

The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r

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African Americans and the African world.

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Cover Story

Voter Suppression a Big Issue in Charlotte By Amy V. Simmons - Reporting from the Convention BC Editorial Board

Note: Ms. Simmons is attending the Democratic Convention as a representative of BlackCommentator.com. Additionally, we welcome her as a member of the BC Editorial Board.

The voter ID issue was on everyone's mind as the Democratic National Convention officially opened in Charlotte NC on Tuesday, September 5. Delegates and politicians alike were in agreement that the recent attempts at voter suppression were as blatant a move that had been attempted since the passing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Pennsylvanians, in particular, had strong opinions, given the recent voter ID legislation which was challenged and deemed constitutional there, despite strong opposition.

Although several efforts have been made as a result to assist those most affected to obtain the required ID at no cost, and with some relaxing of normal requirements, there are still strong opinions about this latest blatant and unrepentant disenfranchisement effort by Republicans, spearheaded by Tea Party legislators who rode the wave of 2010 mid-term election victories. A large group particularly at risk by this cynical move, although by no means the only one, are African Americans.

State Representative Curtis Jones (D- PA) summarized both what is happening, and the proper response to it, mirroring what everyone at the convention was discussing amongst themselves.

"This is nothing new", he reflected.

"Since Reconstruction, grandfather clauses, dimpled chads and more have been used to disenfranchise African Americans. There are one

million more Democrats than Republicans in Pennsylvania. We are launching a marked effort targeting young people and seniors."

Equal rights for all, regardless of gender and sexual preference, public sector job protections and a strong focus on the middle class seem to be trending as the priorities for this election cycle. And yet, as the 2012 convention opened, aside from some references and examples noted throughout the evening in some speeches, there was no mention of the poor, many of whom are the former middle class or the so - called "working poor".

The fact that this group is the most vulnerable to the current voter suppression attempts, makes a solution imperative. Without the active participation of the poor and working poor in this election, all of the most pressing concerns of the party are in jeopardy.

The issue of voter intimidation must be taken more seriously or the active campaign by Republican operatives and ideologues to destroy, discourage and suppress voter turnout will succeed.

BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board Member Amy V. Simmons is a media professional well respected in many circles; she studied journalism and communications at Point Park College in Pittsburgh , PA, and English at LaSalle University in Philadelphia, PA. The daughter of two lifelong social justice, community and civil rights activists, she is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists, the world's largest journalism organization, as well as its founding chapter, the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists. She is also a member of the Native American Journalists Association. Click [here](#) to contact Ms. Simmons.



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