

'American Blackout' Demonstrates Need for Hip-Hop

Written by Imani Milliner ID2552
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Exclusive: McKinney: 'American Blackout' Demonstrates need for Hip-Hop - by Imani Milliner
Editor: ReddingNewsReview.com

As Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) attends nationwide screenings of "American Blackout," a hip-hop influenced documentary about the recurring disenfranchisement of black American voters and McKinney's role in investigating undisclosed information, the congresswoman reaffirmed her political agenda according to the current issues nibbling at the nation's spine.

The film - directed by Ian Inaba, co-creator of Internet TV news channel Guerrilla News Network (www.gnn.tv) and director of Eminem's world-shattering political music video "Mosh" - follows McKinney as she publicly questions what happened to the black American vote and the Bush Administration following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

"Whenever we have young people willing to push toward such awareness, it needs to be celebrated," McKinney said of Inaba's award-winning filmmaking and his role in elevating hip-hop culture in the mainstream through his "Mosh" video.

Hip-hop has been "denigrated into gangster iconography," McKinney said, with such serving only to distract young people into unawareness. The congresswoman, who has drafted legislation that would require the National Archives to divulge all information recorded on slain "thug life" rapper Tupac Shakur, named Paul Robeson as an example of entertainers' ability to affect youth movements across races and continents via mass media.

What's more, McKinney said the country "definitely" needs more videos like "Mosh". She pointed out that the genre of hip-hop music that speaks to the conditions in American communities is a vital source of information for people. "This is how hip-hop started," she said.

McKinney - who spoke to Redding News Review by phone in a wide a wide-ranging interview late last week following a screening for "American Blackout" - also cited the well documented intent of U.S. government to systematically quell dissenting political organizations, especially youth membership. She associated such iconography in hip-hop as serving to further

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distraction among youth, and noted this fact can be found as Point (5) in the March 4, 1968 COINTELPRO document (www.Cointel.org; see Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports, Book III).

"The American people have to learn how to get information," McKinney said, when asked what the public should be doing to keep all levels of government accountable, from the response to Hurricane Katrina, to international genocide and the Dubai Ports controversy.

On the admitted delayed evacuation of the New Orleans Superdome and Convention Center, McKinney said, "It shows the general incompetence of this administration, and complete disregard the government plays in the lives of its citizens. It is difficult to have a functioning government when those inside the government are those who don't believe in government.

Michael Brown's skills were in other areas, and when the moment arose it was very difficult for him to function.

Chertoff was confused about what his role was.

How can you be confused about your role in a situation that affects the homeland?"

"I agree with Haley Barber," McKinney continued, "when he says Congress has been derelict in its responsibility.... The challenge has been put out there and Congress has not lived up to it."

In considering HR 4197, the Hurricane Katrina Recovery, Reclamation, Restoration, Reconstruction and Reunion Act (2005), McKinney feels more could have been accomplished to date had this bill held hearings or been passed. Evacuees' right to vote, compensation funds, and the erasure of uncertainty could have been addressed, she said.

"For those that were most resourceful with dislocation, they are putting their lives back together, but in large measure it is outside of Louisiana. They should have the ability to put their lives back together wherever they choose to live."

When asked of U.S. government's reluctance to declare genocide in the Sudan, McKinney said,

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“Well, it’s clear there is genocide in more than the Sudan. We should strive to have Africa be for the African people first and pay a decent price for their resources.”

Regarding the international business of political bedfellows, McKinney said she “plans to investigate the pecuniary interest that may be involved in this [Dubai Ports] deal.”

Acknowledging that President Bush stated he would have considered using his veto power for the first time since being in office, McKinney said what she wants to know is “Who is Dubai Ports?”

“Too many government operations have been privatized. Intelligence and military operations have been privatized to private corporations...vital assets then become subject to the highest bidder. This goes back to who respects the function of government,” McKinney said.

“This administration has a history of rewarding its corporate friends,” the congresswoman noted.

“We know Rumsfeld has an interest in the Avian Flu drug, Tamiflu,” and also referred to having “a sitting Vice President with an interest in Halliburton.”

With McKinney and fellow members of Congress considering impeachment, her expectation of seeing the bill receive the needed support seemed low. “In the end, impeachment is simply another bill needing 218 votes,” mentioning that Congress still has yet to acquire 218 votes for the No Child Left Behind Act and seniors’ prescription drugs.

“It’s clear Republicans set the standard for impeachment,” she said, while citing going to war on faked intelligence and a failure to protect Hurricane Katrina evacuees as her grounds for impeachment.

Such partisan conflicts still creating the political climate throughout the levels of government leaves a number like 218, McKinney said, “truly in the hands of the people.”

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