I Need a Favor

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November 2, 2022 By Paul Kawata

America goes to the polls. I could write an impassioned plea to vote, but I would be preaching to the choir. As a community that fights infectious chronic viruses that impact millions of marginalized Americans, we are dependent on federal support. Our ability to end the HIV, STD & Hepatitis epidemics, build a national PrEP program, take care of seniors living with HIV, and the fight for equality and justice needs a supportive Congress.

Elections have consequences. Right now, there are still candidates who question the results of the 2020 election. If Congress can't agree on the facts, how can we have a functioning government? That is why this election is so important, but you know this.

I need a favor. Studies show that personal outreach is one of the most effective ways to get people to vote. Will you consider texting your friends and family? Here is what I'm sending.

"Please vote because the stakes have never been higher. I am worried for our future. The world we are leaving our children has too many challenges. This election is about the future of America. Democracy literally sits in the balance, and we can make a difference.

I know this sounds extreme, but it is also very real. The world has never been more difficult, and it is easy to give up hope. Not voting means they win. Thank you."

Keep it simple. The message doesn't need to be long, but it does need to be personal. Speak your truth and vote like your life depends on it.

Next Up: Affirmative Action

The Supreme Court is taking another look at Affirmative Action. On Monday there were opening arguments about the use of race in affirmative action college admissions. Currently, race can be one of multiple factors. The court under Justice Thomas could move to completely exclude race. The ruling is much larger than college admissions because the decision will be used to determine if race can ever be factor in things like contracting and procurement. NMAC is concerned that in their efforts to build a colorblind society, this Supreme Court decision will unfairly advantage White cisgender heterosexual men. The pretext is a world where we are all equal but that belies the reality of daily life. For HIV, where race, sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity are core factors, this decision could impact our ability to end the epidemics of HIV, STDs, and Hepatitis.

Judge O’Connor Asked to Scrap ACA’s Preventive Care Rules

As a follow-up to a court case that could have a profound impact on our work, last week a group of conservative employers in Texas asked District Court Judge Reed O’Connor to toss out all the rules that the ACA’s Preventive Services Task Force created for what insurers must cover and to halt enforcement of them nationwide. Specifically, they objected to paying for HIV PrEP and STD services for gay men.

O’Connor had already agreed with the challengers in September that the mandates violated their religious rights and that the task force does not have the legal authority because they weren’t appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Now, the court will consider a “universal” ruling that could throw the ACA into chaos.

Make no mistake, they are using a “technical” issue to backdoor the ACA. As with Roe, gun control, affirmative action, and now the ACA, the courts are reshaping America. We urge the Biden administration, Secretary Becerra, and Attorney General Garland to figure out a fix, so this case does not go to SCOTUS.

Yours in the Struggle,

Paul Kawata

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