

Kaine hails N.C. victory against voter ID

BY CASH MICHAELS
FOR THE CHRONICLE

If there was any doubt about the importance of North Carolina as a battleground state in the upcoming presidential election, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) has come here to put all doubts to rest.

Not only has the state changed demographically since the 2012 presidential contest that saw President Barack Obama lose by just 100,000 votes to Republican challenger Mitt Romney, but Senator Kaine, the vice presidential running mate with Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, made it very clear recently in an exclusive interview that the campaign is paying very close attention to the recent U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling striking down North Carolina's voter photo identification law, which the three-judge panel made clear in its ruling was geared by GOP lawmakers to suppress the African-American vote.

Republican Gov. Pat McCrory has petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to stay the appellate ruling and allow voter ID to be reinstated for the November general elections. During their many visits to the state, both GOP presidential candidate

Donald Trump and his running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence (who as in Winston-Salem Tuesday) have come out in favor of voter ID.

Right after the appellate ruling, Sen. Kaine, who visited Asheville, Fayetteville and Greensboro earlier this month, said given his 17-year experience as a civil



rights attorney in Virginia and year as a Jesuit missionary under the military

dictatorship in Honduras, he was very sensitive to the voting rights struggles of African-Americans in North Carolina. During the interview, it was clear Kaine has been following North Carolina's voter ID case very closely.

"The thing that is very disturbing in North Carolina and in many states is this concerted effort, especially since President Obama was elected in 2008, to really curtail [black voter] participation, whether it's erecting new challenges with respect to IDs, or making it harder to register [to vote], reducing early voting ...

when you see these things happen, it's tragic."

Sen. Kaine, who has litigated voting rights cases, was impressed with the appellate court's unusual North Carolina ruling.

"When you get a court to declare it's striking down voting restrictions because there was an intentional effort "with surgical precision" to put up barriers [to voting] in front of African-Americans, that is such a rare factual finding by a court. In this case, they made a finding that it was intentional discrimination."

Sen. Kaine said he's been telling North Carolina audiences "... if anybody tells you your vote doesn't matter, you should tell them, 'It sure matters to the other side.' A lot of folks are working hard to make it harder for you to vote. Please value your own vote as much as somebody else values trying to stop you."

When asked why he feels there is a clear choice between Clinton/Kaine versus Trump/Pence, Sen. Kaine says he boils it down to three questions - 1) In terms of the economy, do Americans want a "You're hired president" or a "You're fired president" when it comes to who has the better plan to grow the economy and

create 300,000 more jobs in North Carolina; 2) On the international front, "Do you want a trash-talker or bridge-builder?" Clinton, as a former Secretary of State and diplomat, already knows how to build alliances with foreign leaders.

"Trump is trash-talking everybody but [Russian Pres. Vladimir] Putin," Sen. Kaine maintained, noting the only foreign leader the Republican president speaks highly of.

Finally, Kaine says character is also a deciding factor between Trump and Clinton. "Do you want a 'kids-and-family-first president,' or a 'me first president?'" Kaine asks rhetorically, noting that Clinton has been involved with children and family issues long before she entered public life, while during his business career, Donald Trump has rarely identified himself with a family cause or issue.

The first of three presidential debates is Monday, Sept. 26, followed on Tuesday, Oct. 4, by the only vice-presidential debate between Sen. Kaine and Gov. Pence. Each debate is scheduled to be carried live by the four major broadcast networks, PBS, C-SPAN and the three major cable news outlets.

Democrats

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form. He mentioned, "During their visit to Winston-Salem in July, trade and offshoring jobs was the central theme, but we all know where Donald Trump has his own brand-named goods manufactured and it's not in America."

But he didn't stop there. Besse noted since being named governor, Pence has given incentive payments to companies who have closed plants in Indiana to move their operations overseas.

"That's not the way to make America a better place," he said. "Hillary has a plan to build infrastructure in our nation."

According to Besse, Clinton's 100-Day Job Plan would help the North Carolina economy create over 300,000 new jobs, while Trump's plan would cost the state 100,000 jobs, plus a deep recession.

While sporting an "H" pendant in support of the Clinton campaign, Adams also discussed Clinton's economic plan. She said,

"Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine are working to build an economy that works for everyone and not just those at the top.

"Hillary has an economic plan that puts working families first by breaking down barriers for people from all walks of life," she continued, "by making crucial investments in infrastructure, manufacturing, research technology, clean energy and small businesses."

Next, Adams discussed Clinton's track record for putting children first. She noted, as First Lady she helped pass the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), which provides health care for eight million children across the country.

"As President, she will fight to expand health care options for rural North Carolinians by protecting the Affordable Care Act, doubling funds for primary care services, and supporting innovation in medicine," Adams said.

While discussing the Trump campaign, Adams said the people of North

Carolina deserve better than Donald Trump. She said he has made his campaign about tearing down people, and tearing them apart.

"Along the way, all of his proposals show that he has no idea of how to do this job," she said. "We need the next president to bring us together and put families first. We can't afford a loose cannon in the White House who will divide people and also hurt our economy as well as our national security."

When asked about Trump's recent statements that minority voters don't have anything to lose and should vote for him, Adams said, "We have everything to lose.

"African-Americans and people of color are still struggling and coming into our own. So we have to realize that with every presidential election and every off-year election, there is an opportunity to improve our quality of life," Adams noted.

"Everything we do in this country is political. When we don't vote, what we see is what we have



On Tuesday, Aug. 30, City Council Members Dan Besse and D.D. Adams held a press conference to discuss why Donald Trump is the wrong choice for voters in North Carolina.



Photo by Todd Luck

A crowd filled most of the ballroom at the Millennium Center to hear Donald Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, on Tuesday, Aug. 30.

Pence

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but still had several local politicians speak before he came out. Forsyth school board member Lida Calvert-Hayes talked about starting her own business, S&L Painting and Decorating, and touted Trump's business background as one that America needs.

"It's time for a change and we are the only people who can make that change," she said.

Attorney general candidate Buck Newton and 13th district U.S. House candidate Ted Budd spoke. The crowd booted mentions of letting more Syrian refugees fleeing from ISIS into the country, and broke out into chants of "lock her up," referring to presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

"Well, if I can find some North Carolina laws she violated, I'll do my best," Newton told the crowd.

Though polls show Trump is disliked by the majority of voters and trail-

ing Clinton nationally, Pence said that the Republican Party is united behind him.

"Now this movement is united, this party is uniting and we're going to make Donald Trump the next president," said Pence.

Pence described Trump as "something new and different" that voters want. He said Trump was a "leader" and "truth teller." Trump has made continuous headlines for his controversial statements. Among his latest was a tweet that said the killing of NBA superstar Dwyane Wade's cousin illustrated his arguments on why African-Americans will vote for him.

Pence attacked Clinton, accusing her of leaving Americans to die in the Benghazi terrorist attacks. Numerous Congressional investigations into the attacks did not fault her for the casualties. He also accused her of having a "pay to play" scheme as secretary of state with Clinton Foundation donors getting access to the State Department, which the Clinton campaign has denied.

He promised Trump would repeal all of President Barack Obama's executive orders, sign a moratorium on any new "red tape" on businesses, lower taxes "across the board" for businesses and individuals, and exploit all domestic energy resources, especially coal.

Pence made little specific outreach to minorities while speaking to the mostly white crowd. He did say that Trump has been reaching out to all Americans and will make the country great again for everyone. He accused Democrats of being racially divisive. A Public Policy Poll released on Tuesday showed that Clinton has 73 percent support among African-Americans and Latinos, while Trump only has nine percent.

Pence promised to return to North Carolina many times before Election Day.

"Make no mistake about it, North Carolina will loom large in the destiny of this nation," said Pence.

The Case for a New Forsyth County Courthouse

With the safety of the judiciary and the public at the forefront of our concerns, the Forsyth County Bar Association has partnered with judges, attorneys, clerks, and law enforcement to demonstrate the pressing need for a new, standalone, modern, secure, and user-friendly courthouse.

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