**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE NATIONAL BLACK POLITICAL CONVENTION (NBPC)**

**AND**

**THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**LAUNCH A POWERFUL NEW FORUM SERIES**

***‘ON THE ROAD TO THE CONVENTION’!***

November 1, 2022

Newark, NJ—On **Saturday, November 5th**, the **National Black Political Convention**, in partnership with the **Newark Public Library**, will launch a powerful new forum series titled *‘On The Road To The Convention’.*

This forum will feature a local expression of what will be one of the most pressing issues and panels to be addressed at the forthcoming 2023 Convention: the urgent challenge of Voting Rights facing African-American voters. It is rightfully being dubbed *The John Lewis Voting Rights Plenary*, in honor of the late champion of Civil Rights and Voting Rights.

This initial forum will feature panelists who were each participants in the **1972 Gary National Black Political Convention** : **Lawrence Hamm**, Chair of the People’s Organization for Progress, artist-activist **Amina Baraka**, and **Junius Williams, Esq**. It will be moderated by education activist **Kaleena K. Berryman**.

It will take place at the Newark Public Library, 5 Washington Street, Newark, in its **James Brown African American Room** at 1pm.

This roundtable was also originally going to feature, the Co-Convenor of the forthcoming national convention **Mayor Ras J. Baraka,** as a Special Guest. An unforeseen schedule challenge is going to preclude the Mayor from joining us.

When the 1972 Gary Convention took place, Voting Rights were becoming secure as a consequence of the landmark **Voting Rights Act of 1965**. The African-American vote was becoming fully mobilized in a way that transformed the national political landscape out of Jim Crow Segregation. Since the ***Shelby County v. Holder*** case of 2013, which weakened the enforcement dimensions of the Voting Rights Act, voting rights have been under attack. According to **The Brennen Center**, at least 19 states have enacted laws to further weaken access to the ballot for African-American and Latinx communities. In addition, the current conservative **Supreme Court** is now considering another case, **Merrill v. Milligan**, which can further weaken the historic act. These dangerous new challenges may prove to be decisive in both the November mid-term elections and the 2024 elections.

“When we hear some people say that democracy itself is on the ballot in this election, these attacks on our Voting Rights are what that looks like for our community,” said **Lawrence Hamm**, whose organization is one of the community organization supporters of the 2023 NBPC. **Hamm** is also a key conceptualizer of the forum series.

“We are supremely pleased to have this partnership with the Library and especially proud to host these forums in the James Brown Room. We hope James and Amiri, referring to the immortal **Amiri Baraka**, the key convenor of the ’72 Gary Convention, are pleased with what we are aiming to do,” said **Zayid Muhammad** of All Politics R Local radio, who is also a community organization supporter of the 2023 NBPC.

Moving forward, every month, the forum series will feature more local expressions of other key convention components to be examined at the **National Black Political Convention** **(NBPC) 2023**.

For more information, contact Zayid Muhammad at [babazayid@gmail.com](mailto:babazayid@gmail.com) or call or text 973 202 0745. In the coming weeks, follow the National Black Political Convention’s website, ***nbpc2023.com,*** which is currently being updated. Each forum in this series will be livestreamed on the NBPC YouTube page **NBPC Network...**

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