



**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**  
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## **NAACP LEADERS FIGHT TEA PARTY WITH VOTER OUTREACH**

JENNIFER KAY, AP

NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous (AP Photo)

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (AP) -- The tea party movement sweeping the U.S. political landscape has benefited from voter mobilization techniques pioneered by the NAACP, and the nation's oldest civil rights organization needs to rely on that outreach to fight back in the midterm elections, two NAACP leaders said Saturday.



"I think they took a page out of our own play book, and we have to beat them at their own game. We ought to know how to meet them on the front line," board chairman Roslyn Brock said in a town hall meeting at the NAACP's annual youth leadership summit.

Brock and Benjamin Todd Jealous, the organization's president and CEO, urged their members not to become complacent about their achievements or dissuaded by media attention on small, but loud, gatherings of conservative protesters.

"What they're angry about is we won," Jealous said.

The voters who elected President Barack Obama in 2008 and the NAACP's members outnumber the people in the tea party movement, but they're not speaking up, Jealous said.

"That majority of people hasn't gone anywhere but to their couch. We could win again if we could get them off the couch," Jealous said.

The NAACP Leadership 500 Summit focuses on engaging younger members of the nation's oldest civil rights organization. About 350 people are attending this weekend's conference in Hollywood. Brock, a health care executive, founded the summit five years ago. She was elected board chairman in February, and she and Jealous are the youngest people to hold their positions in the 101-year-old National Association for the Advancement for Colored People.

As it tries to engage a younger generation who thinks about civil rights in broader terms in a multiethnic society, the NAACP must focus on education, health care, economic opportunity and immigration, they said. "The challenge we have is to make sure this country understands we have a movement defined by where the black community is right now, but it ultimately is pointed in the direction the rest of the country needs to go," Jealous said.

The NAACP has joined other civil rights groups seeking to throw out Arizona's new immigration law, and Jealous is among critics who say new textbook guidelines in Texas water down the teaching of the civil rights movement and slavery.

Everything connects to civil rights, such as decreases in education funding when spending on prisons has increased, Jealous said.

The NAACP, too, needs to recognize that it also has failed to spend more time and money in urban centers, instead of in more affluent communities where the organization's core membership resides, he said.