

ALL SKINFOLK AIN'T KINFOLK

*Black Women's*

ELECTION GUIDE

A FILM BY ANGELA TUCKER

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# A HISTORIC ELECTION SEASON



Black women have long been the unsung heroes of our democratic system. From early abolitionists and suffragists like Sojourner Truth and Charlotte Forten to Fannie Lou Hamer in the Jim Crow South, Black women have fought to protect the right to vote for all throughout this country's history. Today, women of color are shaping the composition of the female electorate and influencing the priorities of presidential candidates. In this election cycle, over 15 million Black women who are eligible to vote will have the power to influence the priorities of the electorate by participating in primaries, local forums and national elections in the tradition of Black women serving as catalysts in movements for progressive change.

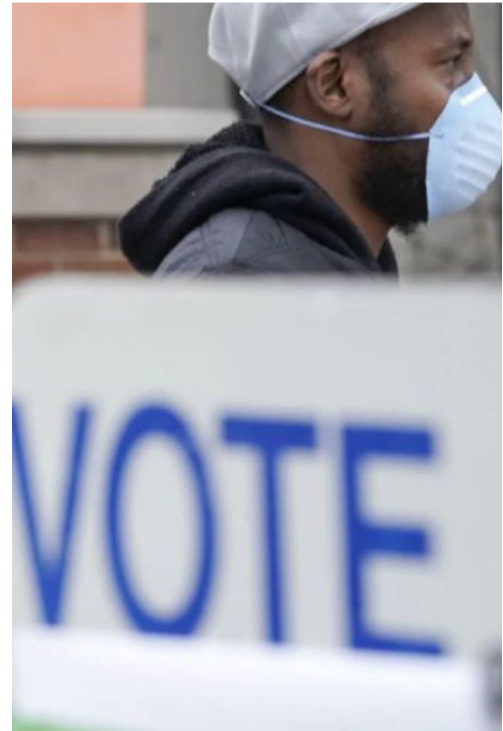


This election season is a critical litmus test of Black women's power, given the ongoing threats to democracy, including growing limitations by states and municipalities on electoral access and voting power for voters historically protected under the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The restrictions on equal protection across the country have suppressed universal access to the ballot box through measures like strict voter ID laws, shorter voting times, restricted registration and purging of voter rolls. The Supreme Court ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder* in 2013 provided fuel for many of these efforts by weakening the legislative framework. Since then, the barriers faced by eligible voters—including Black and Brown, young and older voters—have increased in states such as Alabama, Texas, Florida and Georgia. Between 2013 and 2018, 24 states introduced or carried over at least 70 bills restricting voting access.



## Voting After COVID-19

COVID-19 presents special challenges for voting. In some cases, it may require a special effort to vote. For example, in Louisiana, voters currently must provide an “excuse” to be eligible to vote by absentee ballot. Officials there have proposed a plan for the upcoming primary and municipal elections that would allow voters with specific underlying medical conditions or who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 to request absentee ballots. But this does not allow all voters who may be vulnerable to COVID-19 to receive absentee ballots. Louisiana also requires that each absentee ballot be signed by a witness to confirm that the identity of the voter matches the ballot. These requirements could put a significant number of Louisiana voters at risk by forcing them to leave their homes or invite others into their homes. We each hold power in our vote. Let’s work to ensure that Black women voters can cast their ballots this year.



## Tips To Protect Your Vote:

- Make sure to register to vote.
- If early voting is available in your state, take advantage of it.
- If you need an absentee ballot, make sure to obtain a ballot by the deadline in your state.
- If you are voting in person and do not know where to go to vote, call your local election office or an elected official or visit their website in advance.
- Plan ahead: check your schedule, request time off and arrange transportation to make sure you have enough time for the long lines.
- You may need your photo ID, water and a face mask.
- If you have a problem with a voting machine, seek help and report it through your local election office.
- If you are denied the right to vote, ask to vote via a provisional ballot.
- If you are concerned about your eligibility to vote, contact a local or national voter protection organization. The list below includes resources to help you spot any voter fraud schemes in your area.
- Report election disinformation.



*"If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free."  
- Combahee River Collective*

# KEY CAMPAIGN ISSUES



## Criminal Justice

Key issues emerging in the 2020 election cycle include police accountability for shootings of unarmed victims, marijuana decriminalization, bail reform, reentry and the release of vulnerable inmates. While politicians have achieved bipartisan consensus on a narrow criminal justice reform agenda, the views of Republican and Democratic candidates still diverge on a range of policies, including sentencing and the rehabilitation of incarcerated persons. Other issues, such as the privatization of prisons, are ripe for debate. Finally, how funding is prioritized and allocated to meet law enforcement and security aims—as well as rehabilitation and restorative justice goals—has become an increasingly urgent issue for local constituents as well as national policymakers.

## Environmental Justice and Climate Change

The Trump administration has rolled back many of the federal air and water protections and other environmental regulations that impact the health and wellbeing of communities of color throughout the country. And infrastructure agendas have failed to address holistically climate resilience planning and the special risks of natural disasters in coastal areas. The prospect of expanding solar energy and green technologies also raises equity and climate justice concerns that will make this election a defining one.

## Racial and Gender Equality

From Charleston to Atlanta, acts of racial terror have shaken communities and taken lives too often for any candidate to ignore. Hate speech against persons of color also threatens peace in our communities, schools and homes. The current moment demands smart and inclusive agendas to tackle hate crimes, White supremacist speech, xenophobia and issues of reparation, justice and systemic racism. More than this, Black women still face vast inequities, with studies showing that close to half have experienced gender discrimination when applying for jobs or seeking promotions or equal pay.

## Health Care and COVID-19

Long before the arrival of the novel coronavirus in U.S. states, Black women supported quality, affordable health care for all. More broadly, the experiences of Black women reveal harmful intersections of health and racial equity that have led to vast disparities, including the high infant mortality rates and lack of access to reproductive rights and care that prevail among Black women. In 2020, voters will also be looking to leaders to address vulnerabilities in employment, health care, housing and transportation that COVID-19 has heightened.

## Economic Empowerment

We know that the economy is not working for everyone. In particular, Black women without college degrees and those with annual household incomes of less than \$50,000 struggle to support themselves and their families. Cuts to big corporations and the wealthy, investment in entrepreneurship and innovation and access to capital in communities where small businesses can offer needed growth will also be key issues in this election cycle.

## Our Democracy

In recent years, our democracy has faced seismic shifts and novel challenges. The presence of money in government, state governance, foreign influence, new voter suppression tactics and the electoral college have raised stakes and unprecedented questions of fair and equal representation. This will arguably be one of the most historic elections in our history, with the potential to shape questions fundamental to the future of our constitutional democracy.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR VOTERS



## **BLACK VOTES MATTER**

Dedicated to increasing power in Black communities through voter registration, policy advocacy, organizational training/development, and election activities.

## **ROCK THE VOTE**

Helps build young people's political power and increase their participation in our democracy. Voter registration by state is available on the organization's website.

## **BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE**

An independent, nonpartisan law and policy organization that works to reform, revitalize, and when necessary, defend our country's systems of democracy and justice.

## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

Working to empower voters and defend democracy through information, voter registration, advocacy participation & inclusion. Also pledges to challenge all efforts and tactics that threaten our democracy and limit the ability of voters to exercise their right to vote.

## **ELECTION PROTECTION**

Works year-round to ensure that all voters have an equal opportunity to vote and have that vote count. Made up of more than 100 local, state and national partners, Election Protection uses a wide range of tools and activities to protect, advance and defend the right to vote.

## **YOUR LOCAL ACLU AFFILIATE**

The ACLU protects your freedom through a nationwide network of staffed offices in every state, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. To request legal assistance or get involved, find your local ACLU affiliate on the website.

## **BLACK FUTURES LAB**

Works with Black people to transform our communities, building Black political power and changing the way that power operates—locally, statewide, and nationally.

## **THE SUPERMAJORITY**

A membership-based home for women's activism that affirms and builds women's power, training and mobilizing a community of all ages, races, and backgrounds to become effective advocates and build a more equitable future for all women.

## **WOMENX**

Focused on creating intentional meeting spaces for Black Trans Women, Cis women and gender-nonconforming community leaders and activists to talk with each other about the Democratic primary and our impact on 2020 elections.

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The Skinfolk Engagement Campaign's Impact Producer is Krystal Tingle.

Our Impact Coordinator is Jheanelle Ferguson.



## ABOUT WORLD CHANNEL

The WORLD Channel mission is to inform and inspire with real stories from around the world.

## ABOUT THE TUCKERGURL INC

Founded in 2006 by Angela Tucker and Iyesatu Chari, TuckerGurl LLC is a production company for feature length films, television and web series, advocacy videos and theatrical productions. We are passionate about telling compelling and irreverent stories about underrepresented communities.

## ABOUT RED OWL

Founded by veteran impact strategists Eliza Licht and Alice Quinlan in collaboration with Nyasha Laing, and Jessie Rovera Debruin, Red Owl seeks to bolster community through the power of art. With a collaborative and responsive approach, we work with filmmakers and changemakers to leverage the power of strategy, storytelling and partnership to create meaningful change on the local and national level. From development to distribution, we work with filmmakers at all stages of their film's journey to define impact strategy and implement campaigns that engage deeply with nuanced issues. Using a boutique model, Red Owl draws on 25+ years of experience in the impact and engagement field to support films with vision and perspective.