

National Black Church Initiative

P.O. Box 65177

Washington, DC 20035

202-744-0184

dbc2002@yahoo.com

www.naltblackchurch.com

For immediate release

PRESS RELEASE

Contact Person

Rev. Anthony Evans

(202) 744-0184

NATIONAL BLACK CHURCH INITIATIVE ANNOUNCES ITS EARLY VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE FOR THE 2010 ELECTION

We are seeking to educate Black voters on the new political reality

Washington, DC – The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 34,000 churches across the United States, under its Civil Society Initiative announces its Early Voter Registration Drive as one way to send a message to elected officials that the suffering of African Americans in this country is deep and substantial. Our Civil Society program focuses on holding elected officials accountable for the policies of which they advocate that have a direct impact on the Black family. Through our Civil Society program we plan to hold elected officials accountable to moral and ethical standards that should be present in all people of society. We will also hold them accountable for what they deliver to our communities in the areas of housing, education, health, financial literacy, foreclosure education, small business assistance, putting a stop to gang violence and stopping police brutality and racial profiling, like was seen in the recent Cleveland serial killer case. That case clearly showed how law enforcement completely ignores racial communities, despite the fact that the federal government makes money for community police available. As NBCI noted in its press release on the subject it is unacceptable behavior and our elected officials must stop it.

We are seeking to change the political dynamics in the Black community. We can ill afford to give our votes to one party and not hold them accountable to deliver the goods and services required to sustain a healthy community. We are ready to try new ways of working with old partners, and also trying different strategies in working with new partners. We will not be bound by tradition, whether it is Democratic or Republican. We will be bound by what that individual can deliver to our community, and he or she will be held accountable every election because

NBCI will be distributing report cards on all officials throughout its network of Black churches. This is a part of a comprehensive strategy to educate Black voters on the issues and to form new alliances and coalitions so that the Black community can prosper even in times of economic difficulties.

This recession has taught us that we cannot rely on Democrats or Republicans to deliver the goods and service needed. We must educate our voters concerning a candidate's position, ethical character, ability to serve and ability to deliver on campaign promises. This is why we are moving to launch an early voter registration drive so that we may have significant time to educate African American voters on the real positions of a candidate. We will reject the notion that because someone endorsed a candidate from our community that all African Americans should support them. We will break away from traditional relationships that we have had in the past, like the gay community, in electing a particular political candidate. We will not be persuaded by the notion that to vote for a particular Republican or Democratic will be bad for the Black community. We will use our political report cards to educate our communities on who will be the candidate that will help the Black community build a civil society.

Here is how it would work:

1. NBCI ministers throughout our Faith Commands in Atlanta (SE), New York (NW), Dallas (SW), Oakland (West) and Chicago (MW) will meet with each candidate to talk about the five given areas and what they have done or will be doing in those areas.
2. We will create scorecards on each of the candidates and they will be distributed throughout the congressional districts by our churches. These scorecards will also be posted on our Website.
3. We will then allow the candidates to address our congregations 90 days before the election. We want to avoid the last minute rush toward trying to persuade the Black church to support a position.
4. We will hold multiple public forums that would allow our congregants and clergy to question the candidate.
5. 30 days before the election we will ban candidates from addressing us in churches. By that time many of our members will have all the information and will need time for reflection. We want to give the congregations a chance to think for themselves which candidate is right.
6. We will provide comprehensive transportation assistance for all of our congregants, especially seniors in battle line states, on the day of the election as part of our Get Out the Vote strategy. We hope to minimize the last minute influences on our members.
7. We plan to organize up to 50,000 church vans to deliver our members at the polls.

The scorecards that representatives will be evaluated on will use five major points in order to grade the candidate.

- Health – This will focus on their position and plans on subjects such as health disparity, healthcare, access to healthcare and more minority doctors, especially dentists.
- Education – This will focus on the massive dropout rates in inner cities, the availability for quality education for all those who want it and the issues of funding surrounding historically Black universities and colleges.
- Business – This will focus on how the candidate proposes to create news businesses in the community and how they plan to revamp the federal and state assistance to small businesses. Black businesses desperately need capital as they have been failing at a rate of 50 percent since the recession.
- Housing – What are some of the policies that the GOP is considering that will help African Americans recapture the level of homeownership that was achieved prior to the crisis.
- Crime – The candidates plan to deal with the high crime rate that infests the Black community and also issues around racial profiling, neglect of minority neighborhoods (i.e. the Cleveland serial killer).

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of NBCI, said, “I am enormously happy to announce this new initiative because it changes the political dynamics of our community, and does not allow us to throw all of our votes at one party. It will allow us to use those votes to promote the principles of our communities. So often we have voted for candidates that don’t represent our best interests or our principles, and they have taken us for granted year after year. I am happy to say that this will not be the case for the Black community anymore. Through our Early Voter Registration Drive the education of the voter will be our cornerstone of moving the African American community to vote for candidates who share our positions and goals. We will not vote for candidates based upon endorsements or party affiliations. We will use the criteria that we have set forth in this press release to judge each candidate. This is a brand new day in the African American community, and it is a long time coming!”

NBCI understand that the GOP is trying to pick up 41 seats in order to control the House of Representatives and that the DNC is trying to maintain that majority in the House. NBCI clearly recognizes that the Black vote can play a constructive role in the 2010 elections. African Americans are 5-12 percent of the vote in some closely contested districts and hold between 20 and 40 percent in other districts. Given the nature of the electorate cycle since 2000, 5-12 percent can make or break any candidate. This was proven in NJ, and other races around the country where winning was because of under 12 percent of the vote. The Black Church wants to use demonstrate in the current round of elections the importance of political education and issuing information on each of the candidates. By taking these actions we play a more productive role in general society and also within our own communities. The church is very concerned with protecting the integrity of the poor. Too often they are disregarded and ignored. This is why our voter registration will focus on keeping those who were first time voters in the Presidential election of Barack Obama voting. However, we will not play party politics here and simply want to keep voters voting on one side of the aisle or the other.

Rev. Paul Sewell of Mount Zion AME Zion Church and head of NBCI's Southern Faith Command said, "We have our marching orders and our process has begun here in the southern states. We have met with two members of party leadership already."

About NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 16,000 African-American and Latino member churches works to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare. In addition to our member churches, we have 18,000 sister churches. NBCI is a faith-based health organization dedicated to providing critical wellness information and preventive health screening to all of its members. The African-American community ranks first in eleven different health risk categories. NBCI's purpose is to partner with national health officials to provide health education, reduce racial health disparities, and increase access to quality healthcare.