

Kamala Harris is Right Choice to 'Save our Country'

BY STACY M. BROWN
NNPA NEWSWIRE CORRESPONDENT

That Democratic California Sen. Kamala Harris announced her candidacy for president on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is no coincidence.

For her supporters and those who know her well, Harris has long been a fighter for freedom, justice and equality and she's often invoked the spirit of Dr. King in talking about the America's needs today.

"I think we all know when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. talked about the Dream, it wasn't about being asleep," Harris said during the recent Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference. "It was about being awake."

On a day to honor King, and in a brief video from her campaign that was released on social media Monday morning at the same time that she appeared on ABC's "Good Morning America," Harris called on her supporters to join with her to "claim our future."

"Justice. Decency. Equality. Freedom. Democracy. These aren't just words. They're the values we as Americans cherish. And they're all on the line now," Harris said in the video, teasing her official kickoff in her birthplace of Oakland next Sunday.

"The future of our country depends on you and millions of others lifting our voices to fight for our American values," said Harris, the first African-American woman, and the third woman overall, to announce her candidacy for the 2020 election.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) have also announced that they will run.

Harris said she's running to "lift those voices, to bring our voices together."

"On Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) salutes the outstanding courage and leadership of Sen. Kamala Harris as she upholds and embodies the spirit and courage of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by announcing her candidacy for President of the United States," said NNPA president and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

NNPA Chair, and the editor and publisher of the Crusader newspapers in Chicago and Gary, Indiana, Dorothy R. Leavell, also applauded Harris' announce-

ment. "I am excited that Kamala Harris has entered the presidential race for 2020 and look forward to her mounting a vigorous campaign," Leavell said.

"She is imminently qualified, having come through the ranks of politics in the Bay area and has served admirably in the United States Senate these last two years. Just last March (2018), under the leadership of Amelia Ward, who serves as Chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation and is the publisher of the San Francisco Sun Reporter, Harris was honored as our 'Newsmaker of the Year,'" Leavell said.

She continued: "She has a close relationship with the Black Press and respects its commitment

champion of equality and opportunity, and someone who will stand up and fight against the forces of hatred and bigotry. Her candidacy is a breath of fresh air in an environment spoiled by the toxic and incompetent individual whose administration is running the country."

According to CNN, Harris' campaign will be headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland – giving aides an East Coast hub in a racially diverse city that has struggled with wide income disparities – and Oakland, where Harris was born to immigrant parents who came to the U.S. to advance their academic careers.

Harris chose to announce on Monday to honor the legacies of two of her heroes. Forty-seven years ago this week,

Meanwhile, Amelia Ward the NNPA Foundation Chair, who also counts as a personal friend of Harris, said her fellow Bay Area resident is a great choice to put the country back on solid footing.

"Senator Kamala Harris has long been a champion for the people of the San Francisco Bay Area and the state of California. The Sun-Reporter has supported her since her successful run for San Francisco District Attorney in 2003, and also her campaigns for California Attorney General and U.S. Senator," Ward said.

"As a junior Senator, Harris hit the ground running in Washington D.C. becoming an instant force and outspoken critic of President Trump and his



Kamala Harris announced her candidacy for President of the United States on Jan. 21, 2019.

as an institution of the black community. She is energetic, smart and works hard to be prepared for the duties she undertakes. We are certain that she will be a formidable candidate and wish her the best in the campaign."

"It is quite appropriate that on the day that the nation honors Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a fresh and vibrant new face announces her run for the presidency," said Rosetta Miller Perry, Publisher of the Tennessee Tribune Newspaper.

"California Senator Kamala Harris is everything the current holder of the office isn't," Perry continued. "She is honest, a

Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman to ever run for president, launched her campaign. And Dr. King has been a role model for Harris throughout her life as a result of what she views as his "aspirational fight for progress."

Harris chose yellow and red for her campaign logo in a nod to Chisholm's bid for president with its red and yellow campaign buttons, CNN reported.

Her signs will carry her campaign theme "Kamala Harris for the people," the words that she spoke each time she rose in the courtroom as a prosecutor.

regime. The NNPA – the Black Press of America – honored her last March when the organization's Foundation awarded her our prestigious Newsmaker of the Year award," she said.

Ward continued: "Now is the time for a national leader like Senator Harris to come forward to help save our country. I believe that now as a candidate for President of the United States, she has the opportunity to connect with Americans across this country and emerge as the people's choice to put our country back on track."

Suing the government is not an option to end shutdown

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As the government shutdown enters an unprecedented fifth week, some are calling for drastic measures to end the stalemate that has 800,000 government employees either working without pay or altogether furloughed and unable to put food on the table.

In a recent column, Charles Ellison, a political strategist and host of the radio program, "Reality Check" on WURD Radio, said Congressional Republicans could help reopen the government by simply corraling enough votes in both the House and Senate to arrive at the two-thirds majority needed to override any Presidential veto of the federal budget.

But Congressional Republicans – led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) – refuse to do that. McConnell claims that not only is he awaiting a deal between Congressional Democrats and the White

House, but he also needs approval from the president before taking action.

Which brings to mind three questions:

1) Why haven't Congressional Democrats sued Congressional Republicans?

2) Could states do that instead?

3) Why are Members of Congress still getting paid?

"I don't know if suing will get us anywhere in any type of manner," said Delaware County, Pennsylvania Democratic Chair Colleen Guiney.

"I'm not sure if it's an option but Democrats in Congress have seven bills to reopen the government, but McConnell is refusing to consider any of the bills. The Senate should respect the will of the people," Guiney said.

U.S. Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pennsylvania) said she and other Democrats have worked tirelessly to find and offer solutions to reopen the government as thousands of federal employees have gone without pay and are

struggling to pay their bills and feed their families.

"What I fear is this administration and our Republican colleagues in the Senate have forgotten is that this is the people's house," Scanlon said. "We have an obligation to work for them. Refusing to uphold that commitment, that promise, is a slap in the face to the American people," she said.

Former Pennsylvania Republican Rep. Alex Charlton said his guess is that if Congressional Democrats did sue Congressional Republicans it would be the "nuclear option."

"It would significantly delay any progress towards an actual resolution," he said.

Unlike the federal government, a state-level government shutdown in Pennsylvania is unlikely because a court decision mandates that state employees must be paid as long as the state is still collecting tax revenue, Charlton added.

"The Republican legislature has been diligent in ensuring that the state's

expenses do not outpace its revenue. Any increase beyond that would require tax increases, which the citizens of Pennsylvania do not want," he said.

As to why federal lawmakers continue to draw a paycheck despite the shutdown, Charlton said the salaries of U.S. senators and representatives are paid by the treasury and are set by Congress itself.

"Members of Congress

"It's a legislative function not a judiciary one," Madonna said.

"Folks injured by the shutdown might sue but the courts would get involved in the separation of powers doctrine. That's been in the courts now, but a federal judge refused to rule on the charge," he said.

More pointedly, Professor Garrett Epps who's a professor of law at

Further, it's Congress' job and they make the rules so there's no legal penalty if they don't reopen the government, said Justin Levitt, a Constitutional law scholar and professor at Loyola Law School.

"The Constitution allows Congress to fund government, and everybody assumes that federal officials would want federal activity. But it doesn't require Congress to fund



are paid under legislation that is separate from the appropriations bill that funds most of the government. The tax dollars that members of Congress are paid with do not come from the same budget used to pay other federal employees," Charlton said.

G. Terry Madonna, a professor of Public Affairs and Director of the Center for Politics and Public Affairs at Franklin and Marshall College, said there's no basis for a lawsuit.

the University of Baltimore, said the Constitution would not allow members of Congress to be sued for any vote or failure to vote in Congress because the Speech or Debate Clause would cover that.

"I also know that this shutdown only affects one-quarter of the federal budget so quite a few employees are still being paid like members of Congress," Epps said.

the government," Levitt said.

"So there's nothing to be gained by a lawsuit. It would fail," he said, noting that there's currently a federal lawsuit by federal officials who aren't getting paid, saying that it violates the 13th Amendment to force them to come to work unpaid.

However, "the courts so far have said that because those officials could quit and get another

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