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Black clergy made last second push to get out the vote

By Jesse J. Holland

WASHINGTON (AP) - Black clergy are taking to the pulpits and the streets nationwide this weekend in hopes of energizing black voters ahead of Election Day, aiming to make a difference in the presidential contest between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

Many expect a drop in black voter participation this year, primarily because Barack Obama, the nation's first African-American president, is not on the ballot. His historic candidacy in 2008 and re-election in 2012 helped to fuel record black turnout.

"Voting, for us, is both a spiritual and a political issue," said Rev. William Barber, president of the North Carolina NAACP and architect of the Moral Monday Movement in North Carolina. Barber will be one of several clergy at the historic Riverside Church in New York City Nov. 6 for a revival service to encourage voting on Nov. 8.

In battleground states like Florida, Ohio and North Carolina, other black clergy are extending "Souls to the Polls" efforts for a second weekend to get black churchgoers to cast ballots early or on Election Day. Souls to the Polls events are based around black churches that encourage their parishioners to vote - although they cannot tell them who to support - and try to make it easier for elderly, busy

The number of African-American voters has increased steadily: 12.9 million in 2000, 14 million in 2004, 16 million in 2008 and 17.8 million in 2012. In the last presidential election year, blacks for the first time voted at a higher rate, 66.2 percent, than did whites, with a rate of 64.1 percent, or Asian-Americans or Hispanics, with rates of about 48 percent each.

No one expects those numbers for blacks this time around, said Derrick L. McRae, pastor of The Experience Christian Center in Orlando, Florida. "But I'm pretty confident we're going to show up.'

Obama will travel to Florida on Nov. 6 to campaign for Clinton and encourage get-out-thevote efforts. Clinton and Trump will be crisscrossing the country, too, with the Democrat in Michigan as well as Pennsylvania and

Trump camp calls KKK newspaper 'repulsive' after praise

WASHINGTON (AP) - Donald Trump's campaign is firmly rejecting the embrace of a Ku Klux Klan-affiliated newspaper.

The latest issue of The Crusader used Trump's "Make America Great Again" campaign slogan as its headline for an editorial praising the catchphrase and the Republican presidential candidate. The newspaper bills itself as "The Premier Voice of the White Resistance.

The newspaper didn't specifically call for readers to vote for

In a statement, the Trump campaign calls the newspaper "repulsive." It said its "views do not represent the tens of millions of Americans who are uniting behind our campaign."

Trump had been criticized earlier in the campaign for failing to immediately denounce the endorsement of David Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Get-out-the-vote efforts are underway outside the churches as well, in vote-rich places like Ohio, where Clinton will appear this weekend with hip-hop mogul Jay Z and other artists who she hopes can persuade black millennials to vote for her.

At several historically black colleges and universities like North Carolina Central University and Bethune-Cookman University, students have held marches to the polls to encourage early voting not just for president but for other issues they care about.

"For Floridians the issues of social justice, criminal justice supports band reform and economic parity are also critical," said Salandra Benton, convener of the Florida National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and the Florida Black Women's Round Table.

Florida and North Carolina are considered key states for both Trump and Clinton, with the potential to push either of them toward the electoral votes needed to win the presidency.

In addition to helping people vote, several black churchgoers also plan to monitor polling places to ensure potential voters are not intimidated by anyone trying to depress turnout through trickery or misinformation.

"If it's an older woman who's or just reluctant voters to cast on a cane, if it's somebody who's thirsty, if it's someone who just needs some encouragement, we're there to do just that," said Rev. Dr. Alyn E. Waller of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church in Philadelphia. "And if anyone comes around to do anything that would deter from the free, fair opportunity to vote, we will shut that down.'

Lawsuits have been filed

Ohio and the Republican in New around the nation over allegations of voting intimidation, including in Ohio where a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order against Trump's campaign and his friend Roger Stone. It says that anyone who engages in intimidation or harassment inside or near Ohio polling places will face contempt of court charges.

In other states including Michigan, Nevada and Arizona, judges are considering similar complaints.

East Carolina University faculty protests

GREENVILLE (AP) - The faculty senate at East Carolina University is supporting students' free speech rights after a protest in which some band members knelt during the national anthem at a football game.

The News & Observer of Raleigh reported that the Greenville school's faculty resolution Nov. 1 also condemned violence or intimidation directed at the students or the community. Kneeling protests against police shootings of African-Americans have occurred at other universities.

Nineteen band members knelt Oct. 1 and the crowd booed and the band had to be escorted out by police.

Chancellor Cecil Staton initially said the university would protect the students' free speech rights. Two days later he said no protests by the band would be tolerated.

The newspaper said most of the emails Staton received about the protest were negative.



Cleveland Cavaliers star LeBron James speaks as Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton listens during a campaign stop at Cleveland Public Hall in Cleveland, Sun., Nov. 6. (AP Photo/Phil Long)

Janet Reno, former US attorney general, dies at age 78

By Curt Anderson

MIAMI (AP) - Shy and admittedly awkward, Janet Reno became a blunt prosecutor and the first woman to serve as U.S. attorney general and was also the epicenter of a relentless series of political storms, from the deadly raid on the Branch Davidian compound at Waco, Texas, to the seizure of 5-yearold Cuban immigrant Elian Gonzalez.

Reno, 78, died early Nov. 7 of complications from Parkinson's disease, her goddaughter Gabrielle D'Alemberte told The Associated Press. D'Alemberte said Reno spent her final days at home in Miami surrounded by family and friends.

Reno, a former Miami prosecutor who famously told reporters "I don't do spin," served nearly eight years as attorney general under President Bill Clinton, the longest stint in a century

Her sister, Maggy Reno Hurchalla, told The Associated Press that Clinton called over the weekend said to "tell Janet I love her" and that many others from her career visited or called, including former Florida governor and Sen. Bob Graham.

'When I tucked her in at night, I said 'I love you," Hurchalla said. "She looked like she was asleep and raised one eyebrow and said, 'I love you too very much.' She was surrounded this weekend by people who love her."

One of the Clinton administration's most recognizable and polarizing figures, Reno faced criticism early in her tenure for the deadly raid on the Branch Davidian compound at Waco, Texas, where sect leader David Koresh and some 80 followers perished.

She was known for deliberating slowly, publicly and in a typically blunt manner. Reno frequently told the public "the buck stops with me," borrowing the mantra from President Harry S. Truman.

After Waco, Reno figured into some of the controversies and scandals that marked the Clinton administration, including Whitewater, Filegate, bungling at the FBI laboratory, Monica Lewinsky, alleged Chinese nuclear spying and questionable campaign financing in the 1996 Clinton-Gore re-election.

In the spring of 2000, Reno enraged her hometown's Cuban-American community when she authorized the armed seizure of young Elian. The boy was taken from the Little Havana home of his Miami relatives so he could be returned to his father in Cuba. During her tenure, the Justice Department prosecuted the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing case, cap-

tured the "Unabomber" Theodore Kaczynski that same year and investigated the 1993 terrorist attack on New York's World Trade Center. The department also filed a major antitrust lawsuit against Microsoft Corp. and Reno was a strong advocate for protecting abortion clinics from violence. Attorney General Loretta Lynch praised Reno's integrity and status as a female trailblazer, calling

Reno in a statement "one of the most effective, decisive and well-respected leaders" in Justice Depart-Reno, added Lynch, approached challenges "guided by one simple test: to do what the law and the

facts required. She accepted the results of that test regardless of which way the political winds were Miami U.S. Attorney Wifredo Ferrer, who worked for Reno in Washington from 1995-2000, recalled

her compassion for the nation's dispossessed, her warm relationship with employees and her practical approach to problems. "Even if you agreed or disagreed with her, you knew she was coming from a place of integrity," Ferrer

said in an interview. ""Through her work, through her decisions, she exhibited a lot of strength and a lot of courage. And that is also inspiring."

After leaving Washington, Reno returned to Florida to run for governor in 2002 but lost in a Democratic primary marred by voting problems.

The campaign ended a public career that started amid humble beginnings. Born July 21, 1938, Janet Wood Reno was the daughter of two newspaper reporters and the eldest of four siblings. She grew up on the edge of the Everglades in a cypress and brick homestead built by her mother and returned there after leaving Washington. Her late brother Robert Reno was a longtime columnist for Newsday on Long

After graduating from Cornell University with a degree in chemistry, Reno became one of 16 women in Harvard Law School's Class of 1963. Reno, who stood over 6 feet tall, later said she wanted to become a lawyer "because I didn't want people to tell me what to do."

In 1993, Clinton tapped her to become the first woman to lead the Justice Department after his first two choices - also women - were withdrawn because both had hired illegal immigrants as nannies. Reno

"It's an extraordinary experience, and I hope I do the women of America proud," Reno said after she

won confirmation. Clinton said the vote might be "the only vote I carry 98-0 this year."

A little more than a month after taking office, however, Reno became embroiled in controversy with

the raid on the Branch Davidian compound near Waco. The standoff had started even before Reno was confirmed as attorney general. On Feb. 28, 1993, agents from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms made a surprise raid on the compound, trying to execute a search warrant. But during the raid gunfire erupted, killing four agents and six members of the religious sect.

That led to a 51-day standoff, ending April 19, 1993, when the complex caught fire and burned to the ground. The government claimed the Davidians committed suicide, shooting themselves and setting the fire. Survivors said the blaze was started by tear gas rounds fired into the compound by government tanks, and that agents shot at some who tried to flee. Reno had authorized the use of the tear gas to end the standoff and later called the day the worst of her life.

More than 45 percent of NC voters have cast ballots already

By Emery P. Dalesio

RALEIGH (AP) - More than 45 percent of North Carolina's nearly 6.9 million registered voters have already cast their ballots ahead of election day, with Democrats and Republican turning out in roughly equal proportions, the state's elections board said Nov. 6.

Almost 3.1 million voters have made their choices at earlyvoting locations or by mail-in absentee ballots, the State Board of Elections said Nov. 6, a double-digit increase over the early voting period during the last presidential election in 2012.

But percentages for Democratic and black voters remained lower compared to four years ago. Blacks comprised 22 percent of the early vote compared to 27 percent during the last presidential election, when Republican Mitt Romney won the

About 7 out of 10 voters submitting absentee ballots have come from white voters during early voting this year, an increase of about 17 percent over their 2012 totals. Meanwhile early ballots from black voters decreased by 9 percent from

Ballots cast by voters who declared themselves unaffiliated

with either of the two major political parties surged by 40 per-The major remaining question is how many more people

will cast ballots on Nov. 8 and whether it will be more or less than the 4.5 million who cast ballots in 2012, Catawba College political scientist Michael Bitzer wrote in an email.

With close campaigns for North Carolina's next governor and U.S. senator also on the line, the state was ground zero for the presidential fortunes of Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Trump's vice presidential running mate, Mike Pence, was scheduled to hold a rally Nov. 8 at the airport in Hickory, setting up a frantic slate of campaign rallies on Nov. 7.

Trump appeared Nov. 7 afternoon at an arena on the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh, wedged between stops in other battleground states of Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan and New

Democratic vice presidential nominee Tim Kaine campaigns in Charlotte and Wilmington on Nov. 7. Hillary Clinton closes out her campaign rallies in Raleigh, where she speaks at a midnight rally ending in the first minutes of Election Day on the campus of North Carolina State University.