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A Voteless People is a Hopeless People

Voting advocates fear impact of Va. voter ID law

By Frederic J. Frommer
WASHINGTON (AP)
Voting rights groups are
concerned that Virginia's new

voter ID law, which will
require people to show a
photo ID to vote, will dis-
enfranchise some in next

month's midterm elections.
"There are so many cases
where voters who have very
right to vote

potentially can be turned
away," said Anne Sterling,
president of the League of
Women Voters of Virginia.
She said rural, poor and
elderly voters could face a
harder burden.

It's an issue in states
across the U.S., with the
Supreme Court last week-
end allowing Texas to use
its strict voter ID law, over
the vehement objection of
three justices. The Texas
law, unlike Virginia's,
doesn't allow college stu-
dent IDs as a form of iden-
tification.

Defenders of Virginia's
law say it provides ample
opportunities for people
who don't have photo IDs
to get them in time to vote.
And opponents such as the
League of Women Voters
are working to help people
obtain IDs ahead of the
election.

Just how many voters
lack an acceptable ID is
difficult to say. The State
Board of Elections last
month said that just un-
der 200,000 active voters
in the state lack a Depart-
ment of Motor Vehicles-
issued photo ID, the most
common form of ID that
voters are expected to use
at the ballot box. But the
elections board stressed
that there are several other
types of IDs that voters can
use, such as U.S. passports.

Stephen J. Farnsworth, a
political science professor
at the University of Mary
Washington in Fredericks-
burg, said the law will have
a disproportionate impact
on lower-income and Afri-
can-American voters. The
law "is likely to mean tens
of thousands of people are
no longer going to possess
the documentation to be
able to vote."

"Those people who will find
it most difficult to participate
are more likely to vote Demo-
cratic," he said. But he didn't expect any
of Virginia's races to be close
enough for the new law to make
a difference in the outcome.

Virginia State Sen. Mark
D. Obenshain, a Harrisonburg
Republican who sponsored the
state's voter ID law, said he
didn't expect a drop-off in any
group of voters, except perhaps
fraudulent voters.

Obenshain cited a 2005 bi-
partisan Commission on Federal
Election Reform, chaired by for-
mer President Jimmy Carter and
former Secretary of State James
Baker, which called for states to
require voters to present photo
IDs and offer free photo IDs to
those who don't have driver's
licenses.

"The most compelling argu-
ment for a voter ID law in Vir-
ginia is it buttresses voter con-
fidence," he said.



The winner of the Hayti Heritage Center Amateur Night Auditions announced its winner. Ms. Nedra Kay is the winner for season 1 of Amateur Night at the Hayti. She will be going up to world famous Apollo and appearing at the iconic show on February 18th of 2015. (Photo Courtesy of Hayti Heritage Center)

Obama pitches for votes on black radio

By Nedra Pickler

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Barack Obama is turning to black radio listeners to plead for midterm votes, a targeted approach to drum up Democratic support at a time when many candidates don't want him around in person.

African-American turnout will be vital to Democrats' hopes in states such as Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and North Carolina that will help determine control of the Senate. And Obama remains beloved among black voters even if Democratic candidates in those races are running away from him amid the president's low overall approval ratings.

"This isn't about my feelings being hurt," Obama told the Rev. Al Sharpton in one of seven nationally syndicated interviews he's conducted the past week. "These are folks who are strong allies and supporters of me. I tell them, I said, 'You do what you need to do to win. I will be responsible for making sure that our voters turn out.'"

That's a big responsibility to take on in a midterm. Census figures show that in recent congressional election years, around 4 in 10 black adults turn out to vote. In recent presidential election years, a majority of black adults reported voting, including more than 6 in 10 in 2008 and 2012. White voters traditionally voted in larger percentages than blacks in both midterm and presidential elections, but in the past two presidential elections black turnout was higher - which Obama pointed out was what helped put him in office.

"We do not vote unfortunately in midterm elections as high a rate as we do during presidential elections," Obama explained on the Rickey Smiley Morning Show, hosted by a comedian known for his prank phone calls. "I'll bet there are whole bunch of folks listening to your show who may not even know that there's an election going on. I need everybody to go vote."

An Associated Press-GfK poll out Tuesday found Obama has an 85 percent approval rating among black voters, versus 34 percent of whites. The White House said the president and first lady Michelle Obama plan to do more radio interviews aimed at black listeners in the final two weeks of the campaign. Obama also has been doing web videos, mailings and recorded calls targeted at black voters in key races, although the White House declined to reveal which candidates are requesting them.

The efforts indicate that even if Democratic candidates think Obama would do more harm than good by appearing at a rally, they are eager to have his help reaching black voters.

The Democratic National Committee is using Obama's popularity among blacks in a seven-figure advertising campaign targeted at minorities and young voters. An ad targeted for black newspapers reads "GET HIS BACK" in large letters over a picture of Obama and urges readers to stand with the president by voting for Democrats. In a DNC commercial airing on radio stations popular among black listeners, an Obama speech touting his economic agenda is set to jazz and ends with a voiceover urging listeners "to stand up for our community and vote Nov. 4."

Democratic strategist Donna Brazile said a challenge for Democrats this election is that many of the most hard-fought races are in Republican-leaning states where Obama didn't compete in 2008 or 2012, so his campaign did not engage core voters.



Action NC, Durham Association of Educators, Durham People's Alliance, Durham PTA Council, and Greenpeace Plan the DURHAM VOTES EARLY! March

On October 25th, the members of a coalition of educators' and concerned citizens' groups reproduced Durham for Obama's 2012 March to the Polls in the downtown Durham. The event provides an opportunity for educators and students to make their voices heard while marching voters directly to the brand new Board of Elections site at 201 N. Roxboro Rd. This building was formally the Old Durham County Judicial Annex Bldg, on the corner of Roxboro and Parrish Streets. As of October 23rd, it will be a new Early Voting site.

After listening to inspiring words from students and educators alike, attendees will enjoy marching through downtown along with Southern Durham High's marching band, A.K.A The Spartan Legion. They performed "Happy" the mash hit tune of Pharrell Williams' first 24 hour music video from the soundtrack of the smash motion picture hit, *DESPICABLE ME 2*.

Smithsonian aims to raise \$1.5B to improve museums

By Brett Zongker

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Smithsonian Institution has embarked on a major campaign to raise \$1.5 billion and increase private support for the world's largest museum and research complex to fund programs in history, science, art and culture.

The Smithsonian's Board of Regents announced the goal Monday and revealed more than \$1 billion already has been raised in a quiet phase since October 2011. This is the first institution-wide fundraising effort and the largest campaign in history for any cultural institution, Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough said. The campaign will continue through 2017.

Several large gifts were previously announced for large projects. David H. Koch donated \$35 million for a major renovation of the Smithsonian's dinosaur hall. Boeing is giving \$30 million to overhaul the central exhibition showing the milestones of flight at the National Air and Space Museum. Oprah Winfrey donated \$13 million to build a new National Museum of African American History and Culture.

"Our campaign is about creating a larger base of support for the Smithsonian from people across the nation," Clough said, adding that 60,000 people have already made contributions to the campaign, gifts both large and small.

Former President George W. Bush and Laura Bush and former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton are honorary co-chairs of the campaign. Additional supporters include Ralph Lauren, George Lucas, actress Eva Longoria, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, former Google CEO Eric Schmidt and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The Smithsonian historically received federal taxpayer funding for about 70 percent of its annual budget for staff salaries and building maintenance, but that amount has declined to about 60 percent. The complex still needs about \$100 million a year for maintenance, officials said, though federal appropriations have fallen below that mark. Most exhibits and programs are privately funded.

The public-private funding model dates to the Smithsonian's founding in 1846, when a British scientist's bequest established the institution. Now the Smithsonian includes 19 museums in Washington and New York City, the National Zoo and nine research facilities around the world.

Washington philanthropist David Rubenstein is co-chairman of the fundraising effort. He serves on the Smithsonian board and has made major gifts to the Kennedy Center, numerous historic sites and to restore the Washington Monument.