



polls for the November 2012 election. That's two percent higher than registered White voters, and nearly six percent higher than U.S. voters overall.

Although many view this percentage as positive, given the years of pain and suffering endured by our relatives who built this Country, fought its wars and raised its children, we as African Americans, collectively, should be more than ashamed. One-third of eligible African-American voters not voting is unacceptable.



Andrew Goodman (20), James Chaney (21), and Michael Schwerner (24). These three civil rights workers were among the many who risked their lives and were murdered registering voters in the South during Freedom Summer in 1964.

Our forefathers and foremothers did not allow transportation issues, bad weather, bad jobs, political games, illiteracy, threats, bodily injury, assault, etc. to dissuade them from establishing the right to vote.

Today, when you exercise your freedom to vote or not to vote, remember who provided the option of that freedom and what they paid.

The agency that oversees Wisconsin elections predicts 20 percent of eligible voters will come out for today's spring election.

Statewide races include a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court and a constitutional amendment that decides how the state Supreme Court's chief justice is chosen, whether by seniority or selection by their peers.

**A photo ID is NOT required** for the spring elections today. It is the last election before the state's voter ID law fully takes effect following a U.S. Supreme Court decision last month.

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## The MMSD School Referendum Please Vote

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In December 2014 the Board of Education voted unanimously to ask our community to consider a \$41 million referendum on the spring election ballot to address the most immediate facility needs in sixteen Madison schools. If passed, the referendum would fund projects to improve accessibility, add learning space to overcrowded schools, renovate buildings in need of repair and upgrade the district's technology infrastructure to support 21st century learning.

The sixteen schools in the plan include Mendota Elementary, where close to 58% of the students are African American. Mendota Elementary School is an anchor to its Northside neighborhood. If passed, money from the referendum would provide the school with renovations and a "face lift" with improved lighting and mechanical systems, a regrading of the parking lot where rainwater causes flooding near entrances to the school, as well as an elevator to ensure the school is accessible to students, family and community members who have mobility impairments.

At Jefferson Middle School on the West side, a complete renovation will provide classroom walls where now there are only partitions between classroom spaces. The school was originally built in the 1970s with an "open school" concept. With classroom walls and a new HVAC system, students will be less distracted by noise from adjoining spaces. They will be able to work more effectively in cooperative groups to engage in hands-on learning.

These are just a few examples of the many significant improvements proposed for sixteen schools where the needs are most immediate.

If the referendum passes, East High, where students of color comprise 60% of the student body, will get a major renovation to its auditorium. For many years, the school has been limited in the kinds of productions it can feature because of the condition of the stage and seating. With a new auditorium the East side community as a whole will have greater opportunities to use this shared space, as is currently the case in the Memorial, West and La Follette High School neighborhoods.

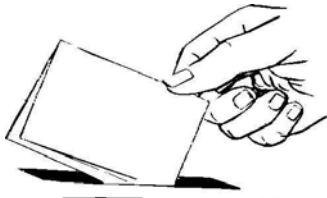
The referendum will require a tax increase on an average Madison home valued at \$237,678 (the average single-family home value in Madison) of approximately \$61.80, for the next 10 years, after which the debt will be paid.

### **Bottom line ...**

The cost to house a prisoner in Wisconsin is **\$23,156** per year for security and administration, see [http://www.ehow.com/about\\_5409377\\_average-cost-house-inmates-prison.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_5409377_average-cost-house-inmates-prison.html).

**Do the (long-term) math. Then decide on what you want your money to be expended.**

## **Union Cab to Provide Free Rides to the Polls and Back**



**VOTE**

Today, 7 April 2015, Union Cab will be offering free cab rides between your home and your local polling place. Taxis and accessible vans\* will be available to serve you while polls are open.\*\*

Making an advanced reservation for your ride will help with timely transportation, but on-demand service will also be available. Please make sure you allow plenty of time for wait and travel to and from the polls.

This is a non-partisan effort on the part of Union Cab. People who need transportation to their polling place will only need to **call 242-2000**. Rides will be provided between a person's polling place and their home address.

Union Cab will provide rides free of charge to people in Madison and the following connecting municipalities: Sun Prairie, Middleton, Monona, Shorewood, Town of Madison, Town of Blooming Grove (segments within Madison), Town of Burke (segments within Madison), Maple Bluff, and Fitchburg (north of Lacy Rd).

\*Accessible service may have a 30-60 minute wait.

\*\*Free service to the polls will end 30 minutes before the polls close. If you are already at your polling place and need a ride home, the free service will still be available.

## **In Closing ...**

The agency that oversees Wisconsin elections predicts 20 percent of eligible voters will come out for today's election.

Aside from the selection of the Mayor and City Alders and school referendum, a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court and a constitutional amendment that decides how the state Supreme Court's chief justice is chosen, whether by seniority or selection by their peers, are on the ballot.

**Today is a very, very important election. Please, please vote and encourage others to vote.**

Remember, a photo ID is **NOT** required for today's 7 April spring election. It is the last election before the state's voter ID law fully takes effect following a U.S. Supreme Court decision last month.

## Now Accepting Articles & Photos

We are currently accepting stories and photographs for future issues of "If One Fails the Community Fails." Please submit your stories and event photos for consideration. Submission does not guarantee placement in this publication.

Stories should be 200 words or less and electronic photos should be 300 DPI or better in JPG format (NO SCANNED PHOTOS). Include captions for each photo (who, what, when, and where). Photos without captions WILL NOT be considered.

**Submit your stories and photos (with captions) to**  
[president@africanamericancommunication.com](mailto:president@africanamericancommunication.com).