

Kamala Harris in PlayersTV | October 17, 2024

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Speakers:

CJ McCollum - 21.1%
Kamala Harris - 65.2%
Chris Paul - 13.7%

Notes:

Summary by ChatGPT

- Voter Disengagement: Harris acknowledges that many Black men feel disengaged due to systemic obstacles and a belief that their vote doesn't make a difference.
- Power of Voting: She emphasizes the importance of voting, noting that politicians prioritize high-frequency voters, making it crucial for Black men to vote to ensure their concerns are heard.

- Challenges to Voting: Harris highlights efforts by powerful entities to make voting more difficult for Black Americans, referencing the rollback of Voting Rights Act protections.

- Impact of Voting: Harris outlines how past elections have resulted in policies that benefit Black communities, such as HBCU funding, federal contracts for minority-owned businesses, and changes to marijuana laws.

- Myths and Disinformation: She stresses the importance of combating misinformation and ensuring accurate information reaches Black voters to empower them in the electoral process.

CJ McCollum

00:00:00

She said I could call her MVP. So don't think that I just did that on my own. Madam Vice President, you have a wealth of experience in policy, in government. Based on your experience, could you kind of shed some light on the disengagement amongst black men in the voting process and just kind of talk about ways in which we can improve, um, our voting numbers?

Kamala Harris

00:00:18

I think there's so much about this environment right now, and it has been this way for a while, that is sending signals to people that they don't count or that if they put themselves out there, it will not make a difference, it will not have effect. There are forces that I think are at play to try to make people feel small, that if they engage in the system, they cannot have impact.

Kamala Harris

00:00:41

And the work that you all have been doing through this organization and using the voices, through your celebrity, through, of course, your incredible talent, it really matters, and it's not without risk, especially in this environment. So I just want to start by thanking you. We have a nation that considers itself, rightly, a leader in the world.

Kamala Harris

00:01:05

We tout ourselves as being the strongest democracy in the world, imperfect though we certainly are, and flawed though we certainly are. And in any democracy, um, as. As we define it, the people must have the power, and representation matters. It is part of the founding ideals of our country, the promise of equality, the promise of freedom, the promise of liberty for all.

And we know we still have a whole lot of work to do in that regard, especially when we look at the condition of black men in America. We still have so many disparities based on. And I'd like to talk about some of these issues based on access to wealth, access to opportunity, um, the ability to jump over obstacles that are systemic, that are rooted in the racism that has influenced policy.

Kamala Harris

00:02:07

And so that is how I think about it overall, in terms of how we should be thinking about the details of what we need to address.

CJ McCollum

00:02:16

Thank you. Thank you. That was beautifully said. CP, you've done a lot of great work in the community, obviously, back in Carolina, but also alongside HBCUs. Can you kind of speak to why this has been important to you in ways in which you try to kind of unite the black male vote in general?

Chris Paul

00:02:32

I find it to be very important, uh, especially for black men, because there's so much that we don't discuss, we don't talk about. Right. Uh, you, like myself, have spent most of our adult lives, uh, in the NBA, and a lot of times in locker rooms. Guys talk about everything, but guys don't talk about politics, right?

Chris Paul

00:02:50

And even in our communities, in the black communities, you don't grow up watching, you know, CNN, Fox News, none of this. No one really talks about politics. So it was interesting for me, uh, when I turned 18, to go vote for the first time. It's so important, you know, when you look here and you see all these black men here, because when you look at statistics, it's usually always women who get out and vote more than men.

Chris Paul

00:03:13

And so as men have to continue to get out and talk about these things and make sure that we're not too cool or just too strong or whatnot, to be vulnerable and to learn, because there's an education aspect of it that I think is very important. And so what is something that you can tell us, right, to, uh, help engage the black male vote, because we try.

Chris Paul

00:03:35

We try to do what we think we should do. But if you have any words of wisdom, we all are open to it.

Your vote is your voice. Generally speaking, there are two groups of people who have power. Those who write checks and those who vote. Because the cold hearted reality of it, I'm sure everybody's been watching whatever, CNN or whatever, you know, the polling, right? And it'll say, well, these are the people who are gonna vote.

Kamala Harris

00:04:06

And so then people who are running for office want to pay attention to the people who vote, because the people who vote will elect them. And so they will seek out the people who are likely to vote. The high frequency voters is what it's called. And we'll then ask them, what is important to you?

Kamala Harris

00:04:26

Cause I wanna make sure I address that the more you vote, the more people are going to pay attention to you. Right. And so there is that piece of it. There is the piece of it, which is about also understanding the intent that very powerful people have demonstrated to make it more difficult for black people, period, to vote.

Kamala Harris

00:04:52

Look at it in terms of the court. Undid the strength of the Voting Rights act, and we still cannot get in Congress the number of people that are necessary to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights act and the Freedom to Vote act, which would restore the protections to make sure that there would be, if anyone, if any state wants to pass these laws, making it more difficult to vote, they would have to have a high threshold to explain why it would not be a violation of people's civil rights.

Kamala Harris

00:05:22

That's what the Voting Rights act did. The Voting Rights act. Right. Born out of all those folks who walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday, John Lewis and all them my parents who marched and shouted for justice. Uh, we all come from a tradition of family members and people we know who fought for those things, like the Voting Rights act, knowing that without that protection, there were and have and continue to be an intent to make it more difficult for people to vote.

Kamala Harris

00:05:55

Look at what happened in 2020. We had an extraordinary turnout in the midst of a pandemic, and thereafter, you saw these laws being passed to make it more difficult to vote. It scared people. When the voters of Georgia, for example, elected Raphael Warnock to be a member of the United States Senate, a black man from the state of Georgia going to the United States Senate, uh, that scared people.

So another point to be made, then, is not only is your vote important to receive the attention of the issues you care about, there is the point that is also about challenging folks to understand. There are people who are trying to make it so that you don't vote. There are people that are counting on you to not vote.

Kamala Harris

00:06:37

There are people who are trying to suggest to you that your vote doesn't matter. There's a history in our country of making it more difficult for you to vote with the belief that if it's made more difficult, you won't vote. And so therein, let's issue the challenge, which is don't let anybody silence you, see what's happening, see the game that's being played.

Kamala Harris

00:06:57

And then there is the fact that when you vote, the things that you care about matter. So we had record turnout, black vote, and young people voting. Those are the voters that then elected Joe Biden to be president and me to be vice president. And then we came in caring about, for example, as a proud HBCU graduate, what we need to do to better fund our hbCus, knowing those are centers of academic excellence, but don't have the resources that a lot of the others don't have, the endowments that a lot of the other universities have.

Kamala Harris

00:07:27

We've now given over \$16 billion to HBCuse because people voted and told us what they want. Joe Biden and I committed on day one to increase federal contracts to minority owned businesses by 50%. A federal contract. If you get a federal contract, unless you mess that thing up, that is like yours, potentially for life.

Kamala Harris

00:07:53

Talk about a generator of intergenerational wealth. Because people voted, we said that we're going to remove barriers to access to capital around SBA loans as it relates to people who were previously incarcerated. We decided that we needed to deal with marijuana because basically, nobody should have to go to jail for smoking weed.

Kamala Harris

00:08:16

And we have now issued four times more clemency than Trump ever did. And we are changing marijuana on the schedule. So instead of it being where it had been, which was to be compared to heroin, it's now from schedule one to three, which means it would be at the same level as basically, like, tylenol codeine.

Kamala Harris

00:08:36

Because people voted. Because people voted. We've taken on the issue of black maternal mortality, which impacts black men as much as it does women. Of course, they are the fathers, they are the brothers, they are the sons. The point being that your vote matters and it actually produces results. There are people who are trying to make it so that you don't vote.

Kamala Harris

00:09:03

And when you vote, people pay attention. Oh, you're voting. I better listen to you and find out what you care about.

CJ McCollum

00:09:14

I just want to follow up because you touched on so many points, including the political distrust that we have as a society, not just black men, but, uh, all of us in general. One of the things we want to know about is ways in which we can hold political leaders accountable for their actions going forward.

CJ McCollum

00:09:30

Obviously, the vote matters, right? 118 days from now, we're going to have the election. But how do we hold people like yourself accountable going forward so that we can have success not only 118 days from now, but for when my son, who's two and a half, when he becomes ten and twelve and 15, and CP, when his son and daughter become a little older so that they can live a better life.

CJ McCollum

00:09:50

How do we hold them accountable now?

Kamala Harris

00:09:53

Well, elections are one of those ways, right? Because there are elected leaders, in particular in the state of Florida, who are advocating to not teach America's full history. Hold them accountable, vote them out of office. The people who are in elected office make profound decisions about that two year old baby and what their life will be like and what their children's life will be like.

Kamala Harris

00:10:21

Profound decisions.

Chris Paul

00:10:23

I think another question would be, uh, of course I will vote in all these different organizations. Do a great job of trying to educate people and meeting them where they

are and teaching about the, uh, statistics and all the different things going on for our social change fund and other organizations out there.

Chris Paul

00:10:41

What type of advice would you give us on how we can, uh, engage black male voters just a little bit more?

Kamala Harris

00:10:50

Well, I'll start with this. There is a profound amount of myths and disinformation, and, um, the leaders here in this room have extraordinary platforms to talk with a lot of people who trust you and trust you to give them a accurate information. Um, there is so much work to be done to make sure that people are just operating with accurate facts or telling people where to go to find out, are they registered to vote?

Kamala Harris

00:11:20

One of the things that's happening in the states around these laws to try and make it more difficult is they're closing polling places. So we want to make sure that one people go to the website and actually just make sure they're registered and that they know where to vote. In case that has changed, we need to get correct facts to people.

Kamala Harris

00:11:39

And then again, to remind people, don't let anybody silence you. We cannot be silenced. There is too much hard work that has happened by those who came before us for us to fall prey to cynicism, um, especially from people who are intentionally trying to convince us that we don't matter.

CJ McCollum

00:12:07

That was great. I don't have much else to say after that. I want to thank you, MVP, for this thoughtful conversation. CP, I know you've been traveling a lot, so thank you for showing up as well, and for all of us. I think it's our duty, it's our job to figure out ways to make this world a better place.

CJ McCollum

00:12:22

And it starts with spreading the right type of information. It starts with encouraging our friends, our peers, our neighbors, um, those we care about to vote and telling them why they should vote. And I think it's also important that everybody understands that every vote matters. I think, you know, I grew up in a neighborhood where we didn't always think our vote mattered.

And as we've gotten older, as we've grown, as we continue to educate ourselves, we realize that is one of the ways in which they get to the black man is telling them that his vote doesn't matter. We've shown that that's not true. And I think for us now, as a society, we have to continue to have these conversations, this dialogue, and spread the right types of, uh, uh, messaging.

CJ McCollum

00:12:56

So thank you all again for coming. Save travels, and, um, that's all, folks.

Kamala Harris

00:13:02

Thank you. Thank you.

CJ McCollum

00:13:07

Thank you.