



THE CPAC INFORMER

Political Issues Impacting the
Caribbean American Diaspora

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Politicians from the Caribbean Diaspora

The 2016 election cycle is finally beginning to peak and mere months remain before the first Tuesday in November; and then, it will all be over. While some will deem this the most important election in our lifetime, others will be less inclined to attribute this hyperbole to the event. Regardless of the position taken, the real issue for every election including this one is determining which candidate best understands the role of government and supports the issues that are important to you.

What is sure; is that the 2016 political outcome has the possibility of being another history making one for the United States. This is especially so since there is the real possibility for the US to have at its helm, the first female President ever!!! Should former Secretary and First Lady Hillary Clinton become President, she will join the ranks of several Caribbean female heads of government in the region.

It has well been documented that on a global scale, very few women hold leadership roles in decision-making processes. And despite the social, economic and political barriers experienced by women, the Caribbean region has made some progress. For, women from the Caribbean Diaspora have historically been actively involved in a variety of political roles; even serving as Governors-General and opposition party leaders. Secretary Clinton, should she become President, will join the sisterhood of prominent women from our region. This group of women includes Dame Mary Eugenia Charles who at the helm of Dominica, served from 1980 to 1995 as the first female premier

in the Caribbean and the second black female head of state in the world.

Other female heads of state in our Caribbean region have included:

- Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister, Trinidad and Tobago (2010 - 2015)
- Paula Cox, Premier of Bermuda (2010 - 2012)
- Michèle Pierre-Louis, Prime Minister, Haiti (2008 - 2009)
- Portia Simpson-Miller, Prime Minister, Jamaica (2006 - 2007; 2012 - 2016)
- Jennifer Smith, Premier of Bermuda (1998 - 2003)
- Janet Jagan, President, Guyana (1997 - 1999)
- Pamela Gordon, Premier, Bermuda (1997 - 1998)
- Claudette Werleigh, Prime Minister, Haiti (1995 - 1996)
- Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, President of Haiti (1990 - 1991)

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As the country heats up and the first, second, and third generation Caribbean Diaspora members who, according to the Strategic Corporation, number closer to 25 million and not the often touted 3 million decides to vote for either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump, one thing is certain; politicians who want to represent us in the DMV seek our vote.

Regardless of who occupies the White house this fall, members of the Caribbean Diaspora are urged to go out and let our collective voices be heard by flexing our political muscle. Make your vote count and be sure to tell a neighbor and take a friend to the voting booth when you go.

In this issue of the C-PAC Informer, we highlight need for the injustice done to our beloved National Hero, The Rt. Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey be corrected by asking President Barack Obama to issue him a pardon clearing him of any wrongdoing. We also catch up with two formidable politicians from the Caribbean Diaspora. They are **Anthony Brown**, Former Lt. Governor for Maryland. Mr. Brown is running for Congress to represent Maryland's fourth Congressional District and **Karl A. Racine**, who currently serves as the first ever elected Attorney General for the District of Columbia (January 2015–present). Please see interview with other Diaspora politicians including C-PAC Founding Patron and politically active Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam of Maryland, in the earlier issues of the C-PAC Informer by visiting www.caribbeanpac.org.



FORMER MARYLAND LT. GOV. ANTHONY G. BROWN successfully won in the Democratic primary for the open congressional seat in the Prince George's County 4th District.

Brown, of Jamaican heritage, is a veteran who served as a judge advocate general in the Army including a tour of duty in Iraq.

What do you perceive is the most pressing political issue for Caribbean nationals residing in the DMV?

Our need to increase political and civic engagement! The Caribbean community is organized and, like other groups the challenge remains how to find creative ways to be even more civically engaged. This includes an increased effort towards active involvement in political campaigns and activities at the local, state and federal levels. Also, being involved in local entities such as the Chamber of commerce is strategic. For example, having a presence in Annapolis where the seat of Maryland's government functions. Many groups representing various nationalities, ethnicities, faiths and communities come to Annapolis every year during the legislative session, not necessarily to lobby members on specific issues but to raise awareness about their presence in Maryland and to convey what their interest and concerns are. By doing so, stronger relationships are

forged with elective officials. And, should there ever be a need to call on elected officials to support a position, issue, or an initiative, relationships have already been established and the process becomes less burdensome and frustrating.

How will you use your political position to advocate for education and its importance today in reaching the American Dream?

The following are among the three areas I will continue to focus on when I am in Congress. First, the expansion of early childhood education or what is called universal Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K). I worked on this initiative extensively when I was Lt. Governor and was excited that we were able to expand Pre-K to more 4-year-olds in Maryland. However, we were unsuccessful in achieving universal Pre-K. I'll continue to work on this issue when I am in Congress. I know that Universal Pre-K is a goal for President

Obama, and Secretary Clinton has already pledged her commitment.

When we give young kids a running start in kindergarten by providing Pre-K, they do much better during their academic journey. Furthermore, universal Pre-K will go a long way in closing the academic achievement gap for poor families who have less access to these resources.

Another priority for me is in the area of career technology education. We recognize that not every student who graduates from high school will go on and get a 4-year College degree; and that is acceptable because our economy does not need everyone to have a 4-year degree. However, to be competitive in today's workforce, education beyond the high school diploma is needed. Whether it is plumbing, hospitality, mechanics, culinary arts, allied health professional fields, and many others, there are many

good career fields where high school students can be prepared to graduate and enter the workforce with additional vocational training. These added skills also increase the opportunity for greater earning potential and better opportunities for families.

Finally, I have served in the role of Chair for the Board of Trustees for Prince George's Community College. I think that community colleges provide one of the most affordable quality educational opportunities that you can get today. By attending a community college for two years, it may be the beginning of a 4-year college experience for some; a terminal (associate) degree for others; or just a matter of taking a number of courses to help sharpen skills and become more competitive in the workforce. Overall, I feel that community colleges are really a good value in higher education.

Do you believe health care is a right or a privilege?

Unquestionably health care is a right. The way we ensure good health is to ensure that people have access to affordable quality health care. Without access to affordable quality health care your ability is diminished in so many ways. It is hard for students to perform well in school if they are suffering from poor health. It is hard for someone to show up on the job and work to provide for themselves and their family if they are suffering with poor health. And certainly, it is unacceptable that in the greatest country in the world, that our elderly citizens do not have access to health care and suffer with poor health and are consequently not able to have a dignified life throughout their life span. That's why I support strengthening Medicare and I was a big proponent of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). I worked hard in my state of Maryland to implement the statewide provisions of President Obama's ACA. And, as a member of Congress, I will do everything I can to continue our efforts towards universal health care.

While some states have enacted laws prohibiting the voting rights of felons or those previously convicted of felonies, others have lessened restrictions on voting privileges for ex-felons so they can participate in the democratic process. Do you think that convicted felons should retain the right to vote?

I think that our returning citizens, our men and women who have completed their sentence, should have their voting rights restored. I am very excited that we passed that law in Maryland last year. Initially, Gov. Hogan vetoed that bill and that veto was overridden by the General Assembly this year. If we are really going to promote reintegration aimed at allowing men and women who have spent time in jail to become productive citizens and productive family members, we must extend as many opportunities as we can – job opportunities, educational opportunities, drug treatment and counseling; and voting rights!! This means full participation in all aspects of life. So I do support the restoration of voting rights to ex-offenders and returning citizens.

If your party forms the next government, how will you foster greater levels of cooperation on regional and national emergency preparedness issues?

We have done a really good job in the National Capitol Region where emergency preparedness is concerned. The success of our efforts requires cooperation at every level – federal, state, local - to ensure that we can respond to natural disasters and emergencies caused by public safety issues such as terrorism and terrorist attacks. A major component of this ongoing effort is to ensure that adequate funding is in place. We must also provide law enforcement and first responders with the necessary equipment and training and in addition, conduct joint cooperative exercises on a regular basis.

One significant component to success is putting partisan politics aside. For example, responding to September 11 (9/11) and the attacks at the Pentagon was not a Democratic or Republican responsibility; it was a fundamental response of the

government, regardless of political party affiliation. And while we have done a good job in the DMV, we still must be engaged in continual updating and improvement of our strategies because when it comes to the area of public safety and threats by terrorists, we know that the enemy is constantly upgrading and improving their techniques and their tactics. This means that we must continually work on our preparation, preparedness and our cooperation at all levels of government.

1. **What is your favorite Caribbean saying?** “The Jamaican national motto ‘Out of Many One People’”
2. **What's on your bucket list?** To travel; especially to places where I have not been. Vietnam to visit a rice paddy; Alaska to view the fjords from a boat; Ghana, in Africa.
3. **What is your most Memorable Achievement?** Raising my three children. My daughter Rebecca who is a rising senior at the University of Maryland in College Park and my two sons who are both rising juniors in high school.
4. **Favorite Caribbean Dish?** Ackee and Saltfish
5. **What Inspires You?** My Father. He was raised in a poor community in Kingston, Jamaica. He immigrated to New York in pursuit of his goal of becoming a physician. And when he graduated from medical school, he saw patients both in the hospital and did house calls in some of the poorest neighborhoods near where I grew up in NY. My father believed profoundly in the responsibility to serve other people. We were comfortable growing up and, with five children; my father was not a wealthy man. My father wanted to heal. He spent a lifetime doing just that. Often at great sacrifice financially. But what he did not make in financial compensation was made up for tenfold in the satisfaction he got knowing that he made a difference in the lives of the people whose lives he touched. I know how that inspired me and as a result, I wanted to live a life of service as well.



WASHINGTON, D.C. ATTORNEY GENERAL KARL A. RACINE has his roots in Haiti. He has served as the first elected Attorney General of the District of Columbia since January 2015.

What do you perceive is the most pressing political issue for Caribbean nationals residing the DMV?

I will highlight two issues. First, Caribbean nationals who have children in the DMV are increasingly concerned that their kids may not have the same drive and commitment to excel that their parents who immigrated to the United States possessed. Thus, we need to ensure that our young people work hard in school and not fall prey to the temptations in our modern society. Second, Caribbean nationals care deeply about their “homelands,” and, thus, want to ensure a positive economic climate, functioning civil government, and the opportunity for others to immigrate to the United States.

Immigration has remained a major issue. What do you consider the major potential political and legislative impact of the Supreme Court outcome at this juncture?

First and most importantly, the Supreme Court’s ruling means that more than 4 million families will continue to wait in legal limbo regarding the status of their loved ones. The President’s common-sense reforms would have had real economic, safety and social benefits for the District, which is why our office filed a friend-of-the-court brief in this case asking the Court to uphold President Obama’s executive action to create the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program and expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. We believe these programs are constitutional and desperately needed in the absence of legislative solutions for comprehensive immigration reform. Second, I do think this will be a major issue for the many millions of voters this fall who want to see real progress on immigration reform.

Our country currently has no shared vision for gun safety laws. Do residents of this region have a right to buy and keep machine guns? Please explain your answer.

The bottom line is no, residents of the District may not own or possess machine guns. Federal law already bans the possession and transfer of all machine guns except those made before May 19, 1986. District law goes even further, banning the registration of any machine gun. This prohibits their possession, since District residents may not possess unregistered firearms.

Do you believe health care a right or a privilege? What policy modifications, if any, would you support to encourage individuals to assume a greater sense of individual responsibility for their health-related decisions?

Yes, I believe health care is a basic human right – and any just government should ensure that citizens have access to quality medical care. President Obama’s passage of the Affordable Care Act is arguably the single most significant accomplishment in his successful presidency. We should go further and provide tax incentives to reward behavior that improves health, and lowers the cost of medical care.

While some states have enacted laws prohibiting the voting rights of felons or those previously convicted of felonies others have lessened restrictions on voting privileges for ex-felons so they can participate in the democratic process. Do you think that convicted felons retain the right to vote?

I believe that, once someone has served their debt to society, he/she should be encouraged and supported in full re-entry to society. This includes having their right

and responsibility to vote restored. Beyond restoring voting rights, we should provide meaningful education, job training, mental health and substance abuse counseling, as well as housing, to ensure that returning citizens do not recidivate, but instead, become independent and responsible law-abiding members of the community.

1. *What Is Your Favorite Caribbean Saying?* Men anpile, chay pa lov. That is, If there are enough hands working together, the burden is not heavy.
2. *What Is on Your Bucket List?* I would love to coach several boys and girls basketball teams.
3. *What Is Your Most Memorable Achievement?* Being elected by the residents of the District of Columbia to serve as their first elected Attorney General. I am committed to doing everything that I can to perform the job with integrity and contribute to the lives of our most vulnerable residents.
4. *Favorite Caribbean Dish?* Griot, Kabrit, et diri ak pwa kole. (Pork, goat and rice and beans).
5. *What Inspires You?* My mother and my father, and the ideals that they lived. My parents committed their lives to others. They were selfless, and did everything in their power to elevate the lives of people who were not as fortunate as them. My mother and father also treated every person with dignity, kindness and respect.

A Presidential Pardon for Civil Rights Pioneer Marcus Garvey — The Time Has Come

The C-PAC Board voted collectively to support a request from Dr. Julius Garvey, son of the Rt. Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey, to support an effort for a posthumous presidential pardon by President Obama of his father, on behalf of his family. An excerpt of the press release is below. We encourage all C-PAC members, supporters and friends to spread the word in support of this critically important undertaking. We thank you for your consideration of this request.

One of the most prominent leaders of the civil rights era in the first half of the 20th century and fully recognized as such by luminaries such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X as well as by the government of Jamaica, which posthumously named him its first National Hero—Marcus Garvey was wrongfully convicted by a U.S. court of mail fraud, a conviction that stalled his movement for racial justice, social progress and economic independence for all peoples of the African Diaspora.

In an effort to redress this grievous, decades-old wrong, a request for a posthumous presidential pardon has been filed by the descendants of Marcus Garvey with the U.S. Department of Justice and the White House Counsel's Office. This pardon request urges consideration of Garvey's unjust arrest, trial and incarceration in 1923; President Calvin Coolidge's commutation of his sentence; and Garvey's crusade, embodied in the Universal Negro Improvement Association, to improve the lives of African-Americans as well as of people of African descent worldwide.

Posthumous presidential pardons are rare occurrences—only two have been granted to date. However, the fact that his conviction was:

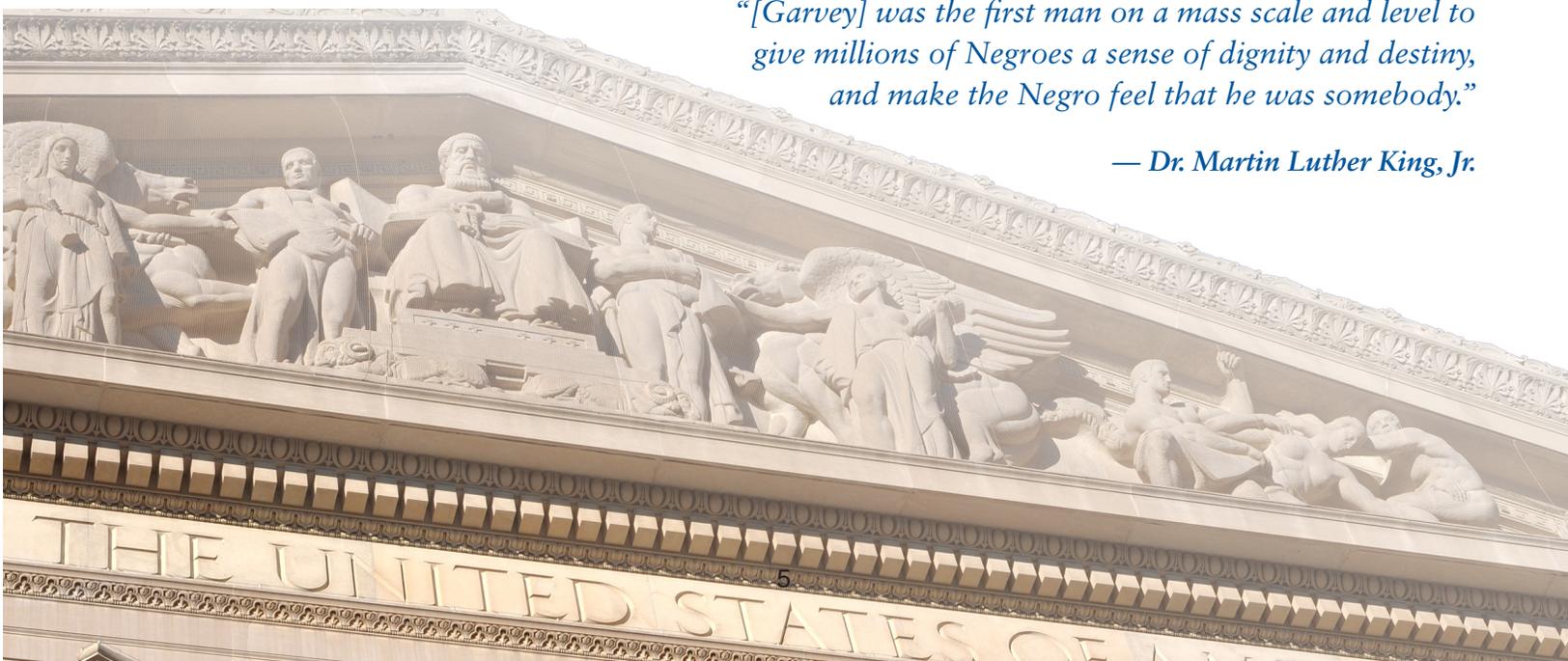
- motivated by a desire on the part of the federal government to discredit, disrupt and destroy Garvey's civil rights movement;
- executed through covert surveillance and deception, with undercover agents posing as Garvey supporters; and
- aided by judicial proceedings that have been condemned as factually unsound and politically and racially motivated

speaks to the extent and gravity of the injustice perpetrated against Garvey.

Though President Coolidge commuted Garvey's sentence in 1927, almost 90 years later, his descendants and supporters believe that the time has come for President Barack Obama to clear, finally and entirely, the name of this pioneering civil rights figure who sought to uplift all peoples of African descent.

“[Garvey] was the first man on a mass scale and level to give millions of Negroes a sense of dignity and destiny, and make the Negro feel that he was somebody.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



NEWS You Can Use!!!

The C-PAC Board has recommended that the Annual C-PAC Founding Patron's Luncheon be moved from November to the third Saturday in October each year. This strategic move allows us to continue to engage politicians who seek our support and have them address our gathering where feasible, prior to final elections. This year the Luncheon will be held on Saturday, October 15th. Come out and be engaged as we celebrate and continue to be informed as we select our regional political leaders and our next president.

As outlined in our bylaws, elections will be held for two upcoming Board vacancies. They are:

Treasurer and Vice Chair Communications.

We will have elections next year as well for the following positions: President; Secretary; Vice Chair Finance; Vice-Chair-at-Large; Vice Chair Membership. We encourage you to be active and consider running for these positions as we continue to strengthen our diverse voices and remain the authentic political voice of the Caribbean Diaspora.

**C-PAC Annual General meeting:
November 5th noon – 2 PM!!
Details to follow.**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We are in the process of planning our 11th Anniversary Celebrations. Share with us some things you would love to see! Have an idea? Send us a message!

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STAY INVOLVED

C-PAC will be celebrating 11 years this year. Stay tuned for more information on how you can get involved in our activities this year!

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