The New Majority

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State of the Dream 2012: The Emerging Majority
Source: United for a Fair Economy
By Tim Sullivan, Wanjiku Mwangi, Brian Miller, Dedrick Muhammad, and Colin Harris

A major demographic shift is underway in the United States. According to the 2010 Census, white babies now make up a little less than 50 percent of all babies in the country. By 2030, the majority of U.S. residents under 18 will be youth of color. And by 2042, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other non-whites will collectively comprise the majority of the U.S. population. For the first time since Colonial days, the U.S. will be a majority minority country. How will the nation adjust to the massive demographic changes set to take place over the next 30 years?

Millennials, Activism and Race
Source: Applied Research Center
By Dominique Apollan, Ph.D.

In June 2011, the Applied Research Center (ARC) released a report entitled Don’t Call Them “Post-Racial”: Millennials’ Attitudes on Race, Racism and Key Systems in Our Society. Based on a series of 16 focus groups in the Los Angeles area, the report found that a large majority of young people believe that race and racism still matter in significant ways in our society, particularly in criminal justice, public schools and employment. This finding contrasts with conventional wisdom that the 2008 election of President Barack Obama ushered in the era of “post-racial America”—and that this “more racially tolerant” generation of young people aged 18–30 (labeled “Millennials”) supposedly see society’s problems as rooted in issues of class rather than race.

Voter Suppression 101
Source: Center for American Progress
By Scott Keyes, Ian Millhiser, Tobin Van Ostern, and Abraham White

The right to vote is under attack all across our country. Conservative legislators are introducing and passing legislation that creates new barriers for those registering to vote, shortens the early voting period, imposes new requirements for already-registered voters, and rigs the Electoral College in select states. Rather than modernizing our democracy to ensure that all citizens have access to the ballot box, these laws hinder voting rights in a manner not seen since the era of Jim Crow laws enacted in the South to disenfranchise blacks after Reconstruction in the late 1800s.

Building Black-Brown Coalitions in the Southeast
Source: Georgia State University
By Joel Alvarado and Charles Jaret

As the percentage of Latinos in the U.S. has risen dramatically, from just under 5 percent in 1970 to 15.4 percent in 2008, writers, researchers, community members, and activists have grown more interested in the ways African Americans and Latinos are relating to each other. Many recent publications have called for, or evaluated the prospects of, cooperative activities and coalitions to solve common problems. On October 5-6, 2008, the first National Black-Latino Summit was held in Los Angeles. Prominent on this meeting’s agenda were such topics as environmental justice, the criminal justice system, access to health care, and immigration.

Research and Resources
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Unwinding Redevelopment
Source: Legislative Analyst’s Office
By Mac Taylor
On February 1, 2012, all redevelopment agencies (RDA) in California were dissolved and the process of unwinding their financial affairs began. Given the scope of these agencies’ funds, assets and financial obligations, the unwinding process will take time. Prior to their dissolution, RDAs received over $5 billion in property tax revenues annually and had tens of billions of dollars of outstanding bonds, contracts and loans. This report reviews the history of RDAs, the events that led to their dissolution, and the process communities are using to resolve their financial obligations. Over time, as these obligations are paid off, schools and other local agencies will receive the property tax revenues formerly distributed to RDAs.

The Public Trust Doctrine
Source: California State Lands Commission
The origins of the public trust doctrine are traceable to Roman and English concepts of common property. The air, the rivers, the sea and the seashore were incapable of private ownership; they were dedicated to the use of the public. This concept that tide and submerged lands are held in trust for the people has endured throughout the ages. Under English common law, this principle evolved into the public trust doctrine pursuant to which the sovereign held the navigable waterways and submerged lands, “as trustee of a public trust for the benefit of the people.” After the American Revolution, each of the original states became trustee of the tide and submerged lands within its boundaries for the common use of the people.

Foreclosure in California
A Crisis Of Compliance
Source: Office of the Assessor-Recorder
Assessor Phil Ting conducted an audit of 382 San Francisco homes that went through foreclosure during 2009, 2010, or 2011, which shows that 84 percent of sampled foreclosures contain at least one clear violation of California’s foreclosure laws. The results provide quantifiable support for greater mortgage industry oversight and legislative change. The report found that 75 percent of sampled foreclosures had at least one issue relating to an assignment of the Deed of Trust and that in many cases, there were instances of suspicious activity indicative of potential fraud, such as lenders signing over debt to themselves and assignments being filed after the Notice of Default. This is the first and so far only such investigation conducted by public officials in the United States.

The Banks are Back—Our Neighborhoods are Not
Source: National Fair Housing Alliance
As the foreclosure crisis continues to affect 1 in 69 households across the United States, or roughly 2.7 million families in 2011, banks are repossessing an unprecedented number of properties. As a result, a related crisis has emerged—one in which vacant and poorly maintained bank-owned properties mar once vibrant, well-maintained neighborhoods. But this problem has not affected all neighborhoods equally. This report documents an alarming pattern by many of the banks, lenders, investors, and other entities that manage Real Estate Owned (REO) assets. They have engaged in substandard maintenance of REO properties in communities of color, while maintaining them in a superior manner in predominantly white communities.

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