



National Baptist Convention USA, INC & NAACP Announce Historic Voter Empowerment Partnership

(Nashville, TN) May 1, 2012. The National Baptist Convention USA, INC (NBCUSA) and the NAACP are delighted to announce this historic partnership for voter empowerment ahead of the 2012 elections. Our organizations will work together over the next several months to **register, educate, and activate** tens of thousands of voters across the country. This partnership is the first of its kind.

From voter registration to voter education to voter protection, this partnership with the NAACP will allow the NBCUSA to engage more than 10,000 of our congregations across the country in the electoral process. With attacks on voting rights – including cuts to Sunday voting – emerging in state after state, it is critical that we stand together to ensure that all of our voices are heard and that all of our votes count on Election Day.

In 2008, voters of color – particularly African American voters – turned out in record numbers to cast a ballot. However, in the last year, more than 30 states have introduced voter suppression laws that disproportionately impact African American voters. These laws include strict voter ID requirements, cuts to early/Sunday voting and restrictions on voter registration by 3rd party groups.

For the 2012 cycle, our two organizations will work to combat the attacks on voting rights and continue high participation trend through coordinated registration, education, and Get Out the Vote efforts conducted throughout our churches, conventions and sessions of NBCUSA.

Over the next several months, our Churches will receive training on voter registration through the NAACP. Additionally, The NAACP will distribute alerts on changes in voter laws at the local level; educate congregants on legislative matters that affect their communities; and ensure that church-goers turn out to the polls and are protected on Election Day.

Our involvement in voter empowerment this year is driven by the need to connect voter participation to our Christian moral obligations for sustaining good government. We

believe governments are institutions ordained by God for the good of humanity. Therefore, it is incumbent upon law-abiding Christians to participate in the voting process and to show our support for governance that enhances every citizen's quality of life.

TALKING POINTS

- Today, National Baptist Convention USA, INC (NBCUSA) and the NAACP announced an historic partnership for voter empowerment ahead of the 2012 elections.
- The organizations will work together over the next several months to register voter, educate voters and ensure voters are both participating and protected on Election Day
 - Churches will receive training through the NAACP on the VOTER ACTIVATION NETWORK (VAN).
 - The NAACP will distribute alerts on changes in voter laws at the state and local levels.
 - Congregants will also be educated on legislative matters that affect their state and local communities.
 - Churches will work with the NAACP local units to ensure voters turn out to the polls and are protected on Election Day
- In 2008, voters of color – particularly African American voters – turned out in record numbers to cast a ballot. For the 2012 cycle, the two organizations will work to continue that trend through coordinated registration, education, and Get OutThe Vote efforts conducted throughout the churches, conventions and sessions of NBCUSA.
- Voter empowerment is more important this year because of the most aggressive attack on voting rights we have seen in over 100 years. States are suppressing voter participation on every front – including cuts to Sunday voting. it is critical that we stand together to ensure all of our voices are heard and all of our votes count on Election Day.
 - 2011 34 states introduced voter suppression legislation., with 14 succeeding in passing the laws. In 2012, 30 states were at it again, with Pennsylvania passing a voter ID law and Virginia on the cusp
 - This coordinated attack disenfranchises those who demonstrated the most zealous participation in the 2008 Presidential Election: people of color, women, blue-collar workers, students, seniors, and naturalized immigrants.
 - The attack has emerged in several ways:
 - (1) Requiring voters to present government-issued photo ID before voting;
 - (2) Shortening or eliminating early voting periods;
 - (3) Eliminating Election Day voter registration;
 - (4) Rules which prevent formerly convicted people from readily reengaging the voting process;
 - (5) Rules which make it difficult, if not impossible, to engage in community-focused voter registration drives; and

(6) Efforts to require would-be voters to jump through extra hoops before they can be added to the rolls.

- Our involvement in voter empowerment this year is driven by the need to connect voter participation to our Christian moral obligations to sustaining good government. We believe governments are institutions ordained by God for the good of humanity. Therefore, it is incumbent upon law-abiding Christians to participate in the voting process and to show our support for governance that enhances citizens' quality of life.