

North Carolina Advocate Yevonne Brannon Honored in Inaugural Cohort of “I AM A VOTER” Democracy Heroes

Founder of Public Schools First NC and lifelong advocate for public schools and democracy, Yevonne Brannon receives national honor.



RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- North Carolina voting and public schools advocate Yevonne Brannon is honored as one of the first 25 recipients of the

national [Democracy Heroes](#) award announced September 27 on MSNBC's "Morning Joe." Highlighting that “Democracy is not just a system of government—it’s an ongoing practice of engagement, service and action,” the impressive awardees are nonpartisan civic leaders working to break barriers and empower all people to make a difference in their communities.

In partnership with “Morning Joe,” the Rockefeller Foundation and Headcount, [I Am a Voter identified these 25](#) “trailblazers, advocates, organizers and changemakers who are making a difference in their communities every day.” (1)

Yevonne Brannon is the founder and chair of [Public Schools First NC](#), a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to advocating for a unified pre-K through 12 public education. Public Schools First NC collaborates with parents, educators, business and civic leaders and communities to ensure that every child is prepared for productive citizenship. Strong public schools are essential to our healthy democracy, and fully funding public schools creates a foundation for developing engaged citizens, critical thinkers, and lifelong voters.

Brannon’s work through Public Schools First NC is especially important today.

Public education in North Carolina is under siege as legislators have been shifting funds from public schools to pay for private school vouchers since 2014. Earlier this month, legislators passed a bill adding \$463 million in voucher funding for the next two years bringing the total for 2024-25 to \$616 million and 2025-26 to \$675 million.(2) North Carolina’s rural communities, which make up 70% of the counties in the state and already have fewer resources than urban

and suburban communities, are impacted the most. Many rural communities have zero private schools and others have only private schools that don't accept vouchers, so dollars lost to vouchers flow out of their county to urban and suburban centers.(3)

Recovering from the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene is going to take North Carolina's communities years of rebuilding and will require millions in state and federal funding.(4) Making sure that public dollars stay in the public schools that are a top three employer in 91 of North Carolina's 100 counties, will be essential to the recovery. Brannon and her colleagues are helping to keep a focus on supporting public schools—the hub of our communities—so they can continue to provide healthy, robust learning environments for all students to learn and grow.

(1)The Morning Joe: Inaugural list of Democracy Heroes announced:

<https://www.msnbc.com/morning-joe/watch/inaugural-list-of-democracy-heroes-announced-220290117557>

(2) House Bill 10: <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/House/PDF/H10v5.pdf>

(3) North Carolina's voucher schools by county: https://publicschoolsfirstnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/9.2024-Voucher-Schools-in-NC-2024-25_1pg.pdf

(4) Supplies arrive by plane and mule in North Carolina as death toll tops 130:

<https://apnews.com/article/hurricane-helene-north-carolina-asheville-f02869c7d01e68f2d7f0553abb82252f>

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