



If Clinton Loses in November, Don't Blame Black Voters

By James Clingman, NNPA Newswire Columnist

Now that the dust has settled around President Obama's comments at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Phoenix Awards Dinner, let me give you my take on the subject.

In 2010, immediately following the midterm elections, in some instances, Black folks were blamed for the "shellacking," as Barack Obama put it, of Democrat candidates.

Again in 2014, the rancor directed at Blacks for failing to vote was raised to an even higher level. In an article by Sabrina Eaton of Cleveland.com, U.S. Representative Marcia Fudge noted that "preliminary exit polls showed the African American proportion of the electorate increased over the 2010 midterms, and urged critics to 'find another scapegoat. Don't blame us!'"

The statement by Rep. Fudge continued: "Our community organizations and churches mobilized to encourage early voting opportunities with programs like 'Souls to the Polls,' and African American activists and state leaders stood ready to combat any instance of voter intimidation or fraud. Black elected officials crisscrossed the country to discuss the urgency and importance of this election. We phone banked, knocked on doors and held 'Get Out the Vote' rallies. Our losses were not a referendum on African-American political engagement. We did our part, so don't blame us!"

In 2008 and 2012, Black voters turned out in unprecedented numbers to help Obama win the presidency. Now, in 2016, as the first Black president prepares to leave office, Black voters will again be held responsible for turning out in droves. We have been given our "marching orders" once again by the President during his "most passionate" speech ever, as some have described it, during the awards dinner.

"I will consider it a personal insult, an insult to my legacy, if this community lets down its guard and fails to activate itself in this election," Obama declared with a stern look and booming passion. "You want to give me a good send-off, go vote."

While it is well known that fewer Blacks vote in midterm elections than in presidential elections, it just may be the result of Black people seeing ourselves being taken for granted after the president gets elected and very little that was promised during the campaign was delivered afterward.

In 2002, NAACP Chairman, Julian Bond said Democrats "failed to engage African-American voters. They had all the issues on their side: high unemployment, failing pensions, people losing vast sums of money and the stock market crash. But the Democrats didn't push these issues. Instead they offered pale shadows of what the Republicans were offering, and that just wasn't good enough."

The excuses for the midterm meltdowns among Democrats over the past decade or so are essentially what we call "blaming the victim." Black people are really victims of the political system in this nation. We have been "downed" by political pundits and sycophants, and now we are caught in their web of false promises and lack of reciprocity for our votes.

I don't know what the CBC has said or will say in response to President Obama's admonishment to them to protect his legacy by voting for Hillary, thereby giving him a "good send-off," but here are my requests of Brother Barack in return for his good send off.

These requests can be read in full on www.IAmOneOfTheMillion.com/our-planks.html among our 22 platform planks.

1. Get Brother Edward Pinkney out of prison in Michigan. Since when do trumped up charges and false accusations on a misdemeanor crime get a person 10 years in a maximum security prison? Plank #20
2. Exonerate Marcus Mosiah Garvey, in support of his son, Dr. Julius Garvey. Plank #22
3. Amend the 13th Amendment by removing the "Exception Clause." Plank #11
4. Support misconduct and/or malpractice insurance for police officers. Plank #6
5. Change your mind about reparations for descendants of African enslaved people, and suggest ways it can be done. You can begin by advocating reparations for the victims of the Tulsa Riot in 1921. You supported reparations for Filipino war vets, and surely you support the Japanese reparations of 1988, Native Alaskans in 1971, and reparations for the Jewish people. Why not in our case, which is just as reasonable as all the others? Plank #14
6. Finally, we would love to for you to be a guest on the Carl Nelson Show, www.woldcnews.com, where conscious Black people hang out.

Mr. President, these are just five of our planks, both internal (those that call for our own personal responsibility toward one another) and external. A good send-off for our Black President should include, at a minimum, your support for these few requests. Your legacy will be even greater among the folks who have supported you for the past eight years if you reciprocate to your own demand of us to "Go Vote!" If you refuse to help us, as Marcia Fudge said, "Don't blame us."

James Clingman is called the nation's most prolific writer on economic empowerment for Black people. His latest book, "Black Dollars Matter! Teach Your Dollars How to Make More Sense," is available on his website, Blackonomics.com.