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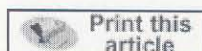
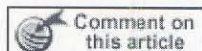
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Judicial report on minorities stuns few

BY JOSEPH MORTON
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Minority leaders expressed a lack of surprise over a report last week that minorities in Nebraska are overrepresented as criminal defendants and underrepresented in the ranks of attorneys and court personnel.

"We've been saying this stuff for years," said the Rev. Everett Reynolds, president of the Omaha NAACP.

Still, Reynolds and others said the report released by the Minority and Justice Task Force is a good one that includes important information.

Reynolds said the results of the task force's study show evidence of "judicial profiling."

The task force looked at a wide range of areas and found racial and ethnic disparities in who is arrested, convicted and incarcerated.

It also found that minorities are underrepresented in the legal community and among court personnel.

The final report stressed that there is not enough data to definitely say there is or is not bias in the system, but that the limited numbers available are disturbing and warrant further study.

Members of the task force said they were proud to be part of a system dedicated to examining itself.

"If there is one institution in this society that must be free of bias, it is the courts," said Chief Judge John Hendry of the Nebraska Supreme Court.

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