

## **Pushing The Black Liberal Agenda:**

*Has The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Squandered Goodwill?*

**by Randy Hall**

*Summary: The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) attracts extraordinary amounts of corporate funding even while it promotes a far left political agenda. But worse, its past leadership is implicated in scandal.*

On June 16, the House of Representatives quietly approved a resolution removing Rep. William Jefferson, a Democrat from Louisiana, from the House Ways and Means Committee following reports months earlier that he accepted a \$100,000 bribe to promote a business deal in Nigeria. The action came one day after House Democrats voted 99-58 to boot the New Orleans congressman from the powerful panel. Jefferson has denied the allegations even though he was reportedly filmed by the FBI accepting the bribe in hundred-dollar bills. Later, \$90,000 in cold cash was found in Jefferson's food freezer at his Washington home. He had repeatedly rejected House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's request that he voluntarily step down from the prestigious committee, which writes the nation's tax laws.

After Democratic House members voted to expel Jefferson from the panel, the congressman himself remained steadfast. "I stand firm in my position that this move is unprecedented, unfair in process, and most importantly it unjustly punishes my constituents," he said. Pelosi argues that the allegations against Jefferson are far too serious to justify delay. "This isn't about proof in the court of law; this is about an ethical standard," Pelosi said. Black Democratic lawmakers are apparently divided over Jefferson. Some favor



**Embattled U.S. Representative William Jefferson of Louisiana, who until March was chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. The subject of a federal bribery probe, Jefferson was removed from the prestigious House Ways and Means Committee.**

Pelosi's hard line and reason that Democrats must be squeaky clean ethically in order to continue attacking what they call the Republicans' "culture of corruption." But others denounced Jefferson's removal, noting that Rep. Alan B. Mollohan, a white Democrat from West Virginia whose personal finances are also under federal scrutiny, continues to hold his seat on the House Appropriations Committee.

Until last March, as his troubles were mounting, Jefferson was chairman of the board of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF), the charity arm of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), an organization representing the 43 African-American members of Congress. For five years, the Harvard Law School-educated congressman guided the affairs of the foundation. For eight

terms Jefferson has represented a district comprising almost all of New Orleans, but his situation opened a rift between his supporters in the CBC and other congressional Democrats, who would prefer to paint majority Republicans as the "party of corruption." The current CBC chairman, Rep. Mel Watt of North Carolina, had accused fellow Demo-

**July 2006**

**CONTENTS**

Pushing The Black Liberal Agenda

*page 1*

Briefly Noted

*page 8*

# OrganizationTrends

ocrats of “political expediency” in calling for Jefferson to step aside from the committee. But Jefferson’s conduct also focuses attention on the foundation he headed from 2001 to 2006.

Last September the foundation met in Washington, D.C. to review the condition of black America and to propose solutions to its pressing needs.

In 21st century America, the foundation’s leaders maintained, African-Americans face continuing, pervasive discrimination in every aspect of life, from renting an apartment to seeing a doctor to casting a ballot. Capitalism is fundamentally unfair, and so is America in general, they argue. CBCF leaders seem to believe that most of the problems black Americans face could be fixed easily if only the nation’s ridiculously low tax rates were raised dramatically and if American taxpayers were forced to pay reparations for slavery, which was abolished in the 1860s.

Despite these extremist positions, the foundation has been very successful. It takes in millions of dollars in revenue from major corporations, attracts thousands of participants to its meetings, and generates reams of positive publicity.

**Editor:** Matthew Vadum

**Publisher:** Terrence Scanlon

## **Organization Trends**

is published by Capital Research Center, a non-partisan education and research organization, classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity.

### **Address:**

1513 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036-1480

**Phone:** (202) 483-6900

**Long-Distance:** (800) 459-3950

### **E-mail Address:**

[mvadum@capitalresearch.org](mailto:mvadum@capitalresearch.org)

### **Web Site:**

<http://www.capitalresearch.org>

**Organization Trends** welcomes letters to the editor.

**Reprints** are available for \$2.50 prepaid to Capital Research Center.

## **Origins**

In 1969 thirteen black members of the U.S. House of Representatives set up what they called the Democratic Select Committee. The founders included John Conyers of

issues and political debates. Its supporters have endorsed universal, mandatory government-provided health care and legislation to boost the national minimum wage, as well as to expand welfare and related services, such as Head Start and the Women, Infants



**Oscar-winning actor Jamie Foxx (left) at a July 2005 press conference with CBCF president Don Tharpe. Foxx was named goodwill ambassador for CBCF’s 2005 Annual Legislative Conference.**

*(Mike Storm/U.S. Newswire Photography)*

Michigan and Charles Rangel of New York, still members of Congress and the ranking minority members of the Judiciary and Ways and Means committees, respectively. In 1971 they renamed the group the Congressional Black Caucus. In 1976 the caucus established the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation as “a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy, research and educational institute.” The foundation today refers to itself as “the premier organization that creates, identifies, analyzes and disseminates policy-oriented information critical to advancing African Americans and people of African descent towards equity in economics, health and education.” To that end it sponsors a variety of internships, fellowships and scholarships for young African Americans. It also promotes youth sports programs in urban communities and provides legal counsel to groups involved in state reapportionment and redistricting battles that may affect current and future black officeholders.

But CBCF is also active in national policy

and Children (WIC) supplemental food program. Its backers also support universal childcare, would roll-back welfare reform, and



**Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas was an early target of the Congressional Black Caucus and other liberal groups.**

oppose proposed Social Security reforms giving workers personal retirement accounts.

In 1991 members of the Congressional

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*The supposedly non-partisan CBC used to have a Republican member, but majority Democrats excluded him from sensitive meetings. Republican congressman J.C. Watts refused to join altogether.*

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Black Caucus fought to keep Clarence Thomas off the U.S. Supreme Court. Thomas eventually took his seat on the high court, but only after he famously denounced on live television the brutal confirmation process to which liberal groups and their lawmaker allies subjected him. Thomas called the hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee “a high-tech lynching for uppity blacks who in any way deign to think for themselves.” Ironically, members of the Congressional Black Caucus were notably hostile to Thomas’s confirmation and have continued to oppose the appointment of minorities who reject liberal public policies that the caucus espouses.

The CBC has almost always been comprised of Democrats. When a Republican representative, Gary Franks of Connecticut, joined the caucus, he was treated shabbily. Franks, who served in Congress from 1991 to 1996, was periodically ejected from caucus strategy meetings so that the group’s Democratic majority could strategize out of GOP earshot. Caucus member Rep. William Clay of Missouri said Franks was “a disgrace to the black race. I think it’s a disgrace we would sit in the room and discuss civil rights with him.” Oklahoma Republican J.C. Watts refused to join the CBC.

The CBC tilts far to the political left. Of the 43 CBC members, 26 —or 60%— are also members of the radical Congressional Progressive Caucus, which itself is currently co-chaired by Rep. Barbara Lee of California, a CBC member.

While the CBC is aggressively partisan, CBCF, a 501(c)(3) public charity, must assume a pose of nonpartisanship. It conducts frequent public symposiums around the country and each year hosts a great extravaganza, its Annual Legislative Conference (ALC). Over 20,000 people regularly attend the ALC, during which participants discuss public policy strategies and possible solutions to perceived problems in American society, with a special emphasis on issues of concern to the black community. Reps. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick of Michigan and Barbara Lee are the co-chairs for the ALC in 2006, the 36th

and Justice, and a leading proponent of reparations for past racial injustices, led the session in which participants urged an increase in the size and scope of government. Ogletree was joined by Democratic Senators Barack Obama of Illinois and Hillary Clinton of New York, along with entertainers Harry Belafonte and Alfre Woodard.

Often it is difficult to distinguish where the advocacy-based caucus ends and the non-partisan foundation begins. During the poverty panel chat at last year’s ALC, then-CBCF chairman Jefferson described the



**CBCF headquarters on busy Massachusetts Avenue in the nation’s capital.**

year the conference has been held. This year’s ALC is scheduled for September 6 through September 9 in Washington, D.C. A fawning Washington Post profile of last year’s ALC called the annual event “the Super Bowl of black politics and activism.”

One panel discussion led by Rep. John Conyers of Michigan at last year’s conference was revealingly named “National Health Care: A Right, Not A Privilege.” Another panel discussion, consisting of a parade of leftist clichés about the basic unfairness of capitalism and America, was entitled, “Eradicating Poverty: Removing the Disparities vs. the Innate Drive for Survival and Success!” Harvard Law School professor Charles Ogletree, who is also executive director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race

foundation’s mission. “Our foundation is going to be a think tank behind these issues. We’re going to think through how we don’t leave anybody behind the next time. We’re going to think about how we recommend to the municipalities how they [do] evacuation plans that include everybody. We’re going to think through how we have health care plans and housing plans, affordable housing plans that give everybody a stake in this country. We’re going to think about how we make health care accessible to people, and we’re going to get these things done,” Jefferson said.

The CBCF has several offshoot or “partner” groups, including the Center for Policy Analysis and Research (CPAR), a tax-exempt group serving as the policy arm of the CBCF.

## Organization Trends

The Student Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP), also part of the CBCF, encourages students at historically black colleges to purchase homes within the first three years after graduation.

### CBCF Leaders and Funding: Mixing the Corporate and the Political

The Congressional Black Caucus currently is comprised of 42 Democratic members of the House of Representatives and Democratic Senator Barack Obama. No one doubts the partisan character of the caucus, but by contrast, the officers of the affiliated nonprofit foundation mostly have corporate and ostensibly nonpartisan backgrounds. The president and chief executive officer is Don Tharpe, who has spent his career in association management and who holds a doctoral degree in education administration from Virginia Polytechnic & State University.

The CBCF vice chairman is Kimberly Williams of GlaxoSmithKline, and the secretary is Isisara Bey of Sony BMG Music Entertainment, Inc. Other foundation board members include representatives from State Farm Insurance Companies, Freddie Mac, Microsoft, Anheuser-Busch, General Mills, Coca-Cola and Wal-Mart. However, the CBCF board also includes ten members of Congress, including Rep. Barbara Lee, who represents Berkeley, California; Rep. Maxine Waters, who represents south central Los Angeles; and North Carolina's Melvin Watt, the current chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. All are far to the left on the Democratic Party's political spectrum.

The CBCF's listed 2005 assets of over \$5.9 million and liabilities—primarily a mortgage on its D.C. headquarters building—of \$2.8 million. Its 2005 revenue was \$6.4 million. The foundation reports that it received about \$4.5 million in contributions and raised an additional \$5.7 million from what its annual report identifies as “Special Events”—i.e. most likely

CBCF's Annual Legislative Conference. The cost of the ALC is reported as \$4 million, and CBCF reports that it netted \$1.7 million from it.

How is it possible to raise \$5.7 million for



**Rep. Mel Watt of North Carolina, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.**

a conference? The CBCF 2005 annual report shows how.

\* It lists major contributions of “\$100,000 and Above” for the 2005 ALC from the following donors: Altria Group, Inc., Anheuser-Busch, Coca-Cola, Fannie Mae, General Motors and Lockheed-Martin.

\* Fifteen companies (e.g. Citigroup, such corporations as Ford Motor, Freddie Mac, State Farm, Toyota, Time Warner, UPS, Wal-Mart) gave \$50,000 to \$99,000.

\* Another 35 corporations gave from \$30,000 to \$49,000.

\* Contributing \$15,000 to \$29,000 were 48 organizations, including interest groups (AARP, Association of Trial Lawyers of America), labor unions (AFSCME), foundations (Annie E. Casey) and political parties (Democratic National Committee).

\* Eighty-nine donors gave \$7,500 to \$15,000: they included the New York Stock Exchange,

the National Basketball Association, law firms (Patton Boggs, Winston & Strawn), and individual members of the CBC as well as quasi-governmental entities like the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

CBCF no doubt tells its donors that it spends the lion's share of its money researching the best ways to help the African-American community, particularly with programs aimed at youth, the leaders of tomorrow. But according to the “Statement of Program Service Accomplishments” on its IRS Form 990, the foundation spent almost \$4 million on research “consistent with its mission to assist the leaders of today.” It spent an additional \$400,000 “to broaden and elevate the influence of African Americans in the political, legislative and public policy arenas.” That suggests its real focus is politics now.

When the caucus was created in 1971 its stated goal was to “positively influence the course of events pertinent to African Americans and...to achieve greater equity for persons of African descent in the design and content of domestic and international programs and services.” This focus on civil rights issues earned it high praise at that time from liberals who called it “the conscience of Congress,” but its activities today seem less saintly.

### Donations and Katrina

Hurricane Katrina brought the CBCF to public attention last summer and fall. The Congressional Black Caucus assumed a high profile in the days that immediately followed

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*Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick of the CBC condemned the Bush administration's post-Hurricane Katrina response. Kilpatrick said she was “ashamed of America” and “ashamed of our government.”*

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**For frequent updates on environmental groups, nonprofits, foundations, and labor unions, check out the CRC-Greenwatch Blog at**

**[www.capitalresearch.org/blog](http://www.capitalresearch.org/blog)**

the August 29, 2005 hurricane and it continued to issue statements in the days leading up to its September legislative conference. With parts of the Louisiana and Mississippi coastline and the city of New Orleans under water, CBC members responded in unison to condemn the Bush administration's handling of storm relief.

Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick declared herself "ashamed of America" at a CBC news conference. "I'm ashamed of our government. We don't want another Iraq, where the money just goes off somewhere. This is real human need. And I'm outraged by the lack of response from our federal government," Kilpatrick said.

However, at its September 2005 Annual Legislative Conference, some CBC members seemed prepared to suspend harsh criticism of the Bush administration. They anticipated working with the administration to rebuild the Gulf Coast. No doubt the idea of dispensing billions in federal reconstruction dollars caught their attention.

Rep. David Scott of Georgia urged President Bush to "reach out to the elected national black leadership, which is the Congressional Black Caucus, and partner with us." Scott complimented Bush for acknowledging during his televised speech from New Orleans on September 15 that "poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination." Scott added that he thought the president gave "a very good speech." Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas was appreciative. "We are grateful [to the president] for the acknowledgment of what we have expressed," she said.

On September 21 the CBCF launched its Katrina relief fund with a stated goal of raising \$1 million to help Gulf Coast residents rebuild their lives. The CBCF claimed immediate success, telling reporters that it had already received several hundred thousand dollars in corporate pledges and implying that much more was in the offing.

But by late December 2005, three months after the news conference launching the CBCF relief fund, spokeswoman Patty Rice announced that the foundation had actually raised "somewhere in the neighborhood of

\$350,000 to \$400,000." She added that the disbursement of the money would not begin until January or February 2006 at the earliest.

Why the slow turnaround? In an undated message on the group's website, Don Tharpe, president of the CBCF, described how the Katrina relief monies would be spent:

"A Katrina Relief Committee made up of CBCF board members will be appointed to oversee the disbursement of donated funds. Part of the role of CBCF's Katrina Relief Committee will be to dispense funds to entities that directly deliver services and tangible needs to people who are attempting to move



**Columnist Mychal Massie (pictured above) on the CBC and CBCF: "The revelations about the caucus, its foundation and their hurricane relief efforts give the appearance of a group that has capitalized on misery and now expects to be immune from scrutiny."**

back into and resurrect their neighborhoods," Tharpe wrote.

"We are collecting all the way up through the very end of the year and then our board has set aside a committee who is going to administer the funds," said Patty Rice, the CBCF spokeswoman, on December 21, 2005. But at the end of 2005, the CBCF announced it had still not used any of the money it collected.

Publicity about CBCF's slow disbursement of relief funds provoked widespread criticism, causing the foundation to reverse

itself in a website statement in early January. CBCF already was distributing Katrina funds, it said. On December 9 the foundation claimed to have disbursed \$290,000 to a New Orleans-based group called Community of Faith for Economic Empowerment, or COFFEE.

When Patty Rice was asked on January 10 to explain the discrepancy between her earlier version of the organization's plans and the latest statement, she said only that she was "intrigued" by her own statements the prior December to the effect that no money had been distributed.

### **Katrina, COFFEE and Rep. William Jefferson**

Whether in fact CBCF gave money to COFFEE is one question. How it gave it is another. COFFEE has close ties to Jefferson, who was CBCF chairman for five years from March 2001 until March 2006. As chairman, Jefferson helped set up a national CBCF program to promote African American homeownership called "With Ownership Wealth" or WOW. WOW's mission was to seek the "backing of the real estate finance and housing policy industry" in order to create "one million new African American homeowners by the year 2005." WOW corporate partners include Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and the National Association of Home Builders.

As a member of Congress representing almost all of New Orleans, Jefferson in 2002 helped launch COFFEE, an umbrella group for local churches that were supposed to administer the WOW program in New Orleans. Jefferson's 2nd congressional district, the only majority-black district in Louisiana, suffered some of the worst damage from Hurricane Katrina. It contains the Ninth Ward, where many of the city's poorest residents resided until their homes were destroyed by rising waters.

According to the CBCF website, COFFEE also is supposed to provide "crisis assistance" by supplementing the rental payments of dislocated families and by providing emergency food and clothing. COFFEE has described itself as a "faith based community

## Organization Trends

development corporation.” The board is comprised of twenty leading ministers who lead congregations totaling 100,000 people.

However, it would not be too much to say that COFFEE officials are also Jefferson political cronies. For instance, in 1999, Rev. Zebadee Bridges, the chairman of COFFEE’s board of directors, preached from the pulpit of his Asia Baptist Church and endorsed Jefferson’s bid to become Louisiana’s next governor. Congregants received envelopes at church to make it easy for them to contribute to Jefferson’s campaign. That caused Americans United for Separation of Church and State to file a complaint with the IRS protesting Bridges’ pulpit solicitation. “Collecting money on behalf of a candidate in church seems like a clear violation of the Internal Revenue Code,” wrote Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United, in an October 25, 1999 letter to the IRS. While Jefferson lost the election to the Republican incumbent, Gov. Mike Foster, Jefferson has continued to enjoy the strong political support of many black churches in New Orleans.

So how did COFFEE use the \$290,000 that CBCF now says it released to it? According to Melanie Roussell, Rep. Jefferson’s congressional spokeswoman, the funds were appropriately distributed to various New Orleans church congregations during a period of several weeks. One church received \$400 for each congregant, and Jefferson himself delivered some of those checks, Roussell said. Some \$20,000 to \$30,000 remains from the \$290,000 grant and “the rest will go to people in Mississippi,” she explained.

Might there not be something unethical in CBCF chairman Jefferson distributing \$290,000 to his own constituents? Mychal Massie, a syndicated radio talk show host and member of the black conservative organization Project 21, has accused Jefferson of just such a conflict of interest. “I believe there is enough questionable goings on for this to be investigated,” he said.

Roussell rejects the criticisms. “These monies did not go to WOW. COFFEE is a conglomerate, an umbrella group of churches, which is why the money went to COFFEE so that that money could then be distributed to those churches,” Roussell has said.

And what about the discrepancy between the two CBCF statements – one that no money was distributed and would not be until well into 2006, and the other that \$290,000 was given out in early December 2005? Roussell says it is a simple communications mix-up between Jefferson’s congressional



**The new chairman of the non-partisan CBCF, Democratic Rep. Kendrick Meek of Florida, protesting Republican policies.**

office and the CBCF office.

Massie also questions why the donations were not immediately distributed. “The revelations about the Congressional Black Caucus, its foundation and their hurricane relief efforts give the appearance of a group that has capitalized on misery and now expects to be immune from scrutiny,” says Massie. “Was CBC criticism of President Bush in September intended to stir racial tension and justify a grab for money? Will this money be used to aid the truly needy or simply to curry favor for Representative Jefferson with his constituents?”

David Almasi, director of Project 21, remains skeptical about COFFEE. “The onus is on COFFEE and the CBCF to show that what they did was above board and legal,” said David Almasi, Director of Project 21. “We asked several questions that would have determined the impartiality of the selection process, and we have yet to discover the answers.”

## Jefferson and The Foundation Part Ways

On August 4, 2005, the FBI raided Rep. Jefferson’s homes in New Orleans and Washington, D.C., his car, and his campaign treasurer’s office. The investigation led Brett Pfeffer, the congressman’s former legislative director, to plead guilty in January of this year to charges that he conspired with Jefferson to solicit bribes from a company seeking to do telecommunications business in Nigeria. Pfeffer is reportedly cooperating with the federal grand jury investigating possible charges against his former boss, who is co-chairman of the House Africa Trade and Investment Caucus. Jefferson has denied any wrongdoing.

Then a month later in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Jefferson directed National Guard troops to escort him to his flooded home in New Orleans. Jefferson had the troops wait for him to remove his personal belongings to safety even as rescue efforts—matters of life and death for those ordinary people who did not have the power to command soldiers—were going on around them.

Following press scrutiny of Jefferson and the slow-moving Katrina relief disbursements, the CBCF and Jefferson quietly parted ways. In early March 2006, the CBCF welcomed Rep. Kendrick Meek of Florida as its new chairman with no mention of Jefferson. Meek immediately announced that fundraising would continue to be a priority for the CBCF.

“So many of the CBCF’s programs are critical to our communities,” Meek wrote in the foundation’s March-April 2006 newsletter. “Every dollar we can raise is another dollar we can commit towards a college education for a young student, combating the health disparities impacting our communities or helping our constituents achieve the American dream of owning their first home,” Meek wrote.

Speculation was running rampant as to why Jefferson had quietly stepped down as the chairman of the CBCF. Was it because an FBI indictment was considered imminent and Jefferson wanted to spare the CBCF the embarrassment of having a chairman who was under federal indictment? Not according to

the foundation's explanation of why Jefferson departed.

CBCF President Dan Tharpe explained that the group's chairmen serve three-year terms. "Our board positions are term-limited, so after you serve two terms, you can't serve any more." According to Tharpe, Jefferson's second term "expired at our annual meeting of the board, which was in February [2006]," and Meek's new term began on March 1, 2006.

But Tharpe's math didn't add up. Jefferson was elected CBCF chairman on March 7, 2001, according to a press release from Jefferson's own congressional office. Based on publicly available documents, it is clear that Jefferson served only five years as chairman of the CBCF, instead of the six that Tharpe claimed. Tharpe declined to clear up this discrepancy.

## DNC Fetes Jefferson with Fundraiser

The very next week after his untimely departure as chairman of the CBCF, and despite an ongoing FBI investigation, Jefferson was feted at a Democratic National Committee fundraising event at DNC headquarters in Washington D.C.

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) Executive Director Melanie Sloan mocked the Democratic Party at that time for hosting a Jefferson fund-raiser and for refusing to respond to media inquiries about it. "It is outrageous that the Democrats will talk endlessly about corruption until it affects them. Then, they have no comment," Sloan said.

CREW, which describes itself as "a progressive legal watchdog group dedicated to holding public officials accountable for their actions," included Jefferson on its list of the "13 most corrupt members of Congress." Of the 13 lawmakers included in the October 2005 list, only one other Democrat, Rep. Maxine Waters of California, was listed. Waters, an outspoken liberal, is also a prominent member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The CBCF has since deleted the previous Web postings detailing how its Katrina relief fund was distributing money and has not offered any further public explanations. Dealing with the now-tainted William Jefferson is

just one of the challenges facing new CBCF chairman Kendrick Meek.

## Follow-up: Jefferson and the Washington Raid

On May 20, a Saturday, the FBI raided Jefferson's congressional offices as part of its corruption investigation. Many members of Congress, including House Speaker Dennis Hastert, an Illinois Republican, questioned the constitutionality of the raid. Pfeffer, the Jefferson aide, was sentenced to 96 months in prison on May 26 for his role in the bribery scheme. Following these events, a rift between the CBC and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi developed.

The relationship between the CBC and Pelosi continues to be tense. The San Francisco liberal Democrat had long pushed to remove Jefferson from the Ways and Means Committee while he remained under an ethical cloud. Following a meeting with members of the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, a group comprised of many Pelosi backers, Jefferson indicated he would not resign. "My position before that I related to the leader is still my position, at this point," the embattled lawmaker said. The CBC has criticized what it sees as a double standard in the Pelosi position: "It's not a question of guilt or innocence, it's a question of precedent," said one CBC member, a strong supporter of Jefferson. "Never has an unindicted member been removed."

## The Future of the CBCF

The impact on the CBCF could be profound if Jefferson is indicted or forced to leave Congress. For organizations such as the CBCF that depend on private donations, the perception that its leadership is unsteady at best and possibly corrupt could cause donations to dry up fast. Even worse is the perception that its money is being used improperly.

Groups like the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation are part of the permanent Washington establishment. Its successes help push the Democratic Party farther to the left and tilt the nation to port as well. The officially nonpartisan organization unabashedly espouses left-liberal causes and issues, even as the corporations that support it so generously use it to keep doors open to members of Congress. That makes the CBCF

a functioning part of the Washington political machinery.

However, CBCF's reputation will take a bigger hit if it does not clear up the mess created by William Jefferson, its former chairman. Jefferson's reckless behavior has sullied the organization he chaired for five years. It hurts the recovery efforts in his congressional district, still reeling from Hurricane Katrina. And it further damages the reputation of members of Congress, which insists on its prerogatives even though it continually fails to be fiscally accountable to the taxpayer.

*Randy Hall is Staff Writer/Editor for Cybercast News Service. Marc Morano and Monisha Bansal of Cybercast News Service also contributed to this report.*

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# BrieflyNoted

France's highest court has upheld billionaire currency speculator **George Soros's** insider trading conviction. The indefatigable leftist meddler was previously found guilty of buying and selling Société Générale shares in 1988 after learning about an upcoming corporate raid on the bank, according to a news report.

Is former vice president **Al Gore**, star of the Hollywood horror movie *An Inconvenient Truth*, a secret partner in another Hollywood horror movie called *The Omen*? According to *The Omen's* official Website: "From earthquakes and tsunamis that have swallowed whole villages, to fires and sickness caused by drought, to lethal mudslides, global warming is breeding chaos. And global warming is caused by the widespread sin, immorality, and materialism of our current society." Gore couldn't have summed up his apocalyptic environmentalist ideas any better.

**Greenpeace** claimed that President Bush's nuclear energy policies would lead to Armageddon. When Bush visited a Pennsylvania reactor site in May, the group released a Freudian slip of a fact sheet. The document described nuclear energy as "volatile and dangerous," and continued, "In the twenty years since the Chernobyl tragedy, the world's worst nuclear accident, there have been nearly [FILL IN ALARMIST AND ARMAGEDDONIST FACTOID HERE]." A Greenpeace spokesman said the draft was mistakenly released, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

**Charities and Congressional Earmarks.** Rep. **Alan Mollohan** (D-WV), who allegedly directed \$178 million in earmarked appropriations to nonprofits in his district, resigned in late April as ranking minority member of the House Ethics Committee. Then on May 7, the Boston Globe reported that Mollohan was secretary of a foundation named after his father that hosts a golf tournament to benefit needy kids. According to the Globe, a Washington lobbyist, former Rep. Marty Russo (D-IL), asked his client, the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, to contribute \$10,000 to the **Robert H. Mollohan Family Charitable Foundation**. The medical center has received earmarked funds from the House Appropriations Committee—on which Mollohan sits. (Russo's team won the golf tournament.)

Then there is the **Bobby L. Rush Center for Community Technology** founded by Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL). **SBC Foundation**, the charitable arm of phone giant SBC/AT&T contributed \$1 million to it in 2000-2004. Rush is a member of the House Commerce Committee, and is co-sponsoring legislation to let phone companies provide cable television service, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

Or what about the **Ted Stevens Foundation** in Anchorage, whose stated mission is to educate the public about the former prince of pork-barrel's career? Foundation chairman Tim McKeever was also the treasurer of the Republican lawmaker's 2004 campaign. Undisclosed donors gave the foundation almost \$2 million in 2004 to study the work of the then-Senate Appropriations Committee chairman.

Here's one more: **Rep. Tom Plant** (D-CO) secured a \$125,000 appropriation from Congress for his state's energy office, which subsequently awarded a \$25,000 grant to an energy nonprofit the congressman heads, reports the Rocky Mountain News. Plant's salary as director of the **Center for ReSource Conservation** in Boulder is \$55,000. Plant said he was a little leery about applying for a grant from a program he sponsored for a nonprofit he runs, but because he is *really* concerned about energy, he decided it would be alright.