

# National Black Church Initiative

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## **National Black Church Initiative Planned to Registered 500,000 New African Americans Voters in Memory of Troy Davis in Georgia** *Boycott calls off because of the Economic Impact*

**Washington DC** – The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a faith-based coalition of 34,000 churches comprised of 15 denominations and 15.7 million African Americans dedicated to the eradication of racial disparities around the world is urging all religious communities to join together in the promotion of peace. Our Black leadership partners - 66,000 churches nationwide – are called upon to use the full force of our combined 100,000 churches to draw attention to the imperative of opposing the death penalty and the nation’s racially charged criminal justice system which unjustly incarcerates African Americans en masse. We mourn the death of Troy Anthony Davis who was the latest victim of that heinous system but we do not believe that an economic boycott of Georgia will be as effective as our initiative to mobilize politically to register 500,000 unregistered voters.

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of the National Black church Initiative vows, ‘We will unseat any Democrat, Republican or Independent politician who supported the execution of Troy Davis. Killing is against the Bible no matter who does it. We will make our voices heard at the polls.’

The unjust and morally reprehensible execution of Troy Anthony Davis which has been stained by compelling evidence of rampant racism in the Georgia state criminal justice system was an enormous tragedy. Unfortunately, it is but one of many such tragedies as African Americans are consistently victimized by what the scholar Michelle Alexander has aptly named the “new Jim Crow”—a criminal justice system that is anything but colorblind as evidenced by the mass incarceration and mass execution of Blacks far in excess of their proportion of the population. The NBCI mourns the death of Mr. Davis and is filled with righteous anger at a system that is destroying so many African American lives, families and communities. We plan to rechannel our anger into a massive movement at the poll come 2012.

That anger is shared by many other Americans who have recently been motivated to make the people of Georgia literally pay for its unjust actions through an economic boycott of the

state. While the NBCI empathizes with this movement we do not believe that it is appropriate during this time of economic crisis. We have therefore decided to call off the planned boycott in response to the execution of Troy Davis because it would have a negative impact on jobs in the African American community.

Racism in the criminal justice system generally and in the application of the death penalty specifically is a system problem that was highlighted by the egregious nature of the Troy Davis case and the grace that Mr. Davis demonstrated throughout his ordeal. However, it is precisely because of the systemic nature of this problem that we believe that a boycott would be ineffective. A smarter and more effective way of impacting and reforming the criminal justice system would be to mobilize politically to channel our collective outrage into change. The NBCI has therefore decided to register 500,000 unregistered voters in Georgia so as to empower the people to reform the criminal justice system so that no more innocents are executed.

The NBCI will be making a ballot issue of the death penalty and will use the full force of the Black church to end this barbaric practice. Towards that end we have obtained commitments of support from 50 civic groups and we will be working the ACLU and NAACP to create a new civil rights movement against the death penalty before the 2012 election. Our reasons for this are outrage over not only the execution of Troy Davis but also the draconian immigration laws in Georgia and the new voter ID laws in the state that is trying to undermine the power of the Black voter. The time to take a stand is now.

### **About NBCI**

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 800 African American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI's mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI's programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. Visit our website at [www.naltblackchurch.com](http://www.naltblackchurch.com).