

Monday, April 9, 2007



**Top Bush Administration, Education, Business Leaders Examine No Child Left Behind Act at The Links, Inc. and Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Roundtable Forum**

(Washington, D.C. - April 9, 2007). The prestigious National Press Club in Washington, D. C. was the venue for The Links, Incorporated's first Annual Public Issues Forum sponsored in partnership with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, the leading African American think tank. The forum was a stellar success on every level -- national leadership, facilitation, substantive presentations, attendance and hospitality. Key players working with the Bush administration, national authorities in education and business were brought together to examine the reauthorization of *The No Child Left Behind Act*. National President of The Links, Link Dr. Gwendolyn B. Lee, brought greetings and framed the discussion from the position of The Links, Incorporated with her initial comments. "The members of The Links, Incorporated are concerned about inequities in public education for our African American youth. We are studying *The No Child Left Behind Act* along with the leading African American think tank, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, to determine whether or not the law addresses these inequities."

An impassioned and sometimes intense discussion followed as the leaders examined the issues as they related to the various factions implementing the NCLB, specifically funding, its impact on the drop out crisis and the increasing rates of incarceration for young people of color generally and young men of color specifically.

The role of educators, business, and policy makers was examined as they considered the importance of this legislation and its impact on implementers. Participants discussed possible modifications to NCLB to more effectively achieve its goals and objectives in minority communities. A brief Q and A period followed with insightful questions from the audience.

Participants in the roundtable forum included Dr. Gwendolyn B. Lee, National President of The Links, Inc.; the Special Advisor to the U. S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Henry L. Johnson; Ralph Everett, Esq., National President, Joint Center; Stacey D. Stewart, President & CEO, The Fannie Mae Foundation; Dr. Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools; Janet B. Walker, Esq., Executive Director, The Links, Inc.; Dr. Badi Foster, President, The Phelps Stokes Fund; Ms. Rebecca Pringle, Executive Committee, National Education Association; and Ms. Amy Wilkins, Vice President, The Education Trust. Ms. Pringle of the NEA applauded The Links for including former teachers on the panel. The Links, Incorporated have initiated a powerful educational tool that will have national impact as The Links impact public policy issues of national significance.

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**The Links, Incorporated**, founded in 1946, is one of the oldest and largest volunteer service organizations of women who are committed to enriching, sustaining and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry. The Links, Inc. has a membership of nearly 12,000 professional women of color serving in 273 chapters in 42 states, the District of Columbia, Germany, South Africa and the Bahamas. Through its philanthropic arm, The Links Foundation, Incorporated, the organization has contributed more than \$22 million dollars to charitable causes since its founding. In 2006, members contributed more than 500,000 documented hours of hands-on service hours to assist communities throughout the United States, Africa and in developing countries. Washington, DC is the site of the national headquarters. To learn more about The Links, Incorporated, visit the website at [www.linksinc.org](http://www.linksinc.org).

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