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Reflections on the 2012 elections The African World By Bill Fletcher, Jr. BC Editorial Board

Leading up to November 6th, I found myself focused on the matter of voter suppression and electoral shenanigans committed by the Republicans. This concern was not for nothing. Prior to and on Election Day there were myriad attempts to subvert the vote, particularly the vote of people of color. On Election Day in Pennsylvania, for instance, there was a voting machine that would convert an Obama vote into a Romney vote (and this was captured on film). Frivolous voter challenges started well before Election Day itself, again targeting African American and Latino voters.

What was most striking about the 2012 election, then, was that in the face of this attack on our right to vote, there was something akin to a popular revolt by the African American and Latino electorate. Latinos voted over 70% for Obama and African Americans over 93%. But those figures do not tell enough. It was the turnout that was so significant. Despite efforts by the political Right to dampen African American enthusiasm for Obama, using the issue of same-sex marriage, this tactic *failed dismally*. And Romney's cynical anti-Latino approach, as evidenced during this primary campaign, came back to bite him in the rear.

It was more than this, however. It was something that you had to feel if you waited in line to vote. I went three times to try to engage in early voting. The first two times the line was out the building and I decided to return at a later date. On the third time, I thought I had arrived early enough only to discover that the line started well within the building. I was on line for two hours, and this was *early voting*.

Around the USA, there were stories like that one - people standing in line for one to seven hours in order to vote.

In effect, what we saw was a counter-attack by the African American and Latino electorate against those who would attempt to disenfranchise us. The obvious intent to eliminate African American and Latino voters, rather than scaring us into submission and docility, energized us to turn out in record numbers. There are many lessons there and one is that we can actually overwhelm the other side by sheer numbers and audacity.

There were many other things about the election that I have reflected upon, but one is a question that I must pose to African American and Latino Republicans. It is simple: *how can you associate with a party that quite consciously set out to disenfranchise African American and Latino voters?* I must ask, what level of self-hatred must one have to actively support a party that purged voter lists to eliminate potential Democratic Party supporters, many of who are African American and Latino? I must ask, what level of self-hatred must one have to actively support a party that regularly used coded language in order to appeal to a racist impulse among many white voters?

Get back with me on that, okay?

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