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A signature program of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation



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**NATIONAL COALITION ON BLACK CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND
BLACK WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE LAUNCH
NATIONAL UNITY '18 BLACK VOTING & POWER BUILDING CAMPAIGN IN GEORGIA**
*Campaign Focused on Leveraging the Power of Black Women's Leadership and Vote
In the 2018 Mid-Term Election Cycle and Beyond*

May 11, 2018 (Washington, DC) – The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP) and the Black Women's Roundtable (BWR) **launched the Unity '18 Black Voting & Power Building "Time4APowerShift" National Campaign (Unity '18) on May 10th in Atlanta, Georgia.** The NCBCP Unity '18 is a non-partisan national campaign that is laser-focused on leveraging the power and impact of the Black vote and collective leadership, with a special emphasis on the South, Black women, young voters and returning citizens across the country---where the Black vote will be key to shifting political power nationally and in states across the country, including AL, FL, GA, MD, MI, MS, NC, OH, PA, VA and the District of Columbia.

Unity '18 is phase one of a four-year campaign that includes developing and organizing a long-term Black political and economic power-building strategy that includes the 2018 Mid-Term Election Cycle, 2019 Election Cycle, 2020 Presidential Election, 2020 Decennial Census and the 2021 Redistricting Fair Representation Process that will determine the balance of political power for the next decade and beyond.

In 2018, there are key elections that will impact the balance of political power----with the election of 435 members of the U.S. House of Representative, 33 U.S. Senators, 36 governors, 87 of the 99 state legislative chambers and 39 certified statewide ballot initiatives, including *Amendment 4* in Florida that restores the right to vote for over 1.6 million Floridians with prior felony convictions upon completion of their sentences, and many local races as well.

Melanie L. Campbell, President & CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and National Convener, Black Women's Roundtable, shares, "We believe 2018 is the year of the woman that is centered in women of color So, we have focused a key part of our *Unity '18 Campaign* on lifting up the intergenerational leadership of Black women and have partnered with over 60 national and states-based organizations and networks, that are primarily led by Black women. Black women voters are not only the 'secret sauce' and most reliable vote for progressive candidates to win: we are leaders of many of our civil rights, women's rights, social justice and human rights organizations."

Campbell further states, "NOW is the time for Black women to unapologetically seize our political power and raise our collective voices to demand that candidates running for any office address our issues—including the unprecedented rollback of civil rights, criminal justice reform, affordable health care, environmental justice, gender and reproductive justice, affordable housing, immigration reform, workers' rights, human rights and other safety net policies that are under attack by the current presidential administration and Congress. These issues and others have communities of color and poor communities literally fighting for their lives."

The NCBCP launched its Unity '18 National Campaign in Georgia in partnership with Black Voters Matter, Southern Black Women's Rural Initiative, Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda/GA BWR, HBCU Green Fund Initiative/Clayton County GA BWR, Georgia StandUP and Black Youth Vote. **The following are comments from the campaign's Georgia launch partners:**

Latosha Brown, NCBCP Board Member and Co-Founder of Black Voters Matter, "We know that Black women have always been on the vanguard of social change and progress in this country. We are in a defining moment in America's political history that will determine whether we go backwards or forward. I am so honored and excited to be a part of the *Unity '18 Campaign* because I think this campaign is grounded in exactly the kind of work we need to move forward. We are centering the voices of Black women, supporting grassroots leadership and coordinating our efforts. When we work together, we win! We KNOW that Black Voters Matter and we will demonstrate this once again in a big WAY through our Unity Campaign work in the 2018 Midterm Election."

Adds **Oleta Fitzgerald**, Regional Administrator for the Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic & Social Justice (SRBWI), "The Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice enthusiastically connects its intergenerational network of women and young women across the Black Belt of Georgia to the NCBCP *Unity '18 Campaign*. There is no more an important time for Black women's voices and actions than now!!"

"It is exciting to host the kick-off of the *Unity '18 National Campaign* here in Georgia, where we know that power of the sister vote will have major impact in our historic Georgia elections this year," said **Helen Butler**, Convener of the Georgia Black Women's Roundtable and Executive Director, Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda. "Black women are one of the strongest demographics in electoral turnout for the state of Georgia and have a definite impact in the communities they represent. We believe our nonpartisan voter registration, voter education, voter protection and voter mobilization activities will help to ensure our communities are able to decide who should represent them and their interests."

Felicia Davis, Convener, Clayton County Georgia Black Women's Roundtable and Director, Building Green Initiative/HBCU Green Fund, shares "Black women lead with compassion and integrity. We value healthy, productive families and we're blazing a path forward in urban, rural and suburban communities especially in the South where our base is strong."

Delsa Guerrero-Castillo, President, Living Green Club @ Clark Atlanta University and Black Youth Vote! member said, "We believe that adopting a healthy sustainable lifestyle is one of the most powerful steps an individual can make as we work to bring about changes on campus and in the community."

States **Deborah Scott**, Executive Director, Georgia Stand UP, "There are two kinds of power; organized money and organized people. We must continue to build power by building up the people power and organizing, one community, precinct, and block at a time. We have always known that black women have untapped power, seen and unseen, now it's time for us to Stand-Up and connect our power grids, lead our communities and the country!"

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The **National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP)** is one of the most active civil rights and social justice organizations in the nation "dedicated to increasing civic engagement, economic and voter empowerment in Black America." The **Black Women's Roundtable (BWR)** is the women and girls empowerment arm of the NCBCP. At the forefront of championing just and equitable public policy on behalf of Black women, BWR promotes their health and wellness, economic security & prosperity, education and global empowerment as key elements for success. For more information visit: www.ncbcp.org or www.unitycampaign.org