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National Association For The Advancement Of Colored

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August 6, 2012

New York City Voter Assistance Advisory Committee
Public Meeting, August 6, 2012, 5:30 PM
40 Rector Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10006

Statement by L. Joy Williams, 1st Vice-President of Brooklyn NAACP

Good Evening Chairman Chang and members of the Voter Assistance Advisory Committee. My name is L. Joy Williams and I am 1st Vice President of the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP.

I come before you this evening to share information that has been circulating among the public, via the internet, churches, social media and at community events/meetings in New York as well as other states.

The communication reads as follows:

*"Dear Friends & Family: FYI this is URGENT!!! and very IMPORTANT!!!
New Voter's Registration Rules - do you know?"*

Make sure your registration card is up to date and you have it ready with TO VOTE.

Please pass the word along. The rules have changed. If you have not voted since Nov 2008, you must re-register to vote 25 days prior to Nov or you will not be allowed to vote in the upcoming National election.

A great deal of people do not know this. Please tell your colleagues, friends, and family to check their voter registration cards and see if you are properly registered. Please check on this before August. A lot of kids in college are not aware who are eligible to vote.

They are not broadcasting this all over the NEWS, so it is up to us to Spread the Word About the New Rules."

The communication does not have any signature or author, yet I have personally seen emails, posts on Twitter and Facebook with this false information. A simple Google search with keywords within this message will produce some of these posts and several reputable organizations have been duped by this information which they have reposted to their followers and broader audience. Empirical data shows that members of the public are requesting to re-register because of the fear that their names may have been taken off the rolls after 2008.

As you are well aware, the NAACP has been at the forefront of protecting voting rights. In the wake of battles over voter ID laws and the purging of voter registration rolls across the country, I implore the members of this committee and agency to clarify this misinformation through both traditional and nontraditional methods.

New York City residents need to be informed of their voting rights and particularly those who are being targeted with this misinformation. In addition to using the traditional methods of outreach and education (for example direct mailings, newspaper, radio, and tv ads) I strongly urge the committee to make use of online and social media tools which are not only less expensive but are also where these rumors are most prevalent.

As part of its long history and tradition, the Brooklyn NAACP will continue to register and educate eligible voters of their rights and will be a loud voice in combating misinformation. We strongly urge the committee to commit the time and resources to ensure that not one voter is discouraged from exercising their right as a citizen of this country.

Thank You.