

# Black Women's Roundtable Statement on Historic Senate Filibuster Reform



Melanie Campbell at The White House earlier this year.

Washington, DC – Melanie L. Campbell, president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic and convener of Black Women's Roundtable, today issued the following statement regarding the change to Senate filibuster rules on behalf of The Black Women's Roundtable:

“Today the U. S. Senate took a bold and much needed step to end partisan gridlock in the blocking of Presidential nominations in the U. S. Senate. The Black Women's Roundtable applauds Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid for his leadership in calling for a vote to reform the Senate rules that will put an end to the unwarranted filibustering by some Senators that has been crippling the government from doing the job of the American people for far too long.

“The new Senate rules will stop reckless filibustering of executive and federal judicial nominations (except Supreme Court nominations) of highly qualified and fully vetted Americans who are willing to serve our country for the common good. Experienced nominees like Patricia Millett, Cornelia Pillard and Judge Robert Wilkins nominated to serve on the U. S. Court of Appeals for the D. C. Circuit; Congressman Mel Watt, nominated to lead the Federal Housing Finance Agency; and other women and people of color will have a fair opportunity to receive an up or down vote.

“We challenge the U. S. Senate to move swiftly to confirm these nominees and others so the work of the American can be done both in the federal government and in the federal

courts.”

#### ABOUT THE BLACK WOMEN’S ROUNDTABLE

The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation’s Black Women’s Roundtable is an intergenerational civic engagement network of the National Coalition championing just and equitable public policy on behalf of Black women. Founded in 1976, The National Coalition serves as an effective convener and facilitator at the local, state and national levels to address the disenfranchisement of marginalized communities through civic engagement, women and girls empowerment, youth civic leadership development and public policy. For more information visit [www.ncbcp.org](http://www.ncbcp.org).

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## **Justice for Trayvon Martin – The National Coalition joins with NUL, NAN & others seeking justice**



Washington, DC – Melanie L. Campbell, president and CEO of The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (The National Coalition) and convener, Black Women’s Roundtable, issued the following statement on Trayvon Martin and the Zimmerman verdict:

As we process the unfortunate not guilty verdict in the trial of George Zimmerman regarding the tragic killing of Trayvon

Martin we, must first lift up and commend his parents who have endured this heartbreaking ordeal with grace and class. Our prayers go out to Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton for the loss of their beloved son, and now this decision.

Trayvon was an innocent teenager returning home from purchasing candy and tea. It's bad enough to suffer the loss of a son, but it's unacceptable for them to have to sit and witness a trial where people try to denigrate their son's name. We must be vigilant in our efforts to seek justice for Trayvon and his family, but also, honor his life by making sure this does not happen to any other teenager.

The National Coalition and Black Women's Roundtable joins with The National Urban League, National Action Network, NAACP, National Council of La Raza and others asking the U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to pursue a federal criminal civil rights investigation. We are urging the DOJ to examine the civil rights violations we believe were committed by George Zimmerman in connection with the death of Trayvon Martin, including the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

In the wake of this verdict and the recent Supreme Court decision to strike down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act there is a renewed fervor to mobilize for the 50th Anniversary March on Washington (50th MOW) to advocate for jobs, justice, peace and freedom.

The 50th MOW Commemoration is being organized by Rev. Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King, III in partnership with A. Philip Randolph Institute, NAACP, National Urban League, SCLC, National Council of Negro Women, The National Coalition, The King Center, American Federation of Teachers, SEIU, AFSCME, CWBI, National African American Clergy, National Organization for Women, National Congress of Black Women, LCCR, HRC, NBJC and others on August 21 – 28, 2013 in Washington, DC. For more information on the 50th MOW Commemoration go to [www.ncbcp.org](http://www.ncbcp.org).

We encourage everyone who stands in solidarity with us in recognizing the miscarriage of justice that occurred with this verdict to let your voice be heard through peaceful protest, advocacy and continued prayers for justice to be served for Trayvon Martin and his family.

When an innocent teenager can be stalked and killed and his killer is not found guilty of any crime we must wake up and TAKE ACTION NOW. We cannot sit idly by and watch the civil rights and social justice gains made over the past 50 years erode. Remember, we are all Trayvon Martin.

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# **Supreme Court Decision to Strike Down Key Element of Voting Rights Act a Travesty to Justice**



Washington, DC – In response to today’s Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* Melanie L. Campbell, president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and convener of Black Women’s Roundtable said, “Today’s decision by the U. S. Supreme Court to invalidate Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act is a travesty to justice for all Americans to have their voting rights protected. We believe the decision opens the flood gates for voter suppression tactics to go unchallenged in states that have historically suppressed our voting rights and the ability for minority voters to vote for their candidates of choice.”

“While many people want to say times have changed, many things remain the same. We witnessed widespread voter suppression efforts as recent as 2012,” Campbell adds. “We call on Congress to act urgently to establish a new coverage formula for Section 4 in order to ensure that the U. S. Justice Department will be able to continue enforcement of the Voting Rights Act now and for future generations.”

Campbell continues, “The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation is committed to our mission to eliminate barriers to civic participation. We urge Congress to repair and restore the Voting Rights Act now. Preventing racial voting discrimination will result in greater social and economic justice and enhance the quality of life for people of color and all Americans.”

Shelia Tyson, convener of The Alabama Coalition on Black Civic Participation, an affiliate of The National Coalition adds, ““I am deeply disappointed by the Supreme Court’s ruling in this case. This is especially concerning for Birmingham residents since we are only nine weeks from municipal elections.”

“Voter suppression is alive and well in Alabama. Even in 2013, far too many Alabama voters face intimidation, prejudice, and discrimination at the polls. Strong voter protection laws are the only recourse for citizens – especially the underserved – to combat efforts to deny them from voting. The Voting Rights Act has been the soundest piece of legislation we’ve had to ensure equality at the polls.”

“This year, the City of Birmingham celebrates the 50-year anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement for racial equality and social justice. While it’s true that we’ve made huge strides since 1963; today’s ruling proves that we still have work to do,” Tyson adds.

Founded in 1976, The National Coalition ([ncbcp.org](http://ncbcp.org)) is a

nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing African American participation in civil society.

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# **It's Official – Black People Made History Out-Voting Whites In 2012**



Melanie L. Campbell speaking during a Black Women's Roundtable briefing at The White House

Washington, DC – Melanie L. Campbell, president and CEO of The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (The National Coalition) and convener of Black Women's Roundtable issued the following statement in response to a U. S. Census Bureau report released yesterday finding that about two in three eligible blacks (66.2 percent) voted in the 2012 presidential election, higher than the 64.1 percent of non-Hispanic whites who did so. This marks the first time that blacks have voted at a higher rate than whites since the Census Bureau started publishing statistics on voting.

Campbell said, "Let me first say it's a great day in America for Black People – especially Black women. It is extremely gratifying to see Census data that reinforces what we already knew: despite rigorous systematic efforts to suppress our vote, Blacks voted at higher rates than whites in 2012. Black women outdistanced every demographic in America and made a difference in the outcome of the election.

“Given the enormous challenges facing our community, The National Coalition’s Board of directors, members and affiliates are proud to have played an integral role in a historic turnout. Working in partnership with A. Philip Randolph Institute and other coalition members, our Black Women’s Roundtable unified women in our communities to help us organize, educate, mobilize and protect the Black vote in 2012. Black women delivered in a powerful way.

“Fifty years after the historic March on Washington – when the Black vote was suppressed across the country – there is no better tribute to the leadership of A. Philip Randolph, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Dorothy I. Height and other civil rights leaders.

“So, today we celebrate the power of the sister vote as we continue to organize and mobilize to push our elected officials to act in our best interest.”