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## **PRESS RELEASE:**

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## **COALITION OF BLACK WOMEN LEADERS PARTNER IN CAMPAIGN TO GALVANIZE OVER 150,000 BLACK WOMEN TO VOTE IN HISTORIC GEORGIA ELECTION**

*The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP) and Black Women's Roundtable (BWR) Launched a Black Women-Led Coalition Campaign in Georgia Focused on Leveraging the Power of Black Women's Leadership and Vote In the 2018 Mid-Term Election Cycle and Beyond*

**May 23, 2018 – Melanie L. Campbell**, President and CEO of The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP) and Black Women's Roundtable (BWR), is mobilizing Black women across the country to get out the vote in the months to come leading into the 2018 Midterms. After spending several days in Georgia, canvassing, getting out the vote, conducting phone banking and going door-to-door, momentum is building to elect progressive candidates that are committed to the issues Black women care about.

Along with get out the vote efforts, robocalls were placed from Black celebrities including Sheryl Lee Ralph, Judge Glenda Hatchett, Judge Penny Brown Reynolds, Susan L. Taylor and others for a digital social media campaign targeted in Georgia to over 80,000 households of Black women voters. Yesterday, election day, rides were provided to the polls and poll monitors were deployed to help protect voters as a partner with Election Protection.

Campbell shares her analysis of the results of the election, "Black women in Georgia showed in yesterday's Georgia statewide primary they are ready for a power shift. Not only did Black women in Georgia make Black "Herstory" by forming a key voting bloc to elect Stacy Abrams to win the gubernatorial nomination for her party, they were also the deciding vote in electing Janice Laws to be the first Black women elected a nominee for state insurance commissioner of Georgia. Black women continue to show through the power of our leadership and vote that if progressives want to win in today's political environment, they must not only thank Black women for being their most loyal voting base, they must invest in Black women running for office, invest in Black women-led organizations and ensure there is equity at the leadership decision-making tables in the Progressive Movement."

### **NCBCP Unity '18 Power of the Sister Vote Georgia Campaign Partners' Quotes:**

#### **Latosha Brown, Co-Founder, Black Voters Matter and Board Member, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation**

"Once again the nation has witnessed the impact and hard work of southern Black women. When we work together we win. It is critical that we support groups and organizations on ground that are led by Black women that will mobilize voters for the leading work for the November 6 election. This is our time. We are the ones that will help make a true power shift in this country."

#### **Helen Butler, Executive Director, Georgia Coalition for the Peoples Agenda, Convener, Georgia Black Women's Roundtable**

**shares** "The historic election of having the first African American woman gubernatorial candidate on the statewide ballot for the November election, the results also included another African American female for Insurance Commissioner. However, it is a reflection of the participation of communities of color, especially African American women who are one of the highest

turnout demographics in the state. Our coordinated non-partisan efforts of educating voters and protecting the right to vote through Election Protection allowed voters to elect the candidates of their choice.”

**Felicia Davis, Convener, Clayton County Georgia Black Women’s Roundtable, Director, HBCU Green Fund**

“We knew that the early vote showed that turnout would be a major problem for the primary election on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. So, we were delighted to serve as a Unity ’18 partner to work around the clock in the final days of the primary to ensure Black women in Clayton County knew their vote was vital in determining who would be elected to statewide office in Georgia. We took the vote to the people, canvassing beauty salons, nail shops, boutiques and festivals and had organizers on street corners letting folks know that the election was coming and that the time to vote is NOW. We know the power of the sister vote in Clayton County we’re the quintessential base for Black women’s leadership, especially in the South.”

**Oleta Fitzgerald, Regional Administrator for the Southern Rural Black Women’s Initiative for Economic & Social Justice (SRBWI)**

"The Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice was pleased to enthusiastically connect its intergenerational network of women and young women across the Black Belt of Georgia to the NCBCP *Unity '18 Campaign*. We know that there is no more an important time for Black women's voices and actions than now!!"

**Deborah Scott, Executive Director, Georgia Stand Up**

“We have to continue to connect “our” family issues, values, agenda and policies to “our” Vote! We must continue to educate our communities, register more voters, fight against voter fatigue apathy and Stand-Up our power at the polls! Black women across the country and in the south are “sick and tired of being sick and tired” as our sister Fannie Lou Hamer, so fabulously captured our feelings. So, today we say thank you to Black women for working together. Please take time rest and take care of your families and yourself this weekend, you deserve it! It’s time “our time”; time for us to continue to organize, work together and Win. Black Women are Uniting because we know that when Black Women work together...Our Families and communities Win!”

**BACKGROUND:**

NCBCP GA Unity '18 Campaign BWR state partners working in coalition with Campbell include: Deborah Scott, Executive Director, Georgia Stand Up; Helen Butler, Convener, Georgia Black Women’s Roundtable, Executive Director, Georgia Coalition for the Peoples Agenda; Latosha Brown, Co-Founder, Black Voters Matter, Oleta Fitzgerald, Regional Administrator, Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative, Southern Regional Director, Children’s Defense Fund, Felicia Davis, Convener Clayton County GA BWR, Director, HBCU Green Fund; GA, Atlanta Black Youth Vote. Over the course of the next seven months leading up to the 2018 Mid-Term Elections the NCBCP Unity ’18 Campaign will continue to galvanize Black women in key states across the country.

The effort by the Unity ’18 Campaign in Georgia, follows the recent launch of the ***Unity ’18 Black Voting & Power Building “Time4APowerShift” National Campaign (Unity ’18) in Atlanta, Georgia***. The NCBCP Unity ’18 is a non-partisan national campaign that is laser focused on leveraging the power and impact of the Black vote and collective leadership, with a special emphasis on the South, Black women, young voters and returning citizens across the country where the Black vote will be key to shifting political power nationally and in states across the country including AL, FL, GA, MD, MI, MS, NC, OH, PA, VA and the District of Columbia.

**Unity ’18 is phase one of a four-year campaign** that includes developing and organizing a long-term Black political and economic power building strategy that includes the 2018 Mid-Term Election Cycle, 2019 Election Cycle, 2020 Presidential Election, 2020 Decennial Census and the 2021 Redistricting Fair Representation Process that will determine the balance of political power for the next decade and beyond.

**In 2018, there are key elections that will impact the balance of political power**----with the election of 435 members of the U.S. House of Representative, 33 U.S. Senators, 36 governors, 87 of the 99 state legislative chambers and 39 certified statewide ballot initiatives<sup>11</sup> including *Amendment 4* in Florida that restores the right to vote for over 1.6 million Floridians with prior felony convictions upon completion of their sentences and many local races as well.

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The **National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP)** is one of the most active civil rights and social justice organizations in the nation “dedicated to increasing civic engagement, economic and voter empowerment in Black America.” The **Black Women’s Roundtable (BWR)** is the women and girls empowerment arm of the NCBCP. At the forefront of championing just and equitable public policy on behalf of Black women, BWR promotes their health and wellness, economic security & prosperity, education and global empowerment as key elements for success

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