

# **DNC/RNC: Black Women's Roundtable Shifts the Focus to the Issues and Voting Power of Black Women at the Republican and Democratic Conventions**



Black women discuss the power of the sister voter during the DNC. Pictured (L-R) Glynda C. Carr, Higher Heights for America; Rev. Leah Daughtry (at podium), On These Things; Hazel Dukes, NAACP; Clayola Brown, A. Philip Randolph Institute; Melanie L. Campbell, NCBCP/Black Women's Roundtable; Dr. E Faye Williams, NCBW

Washington, DC – In their continuing efforts to make Black women's issues a top priority and remind elected officials and candidates of the voting power of Black women, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation's (NCBCP) Black Women's Roundtable co-hosted non-partisan round table discussions in conjunction with the Republican National Convention (RNC) in Tampa, FL, and this week at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Charlotte, NC.

At the Charlotte Convention Center Black Women's Roundtable joined with Higher Heights for America to co-host, "Harnessing

Black Women's Political Power: The Chisholm Effect 40 Years in the Making," a celebration and discussion about the power of the sister vote.

Hazel Dukes, president of the NAACP New York State Conference, opened the session delivering an electrifying speech outlining the historic run of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and chiding leaders for, 40 years after Chisholm's run, not properly recognizing the power of the black women's vote.

Reminding people of the Pew Research findings that the surge in black voter participation in 2008 was driven by increased participation among black women, Melanie L. Campbell, president and CEO of the NCBCP and convener, Black Women's Roundtable said, "We're celebrating the phenomenal power of the sister vote. Black women are getting their swagger back in 2012. They're not just getting themselves prepared to vote, they are making sure their family, friends and neighbors are prepared to cast a ballot that counts in this very important election."



National leaders join Florida leader of Black Women's Roundtable for a photo after a discussion of what's at stake for Black women during the Republican Convention in Florida. Pictured (L-R): Jessica Brown, Black Youth Vote; Dr. Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich, Center for Community & Economic Justice; Barbara Arnwine Esq., Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law;

Salandra Benton, Florida Coalition for Black Civic Participation; and Melanie Campbell, NCBCP.

Campbell adds, "Black women are leaders in turning out our community; our issues should be a top priority for elected officials and we need to see Black women appointed to powerful positions."

Other participants in the DNC conversation included: Rev. Leah Daughtry, President CEO of On These Thing, LLC and Former CEO of 2008 Democratic National Convention Committee; Clayola Brown, President of A. Philip Randolph Institute; Congresswoman Donna Edwards (D-MD); Dr. E Faye Williams, National Chair of the National Congress of Black Women; and Glynda C. Carr, Co-Founder of Higher Heights for America and co-host of the DNC round table.

Over 30 Florida leaders joined national leaders for a more intimate discussion about the continuing economic crisis, criminal justice reform, and voter suppression tactics, during RNC round table held at St. Petersburg's Center for Community and Economic Justice. In addition to the conversation, Barbara Arnwine, executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, provided information and tools like the 866 OUR-VOTE hotline, to help the women educate their constituents, organizations and community members in countering the rampant black voter disenfranchisement in Florida.

The lively discussion was co-convened by Salandra Benton, chair, Florida Coalition for Black Civic Participation; Dr. Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich, president and CEO, Center for Community and Economic Justice; Gypsy Gallardo, publisher, Power Broker Magazine; and Dr. Elsie Scott, president and CEO, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. Participants included: Jessica Brown, national field director, Black Youth Vote;

Chloe Choney, district director for Congresswoman Kathy Castor; and Shahra Anderson, regional Director for Senator Bill Nelson.

BWR is an intergenerational women's network of the NCBCP, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to increasing civic engagement in Black and underserved communities and developing new leaders. For more information visit [www.ncbcp.org](http://www.ncbcp.org).