

Justspeak: Presidential slam dunk—Obama wins electoral landslide re-election

Written by Dr. Irma McClaurin, Culture and Education Editor
Wednesday, 07 November 2012 11:53



For the second time in this 21st century Barack Hussein Obama, the first **Black** President of the United States of America, has made history. He won his re-election by an electoral landslide. He beat the odds that predicted he would win the electoral vote but not the popular vote, and thereby further polarizing America.

Well, they were wrong. This incumbent president has won reelection with 50% of the people claiming President Barack Hussein Obama as the person to lead them over the next four years. But the road ahead is a tough one.

We Need an ObamaDeal

America is in trouble, and it is not only the middle class who has suffered. We have always been a country of the "haves" and "have not's." The economic divide has deepened, and we are moving again to a more economically segregated country.

We need a series of government sponsored programs that help the people not the corporations or businesses. The government has bailed out and distributed support to these entities over the last four years, and it didn't work as effectively as it should have.

We now need bold government initiatives and some Presidential Executive Orders along the lines of Roosevelt's New Deal, which established the Social Security Act; the WPA (Works Progress Administration) that put artists, writers, and others to work; the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Farm Security Administration, and the United States Housing Authority. We need an ObamaDeal to carry us forward.

And Romney and Ryan must now walk the walk they pitched during the election. They must

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support the President in challenging businesses to step up job creation and rehire America's unemployed. The Republican losers must support increased taxes for the rich, and Romney should volunteer to pay more since he's had a government subsidy in the form of low taxes for most of his life.

Towards a Bold New America

It is time for the President to be bold. He cannot allow himself to continue to be bullied by the Republican dominated House. And the Democratic Senate must find its courage (or cajones) to prevent the President's initiatives from stalling. President Obama must take heed of the words of Frederick Douglass who reminds us that there is no progress without encountering challenges:

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning."

President Obama must take off the kid gloves and don the boxing gloves. He must agitate for his policies and legislation. He must expose the naysayers and obstructionists for what they are. He has nothing to lose except our respect and our hope.

Doing our Part as Citizens

We went to the polls. Hallelujah. We marked our ballots, and we casted our votes for whom we thought should remain the leader of the free world. But our job is not finished. As citizens we have a responsibility to hold all publicly elected officials accountable for representing us, whether we voted for them or not or whether they are of our political persuasion or not. Once elected—they belong to us.

We must challenge our political representatives when they stall the President. Blow up their emails and telephones with our concerns as citizens that by withholding their support of Presidential initiatives they have failed us, their constituencies.

We must also hold President Obama accountable as well. He must articulate a position on poverty reduction that acknowledges the persistence of an unequal and unjust system of inequality. He must advocate as boldly for the poor and disenfranchised as he has for the middle class and our educational system.

He must take on the issue of the growing prison industrial complex that perpetuates an unjust legal system because it needs prisoners to survive. I am not suggesting that those who do the crime should not do the time. I am advocating that the Attorney General must scrutinize the fact that the prison sentences of young Black and Latino men are vastly different than the sentences of young white men for the same crime.

We must question the integrity and ethics of ourselves as a country when we have made the creation of prisons a commodity. Are we so desperate? Whatever happened to the idea of

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rehabilitation? When did we drop that as an outcome of prison sentencing? We need greater interventions for our youths, and a good place to begin is to reinstitute some of the Poverty Programs created under President Lyndon B. Johnson: Job Corp, Vista, Head Start, Upward Bound, etc. They worked. They moved us forward.

Bearing Witness



"WITNESS": JAMES BALDWIN McClaurin-John 13

The late James Baldwin once commented that he wrote in order to bear witness to the persistence of racial inequality. His writings were a literary documentary of the trials and tribulations of living in a unjust society of racial inequality. Baldwin became an ex-patriot and resided in France, but returned to the United States periodically. I had the pleasure of knowing him during his time as a visiting professor in the early 1980s at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His wisdom and knowledge were tangible, and his idea of "bearing witness" has stayed with me over the last thirty years.

America, as a society, has made progress. But we are not there yet (meaning that for all our talk of multiculturalism, diversity, inclusion, and equality, we have not yet achieved a truly just and equal society). And so, it is our responsibility as citizens, as writers, as artists to continue to bear witness.

I bear witness to the re-election of President Barack Hussein Obama. I bear witness to the

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politics of divisiveness that has characterized the last four years of his terms. I bear witness to those who wish to reclaim whiteness as privilege. I bear witness to the reality of an ongoing struggle for freedom for all in these United States of America. I bear witness to the right of contemporary immigrants to have the same opportunities in this country as the European immigrants of the early 1900s. I bear witness to the continuing inequality for people of color, and increasingly the lack of tolerance for religious diversity. In the tradition of the late James Baldwin, I bear witness. I bear witness. I bear witness.

And, I promise to fight with my vote, with my words, with my mind, and with my heart against a return to an earlier America in which social inequality was the rule of law. We cannot go back.

President Obama, I move forward with you today. But I also will hold you accountable to fight the good fight not just for the middle class but for the impoverished, the economically, politically, and socially disenfranchised and for those who cannot fight for themselves because they are caught in the throes of simply surviving.

We have witnessed the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, but there is an ongoing social hurricane that continues to assail American society, and we need President Barack Hussein Obama's leadership and his strongest efforts to rebuild and recover the American dream and transform it into an American reality. Mitt Romney and his crew, including the erstwhile Donald Trump and smug Paul Ryan, should not be the only beneficiaries of America's wealth and privilege. We all want a piece of the democratic social contract embedded in our constitution to deliver life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—which should include marrying whom you damn well please and having a livable wage job.

President Obama, Lead us righteously. Lead us into that better world you promised upon your re-election:

"Tonight, in this election, you, the American people, reminded us that while our road has been hard, while our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up, we have fought our way back, and we know in our hearts that for the United States of America the best is yet to come. "

I will bear witness to your efforts and I will hold you accountable for promises kept and promises broken.

To Read More:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_D._Roosevelt t; accessed 11/7/12

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Deal ; accessed 11/7/12

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_on_Poverty ; accessed 11/7/12

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