

# 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](http://www.hsan.org).

#### About The Hip Hop Caucus

The Hip Hop Caucus ([www.hiphopcaucus.org](http://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.

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## **Russell        Simon'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 Eckhard 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

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# **The Source Magazine & The Hip-Hop Summit Action Network host the I AM C.H.A.N.G.E. Initiative Event:: Spike Lee, Russell Simmons, LL Cool J, Vince Carter, Ice-T, Lil Kim, Fabolous, Bow Bow**



New York, N.Y. -October 23, 2008- The Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN), along with presenting sponsor Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., media sponsor BET Networks and supporting sponsor Enterprise Rent-A-Car issued a strong response on the US

financial crisis to the hip-hop community on October 17, 2008 at Clark Atlanta University's Cornelius L. Henderson Student Center with its proven program "Get Your Money Right," now in its fourth successful year. HSAN's response, in particular, was geared toward helping families and communities receive vital information to effectively navigate through the current, unprecedented financial challenges.

Joining HSAN co-founder Russell Simmons and CEO/President Dr. Benjamin Chavis on the panel was Atlanta native, Grammy Award winning hip-hop star and actor Ludacris; hip-hop stars Yung Joc and Yung Berg; Warner Music executive Kevin Liles; D Woods of Danity Kane; Atlanta native, Bad Boy Records artist Gorilla Zoe; producer and Grammy Award-winning producer/songwriter Bryan-Michael Cox; Grammy Award-winning producer DJ Toomp; Atlanta radio icon and producer Gregg Street; Atlanta native and SRC Records artist Asher Roth and Universal Motown music executive Shanti Das.

The standing room only audience of young people listened raptly to basic and necessary information on how to manage their finances in this volatile market, the best way to manage their credit, get out of debt and keep themselves out of debt.

"Coping and thriving in these financially challenging times is always about keeping your head down and doing the work everyday," emphasized Russell Simmons. "Find mentors who can help you. If you want to be successful, help someone who has already made it doing what you want to do."

Financial and mortgage expert Maria Kong, of Markon Realty and Management, advised, "Especially for college kids, credit is so important. When you go to a job interview, they will look at your credit score to see if you're trustworthy. They will look at it when you apply for insurance. Always keep your credit card balance below 50% of your limit. If you pay your credit card bill even one day late, your credit score can be affected."

Warner Music Executive Vice President, Kevin Liles, knows from what he speaks. Starting as an intern at Def Jam years ago, he worked his way up to President of that label. "I started with

hard work and getting my mind right. In hip-hop, everything is possible. Russ taught me it's not about what you get, it's what you give and as soon as I understood that, everything started coming into my life."

Gorilla Zoe revealed a bit of his personal story, "I come from nothing, from the streets. Always chasing money. People like Russ and Kevin [Liles] kicked open the door for young brothers like me to come in and change my life. Everything you get, good or bad, it's all on you," he emphasized. "Never depend on anyone to give you your success."

DJ Toomp has invested wisely with the money he's made. He advised the audience, "Invest in things that have value. Have a plan, not just A and B, but A-T. I already know what property I want to buy. Feeling rich is a state of mind too. I've felt rich since I'm 17 and was able to make my own schedule instead of having to work someone else's."

Grammy Award-winning producer Bryan Michael Cox has sage advice for living within your means. "Credit can be your worst enemy or it can be your best friend, you have to know what to do with it. If you have \$20,000 of credit, you don't have to spend all of it. Look at what your financial situation is and spend what you can pay back on time."

Roberta Shields, Ludacris' mother and the person who runs the Ludacris Foundation, talked about mentors. "As you're working your way up, look to someone doing a good job and match their stride. As you improve and go higher, look to someone else and match their stride and, step by step, you'll get to where you want to go."

Dr. Benjamin Chavis stated, "The Atlanta "Get Your Money Right" Hip-Hop Summit was a great manifestation of the power of hip-hop to focus effectively on equipping young adults with the basics of financial literacy. We thank Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Enterprise Rent-A-Car Rental, BET Networks, Clark Atlanta University and V-103 Radio for their support and partnership

that helped to make the Summit in Atlanta a tremendous success.”

With the mortgage crises at the heart of the current financial turmoil, HSAN became the first national non-profit organization to address the crisis by introducing a special workshop entitled, “Get Your House Right.” The workshop featured home ownership and mortgage lending professionals. Lynn Richardson, Chair of HSAN’s Home Ownership National Advisory Council, hosted the workshop, and partners in the event which participated included Genworth Financial, NAHREP (National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals), NAREB (National Association of Real Estate Brokers) and Regions Bank.

“Get Your House Right!” is based on a model developed by Lynn Richardson and Lori Jones Gibbs, Vice President of Affordable Housing and Industry Affairs for Genworth Mortgage Insurance. It has been successfully implemented by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and Genworth’s communities of faith homeownership initiative.

“Genworth Financial has a long history of helping people realize the dream of homeownership,” said Lori Jones Gibbs, who is also co-chair of the HSAN National Homeownership Advisory Council. “The homeownership gap in this country can be closed. It’s very important that people who want to buy a home get educated about the process so they can make informed decisions and better choices. This initiative features free seminars by mortgage experts who give the facts, answer homebuyers’ questions and provide needed counseling.”

The “Get Your Money Right” tour utilizes the “Get Your Money Right” workbook, produced and distributed by HSAN in both English and Spanish and given to all participants. The workbook is free and is also downloadable at [www.hsan.org](http://www.hsan.org) Community partners for the Summit included The Ludacris Foundation and 100 Black Men. The radio partner for the

Atlanta Hip-Hop Summit was V-103.

Photo ID: Back row (from left to right) guest, guest, Dr. Benjamin Chavis, Maria Kong, Gregg Street, Frank Ski; Middle row (from left to right) guest, Shanti Das, Valeisha Butterfield, Kenny Burns, Yung Joc, Asher Roth, Gorilla Zoe  
Front row (from left to right) Bryan-Michael Cox, D Woods, Russell Simmons and Kevin Liles

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