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Cabrera On Drudge Report: GOP Offers Up Red Herring to Cover Up Sameful Record of Voter Intimidation

Washington, D.C. – With early voting underway already, today the Drudge Report posted a misleading statement about Democratic efforts to fight voter suppression. In response, the Democratic National Committee released:

1) A statement from DNC Communications Director Jano Cabrera;
2) A brief review of past GOP voter intimidation efforts from this year alone;
3) The full excerpt from the DNC field manual which was a alluded to, but unfairly characterized, on the Drudge Report;

STATEMENT BY DNC COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR JANO CABRERA

"Democrats are working every day to ensure that every American eligible to vote can vote," said DNC Communications Director Jano Cabrera. "For decades, Republicans have engaged in systematic voter suppression and intimidation, from throwing minorities off the voter rolls to ripping up Democratic voter registrations. We make no apologies for fighting these tactics by exposing the dirty tricks when they happen, and helping educate local officials and activists about past Republican tactics so they can prevent them from occurring this year."

THE REPUBLICAN RECORD ON VOTER INTIMIDATION - THIS YEAR ALONE

Yesterday
Reports surfaced in Nevada, Oregon and potentially other states of the RNC paying half a million dollars to a company who was ripping up democratic voter registration forms. These activities are currently under investigation.

Last week
A former Republican Party executive filed a bogus lawsuit, which was dismissed, trying to knock 17,000 Democratic voters off the voter rolls in Nevada. He told the Las Vegas Review Journal - "I am looking to take Democrats off the voter rolls."

July
Republican official John Pappageorge told the Detroit Free Press, "If we do not suppress the Detroit vote we’re going to have a tough time in this election cycle."

FULL EXCERPT OF DNC FIELD MANUAL ON HOW TO PREVENT AND COMBAT VOTER INTIMIDATION

The DNC also released the section of their field manual titled "How to Organize to Prevent and Combat Voter Intimidation" referred to on the Drudge Report, which focuses on how to detect, prevent, and combat voter intimidation practices.

I. WHAT TO LOOK FOR

In general, the goal of minority voter intimidation programs is either to provide a basis for challenging the right of people to vote just before election day or when they show up at the polls, and/or to create doubt, confusion and fear among voters about their right to vote or the location at which they can vote.

Prior to Election Day

Activities that may take place in the weeks or days leading up to election day can include:

1. Mass mailing targeted to minority communities aimed at using letters returned as undeliverable as a basis for challenging voters (on or prior to election day) based on change of residence

2. Mailings, signs, and/or phone calls targeted or concentrated in minority communities
   - Providing "information" about the requirements for voting, for example, that persons not current on child support payments will not be eligible to vote, or that persons who have recently moved will not be eligible
   - Providing "information" about what questions will be asked or documentation requested of voters at the polls in order to vote, e.g., that proof of citizenship will be required, or that a driver's license or lease will be required to prove residence
   - Giving warnings about election offenses, i.e., that voting when ineligible to do so, or voting at the wrong place, or providing false information to election officials, etc. is a crime
   - Suggesting that polling places have been changed

3. Any variation of the above in Spanish, targeted to, or appearing in, Latino communities

4. Complaints filed by Republican Party or candidates with election authorities (or police or other authorities) about volunteer registrars registering minority voters illegally

5. Attempts to encourage voters in minority communities to throw away mail-in ballots

6. Attempts to coerce voters in minority communities to turn over endorsed absentee ballots On Election Day

Activities that take place on election day itself may include:

1. Signs, posters, phone calls, and/or sound trucks giving "information" or warnings about voter requirements or eligibility and/or warning that voting when ineligible to do so is an offense, etc.

2. Concentration of numbers of Republican poll watchers or challengers in minority precincts

3. Republican poll watchers challenging every voter in minority precincts on some pretext

4. GOP poll watchers, local law enforcement officers, or persons with official looking badges or insignia stationed at polling places taking pictures, asking for names, or engaging in other types of intimidating conduct.

5. Other persons deliberately placed at polling places to harass or hassle voters

6. Efforts to create longer lines in the polls, targeted in minority communities, through means such as limiting the number of registration books; deliberately sending unregistered voters into certain polling places to create confusion and delay and/or create a scene, and thereby slow down voting at those polling places

7. Changing polling locations close to election day

8. Slower responses to voting machine breakdowns in minority precincts

II. HOW TO ORGANIZE TO PREVENT AND COMBAT VOTER INTIMIDATION
The best way to combat minority voter intimidation tactics is to prevent them from occurring in the first
place and prepare in advance to deal with them should they take place on election day.

1. If there are any signs of present or expected intimidation activity, in advance of election day, launch a press program that might include the following elements:

- Prepare and distribute to the press (or have available at a press conference, see below) materials giving the background and history of GOP minority voter intimidation, with emphasis on past activity in your state or district.

- Devise separate press strategies for mainstream and specialty press:

  i. Mainstream press: Consider a press conference
      — Featuring a prominent mainstream spokesperson (priest, civic leader, business leader)
      — Including a group of established community leaders behind that spokesperson, but with only one person giving a statement
      — Emphasizing a message of outrage, but designed to appeal to the broader community: "We thought this community was better than that", "We thought those days were behind us", "Nothing is more despicable than trying to deprive any American of the precious right to vote, the foundation of our democracy for which so many have sacrificed."
      — Impugning the source of divisiveness – the GOP, the opposing candidate, whoever can credibly be said to be behind it
      — Include call to action

  ii. Specialty press
      — Use minority intimidation as an organizing tool: in a press conference and/or press materials, community leadership should call on the community to rise up against the efforts to disenfranchise them by turning out in record numbers and challenging any effort at intimidation
      — Link this fight to the historical fights to enfranchise minorities, going back to the civil rights struggle.

2. If no signs of intimidation techniques have emerged yet, launch a "pre-emptive strike" (particularly well-suited to states in which these techniques have been tried in the past).

- Issue a press release

  i. Reviewing Republican tactic used in the past in your area or state

  ii. Quoting party/minority/civil rights leadership as denouncing tactics that discourage people from voting

- Prime minority leadership to discuss the issue in the media; provide taking points

- Place stories in which minority leadership expresses concern about the threat of intimidation tactics

- Warn local newspapers not to accept advertising that is not properly disclaimed or that contains false warnings about voting requirements and/or about what will happen at the polls

3. Train field staff, precinct workers, and your own poll watchers thoroughly in the rules they need to know for election day.

4. Plan and completely prepare for possible legal action well in advance of election day

5. Have Secretary of State record public service announcements about election day – when polls are open, who is eligible, etc.

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