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Breaking News: How to Vote

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¹Black Votes Matter

UNO Adjunct Professor, Preston Love Jr.

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Black Lives, Black Poverty and Black Votes Matter

BREAKING NEWS: HOW TO VOTE.

In this column, we have been and will continue to discuss the need to vote and why to vote. Now, let's focus on "How to Vote". Maybe you think you already know how to vote. Maybe you do, maybe you don't. Before I send you off to vote "half baked", let's make sure you know how. Knowing how to vote will maximize your vote. With only a small percentage of us voting, let's make sure that we voters get the most out of our vote. **Black Votes Matter**. With that said here is how to vote:

Step 1: Get your mind straight.

Your self-interest and your needs should be enhanced by voting. You have needs, your family have needs and challenges, and your community has needs and challenges. Every vote you cast should be directed towards you, your family and community. You are wasting your power by missing this point. Recently we voted to increase the minimum wage, a perfect example of voting our self-interest. You your family and community needed the increase wages. What if we all stayed home from voting saying "my vote does not matter" or "what difference does it make"? Unfortunately, I hear this too often, don't get it twisted, your vote does matter. Regardless of your view on the death penalty you will have the opportunity to express your view with your vote in 2016, as Nebraska's death penalty will be on the ballot. Get your mind straight, be clear on what helps and what hurts. Vote your own self-interest, but be empathetic to the needs of your community as well.

Step 2: Prepare your mind.

Review and study the candidates and the issues. Be informed. Attend candidate forums and meetings. Study candidate material. The League of Women Voters (LWV) creates a "Voters Guide" prior to each election. That guide has the views of all the candidates and the pro and cons of major issues on the ballot. The guide are available at public library and I distribute the Guide freely in north Omaha when they become available.

2016 Election Dates:

Democratic Party Presidential Caucus: Saturday, March 5th 2016

Primary Election: May 10th, 2016

General Election: November 1, 2016

¹ BVM.5

Step 3: Register to Vote.

You must register in order to vote. If you are 18 years old or will be by November 1, 2016 you can register and vote. If you are an ex-felon and have been released from prison and/or off paper for two or more years you can vote. If you are a college student and you have residence in Douglas/Sarpy County you can vote. Note if you have residence in another state you must cancel your registration there prior to registering here. Effective immediately in Nebraska you can register on-line. (Go to www.votedouglascounty.com). You can register at any public library. You can register at events which have been given the authority to register. You can register at most county DMV offices.

When you register it will take only a few minutes. You certify your US citizenship, age, name and address. You declare your party affiliation i.e. Democrat, Republican, non-partisan, etc. When you sign you certify the information given is true. **NO ID IS REQUIRED.** You will be sent a voter information card telling you where to vote and what voter districts you are voting in. **Note: if you lose the card or forget where you vote you can go the website above or call prestonlovejr 402-812-3324.**

Step 4: Voting

In Nebraska you can have a ballot sent to your house simply by request. There is an “Early Ballot Request Application” that is readily available, fill it out and a ballot will be sent to your home. When you receive it, you complete the ballot, return by mail or drop it into the secured voter drop boxes that are dispersed around Omaha (ex. Charles Washington Library on Ames). The Application for an Early Ballot is available in January, 120 days prior to primary Election, May 10th. You can vote in person at the Election Commission (225 N. 115th street) beginning 30 days before the actual Election Day. You can vote Election Day at your polling place. **Note: Go to the Election Commission or call to find your polling place. Rides are available before and on Election Day. Call Prestonlovejr.**

A word for Democrats: Attend the Caucus March 5th. There are 14 sites for Democratic caucuses in Douglas County. Find out where your is. Your caucus site is based on the Legislative District (LD) you live in. For example LD 11 will be at Skinner, LD 13 will be at Nathan Hale. All sites will be published in my column at a later date. Additionally, I will be announcing Caucus training soon.

Step 5: After voting, rejoice, you have handled your business!!

Make sure you and everyone in your household votes, **Black Votes Matter**. There will be **Black Votes Matter** yard signs available soon; to make a reservation for one go to my website. Prestonlovejr.com. The yard signs will be free but donations are appreciated to defer some of the costs.

*To review previous Black Votes Matter column articles visit **Omahastar.com**. Column began September 11, 2015*