



IOWA BROWN & BLACK PRESIDENTIAL FORUM IMPACTS VOTERS BEFORE THE IOWA CAUCUSES

Democratic Presidential Candidates Visit Iowa to Discuss Minority Issues

Forum Video and Transcripts Available at bbpresforum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES MOINES, IOWA, DECEMBER 6th, 2007 – This past weekend, the Iowa Brown & Black Presidential Forum, the nation's only presidential forum in which all candidates have the opportunity to answer essential concerns of African-Americans and Latinos, proved to be another groundbreaking event before the Iowa Caucuses. Despite poor weather and airport closures, seven Democratic candidates visited North High School to discuss issues affecting minorities across the country.

HDNet broadcast this historic Forum live, with hosts Dan Rather, Michele Norris of National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," and Ray Suarez of PBS's "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer." The Forum also hosted an expert panel consisting of **Dr. Juan Andrade Jr.**, President of US Hispanic Leadership Institute, **Angel F. Gonzalez Irizarry** Vice-Chair for the State of Iowa's Commission of Latino Affairs, **Adrien K. Wing**, Professor of Law, University of Iowa and **Dr. Benjamin Chavis**, Hip-Hop Summit Action Network President and CEO. In addition to the Forum's panelists, local youth posed relevant questions to all Democratic candidates.

"This year's Forum turned out to be another historic decision-maker in the presidential race. "Until all of the candidates talk honestly about race issues in our country, then we can only see difficult days ahead," said co-founders and co-chairs, Wayne Ford and Mary Campos. "After reviewing the Brown & Black Presidential Forum and assessing the candidates' responses, for the first time since the Forum began in 1984, we are unable to endorse any candidate at this time. In our opinion, none of the candidates aggressively dealt with the problems in the urban communities."

The Iowa Brown & Black Presidential Forum was founded by Wayne Ford and Mary Campos in 1984 and has figured prominently in the Iowa caucuses. Just one month before voters in Iowa are to head to the polls, seven Democratic presidential candidates -- which included Senator Joe Biden, Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Christopher Dodd, Former Senator John Edwards, Representative Dennis Kucinich, Senator Barack Obama and Governor Bill Richardson -- addressed issues affecting America's urban communities. In addition, to discussing issues affecting minorities in the United States, candidates addressed international affairs, including relations with Cuba.

"After the Forum, the *Des Moines Register's* Iowa Poll clearly showed that none of the Democratic or Republican candidates are dealing with the issues that Iowans are most concerned about today," added Ford and Campos. "Therefore, we are requesting the Presidential candidates propose real solutions to the issues of the Iraq war, health care, immigration, the disproportionately high incarceration rate of African-Americans and Latinos in prisons, longer sentences for users of crack cocaine compared to users of powder cocaine, poverty, equal access to education, politicizing the Hip-Hop generation, inequalities in the criminal justice system and the like. We hope that the

candidates can offer more information of their solutions to these important issues so we can endorse someone before the Iowa Caucus on January 3rd.”

The Forum, in its entirety, can be viewed at bbpresforum.org. In addition, transcripts are available at bbpresforum.org/transcript.html.



(Forum co-chairs Wayne Ford and Mary Campos with Democratic Presidential Candidates)

About The Iowa Brown & Black Presidential Forum

The Iowa Brown & Black Presidential Forum is an element of Urban Dreams’ non-partisan Project V.O.T.E. (Voting Opportunities Through Education). Urban Dreams is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization. It is the nation’s only presidential forum in which all candidates have the opportunity to answer essential concerns of African-Americans and Latinos. The non-partisan event began with U.S. Presidential candidate debates in 1984 and has figured prominently in the Iowa caucuses. It is recognized as the oldest, continuous minority forum for presidential candidates in America and one of the longest-running presidential forums in the nation.

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