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The Changing “Face” of North Omaha

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Black Votes Matter

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Black Lives, Black Poverty and Black Votes Matter

THE CHANGING “FACE” OF NORTH OMAHA

Amid my constant cry for north Omaha Blacks to wake up and realize how much our vote matters for our self-interest and in spite of my understanding of the deep and profound reasons poverty stricken communities do not vote, it is time to step back and review the true faces of North Omaha and assess our options.

We assume when analyzing our north Omaha vote, that it is made up of mostly black voters and of course a smaller percentage of north Omaha whites who are either poor themselves or who are committed or are stuck in North Omaha for one reason or the other. In my recent book *Economic Cataracts*, I develop scenarios that pierce the surface and view the poor voting performances that are derived from an economic depressed community. In this column over the last 4 months I have attempted to educate, challenge and develop the need for strong voting. One article was entitled “THE RESURRECTION OF JIM CROW AND THE BIRTH OF A NON VOTING BLACK COMMUNITY. BOTH NEED A QUICK BURIAL”. In another, “VOTER TURNOUT: FERGUSON, MO IS A TEACHABLE MOMENT IN HISTORY IN WHY BLACK VOTES MATTER”. All directed to my beloved black North Omaha community, for us to get the point, wake up and take actions and vote.

Good voting will bring better representation, positive actions on issues that are in our best interest and leverage against power and privilege. Well my beloved, our so-called black vote in North Omaha is getting watered down with each passing year. The vote (or lack thereof) in north Omaha is no longer simply black and white. The face of north Omaha is changing!! That changing face puts added pressure on us to vote.

The face of North Omaha is in fact: Sudanese, Somalian, Vietnamese, Laotian, el Salvadorian, Guatemalan, refugee, immigrant, Afghanistan. Mexican, Iranian, Burmese to name a few. Charles Drew Health Center located in the heart of North Omaha has to prepare staff to accept over 35 languages that may walk through their door.

What is the nature of our new north Omaha residents? How can they improve our community?

To begin with these new communities within North Omaha have the potential to expand our understanding and enjoyment of new and distance cultures. Some bring high work ethic. Some bring an affinity for great land use for gardening and food.

The down side, by in large these new communities bring no new wealth to our community. In fact they bring social and economic needs that outweigh that of the poor black community. They are self-contained and set a side, not integrated with most of the black community. Their businesses are formed to serve within. Those businesses that are serving the greater north Omaha do not bring economic growth to the North Omaha. They tend not to support our small businesses. They compete for scare jobs available to the poor. Some of these new communities bring their own brand of gangs, crime and violence.

Most are not registered and do not vote. They tend not to be engaged. There is the obvious language barriers. Activist voter volunteers are not received and get low reception in door to door efforts to get the vote out. The targeting of voters in North Omaha has become more complex. Our community voting power and leverage is

becoming watered down. Add the north Omaha brain drain, the advent of gentrification, the powerful and privileged buying up north Omaha real estate and what you have left is a community that needs to WAKE UP and get busy. Fight for economic Inclusion, relevant economic development, job training and jobs. VOTE and hold elected official accountable to our needs.

What are our options?

1. Submit, give in, and don't fight back. Don't vote
2. Long term, build coalitions within north Omaha with all, who have something to offer.
3. Stand up, fight, communicate the truths, recognize that Black Votes Matter.

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

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