

# News

## Voting Rights Activists Speak on the Aftermath of the 2016 Elections

### Forum panelists talk about the role restricted voting access may have played in Donald Trump's victory

By Lauren Victoria Burke  
NNPA Newswire  
Contributor

**D**uring a recent forum on the 2016 presidential election on Capitol Hill, voting rights advocates and civil rights leaders expressed concerns about the role that restrictive voting laws might have played in the outcome. The forum also tackled the problems faced by African Americans and Latinos on Election Day.

"I did not get a call from any of the White voting districts," said civil rights attorney Barbara Arnwine, the president of the Transformative



Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, president of the North Carolina NAACP, expressed his thoughts on the voter suppression tactics that were used during the 2016 presidential election. Photo taken during a NAACP demonstration on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. in June 2015.

manipulation and the voting rolls and every other kind of ID law — I think we saw, basically, a stolen election," said Ben Ptashnik, the executive

director-elect had perceived it. Ptashnik also spoke on the issue of voting machines being proprietary in such a way that only

**“Thirteen former confederate states, you control 181 electoral votes right off the top. You have 13 governors who control 13 boards of elections. You control 31 percent of the House of Representatives and you control 26 members of the Senate with just 13 states’**

Justice Coalition.

Some panelists even speculated that the election was stolen due to the weakened Voting Rights Act inability to fully protect the right to vote.

"I think what happened in this election is that voter suppression and

director of the National Election Defense Coalition.

Ptashnik told the packed room on Capitol Hill that Donald Trump was right when he said that the election was rigged, but not in the way the Republican candidate, now Presi-

them, if necessary.

Rev. Dr. William Barber, who led the "Moral Mondays" effort in North Carolina as the president of the NAACP's branch in that state, had a lot to say about how the strategy against voter suppression has to change.

Though Donald Trump

won the state over Hillary Clinton, voters in North Carolina tossed their Republican governor from office on Nov. 8.

"We have to have a grown up conversation about race and class in America," Barber started. "We need to have a moral revival — people are hungry for it."

Barber continued: "We have to do some deep dive work in the South. Never forget it: Thirteen former confederate states, you control 181 electoral votes right off the top. You have 13 governors who control 13 boards of elections. You control 31 percent of the House

of Representatives and you control 26 members of the Senate with just 13 states."

Though Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton won the popular vote, Trump won the election based on the Electoral College.

An emotional Ptashnik urged audience members to "take Donald Trump seriously and resist" what is about to happen.

Author and senior contributing writer for The Nation Ari Berman, who wrote the book "Give Us the Ballot," also participated in the panel.

CNN contributor and

former communications director for Sen. Bernie Sanders' (D-Vt.) presidential campaign Symone Sanders moderated the panel. Members of Congress who attended included Reps. Marc Veasey (D-Texas), John Conyers (D-Mich.), Bobby Scott (D-Va.), Terri Sewell (D-Ala.) and Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas).

### OBITUARY: Helen Patricia Taylor

Oct. 16, 1935 –  
Nov. 15, 2016



Helen Patricia Taylor

**H**elen Patricia Taylor was born on Oct. 16, 1935 and passed away Nov. 15, 2016. She was preceded in death by her husband, Booker Taylor; daughter, Mary Edwards; and sister, Bettye Lewis. She is survived by two daughters; two sons; three sisters; two brothers; and a host of grandchildren; great-grandchildren; nieces; nephews; and cousins. She resided on Mallory Ave., Portland, Or., with family for over 40 years.

Viewing is Friday Dec. 2, 2016 at Terry Family Funeral Home. Services will be held at 10 am., Dec. 3, 2016, at Bethel A.M.E.

### OBITUARY: Sylvia Willamina Russell

Feb. 19, 1953 – Nov. 7, 2016

**S**ylvia Willamina Russell was born to the union of Portland Entrepreneur William T. Russell Sr. (Bill) and Mandy M. Randall, in Portland, Or., February 19, 1953. From this union, Sylvia was the fourth eldest of seven siblings, (Billy Jr., Jeanette, Velma, Edwin, Katherine, and Angela).

Growing up in Portland, Sylvia attended Highland/Boise Elementary and Jefferson High School. She was known and beloved by all in her community. She was a loving daughter, sister, mother, aunt, cousin, friend, and grandmother. Words that come to mind for



Sylvia Willamina Russell

all that knew her are: kind, sweet, humble, fun and funny, and how undeniably beautiful she was inside and out.

Sylvia is preceded in death by her parents William and Mandy, sister Carolyn, and brother Edwin Russell. She is survived by her sons Dee, Marcell and Martez; brother William T. Russell Jr. (Billy); sisters Jeanette Russell, Velma Russell, Katherine Russell, Angela Russell, and Meesha Russell; grandchildren Maliah Russell, Cecelia Russell, Delilah Russell, Destin Russell, Malachi Branch, Ma'Kai Branch; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and extended family.

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