It’s time to turn out and bring out our community to vote

October 30, 2018 By Matthew Rose

For the last few years, a growing movement has been sweeping this country and my chosen field: discussions of how we plan to end the HIV epidemic. Our best thinking, the promise of new scientific breakthroughs and understanding, a whole lotta gumption, passion and the ability to still dream big have lead several jurisdictions to create and implement plans across the country with the common goal of ending the HIV epidemic. However, one key fact remains: no end the epidemic plan can survive, make ground or transform the way we approach epidemic unless it is also coupled with the political will and adequate resources to effectively implement it to the appropriate scale.

We cannot settle for the status quo. We must remind ourselves that we once dreamed big enough to demand that a system change in response to our passion, pain, and hope. Our shared movement’s history reminds us that collectively we can help bend the will of political decision-makers once more to propel us forward.

The question that was asked and answered before is being asked again: do we have the political will we need to make these plans to end the epidemic spark the next great push towards our stated goal. As we head into the election season, it incumbent on us to push for our aspirational dreams. While everyone is not at a position to ask for support for an end of the epidemic plan will make futile ground for changing the epidemic needs to begin now. The chance to remain, people, what happens when our community gathers, focuses and unleashes our power to change the world. So, I ask two things of you today that you engage and that you grow.

First, I ask that you personally engage in this upcoming election cycle. The stakes are too high for you not to participate. Circumstances require that you do more than you have ever done before. I know it’s not fair to ask. But, if we push ourselves one on step further, we can move the center of the dialogue further then where it currently is. Specifically, we can move in a direction that allows us to find the will and obtain the resources we need to make our plans to end this epidemic a reality.

Second, I ask that you commit to ensuring that members of your community and social networks also engage in the mid-term elections. To make a plan to vote and bring your community out with you ask yourself the following questions:

When will you vote?

Morning/Afternoon/Evening

Where is your polling place?

How are you getting there?

Who is going with you?

Myself/family/friends/everyone I can find

What are the provisional ballot rules in my state?

Do I need identification if so what counts?

Can I vote early? If so where at?

Come what may after our votes are cast and the results of the election on November 6th are announced, our work does not end. To build political will two critical pieces of engagement must occur. We have to engage politicians at all levels. Asking them about their commitments to our causes and the people we represent, live with, and love. It is a question of making them do the hard work to answer the call of public service.

It's time to do our part and bring out our community to vote and get accountability for our needs and asks.

November 6, 2018 is a day that should be marked on everyone's calendar.

Why This Election Matters:

- A GENUINELY MASSIVE AMOUNT OF GOVERNMENT IS UP FOR ELECTION:
  - All 435 seats in the United States House of Representatives
  - 34 of the 100 seats in the United States Senate class
  - 39 state and territorial governorships and
  - Numerous other state and local elections will also be contested.

- THE IMPACT OF THIS ELECTION WILL BE FELT FOR OVER A DECADE:
  - On the national level, control of Congress could determine the laws (and the judges who interpret those laws) for maybe even longer.
  - On the local/state election level, the winners of this election will draw the political districts

that will impact representation until well beyond 2030;

Brought to you by the NMAC Policy Team

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