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"Post-Racial" America? Not Yet.

**NAACP Legal Defense Fund Releases Report on Why the Fight for
Voting Rights Continues
After the Election of President Barack Obama**

(New York, NY) — Today, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's (LDF) Political Participation Group, released *"Post-Racial" America? Not Yet*, a report detailing why the fight for voting rights continues one year after the historic election of President Barack Obama.

"Amid the excitement of President Obama's election, 'post-racial' has become a powerful buzzword in our social and political lexicon, and some have asserted that America has completely overcome the racially discriminatory practices that have endured long past the work of the Civil Rights Movement," said John Payton, LDF President and Director-Counsel.

"President Barack Obama's election as the first African American President marks continued progress toward our highest ideals of freedom and equality, and affords all Americans great hope about the promises of our Constitution," said Ryan P. Haygood, Co-Director of LDF's Political Participation Group. "Yet some mistake this critical milestone as the end of our nation's ongoing journey toward racial equality."

With voting as its focus, this report confronts the myth that President Obama's election ushered America into a "post-racial" era by examining two recent developments in the area of race and politics.

First, *"Post-Racial" America? Not Yet* examines the "post-racial" argument made in *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District Number One v. Holder (MUD)*, a recent unsuccessful constitutional challenge to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, a core provision that guards against voting discrimination where it has been most severe. In *MUD*, the plaintiff argued that the election of President Obama rendered Section 5 no longer necessary. This report contrasts the plaintiff's argument with the more than 16,000-page record of ongoing voting discrimination considered by Congress when it voted to renew Section 5 in 2006.

Second, the report demonstrates how President Obama's victory provides important evidence of great progress, while also illustrating the ongoing salience of race in American democracy. Exit polls from the 2008 Presidential Election show that a record 95 percent of African Americans, 67 percent of Latinos, and 62 percent of Asian Americans voted for President Obama nationally, compared to only 43 percent of white voters — the only racial group that did not cast a majority of votes for President Obama.

Voting results in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana bring these racially polarized voting trends into even sharper focus. Of the white voters in these three states, only 10 percent in Alabama, 11 percent in Mississippi, and 14 percent in Louisiana voted for President Obama.

"Post-Racial" America? Not Yet shows that President Obama's victory was the result of two key sources of votes: an increase in his share of white voters in the jurisdictions not covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and a dramatic nationwide increase in his share of votes cast by voters of color.

"In the dawn of a new era, the challenge lies in reconciling two truths embodied by President Obama's election: in the context of race relations in America, a great deal has changed; but to achieve full equality, a great deal of work still lies ahead," concluded Haygood.

"Post-Racial" America? Not Yet is available, free of charge, by clicking [HERE](#)

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ABOUT LDF

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) is America's legal counsel on issues of race. Through advocacy and litigation, LDF focuses on issues of education, voter protection, economic justice and criminal justice. We encourage students to embark on careers in the public interest through scholarships and internship programs. LDF pursues racial justice to move our nation toward a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all.

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