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## Superb North Omaha Vote in the Primary: Black Votes Mattered

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## **Black Votes Matter**

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Black Lives, Black Poverty and Black Votes Matter

### **Superb North Omaha Vote in the Primary: Black Votes Mattered**

For the first time in decades north Omaha can be proud of its voting. The turnout for north Omaha equaled the turnout for all Douglas County voters, that's very good news. For years I and other voter participation advocates have been bemoaning the low turnout in North Omaha. I have written a book (*Economic Cataracts*), this column and the Black Votes Matter initiative all have been directed toward increasing the awareness and education needed for our community to get its voting house in order. The problem has been twofold: the raw low number of votes cast and maybe more important, the negative turnout gap. The Gap is the difference between north Omaha's vote and the vote of all Douglas county voters and it has been consistently terrible. For example in 2008 with all the emotion and historic elements of the Obama presidential bid, north Omaha voted at respectable 62% turnout. However the rest of Douglas County voted at 72%. That was in fact a 10% negative gap for north Omaha. The negative gap has plague our voting for years. In 2004 the gap was 11%, 13% in 2012, and 14% in 2014.

### **Congratulations in the 2016 primary election north Omaha voted at a virtual tie with the rest of Douglas County at 22% turnout, no gap.**

The Black Votes Matter (BVM) initiative takes some of the credit for the community focus and awareness and the ultimate higher turnout in North Omaha. As has been chronicled in this column, the BVM effort in 2016 has been extensive and includes the placing of over 1100 BVM yard signs in the community to focus awareness. The effort also included ride to polls and visibility on Election Day.

Many other great voter participation efforts contributed to this primary success, Activate85, conducted three successful voter education forums, the league of Women Voters conducted many voter registration efforts which included over 500 new young voters. The Urban league Guild, Urban League Young Professionals, and the recent announced IMA 10k: Race to the Poll, and others, all made an impact.

### **The General Election, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 will be the final test of our efforts.**

All of the efforts mentioned above, will be in full swing for the 2016 general election effort. The Black Votes Matter initiative will continue, including placing additional yard signs, forums, educational meetings, senior and youth outreach, and collaborating with other key partners. The IMA 10K: Race to the Poll effort will focus on registering 10,000 new voters over the summer, via the churches and events. Souls to the Polls (ride to the polls) will be provided as well.



Congratulations to the new north Omaha candidates successful and unsuccessful for their desire to give public service. Special shout out to Bert Mehrer, Jake Seaman, Forte Hamilton, and others who were not successful, I urge them to continue their desire to serve.

Key 2016 races that we will be discussing in future articles are the races for: President, US Congress (Ashford vs Bacon), and Douglas County D3 (Rodgers vs Snow), LD13 (Wayne vs Brown), OPS D1 (Williams vs Smith) and the LCC (Williams and Braimah in the running)

*To review previous Black Votes Matter column articles visit [Omahastar.com](http://Omahastar.com). Or [prestonlovejr.com](http://prestonlovejr.com). Column began September 11, 2015*

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