

LRR FOCUS

On the heels of the Democratic victory in the 1995 Kentucky Governor's race, the Kentucky Republican Party filed a complaint with the state Registry of Election Finance. The complaint alleges collusion between the Democratic Party, the Patton campaign, various unions, and the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), a Black voter education group based in Louisville, Kentucky. The Lexington Herald-Leader reported that "outside groups with ties to the Democrats, including unions and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. . . spent at least \$300,000 on the election. Most of the spending was in Jefferson County," which Patton carried by a large margin. The GOP has made unsubstantiated claims that collusion enabled the Patton campaign to skirt the election reform spending limits.

The 1995 campaign was the first conducted under the new regulations which imposed spending limits and lower maximum contributions—changes which the Republicans opposed. The effort of unions and other organizations to educate and turn out voters were paramount in the Patton victory. A primary target of the Republican charges are the activities of the A. Philip Randolph Institute. On election day, close to 600 mainly Black youths were paid by the state Democratic Party and APRI to hand out leaflets and offer voters rides to the polls in predominately Black neighborhoods. APRI reports that it paid between 200 to 400 teenagers \$20 to \$35 a day to pass out fliers and encourage voter turnout on and before election day. On election day it also provided 26 vans equipped with loudspeakers to transport voters to and from polling sites. APRI insisted that it engaged in non-partisan efforts to increase the vote in Black precincts. The Lexington Herald-Leader reports that so far "the registry has turned up no smoking gun—such as an incriminating letter or telephone record—to indicate that Patton's campaign colluded with anyone." ■