

The Power and Importance of Voting

PRESIDENT OVETA GLOVER

I know I may be speaking to the choir, but sometimes singing a song with one new word brings fresh attention to its message. That's what we're doing bringing renewed focus to a message that is as relevant now as it has ever been.

Voting is more than just a civic duty; it is an act of empowerment, a declaration that we have a stake in our future. When we vote, we take control of our destiny and ensure that our voices are heard in the places of power where decisions are made. We vote not just for ourselves, but for our children, our community, and the generations to come.

The Bible may not directly mention voting, but it emphasizes values that align with civic participation, wise decision-making, and justice—values that are at the heart of voting.

Proverbs 11:14** (NIV): "For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers."

This verse speaks to the importance of collective decision-making. When we vote, we participate in that process, ensuring that leadership reflects the values and needs of the community.

Proverbs 31:8-9** (NIV) says: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

This verse calls us to advocate for justice and fairness, to be the voice for those who may not have one. When we vote, we do just that—we protect the rights and well-being of the community, especially the marginalized.

****Deuteronomy 1:13**** (NIV) reminds us: "Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you."

In the same way, voting allows us to choose leaders who are wise, respected, and who will act in the best interest of our communities.

Even ****Romans 13:1**** (NIV) emphasizes the importance of governance:

> "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

While this verse highlights respect for authority, it also implies our responsibility to engage in the governance process—to vote wisely for leaders who reflect justice and integrity. Repeat after me **"OUR VOTE IS OUR VOICE"**

But here's the truth: if we don't vote, we risk turning back the clock, going back to a time when our choices were not our own, when our voices were marginalized / powerless, when our rights were denied. If we don't vote, we may go back to the cotton fields—mentally, of the yesteryears. That is why we must treat every election, every opportunity to vote, as a chance to affirm our dignity and our power. Say it with me, **“WHEN WE VOTE WE WIN”**

We cannot ignore efforts like ****Project 2025****, a policy agenda that aims to reshape our government in ways that could directly impact our community. Proposed cuts to social safety nets, restrictions on reproductive rights, and a push to reduce environmental protections all highlight the stakes of today's political choices. These changes could affect access to healthcare, education, and economic stability for many, especially marginalized groups. Voting is our way to push back against policies that don't align with our values and to choose leaders who will stand for justice and equality.

I can't tell you who to vote for, but I encourage you to vote for someone who has a human feel—someone who understands the struggles, the triumphs, and the realities that everyday people face. Choose someone who will fight for justice, equality, and the values we hold dear.

Now, let's talk about how we can mobilize the vote using the 5 Es of Voting

1. Educate – Share your knowledge about the issues, the candidates, and the voting process. An informed voter is a powerful voter.
2. Engage– Get involved by working the polls, volunteering, or simply taking someone to vote. Our collective action strengthens our community.
3. Encourage – Motivate others to vote. Tell them, “You can do it!” Sometimes all it takes is a kind word to inspire someone to get involved.
4. Empower – Remind everyone that voting is their right. Tell them, “Go get it; it's yours!” There is power in exercising that right, and every vote makes a difference.
5. EARLY – Don't wait. Vote early to ensure your voice is heard and to avoid any last-minute challenges. Early voting is a powerful way to make sure that our voices are counted.

Our vote is our voice, and when we raise it together, it echoes throughout our city, our state, and our nation. So, let's make a commitment right now to keep raising our voices—loud and clear. Let's educate, engage, encourage, empower, and vote early.

TOGETHER **“OUR VOTE IS OUR VOICE” WHEN WE VOTE WE WIN”**

Thank you, and let's continue to sing this song of progress, justice, and change together.

THE COLUMBIA SC BRANCH NEEDS YOU PLEASE JOIN US AS WE BATTLE THESE ISSUES OF LIFE TODAY.