

CBC chair Butterfield blasts Trump as 'unfit'

BY CASH MICHAELS
FOR THE CHRONICLE

On Tuesday, Aug. 2, President Obama raised eyebrows when, during a press conference at the White House, he bluntly told reporters that "the Republican nominee is unfit to serve as president."

But Obama wasn't the first black-elected official to make that declaration about controversial businessman Donald Trump.

North Carolina U.S. Rep. G. K. Butterfield (D-NC-1), who also serves as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), took the stage at the 2016 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia last week to tell conventioners, a national television audience, and Trump himself (if he was watching), "You are not qualified to serve as president of the United States."

"In my community,

you judge a man's heart by his words and deeds," Butterfield continued. "Donald J. Trump, your words have been hostile, been bigoted, and insulting. You've used every opportunity to talk about your wealth, to denigrate people who don't hold your views, even in your own party."

Trump has ignited numerous controversies since he announced his candidacy in July 2015, calling illegal Mexican immigrants "rapists and murderers," demanding that Muslims from countries that have had terrorist activity be temporarily banned, and recently, he criticized the Gold Star family of a deceased Muslim U.S. soldier who was killed in action in 2004, just because the father criticized Trump publicly at the Democratic convention.

While Republicans in Congress and elsewhere

have severely criticized the controversial businessman, few, if any GOP leaders have revoked their endorsement of the Republican nominee.



Butterfield

North Carolina Republican Gov. Pat McCrory has endorsed Trump, and appeared with him as recently as last week in Winston-Salem, along with other state GOP leaders.

Butterfield further charged that Trump would "use your status to alienate African-Americans" and other groups, and you

would use the office of president to take our great nation in the wrong direction."

"We know, we know that you have no plan to address issues directly affecting the African-American community, such as gun violence and voting rights, historically black colleges and universities, raising the minimum wage and addressing persistent poverty," Butterfield continued.

Butterfield's public rebuke of the Republican nominee carries weight because the black Democratic congressman says he is committed to doing everything he can to ensure that Trump does not win North Carolina in November.

The Tar Heel State is considered a prime battleground state that could go either for Trump or his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. In 2008, Barack Obama won the state on his

way to the presidency, but four years later, Republican nominee Mitt Romney won North Carolina in his failed attempt to unseat President Obama. According to many political analysts, if Trump is to have any real chance of tallying the needed 270 electoral college votes to win, he needs North Carolina's 15 electoral votes in his win column.

Both Trump and Clinton have made numerous campaign stops to the state, and many more are expected. Their vice-presidential running mates - Republican Indiana Gov. Mike Pence and Democrat U.S. Senator from Virginia Tim Kaine - are also scheduling appearances across the state. Pence will be in Raleigh today (Thursday, Aug. 4) and Kaine was in Greensboro on Wednesday.

So there was very little surprise when Butterfield,

after stating that he felt Donald Trump was "unfit to be president," began to spell out the reasons why at the convention.

"Instead of putting forth details to address income equality and opportunity for everyday Americans, you use your celebrity status to paint a picture of gloom and doom," Butterfield charged.

"You want to know why your polling numbers are so dismal among African-Americans?" Butterfield continued, referencing recent NBC/Wall Street Journal polls that show Trump getting zero support from blacks in Ohio and Pennsylvania. "We know you have gotten rich through your business, but we also know your wealth has come at the expense of other people."

Street renamed to honor Earline Parmon

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

The corner of Bates Drive and Carver School Road has been renamed to honor former N.C. lawmaker and social justice warrior Earline Parmon.

The street named to honor Parmon last month is across the street from Carver High School. American flags fly under the sign that now reads "Honorary Earline Parmon Drive."

Parmon, who passed away following a brief ill-

ness earlier this year, was elected to the senate in 2012 after serving in the N.C. house for 10 years. Before that, she served 12 years on the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners.

Parmon was an educator as well. She founded the now defunct LIFT Academy, a charter school that is credited with graduating youth who had been written off by the public school system.

Just before her untimely passing, Parmon worked as the outreach director for

U.S. Rep. Alma Adams, who represents the 12th District, which currently includes parts of Forsyth and Guilford counties. Adams said Parmon had a special gift of connecting with people.

"She was honest, courageous, straight-forward and compassionate. She was committed to the people and concerned about their welfare," said Adams. "Earline Parmon gave a voice to the voice-less. We are all much better as a result."

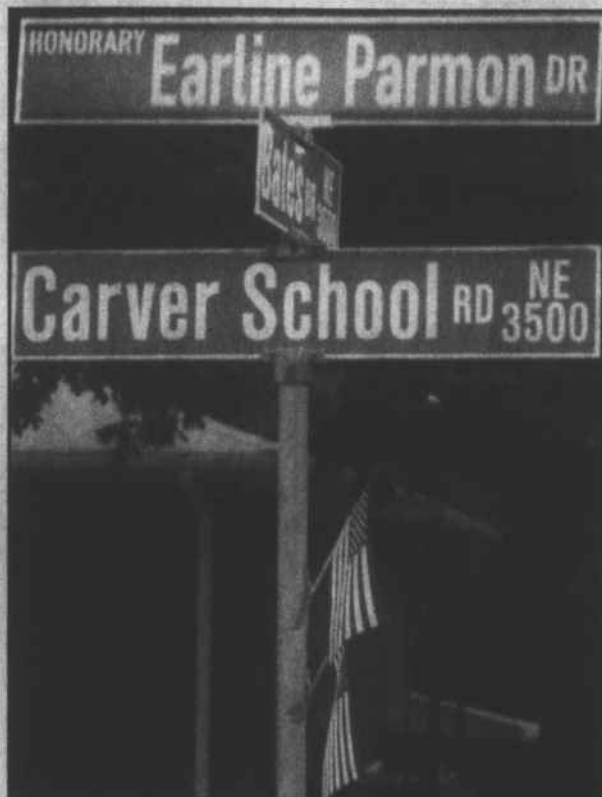


Photo by Tevin Stinson

In honor of Forsyth County's first black senator, the corner of Carver School Road and Bates Drive, located in northeastern Winston-Salem, has been renamed Earline Parmon Drive. Parmon died earlier this year following a brief illness.

ID

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"The Court's decision reinforces that race-based decision-making in the electoral system will not stand," said Penda D. Hair, lead attorney for the NC NAACP. "We know that voters of color rely most heavily on these voting measures, and that, without this decision, they would have borne the brunt of the burden this November."

Unless a timely stay on the ruling is granted by the entire U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals before the Nov. 8 general elections (something Gov. Pat McCrory and Republican leaders have vowed to seek, but legal experts say isn't likely), then voters will have their early voting period restored to 17 days prior to Election Day instead of the current 10 days; maintain same-day registration and out-of-precinct provisional balloting; reinstate voting pre-registration for 16- and 17-year-olds; and most importantly, not have to show a government-issued photo ID in order to vote.

For Ellison, this means county Democrats no longer have to educate voters at rallies or by phone banks about making sure they have some form of official government-issued ID, or legal excuse for not having one. They can continue their door-to-door canvassing of neighborhoods for candidates, as they have since June.

"It's a great relief to know that our [legal] system does work," Ellison said, noting that at least six laws by the Republican-led General Assembly have been found unconstitutional by the courts since the GOP takeover in 2011.

"The pressure valve has been released," Ellison added, also noting that in case there was no positive ruling before November, his county party was instructing voters to make sure their voter registration was up-to-date, and to even use the absentee-balloting process in order to lessen the prospect of long lines at

the polls.

Now, not only should excessive long lines be eliminated, but voters can still have their ballots counted, even if they go to the wrong precinct.

But, like other activists who've worked hard to overturn voter ID, Sutton is now waiting to see how the Forsyth County Board of Elections (BOE) is going to proceed. How will it implement the changes brought about by the ruling in terms of early voting and same-day registration?

"We're awaiting the Board of Elections meeting so that we can have some input, as usual, into early voting. So I want to get that over with first, she says."

The problem is there is no word as to when that Forsyth BOE meeting will take place because, as of press time Tuesday, there has been no further instructions from the state Board of Elections, which effectively determines policy for all 100 county BOE's across the state.

"We need to, and are awaiting direction from the N.C. State Board of Elections and the executive director," confirmed Gary Sims, director of the Wake County Board of Elections, because "whatever action does or does not happen, needs to come from their guidance."

Ironically, all local BOEs were required to have their early voting sites locked in by July 29, the same day the federal ruling came down.

Sims added that while the 17-day early voting period is reinstated, the longer hours of operation per early voting location currently in force could be relaxed since the period is being extended from 10 to 17 days. But exactly what to do with that seven-day extension would be up to local county BOE boards, like Forsyth.

One of the other challenges Forsyth and other local BOEs face is that they are already locked into budgets prior to the July 29 ruling. That reality will also constrain how

quickly and adequately local BOE's will be able to comply. Having only one early voting site open, namely the local BOE office itself and no satellite sites for the seven-day extension, is a possibility.

Prior to the July 29 ruling, Sutton had been distributing materials educating voters about the photo ID requirement, which went into effect this year during the March and June primaries.

"Now we have to go back and educate people that they do not need the photo ID," she added, saying that now the community must also be clear that not all of the voter ID law was knocked down. They will still be faced with no straight-ticket balloting, meaning that instead of voting for all candidates of a single party with just one mark, voters will have to individually mark, race by race, which candidates they choose.

Critics of the 2013 law have always said that voters may not be aware of all of the candidates, especially during a presidential election year, and thus, only vote for a few of the major offices, leaving judicial or local races blank.

Another element of the 2013 "Monster Voting Law" left untouched is the provision that allows anyone from anywhere in the state to confront any voter in line at a precinct, and challenge their right to vote.

That means the challenged voter is required by law to leave the line, and report to the precinct judge's table with the challenger to answer questions about their voting qualifications.

"Those are still current challenges that we have," Ellison said. "So we have to have a strong voter protection plan in force - observers making sure that people are educated, and that they are not intimidated at the polls."



CINEMA UNDER THE STARS

Fridays in August



- August 5 | The Goonies
- August 12 | Labyrinth
- August 19 | Aladdin
- August 26 | Field of Dreams

\$5/person; \$20/car; RAH Passholders free
Gates open at 7:30 p.m. for pre-film activities, films shown at dark. Beer and wine are available for purchase and picnicking is welcomed. In case of rain, films are shown in the auditorium. Co-presented by the School of Filmmaking at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

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