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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Media Alert

#### NAACP Branch President Richard Rose issues statement on local elections

For people of color, the vote has always been our most powerful form of protest. The Atlanta NAACP urges all eligible unregistered citizens to register to vote this month in order to vote in November's elections all over Fulton County. We are again mounting a voter registration campaign with other partners. An integral part of voting must be voter education, and we urge voters to educate themselves on issues and the platforms of all candidates, including first-time candidates. This is particularly important regarding those who are running for reelection or for a higher office, as is the case for most of the Atlanta City Council and Atlanta School Board members.

The NAACP feels strongly about the state of affairs and the actions of many of the politicians serving and/or vying for office this year. We urge you to do your research and see if you agree with us.

As an example, we are dismayed by the lack of investment in communities of color in Atlanta.

Mayor Kasim Reed spoke eloquently about the contributions of Dr. Martin L. King Jr., an Atlanta native, at the unveiling of the King statue, but the street named for Dr. King has been cut off from the once vibrant corridor on Atlanta's west side. While money has been allocated for improvements to Phillips Arena, this mayor and this council voted to name a park for a Confederate major and countenanced the erection of a statue in his honor. More insulting is that the park's location in Vine City was once home to Dr. King, Julian Bond and Alonzo Herndon.

As a compromise to the Atlanta Branch's efforts against the endorsement of white supremacy by the City, the park will now be named in honor of a white former city alderman and state legislator. Vine City's councilman, Ivory Young, championed the effort to honor the Confederate major and has been steadfast in his support of this project of "atonement," as if blacks are responsible for their own oppression, and as if there are no deserving black men and women yet to be honored.

Councilmembers Keisha Lance Bottoms, Kwanza Hall and Mary Norwood, and council president Ceasar Mitchell are offering to be the next leader of this great city, and council members C. T. Martin, Felicia Moore and Alex Wan are running to replace Mitchell. Other councilmembers are running for reelection. We urge voters to look carefully at how each one has endeavored to represent the entire city, not just Buckhead but Bankhead; not just downtown but Peoples Town; and not just Peachtree Hills but Dixie Hills. Which ones among them have advocated on behalf of the least of those?

Under this administration and this council, the Atlanta Housing Authority, despite a hoard of cash and land, has not initiated a single project that addresses the lack of housing affordability in Atlanta. Recently, an initiative has been announced to address these needs, but why did such action take until election season?

In our opinion, the Atlanta School Board has not stood with our children, taking no stand on the Opportunity School District's amendment that we believe would have led to more privatization of public facilities without

student benefit. The Atlanta Public School System has relied on outsourcing schools that affect about 2,000 students when there are 52,000 students in the system. In a student body that is 75 percent black and brown, many suffer from the legacy of Jim Crow oppression that requires psychological and sociological inputs. Instead, the school board rides the “failing schools” train that seeks to blame dedicated teachers and administrators while holding the legacy of Jim Crow unaccountable for generations of limited educational resources and job prospects. Failing to adequately address all of the issues of low performing students will doom us to another generation of poverty wages and more despondency, depression, apathy and anger – among people generally locked out of civic engagement and the power of nonviolent protest, and denied equal justice in the legal systems.

In the coming weeks, we will be posting various statements and evaluations on our web site at [www.naacpatlanta.org](http://www.naacpatlanta.org) as well as co-sponsoring candidate forums. We urge all citizens to look beyond the campaign promises and slick campaign advertisements. Attend or view the forums. Focus on actual accomplishments that candidates have made on behalf of all Atlantans both as private citizens and as officeholders. The future of our communities depends upon our vigilance. We should elect leaders who genuinely are concerned about the prosperity and potential of everyone in the Atlanta region and who recognize that the disparate treatment of America’s non-white citizenry requires an on-going effort of equity versus the false presumption of equality.

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