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Black Votes Matter 2016 initiative launched!!

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Black Votes Matter

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Black Lives, Black Poverty and Black Votes Matter

Black Votes Matter 2016 initiative launched!!

Saturday, January 23rd at a full house kickoff meeting, attended by over 100, the Black Votes Matter 2016 initiative was launched. Members from the community, neighborhoods, Clergy and leadership were joined by candidates Jake Seaman, Jill Brown and Dr. Larry Bradley who are running for the State Senate seat currently held by Senator Tonya Cook. Justin Wayne also may run. Senator Cook cannot run because of term limit laws. Also attendees were treated to presentations from all three Democratic Presidential candidates. Nebraska representatives for Clinton, Sanders and O'Malley made pitches and sought volunteers.

Attendees also were briefed on the upcoming Nebraska Caucus this March 5th. Elected officials Ben Gray, Fred Conley, Chris Rodgers, James Cavanaugh, John Ewing and Tonya Cook all were present. The meeting was hosted by caucus captains Vanetta Early (LD11) and Preston Love Jr. (LD13)

The feature event of the Meeting was the unveiling of the new Black Votes Matter yard signs. The North Omaha Voter Project has announced its plan to place 1000 Black Votes Matter yard signs in north Omaha this election season. Meeting participants snatched up all signs available at the meeting. Signs are available free simply by calling Preston Love Jr (you must be registered to Vote).



The Black Votes Matter 2016 initiative:

Voter turnout is stated as a percentage of people who vote as compared to those registered. Example: if you have 100 registered and 60 vote, the turnout is 60%. In 1983 when Harold Washington became the first black Mayor of Chicago the turnout in the black community was over 90%. When Jesse Jackson ran for President in 1984 black turnout was sometimes 70 to 80%. In elections in Ferguson mo., before the killing of Michael Brown by a policeman, Blacks who represent over 70% of the population voted at a shocking low 12%. The result, little to no black elected officials and only 3 blacks on the police force and probably the fate of young Brown. In north Omaha black vote regularly in the 20 and 30% level. (Exception 2008 and 2012 for Obama). We vote way below the rest of Douglas County and we need to stop that. We are wasting our power.

Historically, it should not take some highly historic or emotionally charged election to get us to the polls. Before and after the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Blacks voters understood what scarifies were made and that we could change things with our vote. After many victories in the late 70's, 80's and 90's, we began to lose our way. Our youth are not taught and we have not instilled in them the black experience of voting and lives loss to get the right to vote. Poverty also has plays a pivotal part in this reduction of voter participation. In my book *Economic Cataracts*, I develop the role of poverty and voting.

Our lack of understanding voting could not be happening at worse time.

Most all of the aspects of our lives are affected by elected and appointed officials. Who is in office can severely help or hurt the cause of black people and our north Omaha community. With that said we have a generation that has no clue of these simple facts. The powerful and privilege support their causes by using the power of their money. The rest of us need to understand that we have the power of the vote to help and support our cause. That is why we need to focus on the reality that Black Votes Matter. Matter to our causes and to our families.

Review the following list (*Economic Cataracts. Pages 71-78*)

- Jail time
- Availability of health care and state Medicare
- Federal, state and local financial aid
- Fair running of elections
- The make-up and accountability of the police force
- The level of your wages
- Elected officials who watch your back
- High-level quality of our kids' education
- Public sector(city, county, state and federal) sharing the wealth of contracts and business

Each of us are touched constantly with the realities of this list. The people that control the outcome of this list are elected. Simply stated we need to get “friends” in and “enemies” out. Not voting is a vote for the “enemy”. Our votes matter.

2016 we have the opportunity to step up and face these realities. We also have the fate of the death penalty that will be on the ballot. The Nebraska state legislature has voted to eliminate the death penalty in Nebraska. If you are against the death penalty you need to vote to “Retain” the law as is. Up for election in the 2016 elections are the following:

- Douglas County commissioner
- Douglas County offices of great importance including the courts
- Educational Service Units
- Learning Community Council members
- State Senate legislators
- MUD board
- OPPD board members
- OPS school board members
- State Board of Education
- NRD
- Workers Compensation Board

Don't forget our US Congress Representative, currently held by Democrat Brad Ashford. Donald Trump, Donald Trump. You don't vote and he becomes President, it's your fault. We have a lot at stake. We can make the difference, and that difference can work for our community. **Black Votes Matter.**

During this election season we need to question and demand to know what role potential candidates will have in addressing the needs our community. The short list our needs begin with jobs and job training, small business growth, economic inclusion, initiatives to bring wealth into our community, inclusion of community resources on boards, appointments, panels that affect our community, funding for neighborhood associations and recognition of underutilized expertise in North Omaha. Then we need to make our vote heard and hold the winners accountable.

Join the fight to control our destiny and put a **Black Votes Matter** yard sign in your yard. Come to your caucus March 5th. Call me to find when and where you go to caucus, 402-812-3324. Vote in our Primary May 10th.

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