

# Rev. Jackson Calls for Youth to Vote

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**The Rev. Jesse Jackson (Ann Morrison photo)**



# Rev. Jackson calls for youth to vote

By Laura Meade

"We must be a sane, sober serious generation that takes advantage of doors opened up a mere ten years ago," Rev. Jesse Jackson said Friday. "And you can't do it drunk, putting cocaine in your membranes, pickling your brain with liquor, putting dope in your brain rather than putting hope in your brain."

Speaking to a crowd of about 400 in the Granite State Room, the former aid to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. attacked the presidential candidates for not addressing critical issues and called for youth to help get these issues out in the open.

"This is no popularity contest," Jackson said. "What is at stake is the salvation of a nation. I don't hear the critical issues coming through!"

Jackson said the only issues being talked about are superficial—Reagan's age, Bush's personality.

"So what? Put all of these issues together and stick them in the eye of a needle with some chewing gum and still have room to get the thread through—it just means absolutely nothing.

"I'm trying to communicate to the masses of people in this area, trying to inject into the campaign some issues that make sense and have substance," Jackson said.

Jackson described the election

as a three ring circus—the Republicans on one side, the Democrats on the other and the media as the big top. "But the people are locked out," he said.

Raising his voice at each new topic introduced, the national human rights leader lashed out the public's general feeling towards youth, especially towards high school seniors.

"High school students must not be reminded of how young and incompetent they are," Jackson yelled, "but rather how important they are."

He cited examples of how some candidates won the presidential election by a very narrow margin. The number of high school seniors alone was substantially greater than any of these numbers.

Responding to the criticism that youth today is apathetic, Jackson said, "Students are not apathetic. They're apathetic to things they're not 'hip' to. They're disinterested in things they are not informed about. By and large, we are looking at more ignorance than apathy."

Students aren't apathetic about such things as disco, rock, lowering the drinking age and other issues which directly concern them, he pointed out.

Jackson said students should cross the stage at graduation

JACKSON, page 5



# Jackson

JACKSON  
continued from page 3

with a diploma in one hand, symbolizing knowledge and learning, and a voter registration card in the other.

"Politicians can not wheel and deal and control three million 18-year-olds," Jackson emphasized. "But when it comes time to playing war games with Russia, 18-year-olds become important."

Casually dressed in blue slacks and a blue ski sweater, the 37-year-old black leader called for affirmative action. He spoke of the time when blacks were held as slaves.

"We were held hostage," Jackson said, his voice edged with emotion. "It's not too much to ask of Americans, who ought to be the leaders of the free world, who are known as humane people, to accept affirmative action for those who are locked out."

He questioned the ability of presidential hopefuls to create jobs that will help combat inflation, welfare and despair. He claimed the issue of unemployment has a tremendous impact on the working people and

not just the poor.

"How can you be against inflation and be raising the military spending in peach time," he demanded.

Jackson called for a definition of patriotism. In a slow, slurred, mocking voice he said, "We must, uh, have registration of the students, uh, because the Russians-are-gonna-get-us. We gotta, uh, get the students registered."

Raising his voice, he said those in the military are prepared. They are paid to be prepared. We have overkill potential of 30 times, he said.

"Right now, we are prepared," he shouted. "And so if you don't vote for registration, somehow you don't love America? I reject that definition. I don't reject the nation, I reject that definition of patriotism." Applause from the audience drowned out his last words.

Jackson also called for consistency in our dealings with foreign countries. He said if we're against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, we must also be against the invasion of other foreign countries by foreign nations. He criticized the proposed boycott of the Olympics, saying that cancelling our involvement would do nothing to

stop the Russian movement in Afghanistan.

"If we're serious about cutting off our relationship with Russia, we must cut off supplies of phosphate and other goods," Jackson said, "not just exploit the sports pages and mess up the minds of young people."

The Reverend said if America was being threatened and the national security was in jeopardy, then the draft and registration must be instituted.

He also said the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the draft go hand in hand. Women can't demand the right to go to West Point and then refuse to go to war, he said, again calling for consistency.

Speaking of the U.S. economy Jackson said money was flowing out of America into foreign countries, rather than reinforcing the economy here at home. And when the money flows out, workers lose jobs, welfare and inflation grow, and the whole economic system slides downhill. He called for the candidates to address this problem with a law limiting foreign investments by major corporations.

"Free trade and fair trade go hand in hand," he said, "trade

JACKSON, page 9

JACKSON  
continued from page 5

that protects our interest."

Jackson also said our interests in the Middle East are too broad. "We must have a new Middle East peace policy," he said. "There are three million people there—all of them are potentially our allies. We cannot forsake them."

Although he blamed the candidates for not addressing critical issues, Jackson accused the public for not making politicians deal with the issues.

"I see you sitting back and not forcing them to deal with the issues," Jackson said. "So they say, maybe we need to go to New

Hampshire. We can't ski, but we can slide.

"Let us organize a third force," Jackson pleaded. "Not Democrat, not Republican. A force of people who are determined to be involved. A force that will not just fight for self-centered, selfish, hedonistic issues such as the right to drink and the decriminalization of drugs. A great people must be a sober, sane, sensitive people."

He said a government cannot avoid suffering at all costs, because suffering and sacrifice are real.

"They are too real to be considered negative," Jackson said. "How can suffering and sacrifice be negative when you have to go through both of them to achieve

the ultimate.

"Suffering breeds character, character breeds faith and, in the end, faith will not disappoint," Jackson screamed, concluding a moving, very emotional speech.

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