

Young african  
americans support  
president obama but  
turnout not a  
guarantee argum...

[Politics](#), [President](#)



Reilly Dowd, an online reporter for ABC news website, poses a rhetorical “Are you better off today than you were four years ago?” in his article “Young African Americans Support President Obama, but Turnout Not a Guarantee.” He further suggests the existence of a divide among young African American voters in the 2012 elections. From various sources as regards the 2008 presidential elections, President Obama won a staggering majority of the African American vote and a significant proportion of the vote from the young population under 30. It is a shared worry that much of the enthusiasm that helped bring the African Americans in droves to vote for the then little known Senator Barrack Obama might be absent during the 2012 call to the ballot. Dowd conveys to the reader that some young African Americans feel less enchanted this time around and that their best interest has not been served by President Obama, while others will continue to support and not blame the President for the massive problems that exist in this country today.

Throughout the entire article, the author employs the use of personal anecdotes, visual effect, and tones of optimism, cynicism, tolerance, sentimentality to drive his message across. He tries to give balance to his argument. For instance, he is not too critical of President Obama yet he is not a blind follower either. He has a realistic grasp of the challenge the President faces in order to succeed in his re-election campaign. First and most pertinent is the not so assured turn out of the African-American population and partly because of the new legislation in place locking out many African American voters from taking part in the election. The employment of these various styles and imagery also endears his adult

audience to his message and enforce the communication of his message. His argument is balanced but he seems to be focusing on the things President Obama needs to address to make his re-election campaign successful.

Dowd opens by posing a decisive question regarding the satisfaction of the public to Presidents Obama's term in office and whether they will vote for him again in 2012. Not only does the rhetorical question grab the reader's attention, but the title happens to be thought provoking as well as emotionally charged and this serves to enhance the reader's urge to read the article further. This point to the earlier mentioned emotional tones that the writer uses to endear readers to his cause. He masterly employs personal anecdotes and brings into the open the raw emotion of the people experience everyday problems for which the reader could relate to such as the feeling of ambivalence, disillusionment, hopelessness and disappointment. He writes, " Back then, the national voter turnout rate of African-Americans was 60 per cent. That year, in Jay-Z's hit song, " 99 Problems," he rapped, " If you don't like my lyrics you can press fast forward." So fast forward to 2012, there are more than 99 problems for this president, and a weakened enthusiasm is just one."

In a capture of disillusionment a supporter retorts, " Don't talk to me about voting or politics. My vote won't change a thing," while another reports undergoing depression every time they switch on the television to watch the news whereas they have not held a job for a period upwards of one year. The author is successful in personalizing some of the supporters' problems, which they are currently facing in the advent of President Obama's re-election campaign and this enhances the reader-writer connection.

Conversely, Dowd employs the same emotional and anecdotal approach that although the media seem to think that the African American community has lost that fervour that was witnessed in 2008, it still does exist. They will rise up again in droves with a lot of enthusiasm, optimism as well as passion and will vote for President Obama's second term in office. For example, in one anecdote, Dowd illustrates how some supporters believe that they are truly better off than they were four years ago; especially when it comes to social issues. These supporters feel that the President is doing the best he can for everyone despite the multitude of problems he inherited. They are convinced that the President is on the right course and needs more time to turn the economy around in this country. As a matter of fact, one supporter even thinks the opening question in Dowd's article is rather a stupid question. This is captured in the opening paragraph. To further illustrate the extensive use of anecdotes, the author quotes an immigrant student as saying " This is a not the same election as it was in 2008. At that time, the story was about the first African-American president of the United States". Nostalgically, Dowd captures the reader's interest by showing a remarkable photo of young people excitement and enthusiasm towards the 2008 Democratic presidential hopeful, Senator Barack Obama at a rally in Florida. The author presents only one photo in the article that is appealing to the reader's eye. The photo serves to evoke the memory of the emotional 2008 presidential election and how president Obama's victory was seen as a victory for all Americans. This acts to further endear the reader to the writer's argument, that Obama is still a good choice for the voters.

The author's knowledge of both political camps is clearly evident in the

course of the article and his use of this knowledge to balance his argument irrespective of the fact that the article is primarily about President Obama. It is worth noting that he does not distort any facts especially about Mitt Romney. He cites a recent Urban League study in his article, "The Hidden Swing Voters: Impact of African-Americans in 2012," highlighting the cornerstones to President Obama's victory in 2008 being certain swing states which were North Carolina, Virginia, Indiana and Florida. He notes, "If they don't turn out again in several key states and slip back down to the levels of eight years ago, it could cost Obama a second term."

The author points to the fact that the young generation both within the African American community and elsewhere will turn out and help re-elect President Obama to a second term in office. His competitor realizes this and also attempts to carve out a niche in this voter body by launching a campaign dubbed "Young Americans for Romney"

Dowd closes the article by talking about how the Democratic Party are using celebrities and social media to bring young people, African-Americans and senior citizens to the voting booth, but restrictive voter ID laws are threatening to disenfranchise and keep them away from the polls on Election Day. To combat voter ID laws, Dowd's reports that "the National Urban League's "Occupy the Vote" campaign to increase voter registration is aimed at ensuring people know what the laws are and that they understand what paperwork they need to provide to be able to vote". Dowd leads the reader to logically infer that perhaps young African Americans are less enthusiastic, but most will continue to support their President. He concludes his article by asking another provocative question: Will they vote? In doing

so the writer lets the reader choose whether or not President Obama is worth voting for, again.

His approach is highly effective in making the reader more politically aware and in setting the ball rolling as regards to the oncoming election. He has observed that as the election gets closer, with 50 days to go, the public is becoming more aware and more involved. What his article aims at doing, although as professionally and subtly as possible in journalistic writing, is enlighten the public on President Obama's achievements in office so far, and probably, what he stands to be able to do now that he has gained the momentum of one term in office.

## **Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor,

I agree with Dowd's article highlighting how young African Americans still support President Obama, but high turnout is questionable as compared to 2008. Dowd points out that President Obama received 66 per cent of young voters in 2008, but is expected to receive less in his re-election effort. As the author meticulously indicates, many young African Americans are divided about whether they are better off today than they were four years ago. Many thought that when the first African-American was elected as president that a lot of their troubles would instantly vanish. Obviously, that did not happen and many became disillusioned.

Dowd shares that some young voters contribute their lack of interest and ambivalence to the poor economy, which I believe Mitt Romney and the Republican Party will definitely try to exploit. The age group of 16 to 19 years old has a high unemployment rate of 39.3 per cent which is nearly

<https://assignbuster.com/young-african-americans-support-president-obama-but-turnout-not-a-guarantee-argumentative-essay-example/>

twice that of whites in the same age bracket, quoted in Dowd's article by one of Obama's supporters. I empathize with one supporter feelings of disillusionment with the whole 'change' platform. However, I cannot accept how some loyal supporters do not believe their vote will make a difference and may not return to the poll in November. I think it is wrong for them to blame President Obama for the depressed economy. On the other hand, I truly believe the author is correct in his assumption that the real purpose behind the voters ID laws is to suppress African-American vote in the November elections.

African-Americans are one of the demographics targeted by voter ID laws because they overwhelmingly vote Democrat, which Dowd vividly discusses in his article. Finally, an Obama supporter interviewed by Dowd still has much of the excitement seen in 2008. I agree that the 2012 election is not going to be like the milestone election it was in 2008. In 2008, there was much media attention about the First African American president of the United States. Dowd was correct in stating that President Obama will need to do more to mobilize support such as dispatching celebrities and social media, which is popular with young people. Organizations such as the Urban League's "Occupy the Vote" is helping to combat voter ID laws and increase young African Americans participation in the voting process. Overall, Dowd does a superb job explaining the feelings and need for young African Americans to get excited about going to the poll and vote. It will be misguided for young African Americans not to vote.

## **Works Cited**

DOWD, REILLY. " Young African-Americans Support President Obama, but Turnout Not a Guarantee." ABC News. ABC News Network, 23 Sept. 2012. Web. 03 Nov. 2012. .