



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Many Opinions, Suggestions for Future, at Sanders' Post Trump Election Meeting

JAMES SANDERS JR. November 12, 2016



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) held a post-presidential election community meeting on Saturday at the Black Spectrum Theatre in Jamaica to discuss the road that led to the unexpected election of Donald Trump as the next Commander-In-Chief, what it means for the future of our country and what steps the community should take moving forward to ensure that their voices are heard.

"I think a vote for Trump is a fundamental misunderstanding of who Trump is and what he represents," Sanders said, adding, "Trump is such a danger to America as a whole and to black people, in particular. If you were going to cast a protest vote, you could have gone with Jill Stein or Gary Johnson, but when you are voting for a person who says he has a noose for you, then you're voting for the noose."

Sanders called Hillary Clinton talented and capable, but cited her strong ties to Wall Street and the country's elite, also known as the top 1% percent of earners, as contributing to her downfall. Meanwhile, Trump, a billionaire, was able to become a hero of working class people despite cheating small businesses and admitting to not paying federal taxes because he conveyed a message that appealed to this disaffected group of voters. Trump's stand against trade agreements like the pending Trans-Pacific Partnership and promises of lower taxes and increased job creation served to detract from the often racist, sexist and anti-immigrant views he conveyed on the campaign trail.

"They ended up forgiving him over and over again, and that man needed forgiveness every day," Sanders said.

Some 80 people attended the event, which was co-hosted by State Senator Leroy Comrie and Assembly Member-Elect Clyde Vanel. It also featured panelists, the Rev. Dr. Johnnie Green, Senior Pastor of Mount Neboh Baptist Church, and President and CEO of Mobilizing Preachers and Communities (MPAC), and Oster G. Bryan, First Vice President of CommUnity 1st and President of the St. Albans Civic Improvement Association.

Senator Comrie said Clinton's loss could be attributed to a multitude of factors including low voter turnout among minorities and women, a failed push by the media and the Democratic Party to convince people to support a candidate that many viewed as flawed and not representative of their needs, along with socioeconomic factors and changes in the faith

based community and the dynamics of unions. Comrie added that residents in Southeast Queens should remain positive despite the outcome of the presidential election because of their great ability to organize and work collectively to affect positive change on a local level.

Oster Bryan, a registered life-long Democrat, said he voted for Trump, as a form of protest, and cited dissatisfaction with the progress of the party over the last 50 years, including a lack of improvements to public education.

Rev. Dr. Johnny Green said the election of Donald Trump has divided the nation and turned it upside down. He added that it is hard to anticipate what the future will hold because Trump is unlike any candidate the country has seen in its previous history. However, he remained slightly optimistic that Trump would change some of his controversial views, or at least soften them, now that he has met with President Obama and is privy to the same daily briefings. Having access to more information, Green said, could cause Trump to rethink certain positions. Green also echoed the sentiments of many others at the meeting regarding Clinton being a less than perfect candidate who failed to galvanize the black vote.

“There was a lot of backlash from the black community,” Green said. “She did not get the black support she hoped to get. How could she even desire the black support when this is the same woman who called us superpredators? This is the same woman who supported the laws that her husband had passed that incarcerated an unprecedented number of African-American men and women, and many of them are still incarcerated today. So I’m sorry, we have to live with Donald Trump for at least the next four years because the chickens have come home to roost in our own backyard.”

Attendees had their own ideas about the Trump presidency. Some said the standards for who could be elected president were lowered by the media. Others said neither candidate represented their views. Some blamed the Trump win on a lack of voter education, while still

others believed the country just wasn't ready for the first female president.

Moving forward, there were many opinions on what could be done to affect positive change, even with expected hindrances of a Trump presidency. Carl Clay, the founder of the Black Spectrum Theatre, noted that change starts at the local level and residents need to set the agenda for elected officials at the city, state and federal levels, not the other way around. Others called for increased voter education and the strengthening of community organization and involvement. Senator Comrie cited the importance of people power and the effectiveness of peaceful protests stating that Trump should have many sleepless nights in the White House, always having the voice of the people and their opinions on his mind. There have already been protests in several cities around the country since the election.