



**National
Urban League**

To Be Equal #48

November 28, 2012

African American Leaders to Convene in Washington December 3rd

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President Obama's decisive victory in this year's presidential election signaled a shift in both demographics and attitude in America. While 93% of African American voters supported Obama, his victory reflected a cross-section of America, including substantial numbers of whites and a growing number of Hispanics and Asian Americans. African Americans again made the difference in a number of key swing states. In fact, in hotly contested Ohio, the African American share of the electorate rose from 11% four years ago to 15% this year, with 96% of African Americans voting for Obama. Clearly, the President's small margin of victory in Ohio was determined by an increase in the black vote.

According to Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Senior Research Associate, David Bositis, because of similar increases among Hispanic and Asian American voters, the 2012 presidential election will be the last one where any candidate can expect to win by appealing only to white voters.

It is good news that African Americans in particular are going to the polls in increasing numbers. Our ancestors fought and died to give us that right. But this also means that the voices and concerns of African Americans must be given the attention they deserve. That is why on the day after the election, I sent a letter to President Obama, Representative Pelosi and Speaker Boehner, urging them to immediately get to work to address the disproportionate burden the economic downturn has placed on urban and communities of color, home to large numbers of struggling middle and working class families. Whether we are talking about jobs or education or public safety or the so-called "fiscal cliff," African Americans have lost more than most, and stand to lose even more if Washington fails to act.

On November 16th, I carried that message directly to the White House in a face-to-face meeting with President Obama. I was joined by Ben Jealous of the NAACP, Rev. Al Sharpton of the National Action Network, Janet Murguia of the National Council of La Raza and several others. The President was optimistic that a compromise will be reached on a budget deal. He was very firm that the election gave him the moral authority and a very strong hand

to do something that is consistent with his principles and in the best interest of all Americans.

We realize this is not solely on the shoulders of President Obama. Solutions to the deep problems we face can only be found with bipartisan cooperation in Congress and sustained citizen action. That is why on December 3rd, the leaders of the National Action Network, NAACP and National Coalition for Black Participation and I will convene with African American organizational leaders in Washington, D.C. This will be a unique opportunity to collaborate on specific goals to advance economic opportunity through jobs and education. The debate on the priorities for the next four years has already begun. We must act now if we expect to influence the outcome and shape a better future for our communities. Our voices must be at the table.

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