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Voting Rights Celebration Dimmed

Thursday, Aug. 6, marks the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the 1965 Voting Rights Act into law. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the organization co-founded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will hold a Call to Action Rally at 9 a.m. on Thursday at the Martin Luther King Memorial on the National Mall.

The NAACP hopes to cap its Selma, Ala. to Washington, D.C. relay march, called America's Journey for Justice, in the nation's capital on Sept. 16.

Other celebratory activities are planned for different times.

Considered among the most far-reaching legislation in history, the 1965 Voting Rights Act removed many of the impediments to voting created by cities, counties and states that prevented many African Americans from exercising their right to vote under the 15th Amendment to the Constitution.

Dallas County, Ala., which includes the city of Selma, was typ-



George E. Curry
NNPA
Columnist

ical.

As the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank, observed, in 1965, more than half of Dallas County was Black. However, of the county's 15,000 vot-

Since the 2010 election, 21 states have new laws making it harder to vote

ing-age African Americans, only 156 were registered to vote. By contrast, two-thirds of voting-age Whites were registered.

It took the savage beating of 600 protesters, including future U.S. Congressman John Lewis, by White law enforcement offi-

cials on April 7, 1965, known as “Bloody Sunday,” to stir the nation's conscience against ballot box indignities. That provided the momentum for passage of the bill.

“Only in the wake of the Voting Rights Act did black voter registration in the South begin to approach that of whites,” the Joint Center said in a report titled, “50 Years of The Voting Rights Act: The State of Race in Politics.” It continued, “Five years after the passage of the Act, the racial gap in voter registration in the former Confederate states had closed to single digits. By the start of the

1970s, the Black/White registration gap across the Southern states was little more than 8 percentage points.”

In four of the 12 presidential elections since 1964, Black voters have turned out at higher rates than their White counterparts, ac-

ording to the Joint Center. And the number of Black elected officials have increased from less than 1,000 in 1965 to more than 10,000 in 2015, including President Barack Obama.

While properly appreciating the accomplishments of the Voting Rights Act, we should not lose sight of the challenges that lie ahead.

“Since the 2010 election, 21 states have new laws making it harder to vote – ranging from photo ID requirements to early voting cutbacks to registration restrictions – and 15 states will have them in place for the first time in a presidential election in 2016. Those 15 states are: Alabama, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin,” according to the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law.

Read the rest at www.theskanner.com



Blacks May Have Failed Sandra Bland, Too

Sandra Bland is dead. While many are concentrating on how she died, we must also face the reality of why she died. All of the circumstances surrounding her death notwithstanding, Sandra is still dead. I cannot help but think that along the three-day period from her arrest



James Clingman
NNPA
Columnist

to her final moments in

that lonely and frightening jail cell, there were opportunities to rescue her from such a horrible experience and tragic end.

This is not a rehash of all the conversations, utterances, conjecture and theories put forth after Sandra died. Rather, this is a simple critique of what we all

saw on video and heard from Sandra herself when she called someone to let them know her status, having received a \$5,000 bond. To say the least, she was totally frustrated by the entire situation.

Why Sandra Bland died is also obviously connected to who played a role in her death, whether directly or indirectly. Where were the intervention points by which Sandra's three days of horror could

University, knew about the incident on the day it took place. If someone did know, did they follow up to check on Sandra and make an effort to help her?

Surely, there are a couple of Black lawyers in Prairie View as well.

I am not a lawyer, but I know there is something called “habeas corpus,” which directs a person, usually a prison warden or jailer, to produce the prisoner and justify the prisoner's detention. If the pris-

Was there any way, leading up to her demise, for her to have survived?

have been stopped?

Was there any way, leading up to her demise, for her to have survived?

My initial inquiry would be directed toward the person who shot the cellphone video, the one to whom the cop said, “You need to leave.”

The bystander replied, “Is this public property?” That person obviously had enough backbone to refuse to leave and even question the officer's order; thanking him for recording the incident, I would ask if he make any attempt to see what happened to Sandra after she was taken away?

In such a small town, I am sure the news of Sandra's arrest got around pretty fast.

I wonder if anyone at her new employer, Prairie View A&M

oner argues successfully that the incarceration is in violation of a constitutional right, the court may order the prisoner's release. Am I misinformed about that legality?

Finally, there was the \$5,000 bond, which required a 10 percent payment – a measly \$500 – for Sandra to be released. Does anyone believe that \$500 was such an enormous amount of money that Black folks in Prairie View could not raise it to pay her bond? Even the full \$5,000.00 could have been put up by a group of people until Sandra's family was able to send or bring it to the court. Now we have to live with the fact that a major reason this young lady died is the lack of \$500! Surely, her life was worth far more than that.

Read the rest at www.theskanner.com



MFHM
My Father's House Ministries

Pastors Jerry and Annie Gutierrez invite you to join us in our
New Location for our

Celebration Service

Friday August 7th @ 7:pm

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