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# Can Obama Swing the Black Vote?

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# Obama Courts Black Votes



Earlier this year, President Obama signed an executive order to strengthen the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the office charged with increasing HBCU funding from various federal agencies. To commemorate the occasion, members of the Cabinet and Congress, and about 60 presidents and students from HBCUs attended the signing ceremony.

By Zenitha Prince  
Special to NNPA

As the nation draws nearer to the Mid-Term Congressional Elections on Nov 2nd, the ethics trials for U.S. Reps. Charlie Rangel, D-N.Y., and Maxine Waters, D-Calif., have been set for after the elections on Nov. 15 and Nov. 29, respectively. The announcement, made late last week, prompted the ire of at least one Republican, who said it was motivated by politics.

"This is obviously being pushed back to avoid negative publicity before the Nov. 2 elections," said Illinois Republican Timothy Johnson in a statement. "If the accused were Republicans, I have no doubt the timing would be different."

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But political analysts and observers said holding the hearings any earlier would have little to no impact on the incumbents' success at the polls because their majority-Black constituencies would vote for them.

"Charlie Rangel and Maxine Waters would have to get in an Eddie Long scandal for voters not to vote for them; they're set," said Jason Johnson, Professor of Political Science at Hiram College in Ohio. And other members of the Congressional Black Caucus are also set, Johnson added. "Ultimately, it's a very small bubble they're operating in. Black people in these districts think, 'These folks (lawmakers) may be old and [maybe] corrupt, but that's all we have.'"

The importance of the Black vote in re-electing Black Capitol Hill lawmakers or even adding to the ranks—there's the potential to pick up House seats in states such as Louisiana, Arkansas, Illinois, Alabama and Florida—pales in comparison to its impact on several gubernatorial races, political experts say. Black voters can be the saviors of the Democratic Party in several of the 37 contests.

"If Black people don't turn out and vote, a lot of Democrats don't keep their jobs," Johnson told the AFRO. He added, "The Mid-west is the most dangerous area for Democrats to lose governorships. [For example,] Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan all look like they can go Republican and these are critical 'blue' states."

"These are all places where Black voters are key."

At stake for Democrats—especially the White House—is the political strength needed to enact policies at the federal and state level, said Democrat Congresswoman Donna Edwards, who represents the Fourth Congressional District in Maryland, another battleground where Black voters can determine whether Gov. Martin O'Malley, a Democrat, is re-elected or usurped by Republican candidate, former Gov. Robert Ehrlich.

"An energized and activated Black electorate in the Fourth Congressional District in Maryland could make a

difference in our election for governor; it could make a difference in the direction of our state," Edwards said, using the 2010 census and its resulting redistricting process—which determines political representation—as an example. "What happens going into these governor's races is important to how we're represented and where these lines are drawn for our representation."

The centrality of Black voters to Democratic hopes was confirmed last week by President Barack Obama's personal appeal at a rally at Bowie State University, located in one of the state's majority-Black counties.

"Right now you have pundits saying the other party's supporters are more excited," Obama said. "They're saying they'll turn out [to vote] in higher numbers. They're saying that all of us who worked so hard in 2008 might not be as energized or might not care as much. Maryland, I think the pundits are wrong, but it's up to you to prove them wrong. Don't make me look bad now."

While Obama has a whopping approval rating of 87 percent among African-American voters, some political observers question whether the president can draw them to the polls as he did in 2008. Given the disproportionate toll the recession has wielded on Blacks—a community devastated by foreclosures and by a punishing 16.1 percent unemployment rate—many may feel like Velma Hart, who told President Obama in a town-hall meeting last month that she was "exhausted of defending you, defending your administration, defending the mantle of change I voted for, and deeply disappointed with where we are right now."

Johnson said, "People are confusing and have confused a political campaign with a political movement—campaigns end. What people seemed to believe is that kind of excitement and fervor would continue forever, but it can't. So, what you have is disaffected African-Americans; White liberals who are angry because 'he didn't give us "don't ask, don't tell" and the public op-



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*Continued on page 10.*



# HUD And DOT Award \$2 Million To Create Sustainable, Livable Communities In New Orleans

Unprecedented joint funding to foster integrated approach to housing, jobs and transportation

In an unprecedented collaboration between two federal agencies, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today jointly awarded \$2,000,000 to help stimulate a new generation of sustainable and livable communities in New Orleans, connect housing, employment and economic development with transportation and other infrastructure improvements. The joint HUD-DOT funding will support 62 local and regional partnerships seeking to create a more holistic and integrated approach to connecting affordable housing, job opportunities and transportation corridors.

"Today two federal agencies come together to produce a win-win for local communities around the country," said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. "We're helping local and regional planners connect all the dots in their efforts to make their communities more sustainable and livable. These grants will help communities to hit on all cylinders, producing more affordable housing near good jobs and commercial centers which will help to reduce our energy consumption and increase competitiveness."

DOT Secretary Ray LaHood said, "With the investments HUD and DOT are making today, we are strengthening neighborhoods by connecting housing with affordable and sustainable transportation choices. This is a win-win for people who live in these communities because they will have travel options to better serve them."

HUD is awarding \$40 million in new Sustainable Community Challenge Grants to help support local planning designed to integrate affordable housing, good jobs and public transportation. Meanwhile, DOT is awarding nearly \$28 million in TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) II Planning Grants to implement localized plans that ultimately lead to projects that integrate transportation, housing and economic development.

The Claiborne Corridor Plan will analyze potential infrastructure investments along the New Orleans' Inter-Parish Claiborne Corridor, ensuring that multi-model transportation options connect new and existing housing developments and jobs, healthcare and education opportunities to lessen the burden of transportation costs on low-income families. The project will study corridor challenges and opportunities to reunite a neighborhood divided

by an elevated expressway; and create transportation choices, develop neighborhood and economic development revitalization strategies, and design strategies to address stormwater management, subsidence, multi-model mobility, and urban design.

The Claiborne Corridor Plan includes development of a "Complete Streets and Infrastructure" policy and design prototypes to increase accessibility, improve public safety and lower household transportation costs. A broad set of local non-profits and neighborhood partners will be engaged to expand public involvement and develop a website and communications strategy focused on reaching rarely heard voices.



Secretary of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Shaun Donovan



es. Core partners in the effort include Greater New Orleans Foundation, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, NEWCITY Neighborhood Partnership, NewCorp Business Assistance Center, Office of Councilmember Kristin G. Palmer, District C, Office of Councilmember Stacy Head, District B, Urban Land Institute, Neighborhood Partnerships and Civic Engagement

HUD's Sustainable Communities Challenge Grants will foster reform and reduce barriers to achieving affordable, economically vital and sustainable communities. These funds will be used by communities, large and small, to address local challenges to integrating transportation and housing. Other local efforts may include retrofitting main streets to provide safer routes for children and seniors, or preserving affordable housing and local businesses near new transit stations.

The new HUD-DOT program also builds on the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, an innovative new interagency collaboration, launched by President Obama in June 2009, between the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Data Around Town

### DISH Restaurant on Hayne Grand Opening Celebration and Data Was There

By Dionne Character

I felt like I was in a scene from "Sex And The City" upon my arrival at the Grand Opening of DISH Restaurant, located at 9734 Hayne Boulevard, Friday, October 15.

Purple carpet, valet parking, Crown Royal, live music, and food with a swanky environment, is what you get when you walk into the grown and sexy DISH lounge, which was where the event was held.

White leather, plush couches, a bar, ceramic tile, a stage, and spot lights, this event was fierce. Well attended, folks like Kermit Ruffin, Judge Kern Reese, Calvin Mackie, Terry Scott, and Alphonse Davis, along with many names and faces of New Orleans, enjoyed an elite early afternoon in great taste.

The owner, Charlie Bell who also owns Club 7140, has clearly embraced New Orleans East with an "uptown" feeling. The restaurant

located downstairs from the lounge is family oriented, full of eclectic art, serenity and style.

If you are looking for good food, class and ambiance with a grown-up feel, stop by and enjoy DISH.

Dionne Character can be reached at [dasolediva@yahoo.com](mailto:dasolediva@yahoo.com)







*I was born in New Orleans. My family still lives here. We have to restore the Gulf communities for the shrimpers, fishermen, hotel and restaurant owners who live and work here.*

*- Iris Cross, BP Community Outreach*

## Making This Right

Beaches

Claims

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### **Restoring Gulf Communities**

We can't undo this tragedy. But we can help people get back on their feet. We have been working with impacted communities since day one.

Partnering with local governments and community organizations, my job is to listen to people's needs and frustrations and find ways to help. We have 19 community centers and teams in four states, listening and helping.

### **Restoring The Economy**

BP is here in Gulf communities with shrimpers, fishermen, hotel and restaurant owners, helping to make them whole.

More than 120,000 claim payments totaling over \$375 million have already gone to people affected by the spill. We have committed a \$20 billion independent fund to pay all legitimate claims, including lost incomes until people impacted can go back to work. And none of this will be paid by taxpayers.

BP has also given grants of \$87 million to the states to help tourism recover and bring people back to the Gulf beaches.

### **Restoring The Environment**

We're going to keep looking for oil and cleaning it up if we find it. Teams will remain in place for as long as it takes to restore the Gulf Coast.

And we've dedicated \$500 million to work with local and national scientific experts on the impact of the spill and to restore environmental damage.

Thousands of BP employees have their roots in the Gulf. We support over 10,000 jobs in the region and people here are our neighbors. We know we haven't always been perfect, but we will be here until the oil is gone and the people and businesses are back to normal. We will do everything we can to make this right.

For general information visit: [bp.com](http://bp.com)

For help or information: (866) 448-5816

[restorethegulf.gov](http://restorethegulf.gov)

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# Get Out and Vote on November 2nd



**Marc Morial**  
President and CEO  
National Urban League

## To Be Equal

"People often say that in a democracy decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote..." Walter H. Judd, former Minnesota Congressman

In three weeks, on November 2nd, the

rallies, polls and pundits will be silenced and the American people will have the last word in what has developed as one of the most important and contentious mid-term elections in recent memory. The stakes are high. In the midst of persistent high unemployment and the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes, there are those who are demonizing the jobless and threatening to end their unemployment benefits. There is the threat of the repeal of historic health care reform. There are those determined to extend job-killing foreign tax credits and tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans while shifting more of the tax burden to the middle class. There are calls for the abolishment of the minimum wage, the Department of Education and a woman's right to choose. Immigrants, Muslim-Americans and other minority communities are wondering if they will still be welcomed in the land of equal opportunity on November 3rd. And retired seniors, who learned last week that they won't be getting a cost of

living increase next year, would be put at further risk by those advocating for the privatization of Social Security.

A slight shift in the balance of power in both the House and the Senate could have a seismic impact on the well-being of millions of middle class and working class American families. And with 37 governorships up for grabs, issues that are being hotly debated at the state level, including school reform, immigration and health care spending will be affected. So if you thought about sitting this one out – don't. Too much is at stake.

No matter what you have heard from the pundits and prognosticators, no election is ever decided until the people cast their votes. And if you are among the 16 percent of African-Americans who are currently unemployed and discouraged, that is even more reason to make your voice heard. For you the choice is between building on the change we voted for in 2008, or allowing a return to the policies that got us into this mess in the first place. The percentage

of Black voter turnout, which exceeded White turnout in 2008, will again be a deciding factor in this election.

Our nation is facing tremendous challenges both at home and abroad. The overwhelming issue is jobs, but this election is also about our nation's moral direction and whether or not we will allow groups like the Tea Party movement to take us back to an era of overt racial, ethnic, religious and economic division.

The strength of our democracy has always been the fact that it is "We the People" who get to peacefully choose our leaders and shape our destiny by the power of the vote. As the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Alice Walker once said, "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any."

So today and every day until November 2nd, remember that the power for change is in your hands. Get out and vote.

## It's Time to Do It Again in 2010



**Roslyn Brock**  
Chairman, NAACP

ple and communities of color. For the first time, Black women had the highest voter turnout rate among all racial, ethnic and gender groups. The turnout rate of young Black voters was higher than that of young voters of any other racial or ethnic group. Mid-term elections in 2010 will change the direction of this country if we don't stand up and get out to the polls and vote. We have already seen dwindling turnout in primaries across this country. If we don't show up to vote on November 2nd, we will not be able to move this country forward and we will not be able to make this country work for all of us – not just for the privileged.

History has taught us not to blindly believe what we see and not to indiscriminately adhere to what we are told. Engaged voters in 2008 showed that our nation believes in hope and the possibilities of the American Dream. For too many, that Dream remains unfulfilled. While schools crumble, the prison population soars and hospitals close, we edge closer to being the first generation to be worse off than our parents. Small businesses continue to shutter on the

brink of extinction, crushing daily the entrepreneurial spirit of thousands who embraced the American Dream.

We all can do something to ensure that the forces of progress will continue to move forward. You can visit our Get Out The Vote portal at [www.naacp.org/gotv](http://www.naacp.org/gotv) where you or your family can make phone calls, set up times to go door-to-door, attend a local event, and many other efforts to get out the vote and make our voices heard.

We must continue what we started in 2008 – to put schools before wars, to fight against massive joblessness and to fight

massive tax breaks for the nation's wealthiest denizens. We must be as aggressive as parents fighting for their children's lives, or as individuals fighting for their own lives, because we are fighting for our lives. We must be as inclusive as our long-standing vision for the 21st Century, because it is here. Our time is here, our time is now, and on November 2nd, we must return to the voting booths to ensure that freedom, justice and equal opportunity rings for all throughout our great nation.

Roslyn M. Brock is Chairman of the NAACP Board of Directors

In 2008, we voted for change. We voted for policies that would protect individuals over corporations, we voted for a health care system that would work for all of us, and we voted to move this country forward - and we did it together. It is time that we do something together, again, and that is vote on November 2nd. There is too much at stake to stay at home, quite simply the future of our economy, our education system and our nation are at risk. It is time for us to stand together to vote and ensure that OUR agenda gets through Congress. We did it in 2008, and we need to do it again in 2010.

In the 2008 election, we saw a level of voter participation unparalleled in our nation's history, particularly with young peo-

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# Scared Straight:

## High HIV Rates Among Black NYC Women Frighten a Health Reporter

By Tomika Anderson

My longtime lover and I were driving through Harlem when we passed a billboard that made me want to slam on the brakes and pull the car over. On it were two women—one Black and one Latina—their pretty, youthful faces in lights. But under their pictures was a statistic that sucker-punched me: 93.4 percent.

As in, 93.4 of all new HIV cases among women in NYC occur among Black and Latina women.

As in a mere six-plus percentage points away from 100?

“Oh, hell no!” I thought, and then turned to my boo and asked, “When was the last time you took an HIV test, again?”

### Letting Down Our Guard

Sadly, the question I posed—which I certainly haven’t always—is one that not enough of us are asking our partners. According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, a majority of the newest reported infections among women in that city were obtained during heterosexual sex. And the number of newly infected Black women is on the rise: The latest count (which covers the first half of 2009) is up nearly 2 percent from 2008.

The astronomical figure hits even closer to home for me: Not only do Black women account for more than 66 percent of all new cases (beating Latinas two to one), but the group of sistas getting infected fastest are 30 to 39 years old—an age when many of us are getting married or are trying to be married. When many of us are having children. When many of us—myself included—figure, hell, I’ve been in this long-term relationship for a while . . . I can let down my guard and trust my partner. Right?

Clearly, wrong.



Tomika Anderson is a freelance writer based in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Three days later, I got my second HIV test of the year.

I went because even though my sexual partner and I have assured each other of our negative statuses, I have never actually seen his paperwork; nor has he seen mine. Plus, even though I’m pretty sure he’s not an IV-drug user, and I don’t think he’s slept with (or is sleeping with) men, I don’t know that for sure—particularly since we are not in a committed relationship. To put it simply, I am at risk. If I hadn’t seen that billboard and then thought enough to call the Department of Health to learn more, I don’t think I would have fully understood at just how much risk I actually am.

### Getting Infected During Our 30s

That made me think: If I write HIV-related stories for a living and I’m not fully informed about my risk, how informed is the average sista?

To find out, I hit up a friend who runs a Facebook community called Married to Me, a mostly Black, women-only group that advocates for healthy living—mentally, physically and spiritually.

We posed this question to its membership of 2,000-plus women, mostly in their 30s and 40s: Which group has the fastest-growing rate of infections in New York City? The options were Black women, A-16-25; B-Latina women, 35-44; C-Black women, 30-39; and D-Latina women, 18-27.

Only seven women ventured to guess, and all of them got it wrong.

The answer is C, but all of them said A, mistakenly believing, as many media messages suggest, that this is a youth-driven epidemic. But because the topic was broached in a safe, non-judgmental community space, scores of women now have the right answer and are armed, in turn, to empower others. (Interestingly, all four

brothers who answered the same question on the male version of the site—Married to Me for Men—got it right.)

### Real Talk

For me the issue is how am I going to better protect myself, knowing what I now know. Fortunately, my most recent HIV test came back negative, but since a few of my trysts have been unprotected, I have scheduled a follow-up, since HIV sometimes takes up to six months to detect. I have also instituted a firm no-condom, no-love policy with my lover. He is cool with that and even smiled when I opened a conversation recently with, “No more guest appearances for Mr. Condom—he’s here to stay.”

My boo says he was tested less than six months ago, but I plan on telling him, “I’ll show you my paperwork if you show me yours” the next time we’re together. And I’ve decided that safer sex is a topic I can and need to bring up with other sisters I trust, since it’s a part of everyday life. Besides, I can use the encouragement to continue making safe, healthy choices regarding my sexual health.

In the end, I’m realizing, we must be our sisters’ keepers. We’ve got to have these discussions on social-media sites as well as in our living rooms, at the bus stop, in the workplace and at the nail salon. We need to have real talks that include facts and figures. Just as we babysit each other’s kids, cook for each other when we’re sick and listen to each other’s relationship problems, sometimes we just need to ask our sister-friends, Do you know your HIV status? Are you protecting yourself?

Tomika Anderson is a freelance writer based in Brooklyn, N.Y. Her work has appeared in Essence, POZ, Real Health and Ebony magazines, among others.

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## CDC: 1 in 22 blacks will get HIV

(AP) — Health officials estimate that 1 in 22 Black Americans will be diagnosed with the AIDS virus in their lifetime — more than twice the risk for Hispanics and eight times that of Whites.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported the numbers Thursday. The report says the lifetime risk is 1 in 52 for Hispanics, and 1 in 170 for Whites.

Asian-Americans had the lowest lifetime risk, at about 1 in 222.

The data is not considered surprising. Earlier research has shown Blacks, especially, have a high risk of HIV infection.

The estimates are based on 2007 death certificates, population figures and HIV surveillance data from 37 states and Puerto Rico. They update similar calculations reported two years ago.



# Sanitation Contractors Challenge Validity Of OIG Citizen Inspection

Attorneys for New Orleans-based sanitation contractors Richard's Disposal, Inc., and Metro Disposal, Inc., have appealed to the New Orleans Ethics Review Board to seek cancelation of City Inspector General Ed Quatrevaux's recently announced volunteer citizens' inspection of local residences and small businesses as duplicitous and wasteful.

In an October 18th letter to the Board, Attorney Daniel Davillier, who has been in detailed negotiations with the City on behalf of Richard's and Metro, points out that his clients are fully supportive of obtaining an accurate garbage collection house count and that a scientific and statistically accurate process has previously been used by the City to obtain such a count. "Our clients agree that a physical count of service locations is entirely appropriate, but the methodology laid out by the OIG is fundamentally and inherently flawed. To think that there is a possibility that the results of the OIG's Citizen Verification Process could be the basis of important and long-term negotia-



tions and considerations by City officials in place of the respected international consulting firm that also did work for the U.S. Census is mind boggling. We are respectfully calling on the Board for immediate oversight of the hasty, ill-advised process set in motion by an overzealous OIG."

In 2008, the City contracted with the widely respected GCR & Associates, Inc. to undertake

a detailed service location count as the basis for negotiations with Metro, Richard's and SDT. Metro and Richard's assert that a similar approach be taken now to ascertain a more precise house count.

Davillier's letter to the Board also points out that while there may be a small percentage of homes on the current City list of service locations that are now unoccupied, the OIG's volunteer

sweep of selected locations fails to take into account the many residences that are now occupied but were not when the City's list of service locations was compiled in 2008. By all accounts, several thousand new residents have moved into Orleans Parish in the past 18 months. "Thus, the proposed methodology to be employed by the OIG is inherently flawed because it does not account for the many residences that are being serviced but are not on the Served Locations List."

The OIG may be bringing his bias to the entire "Citizen Verification Project" through his approach to recruiting volunteers. Volunteer solicitation letters justify the proposed volunteer inspection as an attempt to "make an impact on the City budget and put an end to wasting tax-payer money!" "It is clear that the Inspector General has already made up his mind about these sanitation contracts. It is difficult to see his random survey as anything but an attempt to justify the conclusion he has already reached," Davillier said.

Davillier's letter also notes that Quatrevaux's plan fails to live up to the usual high standards for inspections set by the OIG Governing Policies, specifically, the Association of Inspectors General Quality Standards for Inspections, Evaluations and Reviews and the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency as relates to "competency, independence, professional judgment quality control and planning."

According to Metro and Richard's, while the citizen volunteers may be well intentioned, there is no valid screening process for assuring that they are unbiased and unaffiliated in their work and approach to these counts. Davillier's letter to the Ethics Review Board concludes that the entire project is poorly conceived and may well be detrimental to the discussions now underway with the City. Metro and Richard's urged the Board to reign in its Inspector General and allow for an accurate and unbiased scientific inspection to determine these important house counts.

## Richmond Encourages Early Voting

State Representative Cedric Richmond would like to remind voters that the early voting period is from Tuesday, October 19th until Tuesday, October 26th excluding Sunday.

The Orleans Parish and Jefferson Parish Registrar of Voters' offices are open from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day of early voting. In order to participate, you must have proof of identification. A driver's license, a Louisiana identification cards or other government issued cards with your name, signature and photograph are accepted.

For more information about early voting, please contact your parish's Registrar of Voters or early voting sites below:

### Jefferson Parish:

**Eastbank Office** - Harahan: 1221 Elmwood Park Blvd., Room 502 / Phone: (504) 736-6191

**Westbank Office** - Marrero: 5001 West Bank Expressway, Room C-2 / Phone: (504) 349-5690

### Orleans Parish:

**City Hall:** 1300 Perdido St., Room 1W23 / Phone: (504) 658-8300

**Eastern New Orleans:** 8870 Chef Mentheur Highway

**Algiers Court House:** 225 Morgan St., Room 105 / Phone: (504) 658-0195

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tion [in health care]; 'Black political elites, who are saying, 'He lost us on that Shirley Sherrod thing'.... People's expectations were way too high."

Among her constituents and those of the other CBC members, Edwards said, "People are understandably frustrated with the pace of change and with the state of the economy and I think that has had a tremendous effect on concerns about voter turnout and the strength of the electorate going into the mid-term elections."

However, she added, she believes voters will turn out and will vote to give the president a chance to live up to his promises.

"[Black voters] have been really concerned about the obvious backlash against this president and are looking at casting their vote in this mid-term election as a statement of support for President Obama," she said. "We want to send a really strong message into Washington that we support the direction this president is going and we didn't think it was just about 2008, we know it's about 2010 and we also know it's about continuing these policies."

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# Local Artists Urge "Stop the Violence"

Photos by GotDaJoose



Tacaloc



Lyrikill



Lil Dee GodsGift, band Flow Tribe and singer Suave



Rico "Gotem"

By Glenn Jones

As we all know the violence and crime in New Orleans is at an all time high for this year. Yet again New Orleans sits at the top of the murder rate for the nation with 56 murders per 100,000, for the year at the time of this article, we have 174 murders to date. It seems the face of these murders on large part is the black youth or otherwise known as the Hip Hop community.

The Hip Hop community has long been a target or at times, the reason inciting this behavior. Rarely do you hear or read in the media that any Hip Hop artist is highlighted as a positive rapper or possible role model. That's for two good reasons. One; actions of an individual not alone a rapper is unpredictable. A credible media source could lose a bit of its credibility if they put a rapper on a pedestal or cite them as an example as the good in the hip hop community or the

community as a whole. One may say it happens with politicians all the time, and one would be right. The difference is people vote for politicians, so when that goes bad its pie on everyone's face, not just the media source. Two; most conscious or positive rappers are either anti-establishment or they tow the line and are accused of selling out by the purist, with the hard liners saying they aren't street enough to represent true hip hop. I don't know if it was civil rights, the woman's movement, anti-Vietnam or the entire Sixties when it became unwritten law that if you are going to give a positive message or speak for a group of people you have to be militant or a revolutionary? If anyone knows the answer to that please write me and let me know. But back to the story, what happens to just good music for the sake of good positive thoughtful music, to inspire good feelings.

On October 12 some local artists that do just that, came together to send a message to their peers to Stop the Violence via a free concert. Collaboration between the weekly Tuesday production of "Climate Change" at the Dragon Den nightclub and Street Dreams, ZoneGang and Madison Media Group came together to show solidarity between the community and hip-hop saying, "Stop the Violence" and the rising crime in the city.

Lil Dee God's Gift the headliner of the show said "we wanted to bring everybody together to say enough is enough, I lost four friends this year to violence." Lil Dee who doesn't use curse words in his lyrics says, "As rappers we know we have a lot of influence on our listeners and we have to be more responsible with what we write, knowing the effect we have." Lil Dee who's latest mix tape (CD) has over 10,000 downloads and

has a hit single/video on YouTube, a tribute to New Orleans called "Never Let Go" featuring Snipe, has over 20,000 views. On the WDSU Sunday morning show the anchor asked Lil Dee how does his positive music affect the community Lil Dee responded "people come up to me all the time and me how my music helps them get through the day or overcome something, which makes me get inspired, makes me feel good about what I'm doing."

Artist "Lyrikill", Tacaloc and Rico Gotem accompanied Lil Dee to bring the community together. Each artist seems to cater to a different segment in hip-hop. Lyrikill, a staple in the New Orleans positive thought provoking hip hop scene, came on right before Lil Dee and put the crowd in the right frame of mind. Tacaloc who has his own satellite radio show, got everybody amped and ready for a show and "Rico Gotem" of the North Shore Frequent

Flyer fame (newest member of Zonegang) definitely got the ladies involved in the show. I thought it was a great show with variety. Lil Dee ended the show with a live band backing him up, "Flow Tribe" who will be performing at the upcoming Voodoo Fest at the end of this month. The crowd showed their approval by raising the roof with Zonegang chants and reciting his lyrics through the whole set.

Besides the Stop the Violence chants that rang out through the entire show, the hip hop crowd really got behind the Rap slash band sound coming from Lil Dee.

The positive messages coming from this event was a breath of fresh air from the constant barrage of death peaking in our community. I just hope this spreads as fast as the proverbial "Bad News" normally does.



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