

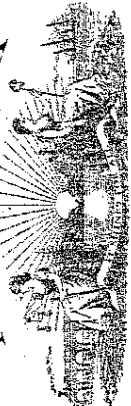
The Final Week of a Most Unusual College Football Season. Russell Levine, p. 25

WEATHER: Sun 60-70, High 70, Low 45, Precip 0%

NASDAQ 2,668.13 ▲ 5.22 (+0.20%) 00LD 802.30 ▼ 5.00 (-0.62%)

DOW 13,311.73 ▲ 22.28 (+0.17%) S&P 500 1,469.72 ▲ 0.70 (+0.05%)

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Report Paints Bleak Picture For N.Y. Blacks

By KAYVON AFSHARI
Special to the Sun

The financial situation of blacks in New York City is worsening, with their employment rate now below its 2000 levels, according to a report released yesterday.

Compiled by two nonprofits, the New York City Urban League and Black Equity Alliance, the report examines African Americans' standard of living in 11 categories, including unemployment, housing, health, child well-being, criminal justice, and participation on the board of corporations and nonprofits. "What surprised me most was that in all of the areas there was inequity," the chairman of Black Equity Alliance's board of directors, Dr. Billy Jones, said.

Mr. Jones said in a statement: "Blacks are still absent from those places where key decisions get made and are still disproportionately affected by poverty and poor health care and low achievement in schools. It's a damning portrayal that ought to move us toward change."

The report says blacks lack access to jobs in the construction industry and on average have a lower wage in the industry than white co-workers. The report also describes an affordability crisis in city housing and says that only 28% of blacks own their homes, compared with 44% of whites. Many black homeowners in New York City are struggling since a quarter of them pay more than half their income on housing, compared to 17% of white homeowners, according to the report.

In 2006, about half of the state prison population was black even though African Americans account for only about 16% of the state's general population, according to the report. Additionally, it concludes that blacks and Latinos constitute more than 91% of New York City's jail population.

The report says institutional racism is the primary cause of the bleak snapshot, and it opposes the cuts in job training, employment services, adult education, and prisoner re-entry programs that are contained in President Bush's 2008 budget.