

**Congressman Elijah Cummings**  
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## ***Supporting both the Man and the Plan***

In 2008, we made history, electing Barack Obama as our 44<sup>th</sup> President. Now, in this year's General Elections, we must stay the course and secure a better future.

Here in Maryland, African American voters in the Baltimore and Washington regions have the power to cast the deciding votes for Governor, Senator and the Congress. We (and not someone else) will decide whether Maryland will continue to move forward with President Obama or regress back into the past.

Our voting in large numbers during Early Voting (October 22-28) and on Election Day will almost certainly decide the results - and the policy choices that surely will follow.

That this power now rests in our own hands is also historic - but only if we seize the moment.

Two years ago, we voted both for "The Man" and his Plan. Although President Obama is not on the ballot this year, the success of his plan for America most definitely is.

The forces of reaction understand this. For two years, the Republicans have done nothing but filibuster and obstruct in the Congress.

That was no accident. With the additional power they gained in the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision, and backed by the Big Banks and Big Oil, they have been doing all that they can to buy this election and win back power.

Dripping with ambition, they have stopped at nothing in their efforts to demean and dehumanize the most successful President since Lyndon Johnson.

Regrettably, here in Maryland, their Republican candidate for Governor has done the same.

We, however, are the voters who can stand up for President Obama and his allies, like Governor Martin O'Malley, who believe in the President's Plan.

We are the ones who can stand tall in the reactionaries' way.

We need only to add "No, you don't" to "Yes, we can," and vote for progressive change.

To succeed, the forces of reaction know that they must convince us to stay at home and not vote. They must make us forget the Republican failures during the Bush years - and convince us that the gains that we have made during President Obama's two years in office mean nothing.

We, however, are smarter than that.

Our children are smarter than that.

They know that their future is at stake – and that support for public education is the key.

Early last year, a steep decline in state and local revenues threatened all of the educational gains that we had achieved in recent years. The Obama Administration and Democrats in Congress realized that we had to act decisively to save our schools.

To his credit, President Obama took the lead in addressing this challenge. Democrats in Congress agreed, and, with virtually no Republican support, we enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Then, despite Maryland's budget crunch, Governor Martin O'Malley did the right thing for our children. As a result, we were able to invest an additional \$1.3 billion in Maryland's public schools.

Our Governor did this because his priorities are clear.

This year alone, for example, Martin O'Malley has provided \$5.7 billion for our schools - an increase of \$1.2 billion since he took office - and invested an additional \$1.3 billion into new school construction and renovation projects.

Realizing the importance of our teachers, our Democratic Governor has continued to fully fund their pensions at the state level. Equally important, he has stopped the crippling increases in college tuition that threatened our brightest students' dreams.

It is no surprise, therefore, that the National Education Association named Martin O'Malley "America's Greatest Education Governor." We were pleased, but not astounded, when Maryland was one of ten states to receiving \$250 million in federal "Race to the Top" funding."

Our children's education is another compelling reason to re-elect Martin O'Malley. Along with President Obama and the Democratic Congress, he has established a record on education of which we can be proud.

Now, however, is no time to rest – and it certainly is no time to retreat.

Our children are depending upon us during Early Voting and on Election Day. They need leaders who will fight for better schools - and are willing to invest the funds that our schools need.

We have voted for The Man. Now, we vote for The Plan.