

## Claiming Right to Wellness: Self-Efficacy and Voting

Written by BraVada Garrett-Akinsanya, Ph.D., LP  
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There is an old song that was frequently sung during the Civil Rights movement entitled: *Ain't Gon' Let Nobody Turn Me Around!*

" This belief is one based in the psychological principle of self-efficacy.

### *Self-efficacy*

is the belief that one is competent believes that he or she holds the power to affect situations. These beliefs strongly influencing no only the power a person actually has to face challenges, but it also influences the choices a person makes. The influence of self-efficacy has been especially studied with regard to behaviors affecting health and wellness. I believe that we all have a right to be well. Cornell West is quoted as saying: "Justice is what love looks like in public." If pain and suffering are the price for freedom and wellness, then the price for us has already been paid! We, as a group of American citizens must realize that as this election year approaches, we must seek with all our hearts what is due to us. We are not entitled by our own volition but by the blood, sweat and tears of those on whose shoulders we stand. Somebody died just trying to make it to the voting booth. Somebody was beaten, raped, robbed or forced to endure voter suppression tactics such as having to pay poll taxes that were so high that they amounted to a week's salary or more. On Tuesday, claim your right to wellness because those rights were endowed by your Creator and are inalienable and precious. Your VOTE and nothing more is the strongest way to claim that right. One day as I thought about our rights to wellness and I wrote this African Centered Wellness Bill of Rights. Please clip it out, put it in your pocketbook or your wallet and take it with you so that you never forget—especially on Election Day.

### **African-Centered Wellness Bill of Rights**

I have a right to **Spiritual Wellness** and to live my life in a way that honors that I am a child of the Creator.

I have a right to **Physical Wellness** and to have access to safety, food, housing and health care to keep my body strong.

I have a right to **Emotional Wellness** and to have a safe place to share my feelings and deal with anger, trauma, grief and fear.

I have a right to **Social Wellness** and to have a community that supports my dreams and my spirit so that I never have to suffer or celebrate alone.

I have a right to **Academic/Intellectual Wellness** and to have an opportunity to gain the practical and technical knowledge that I need to achieve my greatest potential as a human being.

I have a right to **Vocational Wellness** so that I can work in a job that brings me joy and fulfills my Divine Purpose on this earth.

I have a right to **Financial Wellness** and to be debt free, financially stable and independent so that I can take care of myself, my family and my community in the manner in which I desire.

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I have a right to **Cultural Wellness** and to be recognized for who I am and for where I come from so that my language, spirit, values and culture will be honored and nurtured as a unique strength that I possess.

I have a right to **Murua**. Respect. Balance. Wholeness. and Shared Power.

### **I have a right to Abundant Life.**

*BraVada Garrett-Akinsanya, Ph.D., L.P. is a Clinical Psychologist in private practice, serves as President of Brakins Consulting and Psychological Services, and is the Executive Director of the African American Child Wellness Institute. The mission of the African American Child Wellness Institute is to promote the psychological and spiritual liberation of children of African Descent by providing culturally specific mental health services and by developing culture-based, holistic wellness resources, research and practices. Dr. Garrett-Akinsanya warns that this column should in no way be construed as constituting a therapeutic relationship through counseling or advice. To forward a comment about this article or to make an appointment, please contact Dr. Garrett-Akinsanya by email @ [bravadaakinsanya@hotmail.com](mailto:bravadaakinsanya@hotmail.com) or by telephone at 763-522-0100.*