

## (7/3/08): Cincinnati NAACP General Membership voted to support Proportional Representation (PR)

The Cincinnati NAACP Branch General Membership voted at its June 2008 meeting to support Proportional Representation (PR) and take action by engaging in a petition drive to place the issue on the November 4, 2008 ballot. The Cincinnati NAACP hired an attorney to create the petition based on the membership's decision last Thursday. Today, one week later, the petition form is complete. The first printing should be available by 5:00p.m. this afternoon.

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Theodore Berry, former Mayor of Cincinnati and former President of the Cincinnati NAACP, was negatively impacted by the removal of Proportional Representation (PR). Theodore Berry was a Charterite and big supporter of PR. The fundamental aspect of PR is fairness and justice within the election process. Cincinnati NAACP Branch President, Christopher Smitherman, says, "It is difficult for anyone or any institution to claim that they support what Theodore Berry stood for, but not support PR."

The major difference between the Republican and Democratic Presidential Primaries was that the Republican Party had a winner-take-all system while the Democratic Party used Proportional Representation to obtain delegates. The National Democratic Party now has its first African-American presidential nominee as a direct result of PR. Senator Barak Obama would not be the Democratic nominee without PR. Therefore, if PR is good enough for Sen. Obama and the National Democratic Party, then it is good enough for the City of Cincinnati.

Proportional Representation allows voters to rank their candidates from 1-9. It is very simple. It captures the true intent of the voters. Smitherman believes in the intelligence of the Cincinnati voters and rejects any assertions that PR is too complicated for the everyday person. It does not take an advanced degree to count to nine in a simple ranking system. Smitherman is encouraging the local NAACP membership to collect the 6,100 signatures needed to place the issue on the ballot. There are approximately 30 days to accomplish this task. The NAACP of Cincinnati will be reaching out to its natural partners to help to collect the needed signatures.

The issue of PR is not about race. It is about fair and just representation for every voter.