

CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

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BOND, GANDY: MR. PRESIDENT, SOCIAL SECURITY SHOULD NOT BE SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

*NOW, NAACP Leaders Challenge GOP Suggestion that
Social Security Benefit Cuts Be Determined By Race, Gender*

WASHINGTON – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Chairman **Julian Bond** and Nation Organization for Women President **Kim Gandy** today called on **President Bush** to denounce **Rep. Bill Thomas**, R-Calif. who suggested that Congress adjust Social Security benefits based on race and gender. Bond and Gandy charged that the Bush privatization proposal would, in fact, cut benefits severely for African Americans and women.

Gandy leads the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States, which has worked for nearly 4 decades to bring about equality for all women and equality and justice in our society.

Bond, who serves as chairman of the nation's oldest organization fighting to ensure equal rights and no racial hatred or discrimination, was not invited to private meetings President Bush held this week with leaders of the black community to sell his plan to privatize Social Security.

"We are appalled by your failure to publicly denounce Congressman Bill Thomas's suggestion that Congress create a 'separate but equal' Social Security system that allocates benefits according to race and gender," Bond and Gandy wrote in the letter delivered today to the White House.

"The administration is clearly determined to reduce Social Security benefits," said NOW President Kim Gandy. "It's not surprising that women and people of color are being targeted for the harshest cuts."

Campaign for America's Future Co-director **Roger Hickey**, whose group is helping to coordinate efforts opposing President Bush's plan to privatize Social Security and cut benefits, said that the White House has actually as to reinforced Thomas' irresponsible claims.

"The President's comments yesterday to African American leaders have perpetuated the myth that his plan would help African Americans and women, when in fact the exact opposite is true. *Every* American should have an equal opportunity from the start and a secure retirement at the end of a life of work, no matter their race, their creed or their gender," said Hickey. "The American people will not stand for using race or gender to determine the amount of money in a Social Security check and they will not stand for a privatization plan that cuts benefits and costs \$2 trillion."

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