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> CARING FOR THE SOUL

Souls to the polls

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The Weekly Challenger
Originally posted 11/1/2012

On Sunday I was privileged to attend the "Souls to the Polls" rally at Williams Park in downtown St. Petersburg. The weather was nice and the turnout was great. All seemed to have a good time. As I reflect on the events of last Sunday, I cannot help but think about a time in our not too distant past when such a rally would have been against the law.

Due to the efforts of many who participated in the Women's Suffrage Movement, women in America received the right to vote in 1920. However, all women were not permitted to vote at that time. Only white women received the right to vote in 1920. Many years passed before women and men of other ethnic/racial groups were allowed to vote.

The Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965. This law gave African Americans the right to vote and prevents states and local jurisdictions from making laws that would disallow voting by persons from various ethnic/racial backgrounds.

Many Americans suffered and died in order to get the Voting Rights Act passed. Today some take for granted our right to vote. During this election season, I hope and pray that all Americans will take seriously our right to vote. This election is critical to our nation.

We must grapple with who will be the best leaders in our school districts, legislature, courts, and in the White House. We must carefully consider who will be the best leaders that will help our nation compete in a global economy. We must ponder who will aid us and our neighbors with gaining access to high quality educational opportunities for our children and grandchildren.

We must ask our leaders what they will do to keep our communities safe — at home and abroad. We must think about the leaders who will insure that we have adequate health care and housing for generations to come.

We must hold our elected officials accountable to uphold the laws governing our land and to change the laws that unfairly discriminate against disenfranchised groups. In other words, we must vote for those who agree to work for the common good.

As we were reminded during the rally on Sunday, we must take our "Souls to the Polls." Isn't voting a great way to care for your soul and the soul of the community?

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