

Hill-Lewis on Youth Day: "Eight Votes Can Change Everything"

Good morning, KZN!

It is so great to be here with you today.

It is amazing to be in a province with so much energy, so much history, so much natural beauty, and so much potential.

From Durban to Pietermaritzburg, from uMngeni to the South Coast, from Newcastle to Zululand, this province has everything it needs to succeed.

But most importantly, KZN has people who love this place deeply. People who want it to work. People who are tired of excuses. People who are ready for change.

And today, on Youth Day, we gather with one simple message:

Register to vote. Register to win. Register to build a South Africa that works for everyone.

This Youth Day is especially important, because this year marks 50 years since the Soweto Uprising of 16 June 1976.

Fifty years ago, young South Africans stood up against injustice. They showed courage. They refused to accept a future decided for them by an unjust government.

Youth Day is a reminder that young people have changed the course of this country before.

Young South Africans stood up when it mattered. They refused to accept that the future had already been decided for them. They refused to accept that they were powerless. They refused to accept a country that told them to sit down and wait their turn.

And that is the spirit we need again today.

Because our country is once again asking young South Africans a question:

Are you going to sit this one out?

Or are you going to shape what comes next?

Because make no mistake: the future of South Africa is being decided right now.

And the first step is not complicated.

You must register to vote.

Because if you are not registered, you cannot vote.

And if you cannot vote, then other people will decide your future for you.

They will decide what kind of municipality you live in. They will decide whether your community gets basic services. They will decide whether corruption carries on. They will decide whether jobs and investment come to your town, your city, your province.

And I am here today to say: do not give that power away.

Your vote is your power.

Friends, across South Africa, something important is happening.

People are beginning to see that change is possible.

People are beginning to see that where the DA governs, things can get better.

In Cape Town, we are showing that a city can invest in infrastructure, protect basic services, fight corruption, expand public transport, make communities safer, and build a city that works for more and more people every year.

In Midvaal, the DA has shown for years that clean government, sound finances and basic delivery can become the norm — not the exception.

And here in KZN, in uMngeni, the DA is proving that even where things have been broken for a long time, change can start when voters choose a government that gets things done.

uMngeni is proof that when people lend the DA their vote, we take that trust seriously.

And that is why the DA is winning wards in different communities across the country.

The DA is the only party in South Africa that can go into every kind of neighbourhood in this country — and win.

We can go into suburbs and townships.

We can go into rural villages and city centres. We can go into communities that speak different languages, worship in different ways, come from different histories, and face different daily struggles and we can win support in all of them.

No other party has that same broad, cross-cultural appeal.

Why?

Because the DA is not on the side of one group, one language, one class, one province, or one community.

The DA is on your side.

We are on the side of every South African who wants a better future.

We are on the side of the young person looking for their first job.

We are on the side of the family that wants safe streets.

We are on the side of the pensioner who wants dignity.

We are on the side of the entrepreneur who wants to build, employ and grow.

We are on the side of every community that wants clean government, better services, more opportunity, and leaders who actually do the work.

That is why the DA is growing.

That is why more and more people are willing to lend the DA their vote.

Because they can see that the DA is a party for everyone and where we govern, we govern for everyone.

And that is exactly what South Africa needs now.

South Africa can become a country where young people can build a life.

A country where talent does not go to waste.

A country where hard work is rewarded.

A country where government opens doors instead of closing them.

A country where the police protect communities, where municipalities deliver services, where public money is spent on the public, and where leaders are held accountable.

That country is possible.

But it will not happen by accident.

It will not happen if good people stay home.

It will not happen if young people say: "My vote does not matter."

Because your vote does matter.

In local government especially, elections can be won or lost by a few hundred votes. Sometimes by even less.

Just a few weeks ago, in Ward 28 in Emfuleni, in Evaton West, the DA won a historic by-election by just eight votes.

Eight votes.

That is one family.

That is one group of friends.

That is one taxi full of people.

That is the difference between a community getting a DA councillor who will fight for them, or another five years of the same decline.

That is how change starts.

And that is why registration matters so much.

We are here today to rock the registration because we want to rock the future of this province.

We want every young person here to leave with a mission.

Check that you are registered.

Make sure your friends are registered.

Make sure your family is registered.

Make sure your classmates, your colleagues, your neighbours, your cousins, your teammates — everyone — understands what is at stake.

Because there are many people who want change in South Africa.

There are many people who are willing to give the DA a chance.

There are many people who say: “Maybe this time, I will lend the DA my vote.”

But to vote for change, you must be registered.

And to win change, we must help others register too.

That is the job.

That is the campaign.

That is how we win.

Friends, I know many young South Africans are frustrated.

I know many feel disappointed by politics.

I know many have heard too many promises and seen too little delivery.

I understand that.

But cynicism will not build a single road. Cynicism will not create a single job. Cynicism will not fix a single municipality. Cynicism will not make a single community safer.

Hope is not pretending problems do not exist.

Hope is choosing to act because you believe problems can be solved.

And I believe they can be solved.

I have seen it.

I have seen what happens when a government is clean.

I have seen what happens when public money is protected.

I have seen what happens when leaders focus on delivery.

I have seen what happens when people stop accepting decline and start choosing something better.

That is what the DA offers.

So today, from here in KZN, let us send a message to every young South African:

Do not give up on this country.

Do not give up on your community.

Register to vote so you can vote to win.

Because the future is not something that happens to us.

The future is something we build.

And together, we can build a KZN that works.

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