Missouri Officials Turn a Blind Eye to Statewide Voter Suppression

The Missouri State Conference of the NAACP is compelled to call national attention to failures in Missouri which prevented citizens from participating in the most American of endeavors – voting. Across the State, there were issues reported during Tuesday’s Presidential Preference Primaries. The nonpartisan Election Protection effort for Missouri, of which the NAACP is a part, responded to nearly 100 voting issues on Election Day Tuesday.

In Kansas City for example, after a poll worker erroneously juxtaposed the first and last name of Mayor Quinton Lucas when he appeared to vote, the poll worker could not find him on the rolls and he was not allowed to take a regular ballot. As he went to vote, the Mayor posted a video to social media about the importance of voting and then offered a comment sharing his problem, noting that while he could make the effort to return to his poll again later in the day to vote, that many others might not be able to do so. In response, the State’s top election official, Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft, took this as an opportunity to attack Mayor Lucas calling his inability to vote a stunt.

Secretary Ashcroft’s admonition of Mayor Lucas, a young, up-and-coming African American politician, and his outright dismissal of the very real errors that can result in valid voters not getting to vote, disgraces his office, and showcases a recklessness with our right to vote that is telling of the Jim Crow strict voter is law he seeks to have passed in the legislature.

Nimrod Chapel, Jr., President of the Missouri State Conference of the NAACP stated, “the Missouri State Conference of the NAACP has sued Secretary Ashcroft for his failure to protect our right to vote. Not only is it astonishing that he would take such a position when confronted with a citizen – even a Mayor – who complains about not being allowed to vote, it’s this kind of career politician that has set Missouri’s law on the path of Jim Crow. To be clear, the strict photo ID legislation he supports is an extension of Jim Crow in Missouri and his comments about Mayor Lucas suggesting that citizens should vote a provisional ballot are more than wrong-minded.”
Missouri doesn’t need statewide elected officials who disregard their duty and blame citizens for local government failures. Missouri doesn’t need officials who seek to take away the right to vote from hundreds of thousands through racist laws that would literally take away our rights as citizens.

The Missouri State Conference, in an emergency meeting, calls for the resignation of Secretary Ashcroft following his gross disregard of duties and malicious allegations against Mayor Quinton Lucas.

The NAACP opposes voter ID and has brought litigation in many states. It is a member of the Missouri voter protection coalition led by civil rights attorney Denise Lieberman. Current litigation against the Secretary of State includes a challenge brought by the Missouri State Conference of the NAACP challenging the voter ID law. The pending strict photo ID legislation, HB1600, has passed the Missouri House of Representatives and is awaiting hearing in the Missouri Senate.

*The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.*

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