



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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Are Black Voters Volunteer Slaves?

“In my career I guess I saved 1,000 slaves. I could have saved 1,000 more had they only known they were slaves.” Harriet Tubman at her retirement ceremony.

It is incredible how Black power has gone in reverse in terms of political empowerment. Gone are the days when we had mayors in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, Chicago, New York, New Orleans, etc. As we rose up, we soon turned around and started going in reverse. The Democratic Party has masterfully engineered us into a slave mentality which many of us can't realize or gain enough courage to fight against. We are put into a subservient role and smile. It is as if we want this role versus moving ahead with progress.

To paraphrase G. Carter Woodson's *The Miseducation of the American Negro*: If the colored door becomes closed and all can go through a main door, the Negro will feel uncomfortable and try to reopen the colored door. He will ram and bump that colored door in the back of the building trying to reopen it. If he surmises that the door can't be reopened he will then bring a saw and hammer and build a new colored door as he is convinced that his destiny is servitude and indignity.

What is happening now in cities where we have the demographics to gain political power is a servitude to the White operatives of the Democratic Party. They are picking the candidates for us and most times they are not of our ilk or race. Woe to a people who let



CHAMBER WATCH

Harry C. Alford

another entity pick their leaders.

The best example of this is Chicago. Chicago had one of the best mayors in history, the Honorable Harold Washington. They have not had the organiza-

Democratic Party and bow to it. They are indeed volunteer slaves. They cry about low contracting with Black businesses and terribly high unemployment but yet don't seem to realize that the solution is right in their own hands. They are building that door in the back.

Gone are the days when giants like Willie Brown, Thomas Bradley, Wellington Webb, Harold Washington, Coleman Young, Michael White, David Dinkins, Marion Berry, Maynard Jackson and other great mayors made it

punks” to placate us. My people, we are no longer slaves and it is long overdue for us to act accordingly. We must select our own leaders and put them in office and hold them accountable. The Chicago example is replicated throughout our nation. If we don't wake up then it is on us.

There is another poison that is going around. They are trying to mold our opinions. Yes, trying to influence our thoughts through printed press. The first thing they want is to kill our own media. Our radio, TV and printed media are the lifeblood of our culture. Thus, they want to destroy them and replace them with “front” entities who try to substitute as our media. They bought out BET along with Emerge magazine. Now they want to kill all of the Black newspaper publications. The weapons of choice are coming from publications sponsored by NBC, the Washington Post, and the Huffington Post. These purely White corporations are trying to mold our opinions and control our thought via parading as “Black” publications. Don't go for it. If they aren't of our kind they cannot rule our mind. Support our Black press – the real Black press as the others are of ill intent. Stop being a volunteer slave as we have been free for 150 years. Fight the power!

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They are trying to mold our opinions ...
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tion or courage to come up with an equivalent since. The demographics of this city tell the story. There are 601,674 Black registered voters in Chicago which is 52.2 percent of the total. Hispanics have 200,000 registered voters and Whites have 350,000 registered voters so Blacks could defeat them even if they combined their votes together. In addition to that, the greatest growth in registered voters is coming from Blacks with a growth of 5.25 percent. That seems like a slam dunk for Black political empowerment in Chicago. However this city cannot get itself to vote in a Black mayor since the early 1990s. They await the anointment from the White

imperative to create Black millionaires that would provide thousands upon thousands of jobs to our communities. Their legacies are locked in. I can take a business trip starting at the Baltimore Thurgood Marshall Airport directly going to the Thomas Bradley LAX airport. From there I can go to the Maynard Jackson airport in Atlanta and then decide to visit some family in Mississippi via the Medgar Evers Airport in Jackson, MS. That is testimony to our heroes of the Civil Rights Movement. What is lacking is the follow up to all of this courage, blood, sweat and tears. We have turned it over to one political party and they have assigned “party

2012 Hip-Hop Vote: Determining the Future

In less than 10 months from now the final countdown to the next national elections in the United States will be begin. The future of America and to a large extent the future of the world will be at stake. During the next year there will be millions of new young voting age persons that will have to be registered to vote and mobilized to go out to the voting polls across the nation.

It is a well-documented fact that it was the number of voters that turned out for the national elections in November 2008 between the ages of 18 and 30 that provided the margin of victory for President Obama in the key swing states of North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Florida, Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado. Overall voter turnout for the 2008 election was the highest in the last 40 years and President Obama received the most votes for a presidential candidate in American history. It was the “Hip-Hop Vote” that made the critical difference in the outcome of the 2008 elections.

In 2012 there be the potential for a greater number of youth voters to be registered and to vote in the next national elections. But, this youth voting potential cannot and should not be taken for granted between now and 2012. There is no question that the use of Internet technology and social media were effectively utilized in an unprece-

EDUCATION SERVICES

Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.



dented manner in the 2008 elections by the Obama Campaign.

But, the winds of regression and negative campaigning against further inclusive political empowerment in the United States are blowing stronger today than ever before and these right-wing forces are now also using Internet tech-

Timing is important here. We should not wait until it is too late to get all of this work done. It is going to cost money, time, and energy. I am always amazed to witness so-called progressive and liberal political forces to waste valuable time when it comes to galvanizing and re-activating the potential progressive political base in America. There is no effective substitute for grassroots organizing precinct by precinct in every Congressional District, city by city and state by state. The truth is that in 2008 there was a last minute scramble to get out the youth vote in many key states. That mistake

turnout in American history in November 2012.

The states with the largest number of electoral votes: New York, California, and Texas are showing a significant increase in the number of persons that have become 18 years of age since November 2008. A national campaign needs to be properly organized, funded and systematically launched in all the states, especially in those states where there are clear margins where the youth vote is determinative.

2012 will present the most decisive election in American history in terms of whether or not the United States will move forward in the 21st Century as a pluralistic, inclusive democracy or begin to move backward to the old divisive, racial, and elitist politics of the past. Hip-Hop transcends race, class, and other social divisions. Hip-Hop is the cultural phenomena that represents the transformative character of youth consciousness and responsible social action. Let's work to ensure that both the opportunity and the challenge of the youth vote is taken seriously for the remainder of 2011, as we prepare for the battle of 2012.

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Let's work to ensure that both the opportunity and the challenge of the youth vote is taken seriously

nologies and more social media to mobilize what appears to be their growing constituencies nearly in every state. Thus, the difference in 2012 will not be determined just by the technology use factor. It will be determined by an effective, protracted grassroots campaign to register and mobilize millions of youth voters who love hip-hop music and culture. Thus it will be the “Hip-Hop Vote” in 2012 that will help to shape the future of the world.

should not be repeated. The time to make the difference is now for the mobilization of the youth vote.

In the hip-hop community, we all know that you make progress whether you are in a studio, a corporate suite or in a street organization by how well and consistent that you “grind” or work tirelessly until you have perfected your gift and talent to share with the world. We must start grinding to get the Hip-HopVote now and keep grinding until we set another historic record of the highest youth voter