

Frustrated Blacks 'Might Not Vote in 2012'

Written by Hazel Trice Edney
Thursday, 18 August 2011 10:42



Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.) – witnessing thousands of Black people lining up for CBC job fairs and town hall meetings around the country - is warning that African-American frustrations could result in voters staying home on presidential election day Nov. 6, 2012.

“Citizens of this country are hungering for work. And that hunger in all likelihood is going to turn into desperation and I don’t know how that desperation will be played out,” Cleaver said in an interview this week. “There are some frustrations and I hear all kinds of things from African-Americans. I think what’s going to happen is that people would be angry but I think at the end of the day, they’re not going to vote on the other side. The danger for the President is that they may not vote at all. He will get the majority of the Black vote. The issue is the majority of what?”

Cleaver says he has assured President Obama that he is totally committed to his re-election and that he will do everything in his power to make it happen. But, he said he has become increasingly troubled by what he has heard the past two weeks as the CBC has traveled to target high-unemployment cities to hold job fairs. Among them, Cleveland, Ohio, where more than 7,000 lined up for a job fair at Cleveland State University for only 2,200 jobs, he said, noting that many came at 4 a.m. and left after 6 in the evening.

The jobless rate in the Black community has hovered around approximately 16 percent – twice that of Whites – for most of this year. When Obama was asked early in his administration about the even higher jobless rate among Black males, he responded at a White House press conference, “A rising tide lifts all boats.”

Fast forwarding two years later that has not happened. Therefore, the CBC has taken to the streets to find jobs for their constituents, Cleaver said.

“I am troubled that we do not have laser-like targeted programs and initiatives to relieve the unemployment pain in Black America. I think we CBC members received critical words from Black America about what they perceive to be the President’s lack of involvement in targeting

Frustrated Blacks 'Might Not Vote in 2012'

Written by Hazel Trice Edney
Thursday, 18 August 2011 10:42

Black America with job opportunities, so what we decided was that the president will do his thing and we will do ours and we will create jobs.”

Cleaver said he intends to transform his own frustration into actions.

“I said to myself as we were in Cleveland last week, no matter how angry I get because of the problems I see in African-American communities, I am not going to allow it to discourage me or the CBC,” he said. “I thought that it was time for us to quit complaining or depending on someone else to work in this area and the Caucus has been fabulous in its support of proposals that I’ve brought before them and this has been no different.”

The CBC’s goal is to find at least 10,000 for African-Americans. More than 200 companies are participating in the effort – companies that have real jobs available, Cleaver stressed.

The CBC “For the People” job fairs and town hall meetings around the country continued this week in Detroit on Aug. 16; Atlanta Aug. 18-19; Miami, Aug. 22-23 and Los Angeles Aug. 30-31.

It’s been difficult dodging criticism of the President coming from Black voters who want to know what Obama is doing for their economic conditions.

“Because I am so committed to his re-election, when people raise that question – and it gets raised almost every day – I say, ‘Look the President’s doing his thing, we’re doing ours.’ I try not to get into the issue too deeply,” he said. “I’m a supporter of the President. I told him to his face that I was going to do everything I could for his re-election but yeah, I would love to see it a little differently.”{jcomments on}

Frustrated Blacks 'Might Not Vote in 2012'

Written by Hazel Trice Edney
Thursday, 18 August 2011 10:42
