

Hampton U. official, Trump supporter, GOP change agent

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By Wayne Dawkins

Bill Thomas maintained order.

Thomas, **associate vice president** for governmental relations at Hampton University, is a delegate at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

"I am a designated Trump delegate and I am tasked to make sure there is no opposition," he said. "I went to all of the Virginia Delegation committee meetings. We can't have what [former Virginia Attorney Gen.] **Ken Cuccinelli** did Monday." Cuccinelli and delegates from nine states attempted to unbind delegate votes for Donald Trump. GOP leaders quashed the revolt.

Trump was **officially nominated** Tuesday night as Republican candidate for president during a roll call vote of state delegations. In November, Trump will face presumptive Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Cleveland is Thomas' second RNC convention. He is representing the 3rd Congressional District. Thomas said, in 2012 in Tampa, he was an alternate delegate.

During a telephone interview, Thomas stated his No. 1 issue: "The Republican Party hopes that under Donald Trump it can bring inclusive-based principles and values. Black votes, white votes, all votes matter.

"The GOP appreciates blacks' concerns. They have reached out to me, because that's my issue. I'm getting more responses from the Trump organization than from the Virginia delegation. I have focused on HBCU priorities and balancing inequities in education."

Thomas also said "I supported Trump when there were 16 Republican presidential candidates. I support Trump because we need a change in the party.

"At this stage in my life – 64 years – I have never seen such racial division that has separated us among educated people. There's a lack of understanding in what we want is what others want.

"My priorities are family, education and economic development, not the right to vote or civil rights activity.

"Dividing is not going to work.



"I've known Trump for more than 20 years and he will not be like that."

Thomas, a radio commentator who is heard Fridays on WHRV-FM [NPR] "**Another View**" said this about Melania Trump's **much-criticized and ridiculed speech**: "They made a mistake. They need to own up to it and move on."

*The writer is a professor at the **Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications**.*