

Aretha Franklin To Sing At The Inauguration!

Russell Simmons Weighs in: Obama's Post-Election Good Far Outweighs The Bad Remnants Of The Past

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It has only been two weeks since the tremendous goodwill and massive celebrations across the nation that resulted from the election of Barack Obama to be the 44th President of the United States. When positive change happens, there are always forces of negative reaction.

Yesterday, the Associated Press reported that "Obama has received more threats than any other president-elect." In addition the AP stated, "Incidents around the country referring to President-elect Obama are dampening the post-election glow of racial progress and harmony, highlighting the stubborn racism that remains in America."

But let's not rush to conclusions that somehow the progress

that Obama's election verified did not also signal good steps forward toward healing America's historic racial divide. The fact is the majority of Americans, black, white, Latino, Asian, Native and others all voted for Obama to be the President and did not allow racial prejudice or hate to be a decisive factor.

The Inauguration on January 20, 2009 will usher in the Obama Administration as millions of people in the US and throughout the world continue to celebrate this change and transformation with joy and great hope.

Don't let anyone or anything steal your joy and hope. Carrying the weight of the past only hurts you. The world is either a beautiful sweet place full of opportunity and hope where everyone can dream and fly or it's a place only full of strife and pain that keeps shackles on your feet and mind.

Beware of the cynics who prefer to cast the negative stones of the past. We are not yet a perfect nation or society, but I know that we are getting better everyday. We should not let all the weight of making America a better place fall only on Obama's shoulders. The new President will need our involvement, our giving, and our prayers.

Yes, there are still racial problems in the US, but sometimes we respond to racial incidents in a manner that does nothing more than cause more polarization rather than work to eliminate racism in all of its manifestations. The growing number of incidents being reported is an indication of stubborn "aberrations of intolerance" and do not at all represent the mindset of most Americans.

The positive and uplifting spirit of the African American community and all others of goodwill will not be broken by these latest random acts of madness.

Obama's victory was a victory for all people and for all Americans. The pendulum of history now has swung too far

toward equality and inclusiveness for any of us to permit group or individual acts of racial hatred to entice the majority of the people to start stepping backwards rather than to keep marching forward.

The bad societal remnants of the past should be buried. Let's work harder to plant the right seeds in the consciousness of all people and let's give Obama our active support.

– Russell Simmons/ Global Grind

The Hip-Hop Vote Propels Barack Obama To The White House

New York, N.Y. – November 4th, 2008 – In a sweeping and historical victory tonight, Senator Barack Obama was elected to be the next president of the United States of America. The largest voting constituency to usher in this progressive leader for change was the hip-hop vote, 18-35 year olds who are brand loyal to hip-hop culture. In consistent and telling numbers, exit polls in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Wisconsin and Connecticut conducted by major television networks reported that 18-29 year olds voted in record numbers making their voices heard for Barack Obama.

“Tonight, the hip-hop generation made history,” emphasized Reverend Lennox Yearwood, Jr, President of the Hip Hop Caucus. “In the 60's, young people had to be revolutionary, but in the 21st century we have decided to be ‘solution-ary.’ We have

come out in large numbers to not only change America, but to change the world. We have made America respect our vote!"

"What we are witnessing today is the game changing impact of the hip-hop vote," asserted Valeisha Butterfield, Executive Director of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN). "Our grassroots efforts to get out the vote paid off tremendously. Young adults from every part of the United States shattered all records and expectations. I'm so proud of my generation stepping up to the plate."

"Tonight, we all witnessed the transformation of American society," declared Dr. Benjamin Chavis, President/CEO of HSAN. "The early results of the presidential election verifies that the hip-hop generation is a responsible and caring generation. Hip-hop artists and icons, male and female, all worked hard to make sure the issues and the interests of young people were represented. President Elect Obama now has a serious mandate from the hip-hop generation. Hip-hop transcends race and will continue to be a force for change, not only in America, but also throughout the world."

On October 18, the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, in partnership with the Hip Hop Caucus launched an 18-city RESPECT MY VOTE! Get Out The Vote Bus Tour with hip-hop superstars T.I., Jay Z, Russell Simmons, Keyshia Cole, T Pain and others, urging potential first time young voters and all voters to Get Out The Vote. The bus tour hit battleground states throughout the country and culminated in Toledo, OH. and Detroit, MI today, Election Day. Multi-platinum hip-hop star and actor, T. I., was the official spokesperson of the tour and took the RESPECT MY VOTE! bus to vote early in Atlanta, GA. last week.

About Hip-Hop Summit Action Network

Founded in 2001, the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN) is dedicated to harnessing the cultural relevance of hip-hop music to serve as a catalyst for education advocacy and other

societal concerns fundamental to the well being of at-risk youth throughout the United States. HSAN is the largest non-profit, national coalition of hip-hop artists, entertainment industry leaders, education advocates, civil rights proponents, and youth leaders united in the belief that Hip-Hop is an enormously influential agent for positive social change which must be responsibly and proactively utilized to fight the war on poverty and injustice. For more information, go to www.hsan.org.

About The Hip Hop Caucus

The Hip Hop Caucus (www.hiphopcaucus.org) is a non-partisan organization that works to ensure the voice of the Hip Hop Generation is heard by engaging them in the political process. Through the use of grassroots organizing and celebrity spokespeople, the Hip Hop Caucus looks to mobilize young people to register and vote in November and in subsequent elections. The President of the Hip Hop Caucus, Rev. Yearwood, was the co-creator of the 2004 campaign "Vote or Die" with Sean "P Diddy" Combs, former Political and Grassroots Director for Russell Simmons' Hip Hop Summit Action Network, and a Senior Consultant to Jay Z's "Voice Your Choice" initiative.

Russell Simmon's Post Election Statement

The vision of the hip-hop generation and its young people is in full and glorious effect tonight. While many older Americans, who marched and struggled so hard so Senator Obama could run for president of the United States never dared to believe in his candidacy's real potential, young people,

particularly the hip-hop community, had faith and their imagination became our reality.

The election of Barack Obama, a resounding progressive voice, is a clear reflection of hip-hop politics. It is a reflection of the 35 million people who downloaded Eckhart Tolle's "The New Earth," and all of the other popular books espousing this new, emerging consciousness. Promoting love, compassion and generosity over fear, anger and greed; promoting lasting peace through dialogue and opportunity will be more economic to the American people in these troubled times than the promotion of war. Obama's election as president is a beautiful testament to the American collective consciousness that is flowering. This more loving consciousness will be necessary to protect us from some of our hurtful human choices and tendencies. We will need it to create balance with the constantly emerging advances in technology so, going forward, we can use these advances in a positive way to lift up Mother Earth and all her inhabitants.

I don't think I'm overstating it when I say that today, I feel like America has dodged a bullet. Let's support this beautiful leader to do the work necessary to promote and execute on the change agenda we all voted for. Let's each do our part to insure that this is a transformative time in America, where our country can be a leader in creating a positive and lasting change in the world.

-Russell Simmons