

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA), in cooperation with the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education (LCLCE) and Karen Chatman Edutainment, is hosting a series of instructive and entertaining presentations aimed at educating young people about voting. The program, titled “The Right Act: Vote,” combines the popular cultural element of rap music with social issues that are too big to ignore: the importance of exercising the right to vote and the long path it took for all citizens to gain that right. The goal is to educate middle school, high school, and college students in major cities in Louisiana -- in a fun and interactive way -- on the history of the right to vote, the importance of that right, how lawyers helped the process, and how the Voting Rights Act has helped our community recently.

During the October 3 presentations at Istrouma High School in Baton Rouge and Algiers Technology Academy in Algiers students were treated to live presentations by Ms. Chatman and local attorneys. Musical artist J. Flexx performed Ms. Chatman’s upbeat and inspiring “Right Act: Vote” musical composition about voting and the Voting Rights Act. Students were given mock ballots and information on how to register to vote in Louisiana. J. Flexx invited student volunteers to perform an impromptu rap about voting and the right to vote. Students were thrilled and challenged as their fellow classmates encouraged them to exercise their right to vote using lyrics created on the spot. Additionally, voter registration forms were distributed to eligible students and then collected for filing with the local Registrar of Voters office. Student energy remained high as J. Flexx concluded the show by stressing the importance of voting in a fresh and modern way.

These presentations represent an ongoing commitment by the LSBA to serve the community and raise awareness of the legal profession as a noble and service-oriented calling. As a stakeholder in this initiative, the LCLCE continuously works with the Bar Association to coordinate and develop law and civic education programs, train others in the delivery of law and civic education, and assist with the delivery of quality law and civic education programs throughout Louisiana.

“The Right Act: Vote” stems from the vision of producer Karen Chatman. Ms. Chatman hails from Louisiana where her great, great grandfather, Bill Chatman, pioneered the economic movement of his community and became one of the wealthiest black property owners of the early 20th century.

For more information on this and other diversity and outreach initiatives at the Louisiana State Bar Association, please contact Director of Member Outreach and Diversity Kelly McNeil Legier (Kelly.Legier@lsba.org; Direct: 504-619-0129).