

**WE WANT YOU!! A CALL FOR ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP FROM**  
**THE BLACK POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (B-PEP)**

**August 18, 2016**

*"What do we do? WE VOTE In Each and Every Election! We vote! We vote in Each and Every Election!" This is the rallying cry of the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP). Since 1986. Tim Stevens and numerous other "B-PEPers" have worked diligently to make this is a reality.*

**The Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) has for some THIRTY YEARS been strongly advocating that African Americans VOTE in EACH and EVERY election! With this Presidential November 8th Election upon us, with the balance of the Supreme Court at play and the political direction of our nation in question, voter participation is possibly more important than ever! Our vote could indeed be critical to the outcome of this election, both locally and across the nation.**

**For many years B-PEP has partnered with the Community Intensive Supervision Program (CISP) with what we have called B-PEP's 'ROLL TO THE POLLS', which provides FREE transportation on a non-partisan basis, to anyone who needs it in many of our predominantly African American communities on Election Day. We have done this both in Primary Elections and in General Elections. For the November 8, 2016 General Election that tradition will continue. Our intention, however, is to expand our Roll to the Polls program. We hope to do this in partnership with other area organizations and agencies. We would love to have the partnership of area churches, throughout the Metropolitan Pittsburgh Area to provide church vans, with drivers, to augment our B-PEP Roll to the Polls initiative for this Presidential Election and beyond. We also want each church to begin to market B-PEP's ELECTION PROTECTION PROGRAM through which we send volunteers and staff members out on Election Day to visit various polling locations to ensure that there are no problems, and/or to report to us when there *are* problems. We are also calling upon area churches to provide B-PEP Voter Registration Teams within their churches. Registration ends on October 11th and it is important that all of us do what we can to make certain that we are registering as many new voters as possible. Spread the word, help register more people to vote and help us to get them out to vote. Churches, organizations, agencies and dedicated individuals who like to get involved are urged to contact the Black Political Empowerment Project at [412-212-8775](tel:412-212-8775) or at [b-pepinfo@b-pep.net](mailto:b-pepinfo@b-pep.net) to add your voice and willingness to be a strong partner to B-PEP's efforts to politically empower our community. You can also reach us through [412-758-2056](tel:412-758-2056) and speak with B-PEP's Civic Engagement Coordinator, Lorraine Cook Cross.**

**Interested churches, groups and individuals will have a special opportunity to join with representatives of the Black Political Empowerment Project at the East Liberty**

**Busway, near the East Liberty Giant Eagle, on Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm where new B-PEP billboards will be unveiled, new B-PEP yard signs, along with the announcement of new B-PEP bulkhead signs which will be appearing for two months in some forty (40) Port Authority buses. Please call us if you plan to be with us.**

**In addition to carrying out the Mission of B-PEP to urge African Americans to vote in each and every election, B-PEPs other initiatives provide a broad platform for non-partisan political advocacy and action, as well as for civil rights, social justice and peace.**

**The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV) was launched on February 8, 2007 out of the need to address the issue of violence in our communities. According to an alarming report that year, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was leading the nation in homicide rates for African Americans. A working group comprised of youth, street level workers, community and religious leaders, representatives from government and education institutions, and concerned citizens from across the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, was established to identify strategies and ways to significantly decrease the violence which plagued many of the communities in the Pittsburgh region. Hundreds of people came together, over a period of many months to create a comprehensive, anti-violence strategic document – *Strategies for Change*, completed in March of 2008. A second, expanded edition -- *Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities*, and a companion document for schools and youth-serving organizations – contained hundreds of action points, strategies, and suggestions for implementation by community partners from athletes to youth, was completed in 2013. Our CAV Working Group, during this past couple of years, has been identifying additional new strategies for a third edition of our CAV document which will be available soon. We continue to seek partners in the implementation and mobilization of the strategies which have been identified.**

**The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence has also introduced the Youth Summit Program, which is taking the message of anti-violence to area schools. We have conducted summits for students from Brashear, University Prep, Perry, CAPA, Westinghouse, and Holy Family Academy. The Youth Summit coordinators are diligently working to bring the Youth Summit Programs to more schools this year.**

**The Corporate Equity and Inclusion Roundtable (CEIR) is another B-PEP initiative spearheaded by Chairman and CEO, Tim Stevens. The purpose of CEIR is to achieve higher levels of inclusion of African Americans and people of color in terms of diversity in employment, in business ownership and in business development throughout Pittsburgh and the Southwestern Pennsylvania region.**

**The Roundtable's vision is to bring about measurable lasting change and breakthroughs in workforce diversity, equity, inclusion and economic opportunities. CEIR held its Fourth Annual Conference on June 20, 2016 at Duquesne University, hosted by Mayor Bill Peduto, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, and Allegheny Conference on Community Development CEO, Dennis Yablonsky, in partnership with several key agencies, organizations and corporate leaders, bringing together a truly diverse group of people to have a collective commitment to "Create Pebbles of Possibilities for Ladders to Opportunities."**

**The Black Political Empowerment Project looks forward to your partnership in B-PEP's voter registration, Roll to the Polls, and Election Protection efforts, as well as your participation in the work of the Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV) and in the of the Corporate Equity and Inclusion Roundtable (CEIR). Visit our new website at [www.b-pep.net](http://www.b-pep.net), email us at [b-pepinfo@b-pep.net](mailto:b-pepinfo@b-pep.net), [cav.pgh@gmail.com](mailto:cav.pgh@gmail.com) or [ceiroundtable@gmail.com](mailto:ceiroundtable@gmail.com). You may also call us 412-212-8775 or at [412-758-7898](tel:412-758-7898).**

**Also please mark your calendars for the showing of the video highlighting Thomas Merton Center's June 20, 2016 Annual New Person Award event which honored B-PEP Chair, CEO and founder Tim Stevens. The video will be shown each Monday evening in September at 9:00 pm on Comcast 21 and Verizon Fios, and available on the internet at [www.youtube.com/richfishpgh](http://www.youtube.com/richfishpgh). The videographer/editor for this project was Rich Fishkin and Carlana Rhoten is the producer of Progressive Pittsburgh Notebook TV Series.**

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