

President Obama Deserves Our Vote

Written by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
Thursday, 25 October 2012 10:02



In just a few days, millions of Americans will vote in the November 6 national elections. In those states where there is early voting, millions have already voted. There is a clear choice between President Barack Obama and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. At the end of the day it is reduced to the question of “going forward” or “retreating backward” in clear terms of the social, economic, and political empowerment of people who historically have been marginalized and discriminated against because of race, ethnicity or class. It is about the politics of inclusion versus the politics of exclusion. This election is more than a political struggle between the 99 percent and the 1 percent on the quest for wealth and economic control. The consequential future of America and the world is at stake.

For millions of African Americans, the importance of reelecting President Barack Obama cannot be overstated. Given the state of Black America in 2012, the thought of going backward in our society should not even be an option. We have come too far and made too much sacrifice and progress to turn around now because of what appears to be formidable opposition to our interests and future. There is still time to reawaken those of us who have fallen asleep or who have become apathetic at this is another critical moment in our long struggle for freedom, justice, equality and empowerment.

We have to ensure that we mobilize our family members and everyone in our communities about the importance of making sure that every eligible person will actually vote between now and November 6. Every hour of every day now needs to be focused on Getting-Out-The-Vote (GOTV). It is time to pool all our organizational resources to stage the largest grassroots voter turnout in history. The African American church community should be at the forefront of our GOTV nonpartisan work. I am expressing my own personal views about this election in hopes to raise the level of awareness and consciousness of others who may be mistakenly taking this election for granted. It does matter who wins. Not voting is an unforgivable sin.

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On September 22, President Obama reminded us of the 150 year anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation document that President Lincoln issued in 1862 to take effect on January 1, 1863. Why is this an important reminder today in 2012? It is very important not to ever forget the history of slavery, Jim Crow and systematic denials of equal justice and freedom not only to African people, but also all people who have had to struggle to make advancement and progress against formidable odds and historical circumstances.

President Obama emphasized, "One hundred and fifty years after that historic even, we recognize an important milestone in the American story and reflect on the progress we have made toward realizing our Nation's founding promise of liberty and justice for all. Though it would take decades of struggle before African Americans were granted equal treatment and protection under the law, the Emancipation Proclamation marked a courageous step forward in fulfilling that essential task.

"It affirmed that the Civil War was a war fought not only for the preservation of our union, but for freedom itself. The Emancipation Proclamation stands among the documents of human freedom. As we commemorate this 150th anniversary, let us rededicate ourselves to the timeless principles it championed and celebrate the millions of Americans who have fought for liberty and equality in the generations since."

Each generation has to rise to its particular challenge of history. Today, we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to keep pushing forward. For Black Americans, voting is sacred and we dare not take this election lightly. For all of those who have become cynical instead of being vibrant, enthusiastic and active, we have to remind them of the past and of the present. Hundreds of millions of dollars have spent to suppress our vote and on negative deceptive television and radio ads, all designed to confuse, confound, and to immobilize people in our communities. The worst form of suppression, however, is self-suppression and a sense of hopelessness. I am optimistic but know we still have a lot of work to do over the next days ahead.

Mitt Romney, in my view, represents the exclusive views and the ideology of the past. President Barack Obama is not only the hope for the future, but also he is doing a good job in the present in the face of fierce opposition and huge wealth stacked against him. This is exactly the moment that our ancestors prayed for and gave of their sacrifice and blood. Let's stand up together in this moment of decision. Let's have a record turnout in every precinct in every state. Let's defy the odds once again. Let's vote for freedom, justice, equality and empowerment of all. Let's

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re-elect President Barack H. Obama.

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