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**Press Release**

**November 4, 2004**

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## **New Movement Vows to Resist Bush Race Policies Advocates Gather at National Conference on Race and Public Policy**

Berkeley, CA — Just one week following the reelection of President George W. Bush, community activists, policy advocates and scholars are gathering to discuss the future of the racial justice movement at a conference on **Race and Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, November 11-13, 2004**. Participants will plan national and local strategies to protect the rights of people of color during the next four years and to set a proactive agenda for the future. The conference is cosponsored by the Applied Research Center (ARC), the Center for Social Justice at Boalt Law School—UC Berkeley, the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, and the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law.

During Bush's first term, communities of color have faced a resurgence of racial profiling, unequal education and repressive immigration policies, according to conference organizers. In October, the US Commission on Civil Rights assailed the Bush Administration's record on issues such as voting rights, education, and criminal justice.

"This will be the first conference about racial justice and civil rights to follow the presidential elections," said **Tammy Johnson**, Director of the ARC's Race and Public Policy program. "It is an opportunity for the emerging racial justice movement to assess the possibilities for short- and long-term policy victories."

Keynote speaker **Tavis Smiley**, host of *The Tavis Smiley Show from NPR*, and *Tavis Smiley* on PBS, will address the impact of Bush's election on communities of color. Plenary panels on legislative and legal opportunities will include among others **Jacqueline A. Berrien**, Associate Director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, **Maria Blanco**, Executive Director of the California Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the Bay Area, and **John Powell**, Executive Director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.

Workshops will highlight campaigns from around the country to defeat or curtail legislation that has negatively impacted Asian, Arab, Black, and Latino communities in the wake of September 11, 2001. Local organizing efforts have established hate-free zones to protect immigrant communities, have developed new multiracial alliances, and have won local pledges of non-compliance with discriminatory federal laws.

In time for next year's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, the conference will also be a venue for discussing the status of voting rights based on the experiences of the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, as well as recent efforts to expand the franchise to include formerly incarcerated people and immigrants.

"With Republicans in all three houses of government, people of color can still defend and expand their rights," said Johnson. "It will take innovative public policies to achieve racial justice gains for the long term. This conference is a first step in that process."

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