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North Omaha Voter: Which excuse is yours!! Part 2

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Black Votes Matter
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Black Lives, Black Poverty and Black Votes Matter

North Omaha Voter: Which excuse is yours!! Part 2

Recently I conducted a scholarly research project for my Master's Degree class of study at Bellevue University. I wrote two 2000-word papers on my finding. Both papers analyzed finding from a random survey which included an interview question. The survey asked about voter habits, age, race, and reasons for the participant who are not voting, why not. The results were stimulating and I plan to expand on the study this year. The two papers are available from my website: prestonlovejr.com/blackvotesmatter/case study.

Last issue I shared a short excerpt from one of papers. The following represents a summary of the reasons stated by the participants on why they are not voting. The sample was 55% white. The statistical deviations and correlation are not included here but are fully developed in the two papers. This issue I will combine the recommendation from each case study paper in hope to raise the consciousness of the reader as to the challenge we face in getting our voters out to vote.

Recommendations from Case Study 1:

Within the convenes of this limited data set and survey we can focus on solutions. It should be noted that final recommendations should be made only after the analysis of the data from a qualitative perspective (Case study part 2). This will surely benefit from the qualitative comments made by the nonvoters. Those comments have the potential of giving us new insights into the question we have posed, "**who is voting and who is not voting. If not why**".

There some strategic recommendation that can be suggested now, before we benefit from the Qualitative analysis:

1. There needs to be close focus and fighting of attempts to further the gap of turnout, black to white, young to old. The attempts I speak on can be called voter impediments. Gerrymandering, voter ID requirements, voter purging, tampering with polling place availability, minimization of early voting options and ignoring use of voter ease from technology, i.e. on-line voter registration.
2. The development of creative and new innovations for voters such as automated registration at the DMV offices, convenience proximity of drop boxes for voter ballots, Saturday voting, expanded election offices hours of operation.
3. Targeted outreach by voter organizations to low turnout communities. Door knocking and phone banking year-round and during non-election periods. Aggressive voter education meetings and media (traditional and social) directed toward voter education of issues and candidates and civics in general)
4. Outreach to our youth before they develop bad voting habits.
5. Address poverty.

Summary and Recommendations from Case Study 2:

In a democracy, one would think the right to vote would be embraced and fully utilized. In many countries, the act of voting could mean loss of life or bodily injury. In many countries, there is high voter fraud, yet the people continue to exercise their right. In many countries the lines may cause voters to stand in line regardless of weather conditions for 10 to 12 hours, yet they come. So why in America are citizens voting less and less. Despite higher voting numbers once every four years during the Presidential race, , what is called the mid-term years, voting drops off dramatically to as much as 30 % points or more. During those midterm elections in Nebraska we elect US Senators, US Congressman, Governor, a host of very important state and local offices yet only 30% of the voter even focus and the ignore voting. For America this is a signal, like a dead canary in a coal mine. Is Democracy dieing?

So, we do a small sample survey and interviews and the people tell us they are apathetic, too busy to register and or vote. Also, they tell us they didn't vote because the candidates did not raise to their expectations.

Race and poverty surfaces into the picture and lack of voting is borne out even in this small and random survey. Non-whites are not voting. Add to the non-voting, within our democracy we have elements that are working hard to impede the voting process. As was the case in our history, during the Jim Crow era. The old impediments of poll tax, grandfather clauses, literacy test, Gerrymandering, redistricting, intimidation, and violence...have been replaced by the new impediments of Voter ID, voter purging, poll closings, manipulative voting times, early voting games and our old "friends" Gerrymandering and redistricting. Fix these barriers or the canary will be reign.

Recommendations

This sample and all aspects of recent voting history point to a need for communities to recognized the message coming from low turnout. The message is coming from the entire community but is most intense in the poverty stricken and non-white communities. We need to continue to study the electorate in the context of low voter turnout and focus on measures that can improve, by attacking each of the reasons people are not voting. Focusing actions that are specific and directed to each of the reason like the ones brought out by this study.

I am the founder of an organization call *Black Votes Matter Institute of Community Engagement* that was organized for this very reason. The Agenda for this organization is included in the "References and notes" section of this paper.