**Misogyny, Elections and the NAACP**

What if Americans had to vote for President three times over the course of 5 months? What would it do to our democracy? What would it say about our electoral process? I believe in democracy; I also believe in the elimination of oppression for all people and the work of the NAACP.

10 years ago, when I joined my local NAACP branch, it was with that goal in mind that I volunteered my time and passion. In those 10 years I have held various positions of leadership to support the mission of the organization. After 2 years as the 1st Vice President, I knew I wanted to lead the organization differently and decided to run for President.

Elections are contentious by nature; there are usually two or more groups vying for one position. However, what has unfolded during the past 5 months, way beyond the election cycle, demonstrates the inner oppression of the NAACP carried out by its male dominated leadership on the national, state and local level.

It started with the first branch election on Nov. 17th, yes, I did say first election. Minutes after the ballot was released, it was discovered that my name was omitted from the ballot. Since I was the only presidential candidate advanced by the nominating committee, my team of brilliant women and men were baffled as to why my name did not appear on the ballot. We started an online petition immediately to demand an investigation. Within hours we had more than the 25 signatures we needed to address the election concerns.

After a few urgent phone calls and emails to the local, state and national offices, it was determined that a mistake was made in branch communication and a new election would have to be scheduled. The new election date was scheduled for Dec. 1st. I won that election by 50.67% of the vote, the incumbent was second with 49.3% of the vote.

With a two-vote margin between us, he contested. I expected such since as I stated, elections can be contentious. However, since the election was conducted using Election Buddy (an electronic voting system), it was unclear on what grounds the election was being contested. The bylaws of the organization do not indicate that a less than 50% vote is grounds for contest. I inquired of the national election officers and the state leadership regarding the grounds for contesting the election to which I received no answer. So, in addition to written request, I began making phone calls. No one leading the election process thought to call me to discuss my concerns or address my questions.

It went on like this for several weeks. It took two months to determine a third election was in order. It took another month to announce the new election date. In between, it was announced that branches that conducted elections without Election Buddy would have to hold an election using the electronic system by March 15th. It was a clear indication that our branch election was legitimate. However, a third election was scheduled for March 16th, against the backdrop of ongoing concerns and questions of election integrity with no answers from leaders.

After 4 months of election irregularities, it’s no surprise who or what won, misogyny. What happens when more than half of a population are disenfranchised? Do they continue to fight or succumb to an unjust system? Such has been the work of the NAACP for over 100 years; it must be reflected in our internal systems as well as those we fight against nationally. Election integrity is critical to a democracy, so too is the role of women in leadership. Leadership cannot be handed to women simply because of our gender, but it also should not be hindered. It may be sheer coincidence that all the decision makers were men; but maybe it isn’t. As another Women’s History Month is in the books for 2023, we must reflect on the lessons we still haven’t learned. We must do better. Now is the time for the NAACP to reflect on its flawed election processes to be better equipped to fight inequality nationally.