



RCAP BRINGS REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS TOGETHER TO DISCUSS RACE AND POLITICS

With so much division in our nation, one political organization is bringing conservatives and liberals together to talk about uniting the country. On July 21st, Republicans Care About People (RCAP) presented Race & Politics—a community event featuring a forum, moderated by MSNBC commentator, Joe Watkins. The event—part of the RCAP Lecture Series—was held on the Capital University campus in Columbus, Ohio.

The forum included a panel discussion with nationally and locally recognized republican leaders, followed by tough questions from a bipartisan group of community leaders. RCAP's founder and president, Ray A. Jones said the primary purpose of the event was to educate and encourage civic responsibility. He emphasized working together. "This is the first step toward unifying our nation and developing bipartisan solutions," Jones added that racial tension at home and controversial wars abroad reminds him of 1968 (50 years ago) when the country was divided over the Vietnam War, civil rights and the assassinations of President Kennedy and Dr. King. "We should begin to think with our minds and allow our hearts to follow, if we are to unify our nation," said Jones.

Joe Watkins, former Whitehouse Advisor to President George H. W. Bush and author of



The New PC: Practical Consideration opened the panel discussion with a bold statement about the impact of race and politics on minorities, especially the African and Hispanic American communities. If Watkins sounds like a preacher it's because he is a Lutheran Pastor in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "Many people say they love God: the best example of how much you love God is how much you love the people around you," Watkins told the panelists and audience.

Jones said the panelists consisted of individuals who are recognized for their advocacy on behalf of diversity. He said each one has a proven history of caring for people. The panelists discussed public policies that can create equal economic opportunities for minorities and all Americans. Panelists shared their views on solutions for overcoming the great racial and political divide that plagues the nation today.

Panelists included Judge James Green, Harvey Hook, Claudia Yvette DeLeon, Dr. Monty Lobb and Dr. Michele Reynolds. Harvey Hook expressed all of the panelists' statements about the event, "The only way through the conflicting mess and messages of race and politics today is to have open and authentic conversations between people committed to find a common way to move forward in spite of differing opinions." Panelists echoed Hook's comment by telling the audience and each other: until we agree to walk through life with others who are different than us, we will not discover the path we say we all seek to find—the path to political and racial reconciliation.

Claudia Yvette De Leon, a successful Latina businesswoman said that when it comes to job readiness, at least in the Hispanic community, some things are as simple as being more sensitive to cultural differences and incorporating them into job training. "Particularly for new Americans," she said, "it's many times not a matter of not understanding a duty, but understanding why it must be done a certain way". De Leon continued, "All of us can make a difference by simply being more attentive to policy and legislation that are being presented. Many members of our communities are in industries that are continuously being more regulated, such as construction, hospitality, and landscaping. If we can be considerate of how new policies will affect the workforce in our communities, those of us that are more tuned to politics can find ways of navigating the system diplomatically and strategically to create an impact that will be beneficial to all parties."

Dr. Michele Reynolds articulated the importance of the Black community taking ownership and responsibility for their own economic development. She encouraged them to support political candidates who are in the best interest of their community. "The people closest to the problem are closest to the solution," she said. Reynolds offered solutions for economic empowerment, "It's important that African Americans take a seat at the table in their communities and realize the true potential of their buying power. Our riches are in our niches." She said it's going to take both public and private collaborations. "Not just buying products from other cultures but using our buying power and ingenuity to create our own. It's time to move past being consumers of a lot and producers of very little," Reynolds told everyone in attendance. Reynolds said if you are not at the table, you are on the menu.

Judge Green elaborated on the importance of getting involved in the election process. Judge Green told the audience that he would personally attend any of their gatherings to provide education related to candidates from all political parties and all of the ballot issues.

Dr. Monty Lobb expressed his enthusiasm, "What a novel idea and great event to bring people together at such a fractious time to intentionally talk about stereotypes, myths and deeply held notions concerning how race influences our politics. My hat is off to RCAP for making a bold move to bring a group of citizens to talk about a sensitive matter that sorely needs to be thoroughly vetted if we are to maintain a civil society."

As the event came to a close, the audience had their opportunity to weigh in. A surprising number of questions came from attendees who identified themselves as registered Democrats. One attendee—an African American male—talked about how his Caucasian wife is an educator in a predominately African American school. "We use our own money to provide for the students when necessary," he said. "It's all about love," he proclaimed. The event ended with everyone greeting one another and sharing ideas. Everyone in attendance seemed to agree that the event was a conversation-starter and more events that bring conservatives and liberals together would be a positive step in the right direction. One long-time community leader, Annie Ross-Womack said it plainly, "This event was both refreshing and timely."



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 RCAP is a not-for-profit organization that performs critical examinations of candidates, public officials and political issues. RCAP serves as a resource to help voters unpack political messages, and educate the citizenry about Republicans who are demonstrating that they care about the neediest of Americans. As part of its mission, RCAP presents forums with nationally and locally recognized Republican leaders discussing their views on key issues and policies.

It was a privilege to participate. I am not surprised that in 2018, social and political inequality is at an all-time high." Tia Ramey, a local businesswoman who attended the event said that the event was refreshing to say the least. Ramey appreciated listening to a diverse panel of Republicans share their experience and their heart for the community.