

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Celebrating
41
Years
of
Community Journalism

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Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

'Keep your eyes on prize. Hold on.'

The serial 1987 PBS documentary "Eyes on the Prize" shows the hardships and victories black Americans endured in the 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights Movement. The producers used the moving folk song-turned-civil rights song "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize."

In the documentary, one verse goes like this: "You know the one thing we did right was the day we started to fight. Keep your eyes on the prize. Hold on."

It came to mind last week. African-Americans and anyone who loves freedom should be celebrating in light of the speech by the Rev. Dr. William Barber II at the Democratic National Convention on Thursday, July 28, and the ruling Friday by the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals that declared that the 2013 N.C. voting law violated the Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act by targeting black voters "with almost surgical precision."

Barber, a preacher who is president of the N.C. NAACP, brought his firebrand speaking style to the convention as a regular citizen, since the NAACP is non-partisan. The Washington Post covered Barber's speech. It said, "It was a call to action that, in Barber's view, serves this cause — an articulation of a liberal and patriotic philosophy with what Barber said was the moral force to shock and resuscitate the heart of the nation." (To see the video of his speech, go to YouTube.com and search for "William J. Barber, II.")

The Associated Press reported that a three-judge panel of the federal appeals court in Raleigh ruled that the N.C. voting law illegally targeted minorities with tougher ballot access rules, such as requiring photo identification to vote.

The law, passed two years after Republicans took control of the state legislature for the first time in a century, sought to entrench GOP politicians in power, the court panel said. It also was passed after the U.S. Supreme Court declared "times have changed" so the oversight section of the U.S. Voting Rights Act was no longer needed.

We need to keep our eyes on the prize, which is a new North Carolina General Assembly. We can't stop now. Vote on Nov. 8 for the people who will keep the momentum going and not turn back the clock. "Keep your eyes on the prize. Hold on."

GUEST EDITORIAL

More work needed on economy

The governor and many of his cabinet members are trumpeting this state's economic resurgence as they head down the trail into what will be a hard-fought 2016 election.

And there's no doubt that some of our numbers are good: Unemployment is falling steadily, even as jobs are created by new and expanding businesses and industries.

But what they're not saying is important too: Most of that economic growth is limited to the Triangle and Charlotte, and growth outside those thriving centers is more anemic.

N.C. State University economist Mike Walden has long been the go-to guy for analysis of this state's economic trends. He sends out twice-yearly reports on our economy that contain more precision and less politics than we get from elected leaders. His report earlier last month points out some worrisome problems.

Walden says overall economic growth is actually pretty slow. From 2002 to 2006, he says, our production of goods and services grew an average of 3.4 percent a year. Since the recession, from 2010 to 2015, the growth has been less than half that — 1.3 percent.

Across the nation, the economist says, middle-income jobs are going away — as they did here long ago, when the textile industry fled overseas. Job expansion is occurring in the low-paying service industries and in the lucrative "analytical and problem-solving occupations." That latter kind of job isn't growing much in North Carolina, save around the Triangle and Charlotte.

Unfortunately, we're the poster child for a troublesome national trend. As Walden put it, "North Carolina can be viewed as 'ground zero' for the seismic shifts that are happening in the economy."

How does this state combat those shifts? It can start by making sure advanced technology is available across the state. And it can offer better support to the arts, culture and especially to education at every level, because that's how we attract the high-paying industries we want, and how we produce the workers those industries need.

We used to do that in North Carolina. Time to get back to it.

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

N.C. elections board says it's reverting to old law, barring change on appeal

To the Editor:

We encourage all voters to stay informed of developments over the coming weeks.

Our agency is carefully reviewing today's [July 29] decision from the Fourth Circuit. Absent alternative guidance from the courts, voters will not be asked to show photo identification this election. Early voting will run Oct. 20 through Nov. 5, and same-day registration will be available at early voting sites.

If voters do not appear at their assigned precinct within their county, their vote will still count for all eligible contests.



However, to avoid voting a provisional ballot, we encourage voters to appear at their properly-assigned precinct on Election Day.

Counsel for the state are reviewing options on appeal. Regardless of the outcome, our agency will continue to educate voters and prepare elections officials ahead of November.

State Board of Elections
Executive Director
Kim Westbrook Strach
Raleigh

Hillary Clinton is the best person to lead our country

To the Editor:

Hillary Clinton is the best person to lead our country forward because she believes Americans are stronger together. I've served the people of



Clinton

Winston-Salem in different roles and, since 1977, as a member of the Winston-Salem City Council.

I have dedicated my life to making our city a better — a place to raise a family, where we grow our economy together, where men and women are treated equally in the workplace and where we lift each other up — not drive one another apart.

Winston-Salem is a place that thrives on working together, on appreciating the uniqueness of our community, on realizing that our diversity is a source of strength to be proud of, and on ensuring that the American Dream is available to people in every ZIP code. These are qualities that Hillary Clinton represents, especially because her central goal is to build an economy that works for all people, and not just those at the top.

In November, I will be honored to cast my vote for the first woman to be nominated by a major political party in the United States, and to stand up for an America that is stronger together, and where the families of our country come first."

Winston-Salem Mayor
Pro Tempore Vivian Burke

House Democrats vow to protect citizens' voting rights in N.C.

To the Editor:

Republicans passed the most oppressive Voter ID law and limited citizens' voting right. It was a partisan act that illegally blocked access to the polls in order to gain and retain power illegally.

In response, we filed H-239 to restore early voting days and H-240 to allow N.C. college ID to meet the voter ID requirement, but to no avail as Republicans simply refused to hear those bills.

We had to go to court to restore the most basic Constitutional right of citizens — the right to vote. It is appalling that citizens were intentionally deprived of their right to vote and, unfortunately, we can never restore those lost votes — but we will zealously pursue and continue to protect the unfettered right to vote going forward. The challenge now is to provide the resources to fully inform the public. It is a proven fact that when citizens vote, citizens win.

Rep. Larry D. Hall
N.C. House Democratic Leader
Raleigh

Note: The House Democratic Caucus has been, and continues to be, active in the effort to protect voting rights for everyone, it says.

Working people can hold their elected officials accountable this November

To the Editor:

When conservative lawmakers in North Carolina took a scalpel to the voting rights of African-Americans in 2013, Working America members pushed back through collective action with petitions and rallies. Today's [July 29] ruling is a huge victory for North Carolina's working families and helps ensure voters in our state, regardless of race, have access to free and fair elections.

This decision stops injustice in its tracks. Despite state lawmakers' best efforts, today's decision removes another barrier to the ballot box and allows working people to hold their elected officials accountable by electing pro-working families candidates this November.

Carolyn Smith, Director
Working America-North
Carolina State
Greensboro

Republicans vow to appeal ruling to U.S. high court

To the Editor:

Since today's [July 29] decision by three partisan Democrats ignores legal precedent, ignores the fact that other federal courts have used North Carolina's law as a model, and ignores the fact that a majority of other states have similar protections in place, we can only wonder if the intent is to reopen the door for voter fraud, potentially allowing fellow Democrat politicians like Hillary Clinton and Roy Cooper to steal the election.

We will obviously be appealing



this politically-motivated decision to the Supreme Court.

Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham)
House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland)
Raleigh