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Opinion

Black America's Resilience Keeps Us Struggling Forward

Nobody said that the road to freedom, justice and equality would be easy. In the wake of the results of the national elections across the United States, it is crystal clear that the aspirations, hopes and dreams of 47 million Black Americans are neither in vain or hopeless. We have been disappointed before. We have been joyous before. But today we are all called to be vigilant, persistent and resilient.

As one of our sacred freedom songs refrains in an upbeat, "Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom...ain't gonna let nobody turn us around...Got a keep my mind, spirit and soul focused on freedom...no matter what happens...we gonna keep on marching...we gonna keep on shouting...we gonna keep on marching down freedom's road."

You have heard me affirm before within the printed and digital contours of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) that our collective sense of righteous optimism and moral imperatives were really never based exclusively on one event or one defeat or even one victory. Ours is a long protracted struggle for freedom and equality.



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

NNPA
President
and CEO

Our brother freedom fighter, writer and author, James Baldwin, once told me, "We have to look at the future without a moment to blink, with our heads unbowed with a transcendent determination always to rise above the cynicism of the day and never let

“We have come too far to even contemplate resigning, giving up or throwing-in the towel

giving-in to wrong creep into our souls...for nobody knows or even cares about our suffering if we ever stoop to be silent or indifferent after the bloody lash of history has once again hit out bare backs.”

On election night, November 8, 2016, the entire world waited for the election results into the wee hours of the next morning. Black Republicans were overjoyed and repurposed. Black Democrats were dismayed and disappointed. Black Independents were

challenged and confused. But interestingly some of our elders as well as many of our young activists that night and morning gained renewed strength to fight on for another day and era of progress.

We will continue to pick up our pens to write and speak truth to power. We will continue to publish in the grand tradition of motivating and informing the masses to be ever aware of what's happening now. Every day brings teachable moments and lessons. The National Black Voter Poll, done by Howard University's

interdisciplinary group of faculty and student scholars and the NNPA turned out to be the most accurate when it came to the Black American vote across America.

Voting in our communities is not just a right; it is a historic and contemporary responsibility. As we prepare to enter 2017 with a new political regime in the White House, each of us should ask, "What can I do to help improve the quality of life of my family and community?"

How can I and those who I trust in the solidarity of the struggle for freedom and empowerment work together to increase the economic development of the communities in which we reside? How can I contribute to ensuring that our children receive the highest quality education pre-K-12 to college and post graduate? How can I help raise awareness about the healthcare issues that specifically impact our communities? How can I make a positive difference to make our world a better place?

We have come too far to even contemplate resigning, giving up or throwing-in the towel. President-elect Donald Trump has been given the opportunity and responsibility of a lifetime. Will the United States go forward? Or will the nation go backward? The answers to these critical questions will not be limited to what President Trump will do or not do. Each of us will also contribute to what the future holds.

From my perspective, Black America must do what we have always done. Speak out. Stand up. Keep fighting for freedom, justice and equality with renewed vigor, faith and energy. Resilience is in our DNA.

Trump Won, but White Supremacy Won't Win Forever

I began election night with exuberance. I was among the many who forecast a Hillary win. The only disagreement among my circle was how big the Hillary rout would be. I thought she'd get at least 300 electoral college votes, and hoped that she'd thump Trump by getting as many as 340, holding him to less than 200 electoral college votes. The tables were turned and Trump was the one doing the thumping, with the electoral vote count estimated to be 290-228 (at this writing, final counts were not in). Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote, garnering around 600,000 more votes than Donald Trump.

White folks won the day for Trump in an amazing showing of White solidarity. Trump took 58 percent of the White vote, but did not get a majority vote from any other racial/ethnic group. Only 8 percent of African Americans voted for Trump. He did better among Asian Americans (29 percent) and Hispanics (nearly 30 percent). White people repudiated Hillary Clinton and embraced Trump as one of their own, despite his racist, misogynistic, and jingoistic rhetoric.

Hillary Clinton counted on White women, especially college-educated White women, to save the day. Clearly, they



Julianne Malveaux

NNPA
Columnist

were not with her. According to Edison Research exit polls, Trump won 45 percent of college-educated White women and 62 percent of White women non-college graduates.

“Hillary Clinton failed to energize the base, or transcend the indifference that too many voters felt for her

Trump won 53 percent of the total White female vote.

Hillary Clinton failed to energize the base, or transcend the indifference that too many voters felt for her. Turnout was only 56.8 percent, just one percent higher than 2012, and lower than the 58.2 percent turnout in 2008. More than 95 million people who were eligible to vote didn't show up to the polls.

The Republican vote was similar for Trump and for Mitt Romney, the last Republican Presidential nominee. Democrats turned out in much lower numbers for Clinton than they did for Obama. Why? Voter suppression is part of the answer.

There were nearly 900 fewer voting places in 2016 than in 2012. Further, states like Wisconsin, which Hillary lost by less than a percentage point, introduced new voter ID laws between 2012 and 2016. Clinton lost by less than 2 percent of the vote in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Florida.

People of color were more likely to be affected by voter suppression measures than Whites. In Durham, North

Carolina, voting machines weren't working, and a judge ruled to keep the polls open longer to compensate for the broken machines. Clinton lost North Carolina by less than 4 percent. How many more might have voted, but for broken machines and other chicanery?

How many spent hours in line, and how many had to leave lines because they had to go to work?

Lots of fingers can be pointed in this post-election analysis, but Trump won. It hurts to write that reality down, but it is a reality we will all have to grapple with for four years.

Part of the ugly reality is the realization that too many

of our fellow citizens have embraced a racially divisive candidate whose rhetoric has unleashed hateful speech and attitudes. *The Detroit News* reported that students in Oakland, Michigan blocked pathways of Latino students coming to school, shouting, "build the wall." These children are emulating their elders, including the "President-elect."

Donald Trump was able to tap into the angst that too many Whites felt during the Obama presidency, and he was able to win the presidency in the name of White solidarity and White supremacy. It seems

incongruous that a rich, privileged, urban businessman should become the voice of the working class disgruntled, the rural neglected (Trump got 62 percent of the rural vote), and White women. But this is the new reality: the triumph of White privilege and hate rhetoric.

Whites are just 40 percent of the population in California, a state that gave Hillary Clinton 61.5 percent of its vote. And the Census reports that by 2044 there will be no majority group in our nation. White folks might as well enjoy Trump while they can, but time and demographics are on our side. White supremacy won't reign forever.