

## Recent Illegal Voting Charges in Iredell County, North Carolina by Rev. William Barber

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While the NAACP never relishes when citizens are charged with criminal offenses, recent indictments regarding possible voting fraud violations have proven that the current laws to protect against fraud are working well in Iredell County and North Carolina. No matter how these cases are finally adjudicated, it is clear that the laws that we already have on the books are sufficient. There is no need to politicize this incident or try to justify the adoption of voter ID laws because of this incident. The truth is a voter ID law will result in the disenfranchisement of almost 500,000 North Carolinians, significantly impacting African-Americans, Latinos, poor people, students, the elderly and other minorities.

We currently use signature attestation to certify voters are who they claim to be. Violations of our voting laws carry a felony penalty and the court system adjudicates those who violate the law. The tried and true methods of candidates and their representatives watching the polls, and examining the addresses of those who voted worked well. These procedures for protecting the dignity and integrity of the voting process have worked for hundreds of years. This is a situation that would not have been prevented by a voter ID requirement.

Guilt or innocence is not a matter for us to decide but for the courts to determine. We respect that all accused parties are innocent until proven guilty. We also respect the right for this case to proceed through the court system based on its merits. We are pleased that the system that protects the integrity of our elections worked. The laws against voter fraud are tough. While respecting the rights of all who are involved in this matter, the criminal justice system will now seek to determine the guilt or innocence of those citizens who have been charged, and then determine the appropriate punishment for anyone found guilty.

The Statesville NAACP respects the rights of all people who have been charged with a criminal offense. And the Statesville NAACP also respects the work of the investigators and prosecutors that proved once again we have strong protections in place to prevent voter fraud.

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Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.