

Why we are marching on October 2nd

Written by Benjamin Todd Jealous
Wednesday, 08 September 2010 17:08



The past two years have been marked by major progress despite massive challenges, and a worrying resurgence of far-right activity, urging massive resistance to our momentum. We must keep pushing forward. We have come too far to let ourselves be turned back now.

Together with our allies in the civil and human rights community, the NAACP and our allies have advanced an agenda that has successfully increased rights for women at work, expanded healthcare coverage to tens of millions of Americans, cut the sentencing disparity between crack and powder by more than 80 percent, saved more that 150,000 teacher's jobs, and created more than 3 million more jobs throughout the economy.

At the same time, we know 8 million American jobs have been lost and not replaced, more than 2.5 million Americans have lost their homes and 5 million are at high risk of losing their homes, schools are closing at unprecedented rates, and Americans continue to be imprisoned at an alarming rate. In each case, people of color are generally worse off, and black Americans are bearing an especially high portion of the burden.

Despite having such evidence of what we can accomplish together, we have seen voter participation rates plummet--from Shelby County, Tennessee to Alameda County, California. This has been especially true amongst Black Americans.

Simultaneously, far-right extremists have found their way back into the nation's political discourse and helped reenergize a retrograde agenda that includes attacks on every pillar of our civil rights protections from the Voting Rights Act to the Civil Rights Act to the 14th Amendment itself.

Now is the time to get everyone off the sidelines and back on to the battlefield.

We must be bold and aggressive in turning this situation around and we cannot remain quiet in the face of such clear and imminent danger. Our faith tradition teaches us to run and not get weary, walk and not faint. We have made great progress and many strides, but we must press forward because our work is not simply for us-but for the future of our children and their children.

The history of the NAACP and our allies has always called on us, in the face of disparity, injustice, and rising hate to build big diverse coalitions that dream bold dreams and win big

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victories. Mobilization is our core value. Building big coalitions to fundamentally push America forward has always been our guiding principle.

We did it when we fought the rampant lynching of the south, when we desegregated the military, when we dismantled Jim Crow, passed the Voting Rights Act, and when we made health care reform a reality for 32 million Americans. All of these victories were won because we worked to build large and diverse coalitions, and dared to dream big victories. Today is no different.

This is why we are building a broad coalition of ONE NATION Working Together. A coalition that will work to bring America together and put America back to work-for its most precious resource- it's people.

Alaska will be there. Alabama will be there. New York will be there. North Carolina will be there. Texas will be there. California will be there. And we need you and your members there in unprecedented numbers too.

This effort is unifying the civil and human rights community, student activists, faith communities, immigration activists, small business leaders, and labor activists behind a common agenda for increasing opportunity in America, by:

- Increasing job creation
- Defending and enforcing civil rights protections, including ending racial profiling
- Increasing support for public education from pre-K to post-college
- Increasing access to credit for small businesses and bankruptcy protection for homeowners
- Ensuring every worker has a voice on the job
- And fixing our nation's broken immigration system.

Fighting for educational equality, equal protection under the law, good jobs, economic empowerment and labor rights all are central core values of our work in the past, present, and will continue to be the cornerstone surely in the future. Bringing attention to disparities is a key mandate of our constitution. This why we must mobilize. This is why we must hold on to victories and press forward with hope.

This mobilization on 10-2-10 will wake up our communities; make visible our unity, resolve, and majority; re-energize every activist who joins us; and change the national discourse in ways that will remind our neighbors that the 2010 election matters.

This mobilization will set the stage for turning out our neighbors on 11-2-10. It will pay dividends in expanding and empowering our base of volunteers for voter mobilization.

This mobilization will make real progress possible beyond 2010. It will ensure our agenda is empowered in the next Congress (as it was in this one) by allies who came together and made their demands known BEFORE the election.

This mobilization will celebrate our victories, celebrate the power of collective unity to promote

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change and call on our friends and allies from across this great nation to fight with us until our agenda is fully in line with reality---one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for ALL.

We and our allies are STILL the majority of voters in this country. The forces of hope that ushered in change has not disappeared, it has simply gone back to the couch. So let us wake our neighbors up, turn our neighbors out to the polls, and keep making real progress happen for our communities and all Americans.

One Nation. One Dream. One Nation Working Together For All Americans.

For information on how to get on the bus with us go to NAACP.org or onenationworkingtogether.org