



Carmen Berkley of AFL-CIO Urges Fight for Economic Justice and Civil Rights

Fannie Lou Hamer Human and Civil Rights Symposium at Stockton Marks 50th anniversary of protest at 1964 Democratic Convention in Atlantic City

For Immediate Release; with Berkley photo attached

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Galloway Township, NJ - "Racism is not over, brothers and sisters," said Carmen Berkley, the keynote speaker today at the Eleventh Annual Fannie Lou Hamer Human and Civil Rights Symposium at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. "In 2014, it's built into our system," which includes a lack of economic opportunities, unequal justice and recent court rulings making it harder for people to register to vote, she said.

"You're going to have to make a choice," said Berkley, who at 29 is national director of Civil, Human and Women's Rights for the AFL-CIO. "Be a part of something greater than yourself," she told students and others in the audience.

"The fact that people of color are being killed for the color of their skin sounds like something out of slavery," she said, citing the cases of Trayvon Martin in Florida and Michael Brown in Missouri. She urged black people to unite with Latinos, gays, immigrants, women and others who are discriminated against.

"We are not in the minority any more, we are the majority," said Berkley. "They don't want us to vote."

She noted however, that New Jersey has progressive voting laws, not requiring special voter identification and allowing convicted felons to regain the vote two years after paying their debt to society.

"Dream your highest dream of racial equality and economic justice," Berkley told the college audience. "Dream and then act and unite. Black people and white people have to dream together."

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Berkley also said protest marches aren't enough. "Vote - participate - speak up about problems

Photo caption: Carmen Berkley, national director of Civil, Human and Women's Rights for the AFL-CIO, speaks on Tuesday (Oct. 7) at the Eleventh Annual Fannie Lou Hamer Human and Civil Rights Symposium at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.