



Public Policy Project Annual Report 2010

Introduction

As part of its mission the Public Policy Department seeks to: (1) lead and coordinate organizational policy agenda through the development, analysis and support of all Committee projects; (2) provide policy leadership, advocacy, visibility and materials for on the Hill and in coalitions on substantive priorities as they arise on the legislative calendar; (3) coordinate organizational relationships with the White House and the Administration, as well as coalition allies.; (4) effectively engage as necessary and communicate where appropriate with LCCRUL Board Members on the organization's policy agenda; (5) provide public education through Congressional briefings, participation in conference panel/discussions, media, communications and social networking.

In 2010, under the leadership of new Policy Director, Tanya Clay House with the help of Policy Associate, Kenneth Chandler and organization-wide project support, the Public Policy endeavors of the Lawyers' Committee reached new heights, cultivating the mission above in dynamic new ways and under the guidance of well-planned, focused and ambitious agenda. As the Lawyers' Committee sought to become a bigger player on the advocacy front, we worked to implement procedural changes that more effectively branded the organization and the substance of our work for a wider audience on the Hill and in the community at-large. These procedural changes included the use of policy statements, fact sheets, and talking points; the creation of the 2010 Legislative Agenda; and the introduction of bi-monthly legislative updates.

The policy statements, fact sheets, and talking points describe the issues they cover in depth, explaining why the issue is relevant to the Lawyers' Committee and articulating a strong statement of support that highlights the Lawyers' Committee's leadership. The 2010 Legislative Agenda outlines the legislation that the Lawyers' Committee plans to support throughout the year.

Public Policy Legislative Agenda 2010

Community Development

- Livable Communities Act, S. 1619
- Earnings and Work Opportunities Act
- Go Zone Tax Credit Extension, S.2761

- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP III), H.R. 2587
- Payday Lending, H.R. 2563

Education

- Elementary and Secondary Education School Authorization (ESEA)
- Federal Guidance - School integration efforts post-PICS (*Louisville/Seattle Desegregation case*)

Employment Discrimination

- Equal Employment For All Act,
- *Open Access to Courts Act/Notice Pleading Restoration Act*
- Jobs Restoration, H.R. 2847

Environmental Justice

- Title VI Amendment – Sandoval (Civil Rights Act of 2009)

Fair Housing

- Consumer Financial Protection Agency, H.R. 4173
- Foreclosure crisis resolution

Voting Rights

- Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act
- Voter Registration Modernization
- Democracy Restoration Act, H.R. 1719

Other Issues

- Immigration Reform (employment related issues), H.R. 4173
- Crack/Cocaine Powder Sentencing Disparities

In addition to the yearly agenda, the Public Policy department produces an overview of our advocacy and engagement efforts twice a month in accordance with the annual agenda and tiered priorities which are targeted with the help of the subject-matter projects.

Successes

Public Policy can attribute much of its successes to the project’s aforementioned procedural changes. The department was successful in advocating for the resolution to several pieces of legislation pertinent to the Lawyers’ Committee mission, focusing on reducing the crack/cocaine disparity, the POWER Act and status of guest workers, correspondence with the Consumer Financial Protection Agency, support for Senator Reid’s *Pigford* settlement, and opposition to the Murkowski resolution.

The Public Policy Department continues to play a central role in criminal justice reform efforts. Tanya Clay House and Kenneth Chandler participated in a coalition luncheon which addressed the need for retroactivity as a follow up to the recently passed Fair Sentencing Act. The new law is not retroactive, which means that changes to the mandatory minimum sentences do not benefit anyone who has

already been sentenced for a federal crack cocaine offense. The Public Policy Department also expects to be submitting comments to the U.S. Sentencing Commission regarding their issuance of guidance for the Fair Sentencing Act.

The Public Policy Department has been assisting the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice with an urgent immigration issue involving over 260 Indian Guest workers who were trafficked into the United States by a private defense contractor. Currently, meetings are underway with Members and staff of the Senate and House of Representatives. The goal is to initiate Congressional Oversight of the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement Agency which has prevented the just adjudication of the immigrants' visa applications and essentially stopped a Department of Justice Investigation.

In an effort to urge the Consumer Financial Protection Agency's Financial Reform Committee to reject any language exempting auto-dealers from H.R. 4173, the Public Policy department penned a letter to the Consumer Financial Protection Agency. Much like the mortgage industry, auto financing practices have become predatory and abusive in nature, with dealers frequently steering car buyers into loans that are more expensive than they can afford. The language in the House Offer on H.R. 4173 to Exempt Attorneys Engaged in Unfair, Deceptive or Abusive Consumer Financial Practices would allow attorneys and others under their cloak to continue unfair activities without consumer protection. The House language would prevent the Consumer Financial Protection Agency from addressing abuses in loan modification scams, debt settlement claims and arbitration.

Another Public Policy success came in the form of a statement of support for Senator Reid's standalone bill which offered to provide funding for the *Pigford* settlement along with the Native American *Cobell Land Trust* case in an effort to achieve equality for black farmers and Native Americans whose trust assets were mismanaged by federal officials. The department also wrote a letter in opposition to the Murkowski resolution, S.J. Res. 26, which would limit the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency to legitimately monitor greenhouse gas standards via the Clean Air Act. The letter to the Financial Services Committee urged them to maintain the important housing mobility and choice elements in the Transforming Rental Assistance draft bill. The Lawyers' Committee's position is that these provisions are necessary because of HUD's responsibility to affirmatively further fair housing and remove barriers to residential segregation.

Letters Sent and Signed

The Lawyers' Committee sent the following letters during this period:

1. To the Department of Justice - regarding the merger of Election Systems & Software (ES&S) and Diebold's Premier Elections Solutions (Diebold), the two largest providers of voting system products and services in the United States.

This merger began in early September, 2009 with ES&S acquiring the Premier Elections Solutions business from Diebold and combines the primary suppliers of elections equipment and services that states and counties rely on to conduct elections. There was no pre-merger review by the Antitrust Division because of the low purchase price, which allowed the merger to proceed without any examination of detrimental antitrust or civil rights implications.

2. Letter in opposition to the voter ID bill coming up in the VA Senate. This bill, SB 301, does nothing to prevent fraud on Election Day. On the other hand, SB 301 unfairly disadvantages senior citizens, minority, low-income, rural, youth, and voters with disabilities.

3. ESEA Comments to House and Senate

- Promoting diversity and integration requirements and the reduction of poverty concentration in public school programs, including Title I, magnet and charter schools,
- Use of inter-district public choice options
- Increasing and mandating parental involvement programs
- Ensuring civil rights protections in all programs
- Promoting equity, particularly in predominantly minority schools

4. Opposition to Murkowski Resolution (S.J. Res. 26)

The resolution limits the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency to legitimately monitor greenhouse gas standards via the Clean Air Act Transforming Rental Assistance. The letter written to the Financial Services Committee urged them to maintain the important housing mobility and choice elements in the TRA draft bill. We believe these provisions are necessary because of HUD's responsibility to affirmatively further fair housing and remove barriers to residential segregation.

5. Letter Opposing Arizona Immigration Law SB 1070

Letter to Governor Jan Brewer expressed our opposition to the controversial Arizona Bill, urging her not to sign because of Constitutional concerns.

6. Employment Non Discrimination Act

Lawyers' Committee supported ENDA as a natural evolution of Title VII, which was designed to protect those traditionally disenfranchised in the workplace. The letter indicated our support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender workers who deserve the same opportunities in the workplace as other Americans and the necessary protections under federal law.

7. Vote by Mail

Public Policy supported H.R. 1604, introduced by Representative Susan Davis, which ensures that citizens, especially those that find it burdensome to travel from home, have another viable option. We supported such efforts so that all eligible Americans can, without hindrance, participate in the electoral process.

8. The Deceptive Practices and Voter Suppression Prevention Act (S.2554B/A9250A).

We proposed that adoption of this legislation would rectify shortcomings in current New York law. This bill will send an important message to those who might consider engaging in deceptive practices or suppressive conduct that such conduct will not be tolerated. Furthermore, it will give law enforcement officials an ability to prosecute those who ignore this message.

9. Letter to Secretary Vilsack (Dept. of Agriculture)

The letter requested a meeting to address diversity concerns at USDA in light of the misguided firing of Shirley Sherrod.

10. Fair Sentencing Act Support Letter

This letter highlighted the need for Congress to take the necessary steps to reduce this unacceptable sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine-related offenses. The letter noted that the current compromise to reduce the disparity to 18:1 is not perfect but that the Lawyers' Committee will continue to insist upon the complete elimination of this illegal sentencing disparity.

11. Letter to the Editor on Education Reform

This letter responded to a Ruth Marcus editorial to clarify the civil rights community's position with regard to constructive criticism of the Obama Administration's *Blueprint for Education Reform*.

12. *Pigford* Settlement Statement to Senator Reid

This letter supported Senator Reid's stand alone bill offered to provide funding for the *Pigford* settlement along with the Native American *Cobell* Land Trust case in an effort to achieve equity for black farmers and Native Americans whose trust assets were mismanaged by federal officials.

13. Support for Paycheck Fairness Act

The Paycheck Fairness Act will not only ensure that working women receive equal compensation for their labor but also decrease pay discrimination and retaliation claims. This legislation will allow women to inquire about co-worker wages without fear of reprisal, strengthen penalties for equal pay violations, and increase federal outreach and enforcement.

14. Support for the DREAM Act

The DREAM Act rewards those students who seek academic achievement and encourages individual professional development by requiring them to demonstrate either a significant investment in their human capital or service to the United States through membership in the armed forces, in-turn, benefiting long-term American sustainability

15. *Pigford* Settlement Support for Black Farmers

Urged the Senate to distribute funding under the Obama Administration's additional settlement of \$1.25 billion dollars as redress for African American farmers discriminated against by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for years.

16. Finance Equity and Excellence Commission at the United States Department of Education.

The Lawyers' Committee nominated three candidates for the Commission because of their backgrounds and commitment to education concerns: Lynn Huntley, Michael Churchill and Maria Blanco.

The Lawyers' Committee has signed on to the following letters during this period:

1. Urged conference leaders to include the House employer-responsibility framework in the final Health bill. These provisions would:
 - Require employers to provide or *adequately* contribute to coverage of fulltime and part-time employees, with an exemption for the smallest firms;
 - Make proportional contributions for part-time employees; and
 - Ensure employment-based coverage meets minimum standards by extending benefit-package requirements to all markets.

2. Preserving the Open Internet Broadband Industry Practices

The digital divide is unacceptable because it denies minorities and other groups lacking in broadband opportunities equal access to healthcare, education, employment, and opportunities for civic and political engagement.

3. Letter to the Honorable Shaun Donovan, Housing and Urban Development and the Honorable Janet Napolitano urging the Obama Administration and specifically the Inter-Agency Long Term Disaster Recovery Working Group to bring human rights home for our nation's disaster survivors.
4. Letter urging the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to reject the nomination of Sharon Browne to the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation.
5. Foreclosure Prevention Amendment to HR 4173 – fix to bankruptcy to permit judges to modify residential mortgages.
6. CFPA Support Letter (LCCR) – support financial reform legislation that would, among other things, create a CFPA.
7. Opposition to Rep. Bean's Amendment #141 to HR 4173 – sweeping preemption language; would roll back the role of states protecting families from the worst financial abuses.
8. Federal Communications Commission Civil Rights Compliance
This letter addressed minority ownership and employment in Communications industries
9. Petition to Protect Children from Pesticide Drift

This letter urged the Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") to take immediate protective action by establishing no-spray buffers around areas where children congregate while EPA fully evaluates and protects against pesticide drift exposures to children.

10. Sustainable Communities Initiative

Commitment to building a nation of racially and economically integrated and environmentally sustainable regions

11. Student Aid Reform

All federal loans will be moved to the Direct Lending program by 2010. Almost \$90 billion that banks are currently receiving in subsidies would be used to make college more affordable for millions of students. The savings will help strengthen the Pell grant program, keep interest rates on student loans low, improve community colleges, and expand early childhood education.

12. FEMA's National Advisory Council

13. Letter to FEMA requested the inclusion of one or more housing advocates and/or representatives of underserved populations when selecting new members of FEMA's National Advisory Council (NAC).

14. Unity Statement against the Legislation of Hate in Arizona issued in partnership with the National Immigration Law Center, the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice, and other interested parties.

15. Supported the Bipartisan Family Engagement in Education Act (H.R. 5211) encouraged parents and community members in developing and coordinating family engagement in education strategies

16. Perpetuation of segregation and the Public Housing Replacement bill

This letter commented on the provisions of the bill relating to the location of off-site replacement housing, which would forbid the development of replacement public housing units in lower poverty, predominantly white communities "outside the jurisdiction" of the housing authority.

17. DOJ Amendment Letter to Senator Dodd

This letter asked Senator Dodd to include in the manager's amendment a Cardin amendment giving civil investigative demand authority to DOJ under ECOA and the Fair Housing Act.

18. Cybersecurity Letter

A letter sharing President Obama's concerns regarding the security of the Internet and our electrical and technology infrastructure. We emphasized that the right approach to enhanced cybersecurity must incorporate protections of our basic freedoms and constitutional rights.

19. Online Voter Registration

Ensured that Internet voter registration opportunities are made available to all Americans in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner

20. HUD Action Necessary in the Historic Westchester Desegregation Consent Decree

We believe that HUD must intensify and accelerate its direction to Westchester County and the Monitor. The continuous delay and inaction on the part of Westchester County and the Monitor's failure to date to hold Westchester accountable is delaying justice and perpetuating the pattern of segregation. HUD must take a more active, vocal, and directive role in commanding action congruent with the Consent Decree.

21. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program—Demonstration Project of Small Area Fair Market Rents in Certain Metropolitan Areas for Fiscal Year 2011

Organizations supported the proposal by HUD to implement a demonstration project using small area fair market rents. We support HUD's efforts to create a more accurate and fair system for setting FMRs that has the potential to enhance voucher holders' mobility and choice.

22. Coalition Against Religious Discrimination

This letter expressed our concern that the Administration has failed, to date, to take concrete action to address the issue of federally funded employment discrimination on the basis of religion.

23. End Racial Profiling Act of 2010

The passage of this bill is needed to end to racial profiling tactics used by law enforcement officials daily to prejudicially stop, investigate, arrest or detain people based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion.

24. DREAM Act

Urges passage of the DREAM Act as a method of providing conditional permanent residency for 65,000 undocumented residents per year graduating from high school.

25. Federal Election Integrity Act (H.R. 512)

Will prohibit chief state election officials from serving on campaign committees or engaging in other direct political activity on behalf of Federal candidates in any election over which the official has supervisory authority.

Administration

In addition to legislative and agency advocacy, Tanya Clay House worked with Executive Director Barbara Arnwine to increase our engagement with the Administration. Our purpose was to maintain constant contact and help cultivate the national dialogue regarding racial justice issues. We sought to objectively consider and constructively evaluate the Administration's policies.

In an effort to reach out to the Civil Rights Community Barbara Arnwine and Tanya Clay House participated in a meeting for African American Leaders with Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to the President and Director of the Office of Public Engagement. The meeting was an opportunity for leaders to discuss concerns with the Administration regarding their policies and outreach to the community. Tanya Clay House also set up a meeting with USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Joe Leonard for the Community Development Project's Heirs Property Initiative. Barbara Arnwine, Tanya and David Tipson participated in the meeting. Tanya Clay House also attended numerous meetings with the White House regarding pending and upcoming judicial nominees. The Lawyers' Committee worked with Board Members to conduct outreach to Senate offices to support certain nominees, including Ninth Circuit nominee Goodwin Liu.

Tanya Clay House was also engaged in a series of meetings with the White House and the Department of Education over the Administration's *Blueprint for Reform*. Along with a coalition of other civil rights organizations including the NAACP LDF, Rainbow Push, Schott Foundation for Public Education, NAACP, NUL, and the National Coalition for Educating Black Children, the Lawyers' Committee released a document outlining recommendations to ESEA and a critique of the Administration's *Blueprint*. In an effort to provide guidance to the Department of Justice on *Parents Involved*, Tanya Clay House met, as part of the Diversity Coalition, with AAG Tom Perez, DAG Loretta King and Senior Attorney Jocelyn Samuels to discuss the release of guidance for *Parents Involved* and a coordinated strategy with the DOE, Office of Civil Rights.

Legislatively, the year faced triumphs and setbacks as the Policy Department worked to navigate the political dynamics and infighting as many in Congress geared up for the midterm elections. We saw triumph in *Pigford*, compromise in advocating for the Fair Sentencing Act and struggle when it came to the 111th's last days with the promising DREAM Act. The Department continued to fight for criminal justice reform through the National Criminal Justice Commission Act, a bill that provides a useful means for a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system and the relationship to race. The Public Policy Department was engaged in advocating for the reduction of the 100 to 1 Crack Cocaine disparity this year. The Senate Judiciary Committee reached a suboptimal compromise of a reduction to 18 to 1. The Lawyers' Committee acknowledges the progress, but will continue to work with the Administration and coalition partners regarding messaging, retroactivity and next steps in the debate including messaging and further Hill engagement. Tanya Clay House participated in the African American Drug Policy Summit and discussed the Lawyers' Committee's Access Campaign and focus on reducing the disproportionate impact of background checks upon communities of color. In addition to activism on drug policy, the Department also engaged in advocating for employment equality with the Paycheck Fairness Act.

The Public Policy Department also worked closely with the Employment Discrimination Project, AAUW and LCCR to urge support for the Paycheck Fairness Act. We have appealed to Congress to remedy the unjust wage disparity between women and men in the workforce. Employment and Public Policy also teamed up to support the Fairness and Accuracy in Employment Background Checks Act as a part of our Access campaign against the misuse of credit and criminal history background checks. The bill ensures a more reliable and accurate pre-employment screening process for job applicants, employers, and government agencies. Executive Director Barbara Arnwine participated on a Plenary Session panel, focusing on the Employment Discrimination Project's Access Campaign and mitigating the misuse of

credit and criminal background checks. Tanya represented the organization at the NAACP's CLE sessions, and Legislative panels.

The department also continued to push for civil rights protections in housing via Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing compliance, and in Executive Director Barbara Arnwine testified before the House Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights & Civil Liberties in a hearing devoted to fair housing issues. She addressed important fair housing issues and continued challenges to equal opportunity in housing. Drawing from the National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity's report "The Future of Fair Housing," she stressed the importance of the ongoing foreclosure crisis as a civil rights issue. Along with Joe Rich of the Fair Housing Project, the PP Department monitored legislative movement of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative and met with House staff regarding upcoming Committee hearings and promoting HUD's responsibility to affirmatively further fair housing and remove barriers to residential segregation. The PP Department also worked with the Fair Housing Project in monitoring the recently passed Financial Regulation Bill and promoting more oversight for consumer protection.

In the interest of furthering Voter Registration Modernization and Deceptive Practices Reform, the Public Policy department worked with the Senate Rules Committee on voter registration modernization – including the eventual introduction of legislation. The PP department met with the House to ensure that this bill does no harm to other voter registration efforts and appropriately supplements the requirements under the NVRA. The PP department met with Senator Feinstein's staff regarding the Veteran Voting Support Act. The bill permits facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to be designated as voter registration agencies. The coalition is not supporting this bill as currently constituted. The priority is to incorporate it into the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) structure which allows for multiple federal agencies to be designated as voter registration sites.

Public Policy also focused on voting rights in advocating for ex-felon re-enfranchisement including the passage of the Democracy Restoration Act. The department met with Senator Gillibrand's office to encourage co-sponsorship and movement in the Senate. Tanya Clay House also met with staff of Senator Feinstein's office to discuss co-sponsorship of the legislation. Discussions about ex-felon re-enfranchisement will continue with other member offices including Senators Cardin and Schumer among others. Tanya and Ken met again with Senator Feinstein's office on September 2nd to discuss the bill and ways in which it might be improved before garnering our full support. The PP Department is also working on voter initiatives like Vote by Mail as an effort for those who cannot get to the polls on Election Day.

Turning special attention to the importance of education reform through ESEA Reauthorization recommendations, Tanya Clay House organized a meeting with the White House, Department of Justice and the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights to discuss the Lawyers' Committee's Education agenda. Barbara Arnwine, Tanya Clay House and Tricia Jefferson attended the meeting. They presented the Administration with the Lawyers' Committee's Education Policy Agenda and emphasized the need for post-*Grutter* guidance, more aggressive OCR oversight, the need for diversity and integration requirements surrounding the ESEA reauthorization and Race to the top Program and the need to increase parental involvement.) and PICS guidance and continued engagement on the Title VI Sandoval

Fix among others. (The Public Policy Department has been active on the issue of a Title VI Sandoval Fix, which would ultimately restore a private right of action for individuals in disparate impact claims. We have most recently been working with the Public Advocates, Inc. coalition on a legislative strategy for promoting a fix in some capacity. Most recently, the coalition has explored the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill as an avenue through which we may create momentum. The coalition will continue to push for a fix, but faces challenges in the midst of an anticipated change in political landscape this November.

In addition to legislation advocacy, the Public Policy Department was also very concerned with nominations to the Supreme Court. Barbara Arnwine and Tanya Clay House represented the Lawyers' Committee during the hearings for then- Solicitor General Elena Kagan during the week of June 28th. The Lawyers' Committee submitted questions to the Judiciary which addressed our civil rights concerns. In conjunction with confirmation hearings, the Lawyers' Committee released its Kagan report. The report analyzes General Kagan's record pertaining to constitutional interpretation and civil rights, issues which are of paramount importance to the Lawyers' Committee.

Barbara Arnwine and Tanya Clay House also attended a meeting at the White House regarding the nomination of Solicitor General Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court. The meeting was held in response to a joint letter sent from the Lawyers' Committee on behalf of African American civil rights leaders. Barbara and Tanya advocated for the necessity of the civil rights community being more engaged in the selection process and for a more thoughtful consideration of African American female candidates. The Lawyers' Committee recognizes and supports the need for a fair, effective, diverse and responsive judiciary and executive branch. As an organization established by President John F. Kennedy in 1963 to mobilize the private bar in the vigorous enforcement of the nation's civil rights laws, the Lawyers' Committee maintains an ongoing commitment to ensure justice and equality of opportunity.

Panels and Outreach

Public Policy was privileged to participate in a variety of activities this year on behalf of the Lawyers' Committee that helped us increase our message potential and represent a broader voice in the name of racial justice. The Department helped to host a convening on barriers to employment, attended the National Low-Income Immigrants Rights Conference, represented the Lawyers' Committee at the NAACP Convention, participated in the Justice at Stake campaign, took part in Vice President Biden's Middle Class Task Force on Work and Family, attended a conference of the National Urban League, held panels at the National Bar Association Conference, served on panels at the NAACP LDF Civil Rights Training Institute, and participated in the Congressional Black Caucus' Annual Legislative Conference.

Tanya Clay House organized a "Barriers to Employment" Strategic Convening at the Lawyers' Committee on December 3rd. The convening was in reaction to the Lawyers' Committee's disappointment that the White House didn't invite the civil rights groups around the table. This meeting was organized to engage the Administration on moving forward and addressing racial disparities in minority unemployment. Barbara Arnwine, Tanya and Kenneth participated with a roundtable that included: Claudine Karasik (MALDEF); Leslie Proll NAACP LDF); Carol Kaplan (NAACP); Wilhelmina Leigh (Joint Center); Algernon

Austin (EPI); Steve Savner (CCC); Joy Moses (CAP); Alexandra Cawthorne (CAP); Cedric McGee (CAP); Stephanie Jones (NUL); Kimberly Marcus (Rainbow Push).

Kenneth Chandler, Public Policy Associate, attended the 7th National Low-Income Immigrant Rights Conference hosted by the National Immigration Law Center in Arlington, VA. In addition to highlighting fundamentals of immigration law for participants, the conference also evoked efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Strategies for promoting economic opportunity, protection for U.S. and immigrant workers and establishing strategic border enforcement policy were discussed. Cecilia Munoz (Director of Intergovernmental Affairs) and Esther Olavarria (Department of Homeland Security) participated on behalf of the Obama Administration on current policy priorities. Senator Robert Menendez gave the keynote address; he led congressional efforts to repeal a five-year waiting period for access to federal health care programs that had been imposed by newly-arrived lawfully present immigrant children and pregnant women. He has been a champion for low-income communities in the current health care reform and immigration debates.

Barbara Arnwine and Tanya Clay House represented the Lawyers' Committee at the NAACP Convention. Barbara participated on a Plenary Session panel and focused on the Employment Discrimination Project's Access Campaign and mitigating the misuse of credit and criminal background checks. Tanya represented the organization at the NAACP's CLE sessions, and Legislative panels.

Kenneth Chandler is also regularly participating in our Judicial Diversity and Strategic Planning coalition with the Justice at Stake campaign. Vice President Biden's Task Force

Tanya Clay House attended Vice President Biden's Middle Class Task Force on Work and Family in which the Vice President and members of the White House Middle Class Task Force and Council on Women and Girls announced recommendations from the Equal Pay Enforcement Task Force and discussed the Administration's ongoing commitment to improving work-family balance for all Americans.

Barbara Arnwine participated on the opening Plenary Session of the 2010 National Urban League Centennial Conference and discussed the Access Campaign and other issues surrounding challenges faced by African Americans in the workforce. Tanya Clay House attended a plenary session on education reform with Secretary Duncan. Tanya also represented the Lawyers' Committee at the plenary Session with President Barack Obama. Tanya Clay House participated on a panel on *Emerging Civil Rights Leaders*.

In conjunction with the NBA Civil Rights Law Section, the Lawyers' Committee hosted panels at the National Bar Association Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, on several issues areas critical to the organizations this year:

1. Recent Civil Rights Decisions By the Reconstituted U.S. Supreme Court

Barbara Arnwine, Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law –
Washington, DC

Debo Adegbile – Director of Litigation, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund – *New York, NY*

Judge Leonard Murray, Chair, Illinois Judicial Council – *Chicago, Illinois*

Moderators – Tanya Clay House Director of Public Policy, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – Washington, D.C., William Cousins, Jr., Ret, Chicago, IL

2. Education as a Civil Right: Diversity Dynamics in the Classroom

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (NEA) SPONSORED BREAKFAST

Loretta King, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, US Department of Justice – *Washington, D.C.*

John Jackson, President & CEO, Schott Foundation – *Boston, MA*

John K Pierre, Vice Chancellor, Southern University Law Center – *New Orleans, LA*

Damon Todd Hewitt, Director, Education Project, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. – *New York, NY*

Moderator –Tanya Clay House, Director of Public Policy, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – Washington, DC

3. Election Protection 2010

Barbara Arnwine, Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – *Washington, DC*

Bradley Heard, Senior Attorney, Advancement Project - *New Orleans, LA*

Germaine Austin, National Social Action Chair, National Black Law Students Association – *Durham, North Carolina*

Kristen Clarke, Co-Director, Political Participation Project NAACP LDF, Inc. – *Washington, DC*

Harold Franklin, Partner, King & Spalding L.L.P – *Atlanta, GA*

Moderators – Tanya Clay House, Director of Public Policy, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – Washington, DC; J Goodwille Pierre, Esq., Manager-Small Business Development and Contract Compliance, Houston, TX

The Lawyers’ Committee’s Public Policy Department was also visible at the 2010 Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference:

- HBCU Education Session – Kenneth Chandler attended this session, which explored the concerns facing HBCUs going forward, particularly funding, and began to explore ways of resolving such concerns while making HBCUs viable options for the next generation of students.
- Education Success: High Performance Schools in Black Communities – Ken attended this session, which discussed the impact of education reform efforts in a cross-section of communities and how they appealed to higher standards of achievement for African

American students, in particular, through specialization, funding comparability, and character development.

- Judiciary Brain trust – Tanya attended this session which discussed fair housing, and payday lending reform measures.
- Voting Rights Brain trust – Tanya attended session which focused on the upcoming redistricting process.
- Tanya participated in a reception on behalf of the National Bar Association in honor of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Tanya Clay House also participated on the Education panel – Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization: A Turning Point for Education as a Civil Rights Issue?—at the NAACP LDF Civil Rights Training Institute in Warrenton, VA. This panel discussed the upcoming civil rights issues within the ESEA Reauthorization bill that is being developed in Congress.

Coalitions

The Public Policy Department also continues its work on behalf of Lawyers' Committee as a part of several coalitions including:

- Sentencing Disparities
- National Criminal Justice Coalition
- Voting Rights Task Force
- Education Task Force
- Employment Task Force
- Immigration Task Force

We also are happy to have received a two-year OSI grant to extend our work on judicial diversity.

Finally, the Public Policy Department continues to work closely with our Board Committee to help us engage on many efforts as we continue to grow the department.