

The face of hope

Written by By Roslyn M. Brock Chairman, NAACP @roslynbrock
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I am fired up.

Just a few minutes ago, I delivered the opening keynote address before thousands of local and national NAACP leaders who have come to our 103rd Annual Convention in Houston. I talked about the face of hope.

For more than a century the NAACP and our hundreds of thousands of members in communities around the country have been the face of hope for this nation. Our very mission—to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all people—is the embodiment of the hope of America.

It is a humbling experience to look out from the podium on the faces that make up the NAACP family. These are the faces that bring hope to their communities every day. I look at them and I am overcome with the weight of our history and the gravity of our mission. In our first hundred years the NAACP changed the world, yet this is no time to rest in triumph. This next century requires perseverance and strength in mission.

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Tonight I described our vision for the future of the NAACP's mission, our Game Changers—the organizational goals that will focus our work for the 21st Century:

- Economic sustainability. We will ensure every person has an equal opportunity to achieve economic success, sustainability, and financial security.
- Education. We will fight until every child has access to a free, high quality, public pre-K through grade 12 education.
- Health. We intend for everyone to have equal access to affordable, high-quality health care. Racially disparate health outcomes will end.
- Public safety and criminal justice. We will make sure that every person is treated fairly and with dignity by the criminal justice system. Disproportionate incarceration, racially motivated policing, and racially biased sentencing will end. And the death penalty will be abolished in the United States of America.
- Civic engagement and participation. We will see to it that every American has free, open, equal, and protected access to the vote, and fair representation at all levels of the political process.

This is the power of hope. This is the power of the NAACP. This year and in the next 100 years, we will register, we will educate, we will mobilize, we will agitate, and we will cast our votes, and ensure that our votes are counted. Our battle cry for this year and beyond must be "This is my power. This is my decision. This is my vote."

Not everyone is able to join as at the convention, but that doesn't mean your voice isn't heard.

Share your vision of hope in America on Twitter with the hashtag #NAACPHOU12, and we'll bring your voice to Houston.

The future is calling and, led by hope, the NAACP will answer.