

Bradford Brown – Written Statement at Miami Public Meeting

**Miami-Dade NAACP
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Presidential Commission on Election Administration Presentation

The Miami-Dade NAACP has a long history of voter registration and get out the vote activities. Before the “motor voter” bill was passed, this was done with a lot of handicaps. I remember having to be sworn in as a deputy registrar and having our activities restricted to a specific place and time which did not include Sundays. After the debacle of the 2000 election we were involved with our National Office and partners such as the Advancement Fund in addressing obstacles to voting and to registration as we found offices such as motor vehicles were not supporting effectively their new responsibilities. In 2012 the State of Florida imposed severe restrictions on third party registration, placing not only bureaucratic obstacles but the potential of significant legal penalties for violations such as not being able to get a registration in within 48 hours. As in the pre “motor voter” days we could not go door to door or even help a neighbor with how to fill out the form properly! Fortunately various interventions by the courts and the Justice Department removed the most severe obstacles and although we started late the Miami Dade NAACP was responsible for registering thousands of voters. The school system which had previously run an extensive effort and had withdrawn after the incident of the threaten \$1000 fine of a civic teacher elsewhere in Florida for helping to register her class finally came on board but with greater difficulty then previously. This should not happen. Schools should be facilitated in registering students not treated as criminals for making civic education a reality. I fear that in Florida there will be a return of efforts to restrict third party voter registration efforts. Although the legislature has removed some of the onerous restrictions on early voting, their efforts fall short of really opening access such as allowing churches to be early voting sites. Same day registration would be an effective counter and is supported by the NAACP. This Commission should explore that solution and seek others such as that the forms become less complex and confusing and allowing anyone to solicit individuals to fill out voter registrations any time or place and to be able to return those applications to the Registrar’s office to insure that the spirit of “motor voter” is implemented.

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