

A close-up portrait of a Black woman with voluminous, curly, light brown hair. She is looking slightly upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. She is wearing a red garment and a large, colorful tassel earring. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown.

Black Women in the U.S. 2020: Priorities, Policy and Power



*The Power of Black Women's Leadership to
Move a Justice Agenda Forward
in the 2020 Decade*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Moriah Fund, Ford Foundation and AARP for their generous support of this work. We also thank the contributors to this volume for your willingness to share your expertise and wisdom on behalf of the needs of Black women and girls. A special thanks is due to our reviewers for providing feedback on earlier drafts of this report.

Melanie L. Campbell
President & CEO, NCBCP and Convener, Black Women's Roundtable
BWR Intergenerational Public Policy Network

Avis A. Jones-DeWeever, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief
State of Black Women in the US, 2017
Senior Public Policy Advisor
Black Women's Roundtable
www.ncbcp.org

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Black Women in the United States, 2020

Executive Summary

Black Women in the United States, 2020, is the seventh annual report by the Black Women's Roundtable which specifically examines the overall conditions and policy concerns of Black women throughout the nation. This year's report comes at a particularly precarious moment in our history. We find ourselves immersed in a time of extreme political divisiveness, growing economic peril, and potentially facing a world-wide health crisis. Simultaneously, we are in the midst of an especially consequential Presidential election. One with both far-reaching national political implications, but also, as it is occurring in congruence with the 2020 Decennial Census, state-level down-ballot impacts will color electoral district composition for the next decade, thus significantly impacting Black political representation and power for the next ten years. With all of these dire consequences hanging in the balance, this year's report is especially vital as it uncovers and centers the concerns, condition, and political power of Black women at this watershed moment. The following is a selection of this year's key findings:

The Black Woman's Vote Leads the Way in Presidential Politics

- Black women voters have consistently outpaced overall turnout in recent presidential elections by an average of 6.7 percent.
- In 2008, Black women outperformed other demographic groups, voting at a record 68.1 percent turnout for the first Black president of the United States. In 2012, Black women did it again, voting in historic numbers at 70.1 percent, which was the highest voter turnout of any other group, voting out of concern to protect the passage of the Affordable Healthcare Act of 2010 and continue the advancement of criminal justice reform. In 2016, Black women maintained their voting strength at 63.7 percent.
- In 2020, the Black vote in the South, anchored by the Black Women's vote, changed the very trajectory of the Democratic Primary Race. And not only did Black voters turnout in historically large numbers, even exceeding 2008 Obama turn-out levels in places like South Carolina & Virginia, but when looking at issues that were most important to Primary voters in the South, one thing was clear, the number one issue for Black voters are issues related to race.
- According to 2020 Primary Exit Polling, throughout the South, the issue of Race Relations was the issue that mattered most to Democratic Primary Voters that voted for Joe Biden in every Southern state, being was most important to voters in Alabama (69%) and Virginia (60%). And for each state, this issue was of a greater concern to Biden voters than Health Care, Climate Change or Income Inequality.

- Conversely, for Sanders voters, the issue of race relations was the least important issue impacting their vote. And was especially unimportant to voters in Alabama (8%) and South Carolina (12%). As a result, it seems clear, those Southern voters who are most concerned about improving issues related to race in America overwhelming coalesced around the Joe Biden candidacy and was seemingly a key factor related to his victories in that region.

Black Women Sound the Alarm on Growing Racism and Hate Crimes

- Black women cited racism and the rise in hate crimes as the top concern that they believe threatens themselves and their families in the most recent Black Women's Roundtable/Essence Magazine Power of the SisterVote Poll. This concern is far from baseless.
- According to FBI crime statistics for four years in a row, the number of hate crimes in America have continuously increased, including a near record breaking jump in the year immediately following the previous Presidential election, with Black people being the most likely racial group to have been on the receiving end of such crimes.
- In 2017, the nation experienced the largest increase in hate crimes that we've seen in 25 years, and in 2018, roughly half of the nation's 30 largest cities experienced increases in hate crime activity, that for them, reached a decade high.
- Researchers out of Clemson and Texas A&M University have found that generally speaking, when racially intolerant Americans believe that democracy will benefit people of color, they actually abandon their commitment to democracy altogether in favor of authoritarian rule. As such, counteracting growing hate in America must become a national imperative. Not only for turning back the increasing prevalence of violent hate crime activity throughout the US, but also to preserve the Union as we know it all together.

Black Women's Wage Gap Increasing Under Trump

- The Black women's wage gap has grown under the Trump Administration. In comparing the gap in weekly wages between Black women and White women in the last two years of the Obama Administration and the first two years of the Trump Administration, an interesting picture unfolds. While wage differentials between the two groups of women were overall lower and decreasing by the end of the Obama Administration, those gaps have grown substantially under the Trump Administration, jumping from a differential of \$113 per week in median earnings under the last year of the Obama Administration, to a differential of \$171 per week by the second year of the Trump Administration.

- When examining wage gaps in the same time period in comparison to the earnings of white men, Black women experience a weekly earnings wage gap of \$295 by the last year of the Obama Administration, that gap grew to a \$341 weekly wage gap by the second year of the Trump Administration.

Economic Justice Remains Elusive for Black Women Impacted by Race and Gender Discrimination

- Black women experience an intersectional wage gap, one that reflects the unique, compounding effects of how race and gender are perceived together. So while Black women working full-time, year-round earn just 62 cents for every dollar earned by white men working full-time, year-round, wage gaps are also found when Black women's earnings are compared to both white women and Black men, as Black women's earnings are just 79 percent of white women's earnings and 86 percent of Black male earnings respectively.
- Black women cannot educate their way into equal pay. In fact, although Black women's wages increase with higher levels of education, their wage gap also gets wider as educational attainment goes up.
- To secure equal pay for Black women, there must be a focus on combatting discrimination and minimizing bias which includes addressing systemic biases within institutional structures that perpetuate stereotypes about Black women and limit advancement opportunities, end the devaluation of Black women's work and stop the occupational segregation that steers Black women into lower paying jobs. Also critical is the need to focus on ways to increase wages and improve job quality overall.
- Black women especially likely to enter their retirement years economically insecure in spite of educational attainment. Single Black women 60 years of age or older with a college degree have merely \$11,000 in wealth as compared to \$384,400 in wealth for single white women 60 years of age or older with a college degree. However, those Black women who are ultimately best situated for retirement are those who are both married and who hold a Bachelor's Degree.
- For Black women on the economic fringes, especially those who enter their retirement years having to navigate life without a spouse, access to Pension benefits and Social Security are especially critical for staying economically above water and being equipped to live their golden years with a modicum of dignity and independence.

Black Women Progressive Prosecutors Under Attack for Doing Their Jobs

- Black women progressive prosecutors have seemingly been uniquely targeted for attack. They've received death threats and hate messages with racially charged language, have been attacked by police unions, Governors, and the current U.S. President, and some have had their powers limited or removed all together.
- When Florida State's Attorney Aramis Ayala announced that she would not be seeking the death penalty, the Governor moved death penalty cases from her district.
- After dropping charges against actor, Jussie Smollett, Kim Foxx, the Chicago district attorney received death threats. Ayala received a noose after her decision not to seek the death penalty. And during the Freddie Gray trial, Marilyn Mosby was the subject of death threats, hate mail, and protests at her house, and information about her children was circulated to the public.
- St. Louis' Kim Gardner excluding 22 St. Louis Police officers from presenting cases to her office after racist Facebook posts were discovered, and pushed for a new trial for a man who appears to have been wrongfully convicted. Gardner has been the subject of grand jury probe; racial attacks; hate mail; attacked by Attorney General Barr & the St. Louis police union. She has subsequently filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the city, police union, and others who have aggressively fought her efforts to institute meaningful criminal justice reforms.

Racial Bias Calls for Swift Action to Address Maternal Mortality Disparities Impacting Black Women Gaining Traction in Several States

- Black women in the US are dying from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth at a rate nearly [three to four times higher](#) than that of their white counterparts. The reasons for this are myriad and include lack of health insurance coverage, lack of access to care, and pervasive racism.
- According to [analysis from](#) NARAL Pro-Choice America, legislation meant to address the challenge of maternal mortality is growing across the nation, with over 20 measures seeking to address maternal mortality passed in 2019 alone, making it “the most prolific trend in pro-choice legislation” of the year.
- In October 2019, California Governor Gavin Newsom [signed](#) the [Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act \(SB 464\)](#) into law. This law requires perinatal care providers in California to undergo “an evidence-based implicit bias program” with refresher courses at least every two years. California's new law also requires the State Department of

Public Health “to track and publish data on pregnancy-related death and ever maternal morbidity” as a strategy to address maternal mortality disparities in the state.

- Medical experts like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists [have noted](#) that “The racial and ethnic disparities in women’s health (including higher rates of preterm birth, maternal mortality, and breast, cervical, and endometrial cancer deaths among Black women) cannot be reversed without addressing racial bias, both implicit and explicit,” so laws like California’s are a crucial step in the right direction.

Paid Leave Finally a Possibility for Black Women and Families

- Currently, fewer than 19% of employees have access to paid family leave through their employers. And only 40% have access to medical leave for self-care. Of the 60% eligible for the [Family and Medical Leave Act](#), many can’t afford to take it because it is unpaid. Given the high cost of [zero weeks](#) of paid leave, the public has shown overwhelming support for a sound solution: a social insurance fund that pools small contributions from employees and employers to offer portable benefits to all working people. African American and Latinx workers are among the groups least likely to have access to parental leave, compared with non-Hispanic white workers.
- Currently, there is one bill that covers all of the reasons for care and aims to include all families. That bill is the [Family and Medical Leave Insurance \(FAMILY\) Act \(R\)](#) and it builds on years of experience in the states. California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York have been successfully operating these social insurance funds for years. Four more states—Washington, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Oregon—and the District of Columbia are following suit.

Black Women Suffer Unique Levels of Exposure to Violence

- African American and African Caribbean women experience intimate partner abuse at a rate of about 40%. That is significantly higher than the rates reported by white women (31%), Hispanic women (30%) or Asian Pacific Islander women (15%).
- The Centers for Disease Control reports that Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women have the highest rates of homicide, and that over half of these homicides are related to intimate partner violence. In 2017, Black females were murdered by males at a rate more than twice as high as white females: 2.55 per 100,000 versus 1.13 per 100,000.

- Trans women were nearly twice as likely to experience sexual violence as other survivors of violence, and reported experiencing harassment, discrimination and police violence as well.
- Trans women of color constituted 40% of the hate violence homicides in 2017. In 2019, of the 22 known homicides of transgender people, 91% of the victims were Black women.

Black Women & Girls Most Likely to Be Subjected to Modern-Day Slavery

- In the United States, there are more than 600,000 to 800,000 people being trafficked annually across international borders. Victims can be found in schools, places of worship, malls and neighborhoods, trapped in an endless cycle of despair. The State Department reports there are 24.9 million modern-day slaves in the world.
- Girls from the African diaspora are more likely to be trafficked as they represent 40 percent of sex trafficking victims within the United States, while Caucasians made up 25.6 percent of sex trafficking victims, followed by Hispanics at 23.9 percent, Asians at 4.3 percent and others at 5.8 percent
- The International Labour Organization estimates that the human sex trafficking industry generates nearly \$150 billion in revenues. This exploitative system sadly profits off the welfare, stolen dignities and systemic abuses of its victims.
- Major risk factors that put Black girls at greater risk of being recruited as sex workers include living in socially identified high risk neighborhoods, being poor and/or uneducated, having inadequate job skills, and lacking strong social networks.

Voter Suppression in the Digital Age Offer a New and Growing Threat

- During the 2016 election, no single group of Americans was targeted more by Kremlin-linked disinformation campaigns than African Americans. Many of the digital voter suppression campaigns targeting African Americans focus on disinformation (false information about the candidates or the time, place, and manner of voting), calls to boycott the election, and voter intimidation or threats.
- Digital voter suppression campaigns increased during the 2018 mid-term elections. During the 2018 election cycle, an estimated \$900 million was spent in digital political advertising, which is 2.5 times more than what was spent for online political advertisements in the 2014 mid-term elections. Distributed throughout Facebook and Twitter, these messages were largely targeted to African Americans with the specific aim to discourage or prevent African Americans from voting.

- There are currently five online campaigns targeting black voters. Many use issues important to the black community. Some examples are reparations, immigration, criminal justice and climate change. Many encourage black voters not to vote for Democrats. Others tell them to vote but don't vote for the Presidential option on the ballot.
- Black women are alarmed at the US Senate's absent sense of urgency related to securing our democratic election process. While the U.S. House of Representatives have passed several bills aimed at protecting our democracy and several bipartisan bills have been proposed in the Senate to defend our democracy from foreign interference, the Senate has failed to pass any of these bills into law.

The Power of the Black Woman's Vote

Southern Black Women Flex Their Voting Power Early in the 2020 Presidential Election Cycle

Melanie L. Campbell

*President & CEO, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation,
Convener, Black Women's Roundtable*

Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever

President, Incite Unlimited, LLC

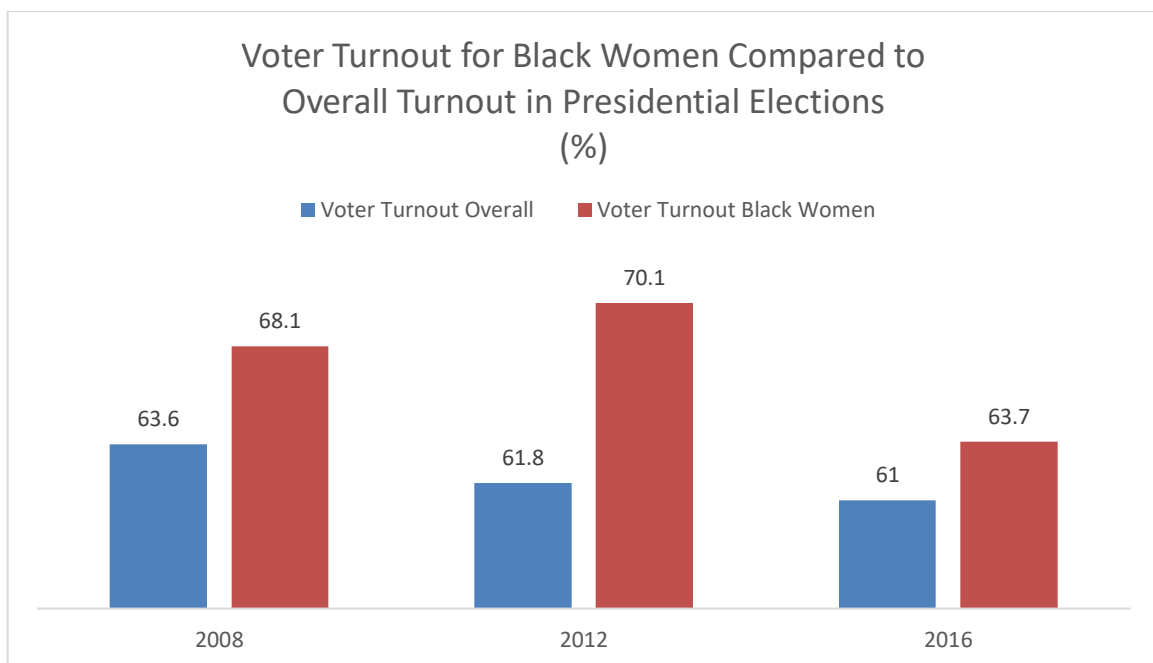
The results of the 2020 South Carolina primaries and Super Tuesday shows once again that you can't win the Democratic presidential nomination without winning the South. And you can't win the South without the Black vote and you can't win the Black vote without winning the Black women's vote.

All roads to the White House must come through the South, at least for Democrats seeking to win their party's nomination. Here is why we make this claim. History has shown that if progressive presidential candidates want to win in states with significant Black populations, they must win the Black women's vote.

Black Women Lead the Way as Voters in Presidential Elections

In 2008, Black women demonstrated their political influence by overperforming other demographic groups, voting at a record 68.1 percent turnout for the first Black president of the United States. Many believe this was fueled by the inspiration of electing the first Black president, the frustration of the Bush Administration's handling of victims from Hurricane Katrina and the shrinking Black middle class caused by the 2008 Great Recession. In 2012, Black women did it

again, voting in historic numbers at 70.1 percent, which was the highest voter turnout of any other group, voting out of concern to protect the passage of the Affordable Healthcare Act of 2010 and continue the advancement of criminal justice reform. In 2016, Black women maintained their voting strength at 63.7 percent. Black women voters have consistently outpaced overall turnout in presidential election years by an average of 6.7 percent.ⁱⁱ (see chart below)



Source: US Census Bureau Reported Voting and Registration 2008, 2012, 2016

Examining What Drives the Black Woman's Vote

We attribute this consistency in Black women's high voter turnout to the strong sense of responsibility that Black voters have to voting, in particular Black women. The Black Women's Roundtable's Annual Report, *Black Women in the US, 2018* and the NCBCP's *Unity Election Day Exit Polls in 2014 – 2018* all show that more than 74% of Black women voters reported voting out of a sense of responsibility rather than to support a specific candidate, this data demonstrates the importance of c3 voter engagement work in the Black community to connect voters to their sense of responsibility.ⁱⁱⁱ As a

result, given the current aggressive political climate, we expect now to see this trend manifest again in the 2020 Presidential Election Cycle. Already, we've seen a hint of that in the Primaries.

The Black vote in the South, anchored by the Black Women's vote, changed the very trajectory of the 2020 Democratic Primary Race. And not only did Black voters turnout in historically large numbers, even exceeding 2008 Obama turn-out levels in places like South Carolina & Virginia, but when looking at issues that were most important to Primary voters in the South, one thing was clear, the number one issue for Black voters are issues related to race.

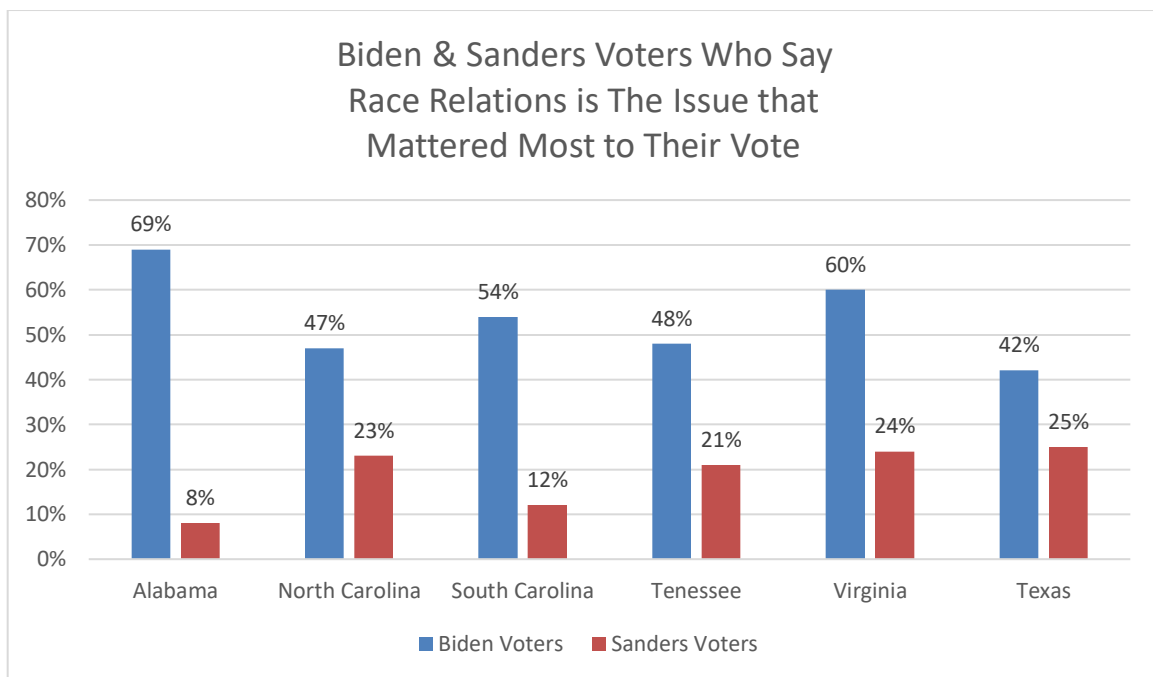
As was the case, in the 2019 BWR/ESSENCE Power of the Sister Vote Poll which found that the top concern that Black women believe threatens themselves and their families is racism and the rise in hate crimes. Similarly, we saw that consistently throughout the South, the issue of Race Relations was the issue that mattered most to Democratic Primary Voters that voted for Joe Biden in every Southern state and was most important to voters in Alabama (69%) and Virginia (60%). And for each state, this issue was of a greater concern to voters than Health Care, Climate Change or Income Inequality.

Conversely, for Sanders voters, the issue of race relations was the least important issue to their vote. And was especially unimportant to voters in Alabama (8%) and South Carolina (12%). As a result, it seems clear, those Southern voters who are most concerned about improving issues related to race in America overwhelming coalesced around the Joe Biden candidacy and was key to his victories in that region.

2020 Primary Voters in Southern States: Which Issue Mattered Most to Your Vote? by Percent Black Vote

State	Biden				% BLK Vote	Sanders				% BLK Vote
	Race Relations	Health Care	Climate Change	Income inequality		Race Relations	Health Care	Climate Change	Income inequality	
AL	69%	62%	64%	53%	72%	8%	15%	26%	26%	10%
NC	47%	43%	36%	39%	62%	23%	26%	23%	25%	17%
SC	54%	50%	41%	45%	61%	12%	22%	18%	23%	17%
TN	48%	43%	34%	37%	57%	21%	27%	29%	25%	19%
VA	60%	55%	53%	44%	69%	24%	21%	22%	28%	17%
TX	42%	34%	31%	26%	58%	25%	32%	29%	32%	15%

Source: CNN 2020 Democratic Primary Exit Polls



Source: CNN 2020 Democratic Primary Exit Polls

Follow Black Women if You Want to Win in 2020 & Beyond

As the 2020 Presidential Election Primaries continues to soar now, one thing is clear---Black women will not only be listening very closely to hear Presidential candidates share their concern for

issues on the Black women's agenda, they are expecting their leadership to be respected and invested in as voters, candidates; and political managers and organizers.

Black women are taking their political leadership to new levels of success in 2020; and for those seeking to win over the Black women's vote, remember Black women are the "secret sauce" to victory. So, follow Black women, if you want to win.

*Black Women Sound the Alarm on Rising Hate in
America*

The State of Rising Hate in Trump's America

By:

Avis A. Jones-DeWeever, Ph.D.

Incite Unlimited

In the 2019 Black Women's Roundtable/Essence Magazine Power of the SisterVote Poll, Black women cited racism and the rise in hate crimes as the top concern that they believe threatens themselves and their families. This concern is not baseless. In fact, it reflects a very real and growing problem in America that too often goes unacknowledged until tragedy strikes.

But the rise in hate crimes in America is not a new. In fact, it's been ticking up continuous since the Presidential primary season of the 2016 Presidential election cycle.¹ And included a particularly notable spike immediately following the conclusion of that particularly brutal and divisive election.² What's especially interesting, is that this uptick didn't only occur generally. The highest spikes actually took place specifically in those specific counties that experienced the largest margin of victory in the 2016 Presidential election.³ Also, those counties that hosted especially controversial campaign rallies leading up to that election, saw an increase in hate crimes

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics, [Hate Crime Statistics, 2009-2017](#), March 29, 2019

² Williams, Aaron. March 23, 2018. *Hate Crimes Rose the Day After Trump Was Elected FBI Data Show*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2018/03/23/hate-crimes-rose-the-day-after-trump-was-elected-fbi-data-show/>

³ Williamson, Vanessa and Isabella Gelfand. August 14, 2019. *Trump and Racism: What Do the Data Say?* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2019/08/14/trump-and-racism-what-do-the-data-say/>

of over 200 percent in comparison to other nearby counties where no such rallies occurred.⁴ This disturbing reality uncovers a growing intersection between hate and politics in this nation that didn't end with the conclusion of one, particularly divisive campaign. In fact, the hate not only continued. It grew.

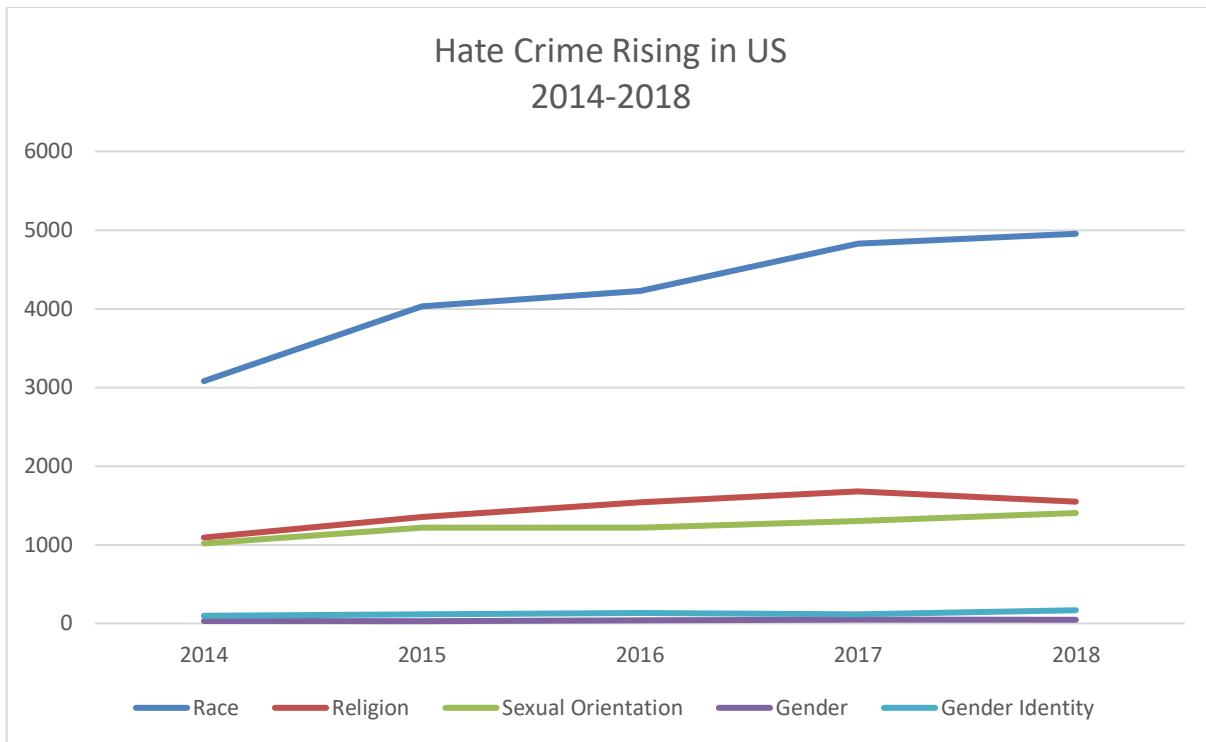
According to FBI crime statistics for four years in a row now, the number of hate crimes in America have continuously increased, including a near record breaking jump in the year immediately following the last Presidential election, with Hate Crimes based on race far and away leading all hate crime activity, and with Black people being the most likely racial group to have been on the receiving end of such crimes.⁵ In fact, in 2017, the nation experienced the largest increase in hate crimes that we've seen in this nation in some 25 years. That spike was second only to the increase we saw immediately following the September 11th attacks.⁶ And in 2018, roughly half of the nation's 30 largest cities experienced increases in hate crime activity, that for them, reached a decade high.⁷

⁴ Feinburg, Ayal, Regina Branson and Valerie Martinez-Ebers. March 22, 2019. *Counties That Hosted a 2016 Trump Rally Saw a 226 Percent Increase in Hate Crimes*. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/22/trumps-rhetoric-does-inspire-more-hate-crimes/>

⁵ FBI: UCR, [2017 Hate Crime Statistics](#), [2016 Hate Crime Statistics](#), [2015 Hate Crime Statistics](#), [2014 Hate Crime Statistics](#), [2013 Hate Crime Statistics](#) [2012 Hate Crime Statistics](#), [About Hate Crime Statistics](#)

⁶ Farivar, Masood. *FBI Reports Largest Spike in Hate Crimes Since 9/11*. <https://www.voanews.com/usa/fbi-reports-largest-spike-hate-crimes-911>

⁷ Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, [Hate Crimes Rise In U.S. Cities And Counties In Time Of Division & Foreign Interference](#), May 2018

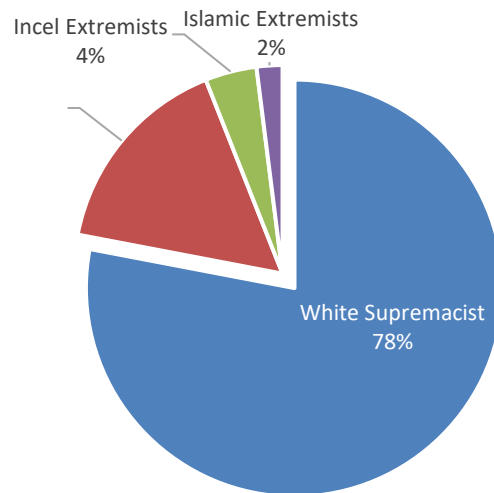


Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2014-2017

All the while, the number of hate groups in America have now surged to over 1,000, the highest number the nation has seen since that statistic has been calculated.⁸ And as far as domestic terrorism goes, far and away, the most likely perpetrator of such lethal attacks is someone motivated by white supremacist ideology.

⁸ Xu, Yanqi. April 3, 2019. *Explaining the Numbers Behind the Rise in Reported Hate Crimes*. <https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2019/apr/03/hate-crimes-are-increasingly-reported-us/>

Domestic Extremist-Related Killings in the U.S. by Perpetrator Affiliation, 2018

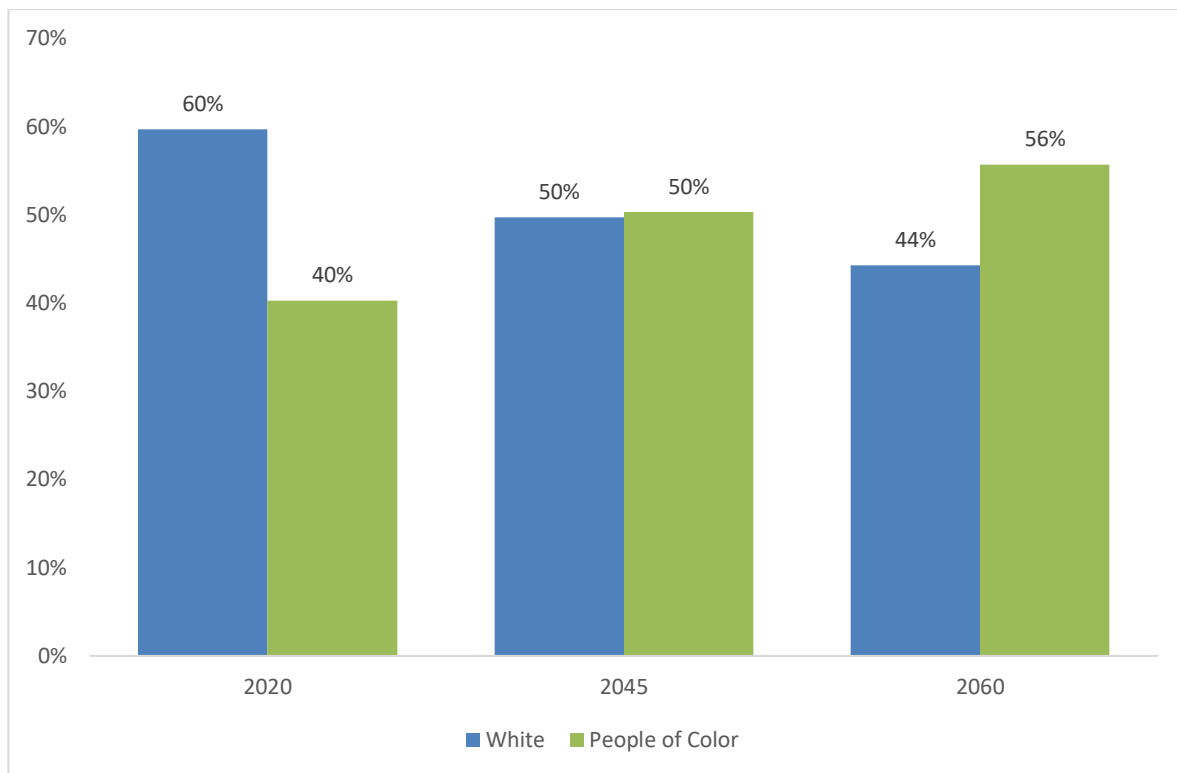


Source: Anti-Defamation League

Looking back on the tragedies of Mother Emanuel, Charlottesville, the Tree of Life Synagogue and the El Paso massacre, just to name a few, this nation has established a pattern of briefly mourning the senseless loss of life in the immediate aftermath of hate-filled violence. But the reality is, the situation isn't getting any better. In fact, it's getting worse. And it won't be stopped until we make it so. The first step in that process is to acknowledge what's really going on. And that boils down to primarily two things.

First, America is changing. Right now, the majority of babies born in this country are babies of color. This, along with the rate of immigration, of people of color to this nation, foreshadow a not too distant future in which America will no longer be a majority white nation.

US Population Projections by Race 2020-2060



Source: Author's calculations based on US Census 2017 National Population Projection Tables, Main Series Table 5.

In response to the impending population shift, political appeals to hate, fear and division have now become all the more commonplace in our political discourse. And in fact, have been used as a wedge to sow an 'us' versus 'them' ideology that has been expertly leveraged for political gain.

Anxiety over a declining white population may not only show up as hate in America, it may also serve as a fundamental threat to America. Survey researchers out of Clemson and Texas A&M University have found that generally speaking, when racially intolerant Americans believe that democracy will benefit people of color, they actually abandon their commitment to democracy

altogether in favor of authoritarian rule.⁹ In other words, as the potential for white voting power dominance declines, support for a democratic system of government declines as well. As such, the real issue here seems to be a deep desire to retain power at any cost so as to freeze the social hierarchy as it stands today, even when the numeric ability to form a majority vote capable of deciding elections at some point in the future, no longer exists.

That said, counteracting growing hate in America must become a national imperative. Not only for turning back the increasing prevalence of violent hate crime activity throughout the US, but also to preserve the Union as we know it all together.

⁹ Berlatsky, Noah. May 27, 2018. *The Trump Effect: New Study Connects White American Intolerance and Support for Authoritarianism*. NBC THINK. <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/trump-effect-new-study-connects-white-american-intolerance-support-authoritarianism-ncna877886>

Impact of Racism on Black Women

By:

The Honorable Stephanie L. Moore

County Commissioner

Kalamazoo County Government

Convener, Black Women's Roundtable, Kalamazoo

Racism and hate crimes have negatively impacted our world for centuries, the impact on black women specifically has been horrendous. The effects of structural and systemic racism show up in many forms in the lives of black women. Some, which include, unrecognized trauma, unaddressed trauma, trauma denial, high rates of infant mortality, maternal deaths, parenting, higher death rates for all cancers, incarceration rates, single parenthood, being underrepresented in positions of power, amongst many other things.

Institutionalized racism is normative, sometimes legalized, and often manifests as inherited disadvantage. It is structural, having been codified in our institutions of custom, practice, and law, so there is no need for an identifiable perpetrator. Indeed, institutionalized racism is often evident as inaction in the face of need. It manifests itself in material conditions, such as differential access to quality education, decent and affordable housing, gainful employment, appropriate medical facilities, and a clean environment. Regarding access to power, examples include differential access to information (including one's history), resources (including wealth and organizational infrastructure), and voice (including voting rights, representation in government, and control of the media). We must also acknowledge that it is because of institutionalized racism that there is an association between socioeconomic status and race in this country. There is a disproportionate number of black women who are incarcerated because of government-led initiatives such as the war on drugs and its impact on families. With less than 5 percent of the world's population but

nearly 25 percent of its incarcerated population, the United States imprisons more people than any other nation in the world – largely due to the war on drugs. Misguided drug laws and harsh sentencing requirements have produced profoundly unequal outcomes for people of color. Although rates of drug use and sales are similar across racial and ethnic lines, black people are far more likely to be criminalized than white people. 2.7 million children are growing up in U.S. households in which one or more parents are incarcerated. Two-thirds of these parents are incarcerated for nonviolent offenses, including a substantial proportion who are incarcerated for drug law violations. One in 9 black children has an incarcerated parent, compared to one in 28 Latino children and one in 57 white children. Punishment for a drug law violation is not only meted out by the criminal justice system, but is also perpetuated by policies denying child custody, voting rights, employment, business loans, licensing, student aid, public housing and other public assistance to people with criminal convictions.

Since researchers confirmed this stark disparity, they've been trying to understand its causes. One could partly attribute it to the structural barriers black women experience when trying to access health care due to generations of discrimination and segregation. African-American women, in particular, have been subjected to unspeakable horrors, including bearing the brunt of a eugenics movement in the 20th century that sought to control black population growth, with, in some cases, African-American have been subjected to forced sterilizations.¹⁰

In fact, many of the health disparities between black and white Americans can be directly linked to federal housing discrimination, redlining, and neighborhood segregation. Black women in America are more likely to live in poverty and to live in neighborhoods where it is difficult to

¹⁰ Irin Carmin. 2014. “For Eugenics Sterilization Victims, Belated Justice.” MSNBC <http://www.msnbc.com/all/eugenic-sterilization-victims-belated-justice>

get quality health care. They're also more likely to have limited access to transportation, to work in jobs with inflexible hours or inadequate benefits with little sick leave, and to be uninsured. Sixty-seven percent of children in America live in single-mother households.

According to a 2018 study from the Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism (CSHE) at Cal State, in 2017 there was a 12% rise in hate crimes. According to this study hate crimes are discussed in isolation, without acknowledging targeted attacks against black women and girls. Many believe that this increase is due to the climate where racist rhetoric spills from the nation's highest office.

The cumulative experience of racism throughout one's life can induce the kind of chronic stress that makes African American women particularly susceptible to chronic health conditions that lead to otherwise preventable deaths.

After reading all the above, one might ask "what's next?" My answer to that question lies in our abilities to collectively come together and work to first impact the communities we work in through service. It is imperative that black women continue to remember that despite all that has occurred, we are resilient, and we must lead through acquiring leadership positions at the local, state and federal levels.

Fighting Hate Crimes and White Supremacy

By:
Kristen Clarke, J.D.
President and Executive Director
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law

While hate crimes in our country are not new, they have reached alarming levels in recent years, with approximately 200,000 individuals victimized by hate crimes every year. Anti-Black hate crimes have accounted for a plurality of reported hate crimes in the United States since the data was first collected in the 1990s, and continue to be a plurality today.

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a national racial justice organization founded at the request of President Kennedy, is at the forefront of fighting bias-motivated attacks aimed at African-American individuals and communities. While our work in this arena has been ongoing, in February 2020 we launched The James Byrd Jr. Center to Stop Hate ("Byrd Center"), a name chosen to honor the legacy of James Byrd Jr., a man killed in a horrific anti-Black hate crime in 1998. The Byrd Center challenges white supremacy by using creative legal advocacy, educating law enforcement and communities about how to better respond to hate, and improving our country's hate crime laws.

Throughout all of our work, we strive to apply an intersectional lens in addressing hate crimes. We know that individuals rarely inhabit a single identity and, similar to our client Taylor Dumpson, in the case of Black women, may be targeted both for their race and their gender.

In 2018, our legal team filed suit on behalf of the first female African American student government president of American University, Taylor Dumpson. The day after her inauguration, a

masked man hung nooses around campus with racial slurs targeting her and her Black sorority. Shortly thereafter, Andrew Anglin, a neo-Nazi, wrote a racist article targeting Ms. Dumpson on the Daily Stormer, a popular white supremacist website. Anglin incited his followers to threaten and harass Ms. Dumpson using social media platforms as their weapon. They doxed her by publishing her contact information and whereabouts. The Daily Stormer's followers obliged, deluging her with intimidating and harassing messages. As a result, our client began to fear for her safety, grew afraid to walk around campus at night, suffered academically, and was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In the lawsuit brought by the Lawyers' Committee, the court held that the online harassment suffered by our client unlawfully interfered with her right to equal enjoyment of public accommodations. This historic ruling set groundbreaking precedent and provides a new legal avenue to hold perpetrators of online hate and harassment accountable for their conduct. The court also imposed a \$725,000 judgment which, once collected, will impair the "business" operations of Daily Stormer for years to come.

In addition to furthering innovative legal strategies aimed at combatting online hate, the Byrd Center has also forged critical partnerships with law enforcement agencies across the country. We believe that long histories of mistrust between communities of color and police can only be healed through open communication. To that end, we've worked with partners to train over 1,200 law enforcement officers and prosecutors on how to better respond to hate crimes. These trainings equip departments with the skills needed to understand how hate manifests in communities and better understand the effects of hate on communities.

In addition to our innovative work on the legal front and training law enforcement, the Byrd Center is also engaged in advocacy work to improve hate crimes laws at the state and federal levels. One area where hate crime legislation can be strengthened is in how hate crime data is

collected and reported A quick comparison of hate crime data collected by the FBI, compared with data collected via the National Crime Victimization Survey, shows that tens of thousands of bias-motivated crimes go unreported every year. Such discrepancies in hate crime data make it hard for advocates, federal agencies, and policy makers to know and respond to the full scope of the problem. To address this problem, the Byrd Center has worked with coalition partners and legislators to support the Khalid Jabara-Heather Heyer NO HATE Act to incentivize better reporting on hate crimes by law enforcement agencies, provide further support for victims, and mandate hate crime trainings for officers. We also support the Justice for Victims of Hate Crimes Act, introduced in early 2020, which would strengthen current law to allow for crimes motivated in part by bias, rather than solely by bias, to be considered a hate crime. A legal standard that requires prosecutors to show that the *sole* motivation of a perpetrator was bias ignores the complex realities of how hate crimes are committed and creates a significant, unnecessary and unjust hurdle for prosecutors to cross.

We are committed to fighting the long and significant history of anti-Black hate crimes in America's history. Hate crimes have grown more frequent and more violent in recent years, but we know that through our innovative approaches and strong partnerships, we can take on hate.

Kristen Clarke is the president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, home to the James Byrd, Jr. Center to Stop Hate. Follow her - @KristenClarke

Economic Justice, Equity & Opportunity

Black Women and Equal Pay

By Jocelyn Frye
Center for American Progress

Black women are hard-working women. They have among the highest labor force participation rates,¹ they work long hours,² and they have the highest percentage of maternal breadwinners among all mothers.³ Yet, too often equal pay for Black women is illusory and elusive. They experience a persistent gap in earnings that reflects the cumulative effects of both a gender and racial wage gap, and that gap gets larger over time.⁴

The path to equal pay for Black women first requires delving deeper into their earnings. In 2018, Black women working full-time, year-round earned 62 cents for every dollar earned by white men working full-time, year-round. This gap meant an estimated \$23,540 less in median annual earnings for Black women over an entire year.⁵ A similar disparity is also evident when Black women's earnings are compared to those of white women and Black men, who respectively earned an estimated 79 percent and 72 percent of white men's median annual earnings. In 2018, while white men earned an estimated \$61,576 in median annual earnings, Black women earned \$38,036 in median annual earnings compared to \$48,390 for white women and \$44,386 for Black men. This means that Black women earned 79 percent of white women's earnings and 86 percent of Black male earnings.⁶ Black women experience an intersectional wage gap, one that reflects the unique, compounding effects of how race and gender are perceived together.⁷ Any interventions, to be effective, must address these distinct impacts.

Unpacking the factors driving the wage gap for Black women specifically is essential. Some of the gap can be explained by measurable factors, such as differences in hours worked and levels of education. But these factors may yield different results for Black women than other workers. For example, although Black women's wages increase with higher levels of education, their wage gap also gets wider with increased education.⁸ There also is a portion of the wage gap that is not explained by measurable factors – an unexplained portion often attributed to discrimination.⁹

An effective response to help secure equal pay for Black women must focus on combatting discrimination and minimizing bias. It must address systemic biases within institutional structures that perpetuate stereotypes about Black women and limit their advancement opportunities. It must tackle the devaluation of Black women's work¹⁰ and the occupational segregation¹¹ that steers Black women into lower paying jobs by focusing on ways to increase wages and improve job quality. It must strengthen enforcement tools by requiring pay data collection and public reporting of pay gaps broken down by race and gender, and target investigatory resources to root out intersectional discrimination and unfair pay practices in industries where Black women are most likely to work. It must make more information available such as salary ranges so that Black women can make informed choices when looking for work, and support economic policies like paid leave and affordable child-care that help Black women navigate their work and family obligations.

CONCLUSION

The work of Black women is vital. But they deserve to be paid fairly for their work. Equal pay for Black women is long overdue.

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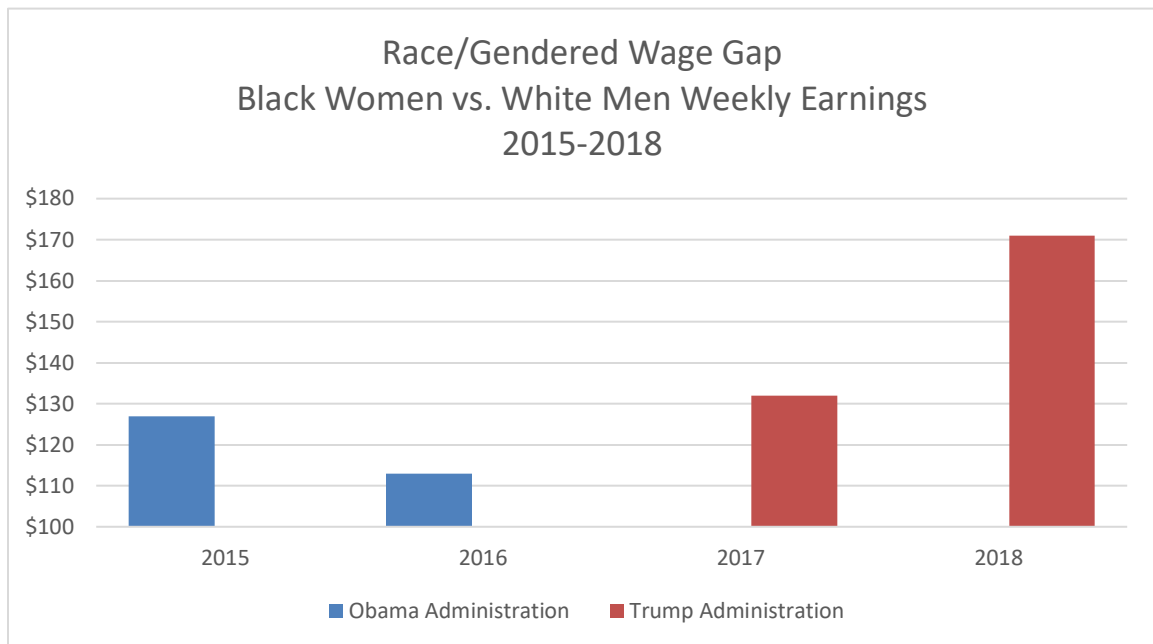
Falling Further Behind: The Black Woman's Wage Gap In the Trump Economy

Avis Jones-DeWeever, Ph.D.

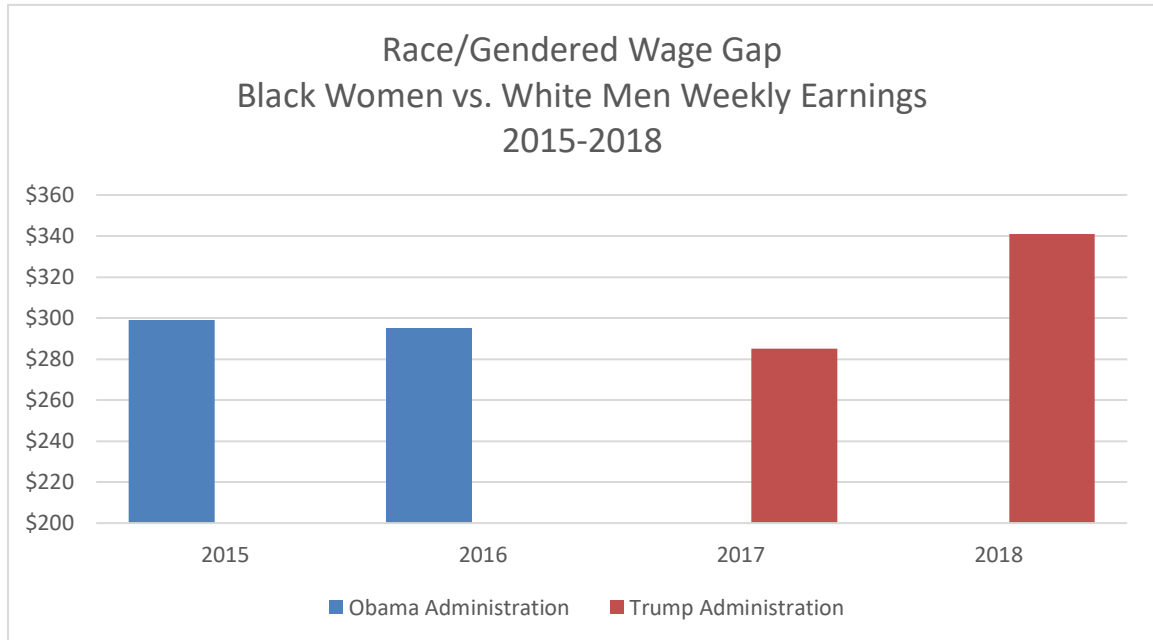
Incite Unlimited

America is in the midst of a decade long economic expansion, ultimately leading to a tight labor market. And while this may result in good news related to unemployment, for Black women, employment has never been the problem. We work. Always have and always will. The challenge we face is the issue of wages. Getting fair pay for a day's work is especially illusive for Black women. As has been detailed earlier in this report, Black women experience an intersectional wage gap. One that is impacted not only by gender, but also, by race. And while this problem is nothing new, what we've seen is that in recent years, this long-standing challenge has been getting worse.

In fact, in comparing the gap in the weekly wages of Black women and White women in the last two years of the Obama Administration and the first two years of the Trump Administration, an interesting picture unfolds. While wage differentials between the two groups of women were overall lower and decreasing by the end of the Obama Administration, those gaps have grown substantially under the Trump Administration, jumping from a differential of \$113 per week in median earnings under the last year of the Obama Administration, to a differential of \$171 per week by the second year of the Trump Administration. And when comparing the differences in weekly pay between Black women and white men, that gap grew substantially between the last year of the Obama Administration and the second year of the Trump Administration (\$295 vs. \$341 weekly earnings gap).



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Median Weekly Earnings, Employed Full Time, Wage and Salary Workers, 2015-2019 Data, Q2.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Median Weekly Earnings, Employed Full Time, Wage and Salary Workers, 2015-2019 Data, Q2.

These wage differentials are especially devastating for Black women's economic security since they are more likely than their white counterparts to be single, have the sole responsibility

of caring for children, or maintain the responsibility of being the primary wage-earner even in two-parent households. And while all women experience wage gaps compared to their male counterparts, and Black men experience wage gaps in comparison to white men, the pay gaps experienced by Black women highlight the degree to which wage injustice is a substantial and multifaceted struggle in the lives of Black women.

Retirement *Insecurity* in the Lives of Black Women

Edna Kayne Williams

AARP

Black women face a unique set of challenges in their retirement years as far too many enter that time in their lives already economically insecure. Although Black women have historically had higher labor force participation rates than other women and have the highest growth rate of college enrollment than any other racial group, these qualities have not resulted in wealth advantages that securely position Black women for an economically stable retirement.

Table 1. Median Wealth of Women by Race, Family Structure and Education, 2013

	No Bachelor's Degree		Bachelor's Degree	
	Black	White	Black	White
Married	\$25,000	\$117,200	\$45,000	\$260,000
Single	\$500	\$8,000	\$5,000	\$35,000

Source: Women, Race, & Wealth. Volume 1, January 2017, Research Brief Series

As the above table demonstrates, Black women are much more economically insecure across differentials in both marital status and level of education, with Single Black women especially disadvantaged across the educational continuum. Most economically fragile are single Black women with no Bachelor's Degree, who ultimately hold a mere \$500 in wealth. While

obtaining a Bachelor's Degree's improves the situation substantially, a net worth of \$5000 is still by any measure, significantly economically insecure.

By the time Black women enter their retirement years, those wealth differentials experienced in her working years are exacerbated even further, especially if she enters those years unmarried. Single older Black women with a college degree have merely \$11,000 in wealth as compared to \$384,400 in wealth for single white women 60 years of age or older with a college degree. However, those Black women who are ultimately best situated for retirement are those who are both married and who hold a Bachelor's Degree.

Table 2. Median Wealth of Women 60+ by Family Structure, Education and Race, 2013

	No Bachelor's Degree		Bachelor's Degree	
	Black	White	Black	White
Married	\$89,500	\$344,700	\$424,000	\$778,000
Single	\$12,000	\$60,000	\$11,000	\$384,000

Source: Women, Race, & Wealth. Volume 1, January 2017, Research Brief Series

For those Black women on the economic fringes, especially those who enter their retirement years having to navigate life without a spouse, access to Pension benefits and Social Security are especially critical for staying economically above water and being equipped to live their golden years with a modicum of dignity and independence.

Trumpism: Its Impact on Black Women's Wealth

Zaneilia Harris, CFP®
President, [Harris & Harris Wealth Management Group](#)

Since the 2016 election of Donald J. Trump, his administration has touted how the stock market has improved, interest rates are down, and joblessness is at a historic low. His leadership takes full credit despite the [eight continual years of economic growth](#) during the Obama administration. Financial reports indicate this should be the greatest economic time in America. For most people outside of the top 1 percent, it's not.

Although unemployment rates are down, there still isn't full labor participation. The Federal Reserve and central banks have been pressured by the administration to [change their strategy of gradually increasing interest rates](#) to avoid inflation. Stock market growth has increased; however, the U.S.'s protectionism approach has resulted in a constant threat of trade wars with China and the European Union, ultimately causing major volatility in the markets. How do these economic realities affect black women?

Research shows that [black women entrepreneurs are the fastest-growing demographic](#) but they struggle to [access capital to fund and expand their businesses](#), which generate an average of just \$27,753 in annual sales. Starting a business is a major form of economic empowerment but if you can't feed your family and support employees, it can be a financial catastrophe.

[Black women make up 64 percent of Black people who earn a bachelor's degree](#), making them one of [the most educated groups in America](#). Funding that education can be challenging. Women owe nearly \$930 billion of the outstanding student loan debt and Black women, on average, have taken on more educational debt than any other ethnic or gender group. Because of

the difficulty in discharging this debt via bankruptcy, education can be a major liability if black women can't make the wages to afford loan payments.

The income disparity pays black women just \$.63 for every \$1 earned by a white male. This limits black women's ability to repay student loan debt, grow wealth and contribute to retirement accounts, buy real estate and stocks, qualify for business loans, and earn the income necessary to invest in private equity opportunities.

Assets minus liabilities equals net worth, which is built by properly managing income and debt. If your personal debt is less than your income, you have a positive cash flow and excess income to invest and continually grow your assets. Research shows that single black women's median [net worth ranges from \\$500 to \\$5,000, depending on education level](#). Despite the Trump administration's preponderance of economic data, the surplus from the booming economy has not trickled down to African-American women in the same way it's benefited white Americans. A foundation of wealth affords black women and their families economic stability and financial security to create safe communities, better schools and economic resources for their children. They can also invest in their self-care and recreational experiences to recharge and rejuvenate using the extra funds to travel and support tourism that often employs low-income minority female workers.

Is this landscape any different than it was during the Obama administration? Statistically, it's not. That's why it's imperative for both political parties to formally address issues around wealth and income disparities, especially in minority communities. The top one percent of affluent Americans are enjoying exceptional growth in their wealth during the Trump administration while African American women feel the strain of more debt with less income.

That's one reason why reparations has become a hot-button topic this election year. Leveling the economic playing field for African Americans, especially black women, means

creating start-up funding for entrepreneurs, expanding higher education grants that help low-income and first-generation college students, capping loan and repayment subsidies for college graduates in low-paying or non-profit jobs, and supplementing a minimum standard of living for the lowest paid populations in the country. Establishing a new pay standard holds employers accountable to salary transparency and equal pay for equal work.

In spite of the lack of federal support, black women fight and bootstrap their way to a level of self-sufficiency. They use their ingenuity to create and build. Black women become their own solution, forming sister circles to leverage resources and knowledge. This results in a demand for financial guidance and direction - a one-stop shop to converge the expertise held by black women, from financial educators, coaches, analysts, journalists, advisors, planners and wealth managers working together to create economic power. Economic power strengthens political power. This may be the fear.

Nevertheless, African America women are the barometer measuring the true success of America. The end result is when black women lose, everyone loses.

The Impact of Diversity and Inclusion on Black Women in the Workplace

Dee C. Marshall
CEO, Diverse & Engaged

Businesses focusing on diversity and inclusion (D&I) have begun to increase, as have more initiatives and conversations around D&I. However, despite these positive strides, black women have not made any significant progress in terms of pay, hiring, retention or promotion. Black women are undisputed leaders of our community, making strides as entrepreneurs, gaining ground politically and continuing to lead globally but there is yet to be any measurable results on workplace gains for us.

We have seen several significant “firsts” in terms of the acquisition of high-ranking positions for black women. In the last five years telecommunications veteran, Cynthia Marshall became the NBA’s first African-American woman CEO. Channing Dungey became the first African-American president of a major broadcast TV network. And in 2018, our beloved Stacey Abrams became the first African-American woman to be the major party nominee for state governor. However, at Diverse & Engaged we work with major corporations to implement inclusion and diversity strategies and in our experience, we know that this does not reflect the status of everyday, hard-working black women.

While there is an emerging diversity and inclusion movement in the workforce, we are still led to ask: where are the black women?

Sixty-two percent of black women make up the labor force in the US today. The median annual earnings of black women are \$36,000 compared to about \$60,000 for white men in the workforce. When it comes to workers in Managerial or Professional roles, black women makeup

32.8% compared to that of white women who make up about 43.7% and Asian women who make up 47.2%. From not being hired with the same benefits package as our white male counterparts, to being passed over for promotions for high-level positions. Black women are not receiving the support, mentorship or sponsorship needed to succeed in the workplace and our psychological safety is at risk. A 2018 Catalyst research study provides evidence there is an “Emotional Tax” levied on Black women (and men) as they try to successfully navigate through their careers and this Emotional Tax has detrimental effects on health, well-being, and the ability to thrive at work.

It appears that there is a counteracting movement at the intersection of workplace diversity and black women.

Some industries are only beginning to embrace D&I and work towards a strategy to address the challenges of underrepresented and diverse populations. As has been the case with the fashion and retail industries who are momentarily embracing diversity as a result of public backlash from social media. As marketing campaigns and customer experiences continue to expose everything from bias to micro-aggressive behavior towards people of color, CEOs are being held accountable and challenged to embrace D&I best practices and share data. However high-reputational risk continues to drive diversity and inclusion action when a corporations’ cultural incompetence plays out online publicly. Most follow the damage control standard with a requisite apology, shut down the stores for a one-day training and hire D&I person.

Other industries are holding a "funeral service" for diversity by shifting the order or changing the language and lens by which they view the issue. The new language in some sectors, particularly in Fortune 500 spaces, includes a focus on inclusion, culture, and belonging or if “inclusion and diversity (I&D)”. Job titles such as “Chief of Human Spectrum” or “Chief of

Culture and Belonging” are beginning to emerge, as a replacement for “Diversity.” One of the possible contributing factors: white fragility.

Many leaders are ‘tired of talking about it’ but another reason for substituting the word “Diversity” could have something to do with, as reported in The Washington Post, “the Trump administration censoring certain words”—diversity being one of them. Removing the word diversity in the U.S. business culture eliminates the need to create fair and equitable opportunities for black women.

Which leads us to another trend in D&I: reprioritizing gender diversity. In the workplace white women are making major progress as the new face of diversity as a result of the post hashtag Me Too movement.

According to a 2019 LA Times article, “women are reshaping the television landscape.” Of the five women mentioned in the article, not one of them was African-American. Where are black women?

In the 2019 Board Monitor report, Heldrick and Struggles stated that “there's a record number of women on the boards of Fortune 500 companies. Racial and ethnic minorities, not so much.” While the number of women board directors on Fortune 500 companies increased steadily overall during the past decade—with female appointees increasing to 40% in 2018—racially and ethnically diverse new board appointments in 2018 remained unchanged. Where are black women?

But there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and that light is shining from the culture and here we find black women.

Black people are watching, and they are using social media to call “employers” out. If there are ad campaigns that disregard, dismiss or demean black people, social media has now placed businesses on blast. Members of the 116th Congress—at its largest and most diverse—are

holding businesses accountable. Here are black women. In walks Congresswomen Maxine Waters and Joyce Beauty asking hard questions like “why are black women still being passed over” and when will time really be up?

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Dee C. Marshall is the CEO at Diverse & Engaged a leadership development, workplace culture and diversity consultant. Her work began in as an Executive Coach and in diversity recruiting. She is certified and credentialed Coach and contributor on women's success at work and in life.

Transitioning from Livelihood to Inter-Generational Wealth

Lisa Anderson, CEO
Anavo Transformaton Solutions

“You’re a rare breed!” These are the words I’ve heard all my life. Being the oldest child, the only girl and the first in my family to finish college, I was a rare breed. Being the only black and one of few women in the corporate board room, I was the rare breed. Being a black woman owned accounting firm, I have been the rare breed. Growing my business from start up to multiple millions in annual revenue, I am a rare breed. Building a legacy filled with generational wealth, I continue to be a rare breed.

Throughout my life and my career, I could not settle. There was always more I could do to develop my name, gain freedom and build a legacy. Because of my tenacity, it became my responsibility to find a way to build wealth for myself and my family. Simply settling for things that only supported my livelihood and lifestyle was not enough. My family deserved more.

Black women have been the backbone of the family for centuries, serving as the strength, support, caregiver, and way-maker. According to the National Domestic Workers Alliance, over 80 percent of black mothers are breadwinners. Creating a financial pathway for our children and our children’s children is a necessary endeavor.

While real estate has historically served as a prominent area of wealth building in the black community, many lost that wealth during the real estate boom and most have not recovered. With the implosion of the foreclosure crisis, many saw their generational wealth built in their homes and

retirement plans, completely wiped out. They did not have control over their financial destiny after all. Something had to change if their families were to strive, thrive and survive.

The pathway to creating and securing financial freedom for black women is in building healthy and sustainable businesses. In its 2019 State of Women Owned Businesses Report, American Express reports black women owned businesses experienced the highest rate of growth of any group of women owned firms since 2014. They further represent 21 percent of all women owned businesses and nine percent of all small businesses in the United States.

While this is excellent news for Black women owned businesses, a huge disparity in earnings power remains. As reported by American Express, the average revenue for black women owned businesses is \$65,800 as compared to \$218,800 for white women owned businesses. These average earnings barely cover their livelihoods and lifestyles, let alone build a legacy of generational wealth.

How can black women shift their businesses to become wealth building machines? Here are five steps I took to scale my business and build my legacy.

Leveraged My Resources

I recognized early on that scaling my business is not something I could do alone. I therefore tapped into my network of professional connections, previous employers and strategic partners to help me grow my business. As a result, I established strong teaming and referral partnerships. For over twenty years, my network has been an excellent source of contacts, leads and holistic growth.

Built My A-Team

As a Black woman, I knew it would be difficult to create financial traction on my own. I therefore sought expert advisors as my A-Team. This included an attorney, banker, accountant, insurance broker, and human resources consultant, all of whom had extensive experience supporting small minority owned companies and connections necessary to move my business forward. Having them on my team made it possible to obtain credit and working capital necessary to keep my business operational.

Stayed Connected to My Numbers

This step was not difficult for me. Being a Certified Public Accountant, I knew the importance of monitoring and managing my finances. Reviewing them frequently helped me ensure profitability and enhance cashflow while mitigating any foreseen risks. I not only managed the consequences of my decisions, I predicted our financial future. In addition, instead of pulling capital from my business to enhance my lifestyle, I allowed the capital to remain in the business. This increased my equity and overall net worth and allowed me to build value in my business.

Took Advantage of Socio-Economic Programs

It's a huge mistake to disregard programs which are made available to minority businesses. Certain programs such as the 8(a) program for Minority and Economically Disadvantaged with the Small Business Administration and Women Owned Small Business Certification with WEBNC, among others, are designed to elevate and advance businesses and provide a fair opportunity to compete. I utilized these programs to jump start our growth and position the business to advance beyond those programs.

For those of us who have the responsibility of creating financial pathways for our families, it's important to understand your mission is critical, business is an asset, money is a tool, and legacies are built. Entrepreneurship and building multi-million dollar businesses make legacy building achievable and is the current day pathway to generational wealth.

Wisdom of the Next Generation: Claiming our Economic Justice Narrative

[Kisha Bird](#) & [Nia West-Bey](#)
Center for Law and Social Policy

The opposite of poverty is not wealth. The opposite of poverty is justice.
-Bryan Stevenson

Achieving justice that is the opposite of poverty means reflecting on the historical consequences of slavery, segregation, and exclusionary policies that have perpetually spewed violence against black women, our families and our communities, and a focus on restoration and healing. Last year marked 400 years since the first enslaved Africans came forcibly to this country. Thanks to [Nikole Hannah-Jones and the 1619 project](#), many people are reflecting on the traumatic consequences of that event for the first time. Yet and still, this nation has not reckoned what it has done to us and our communities.

It is easy to get lost in a conversation about economic justice in dire statistics and disproportionate impacts. These statistics do not define black women; how we define ourselves must be central to this national reckoning and any conversation about economic justice.

Achieving justice that is the opposite of poverty means claiming and privileging black women's narratives about our experiences. In the last few years, we have been fortunate to have the opportunity to engage in conversation with young black women, ages 18-24 as part of our [youth policy portfolio](#). These young women were experts in economic marginalization; they lived in low-income communities; many had not finished high school; some had experienced homelessness. Many were pregnant or raising children. Who better to articulate a justice-driven

narrative of black womanhood than the next generation of young black women? This is how they tell our story:

What does it mean to be a black woman in 2020?

According to young black women, we are defined by our **strength**. Our strength stretches across generations; it is the inheritance that we receive from our mothers and pass to our daughters. It steels us to survive our individual and collective traumas. It leads the list of who we are.

According to young black women, we are steeped in **history**. Whether the people who are the first to achieve certain milestones or accomplishments, or the sites of historic achievements and broken barriers, our history is the backdrop for our lives today. This backdrop is a source of pride that makes our communities unique and allows us to place our current struggles in the context of those who have gone before.

According to young black women, we must **believe in ourselves** against all odds. As black women, we cannot rely on the beliefs of others in a cultural context that has never believed in us. We must believe in ourselves, believe in our sisters, and hold each other up in the face of a hostile national narrative. By believing in ourselves, we determine our own destiny and achieve our dreams.

According to young black women, our **generosity of spirit** fuels the survival of our communities. We believe that our blessings are inextricably linked to the collective well-being, and whatever we have we must give gladly so as not to block our own blessings. We are

caretakers and lifelines, and while this deep and unconditional giving can be tiring, it is who we are.

According to young black women, to be a black woman is to **work**. We work from when we are young, to support ourselves and our families. We have always worked. Sometimes the need to work to provide the bare necessities to our children undermines our relationships with them. But we don't have another way. And so yes, we work. And we have always worked.

So the question before us in 2020 is, how can our work produce justice?

Too often, we are told to wait our turn and to be grateful for small wins and incremental reforms. It has been 400 years and we've waited long enough.

A justice-driven approach to public policy should be as bold and imaginative as we are. A radical and imaginative approach to reparations is non-negotiable. It must consider the transatlantic slave trade, chattel slavery, Jim Crow, segregation and lynching, mass incarceration and a host of systematic policies that have economically persecuted and disenfranchised us and our families. It should not exclude but rather include our collective tribe - brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, partners, grandparents and children. It must come with investments commensurate to the economic violence we've long endured as a result of our race and gender. It should not be thin and prescriptive but thick and rich with possibilities. It must be full of healing, love, and freedom.

"Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all."

– Toni Morrison

Progressive Prosecutors & Policy Options

Black Women Working to Improve the Justice System from Within: The Case of Prosecutors

Elsie L Scott, Ph.D.

Ronald W. Walters Leadership and Public Policy Center, Howard University

Much of the protest activity concerning injustices in the criminal justice system has been aimed at the police, yet, according to Law Professor, Angela Davis, an expert on prosecutorial power, “prosecutors are the most powerful officials in the American criminal justice system.”¹ Prosecutorial discretion is often very loosely regulated by state laws, thus allowing prosecutors wide latitude on the nature and type of charges a defendant receives and the plea bargains they can offer.

Traditionally, prosecution has not been widely viewed as a profession that Black women (or men) who want to bring about positive change in the criminal justice system should pursue. Melba Pearson, former president of the National Black Prosecutors' Association wrote: “I’ve been called a persecutor and a sell-out, and have been accused of just wanting to lock up young black men for a living.”²

Becoming a prosecutor can have a negative impact on the ability of Black women to use their office to pursue higher political office as so many men do. Some feel that this was the case in Kamala Harris’ run for President.

It is estimated that about 95 percent of all lead prosecutors are white and about 75 percent are men. Some Black women are seeking to change these statistics by running for district attorney

positions. These women have looked at the considerable power that prosecutors have in setting charges and offering plea bargains, for example, and they have decided that they can improve the system from within. They have run on progressive platforms, promising to emphasize the prosecutor's role in "seeking justice", not just counting conviction numbers.

Black women are serving as lead prosecutors in the following large jurisdictions: Los Angeles County, CA; Cook County, IL; Bronx County, NY; St. Louis, MO; Wayne Co, MI; Baltimore, MD; Suffolk County, MA; DeKalb County, GA; 9th Judicial Circuit, Florida (Orange and Osceola Counties); Contra Costa County, CA; and Prince Georges County, MD. Some are career prosecutors, while others have been defense attorneys, and still others have been judges. Some that pursued aggressive agendas to address the inequities in the system, especially inequities that disproportionately affect African Americans.

Some Black women prosecutors feel that they face unique challenges because they are Black women. Other progressive prosecutors, including white men, have been confronted about changes they are seeking to make, but the Black women say that the attacks against them have often been very personal. The women prosecutors have received death threats and hate messages with racially charged language. They have been attacked by police unions, governors, and the current U.S. President, and some have had their powers limited or removed. When Florida State's Attorney Aramis Ayala announced that she would not be seeking the death penalty, the governor moved death penalty cases from her district.

Their competencies and abilities to be lead prosecutors have been questioned. After dropping charges against the actor, Jussie Smollett, Kim Foxx, the Chicago district attorney received death threats. Ayala received a noose after her decision not to seek the death penalty. During the Freddie

Gray trial, Marilyn Mosby was the subject of death threats, hate mail, and protests at her house, and information about her children was circulated.

Selected Prosecutors, Actions They Have Undertaken and Attacks Received

Prosecutor	Jurisdiction	Examples of Significant Actions	Attacks
Aramis Ayala	Orange & Osceola counties, FL	Announced that her office would not pursue the death penalty in all cases	Cases removed from her office; budget cuts, threats
Marilyn Mosby	Baltimore, MD	Brought prosecution charges against police officers in Freddie Gray case; tried to vacate old convictions of individuals with marijuana possession	Death threats, hate mail, protests, actions blocked by courts
Kim Foxx	Cook County, IL	Dropped charges against actor Jussie Smollett; declined to prosecute misdemeanor traffic offenses for failure to pay tickets	Special prosecutor appointed on Smollett case, attacked by Trump, A.G. Barr, police union
Kim Gardner	St. Louis, MO	Brought charges against the governor; excluded 22 St. Louis Police officers from presenting cases to her office after racist Facebook posts	Was subject of grand jury probe; racial attacks; hate mail; attacked by A.G. Barr & police union
Rachel Rollins	Suffolk County, MA	Dismisses or diverts certain low-level misdemeanor charges	Criticized by police union and public safety secretary
Stephanie Morales	Portsmouth, VA	Obtained conviction of a police officer in shooting of unarmed man.	Home address published; criticized for making family video, “Booty Poppin”

The attacks on Black women have gotten so cruel and malicious, St. Louis D.A., Kim Gardner has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the city, police union, and others. Her “sistar” prosecutors are supporting her, with some traveling to St. Louis to demonstrate their support. In their statement of support, they said she “received a clear mandate from the

voters...to enact meaningful reforms and upend a broken criminal justice system”, but the “city’s corrupt and racist political establishment” is seeking “to destroy her” when she delivered on the promises.

Attacks and threats have not made the women back down. They have formed a sisterhood bond of support. They are receiving support from other progressive prosecutors, people in their communities such as the Black police association, ministers and everyday citizens. One has decided not to run for reelection, but two who are facing challenges in their reelection bids later this year are standing strong and not showing any signs of giving up the fight.

¹ A.J. Davis, *Policing the Black Man: Arrest, Prosecution, and Imprisonment*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2017.

²<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2016/07/21/my-life-as-a-black-prosecutor>

Paid Leave for All: The Fight for Real Time to Care

Carol Joyner
Labor Project for Working Families, FV@W

Momentum for paid family and medical leave has grown considerably over the years. The U.S. could soon join nearly every other country in the world in guaranteeing that working families can give or receive care without falling off an economic cliff. As our movement has made it clear that paid leave is popular, necessary, and feasible, some lawmakers have jumped in to propose their own approach and claim credit for supporting working families. The message to them is clear: The paid leave bill that eventually becomes law must include everyone, have equity at its core, and cover all the reasons we need paid time to care. It will have to be real paid leave.

Currently, fewer than 19% of employees have access to paid family leave through their employers. And only 40% have access to medical leave for self-care. Of the 60% eligible for the [Family and Medical Leave Act](#), many can't afford to take it because it is unpaid. Given the high cost of [zero weeks](#) of paid leave, the public has shown overwhelming support for a sound solution: a social insurance fund that pools small contributions from employees and employers to offer portable benefits to all working people.

African American and Latinx workers are among the groups least likely to have access to parental leave, compared with non-Hispanic white workers. The [disparity](#) exists due to long-term effects of racist and anti-immigrant hiring practices, the overrepresentation of Black and Latinx workers in low-wage jobs and the high percentage of those in part-time employment, among other reasons. Workers with access to paid family and medical leave tend to work for large firms and have full-time jobs with higher salaries— a population which is overwhelmingly white. As we fight for the leave our families deserve, we must be prepared to ask hard questions: who will the

plan cover and for what purposes? Will it reduce or enhance inequality? Will it expand or weaken protections for working families?

Types of Leave Vary

Paid family and medical leave is different from paid sick days, a number of days each year needed to recover from a cold, attend medical check-ups, care for a child with a stomach bug. Paid family and medical leave is for those occasions we need a longer stretch of time to welcome a new child or care for a serious personal or family illness. The [majority of workers](#) who take time under the Family and Medical Leave Act need the time to heal or tend to a seriously ill family member. Less than a quarter of the population takes leave to bond with a new child. Everyone who provides care for a loved one or needs time to heal knows that access to paid leave is critical in each of these events.

TYPE OF LEAVE	Use	DESCRIPTION	LEAVE STORY
Medical Leave	57%	Time for a person to recover from a serious illness: cancer treatment, surgery, managing chronic disease.	Salandra Benton (FL) was rear-ended twice within a two-month period. She needed extensive therapy and time to recover. Because she is in a union, she had paid time off to heal, pay her bills, and keep food on the table during her recovery. https://familyvaluesatwork.org/blog/floridians-need-paidleave4all
Family Leave	22%	Paid time to care for a seriously ill loved one related by blood or social relationship.	Staci Lowery (MI) was rising in a large company when Bailee, her four-year-old daughter, had a stroke. Staci wasn't going to leave her baby's side but she also needed her job. Staying at Bailee's side cost Staci her job, health insurance and her home. She had to live off savings and move in with her parents until Bailee recovered.

Parental Leave	19%	Paid time to welcome and bond with a new child arriving in the family by birth or adoption, sometimes foster.	Ashley Bostick (GA) lost her job when her first child was born. With her second child, she had to return to work too soon. Ashley knows that the first few months are an important time for bonding and care, but she had to return to work to keep her job and her home.
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The FAMILY Act Builds on State Success

Currently, there is only one bill that covers all of the reasons for care and aims to include all families. The [Family and Medical Leave Insurance \(FAMILY\) Act \(R\)](#) builds on years of experience in the states. California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York have been successfully operating these social insurance funds for years. Four more states—Washington, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Oregon—and the District of Columbia are following suit.

The FAMILY Act is a comprehensive paid family and medical leave bill with 204 co-sponsors in the House and 36 in the Senate that is gaining popularity across the country. [Voters](#) from all demographics and political views have said they’re willing to pay a small premium to guarantee time to care. Small business owners support it as the only way to offer leave to their employees and level the playing field with larger firms. Democratic and Republican leaders have their ears to the ground as they listen to the popularity of an issue that must be addressed for the health of our economy. A close look at the paid leave proposals under consideration will help distinguish between the programs that would provide affordable time to care and those that only gesture at a solution and could do more harm than good.

Paid Leave and Other Proposals

Bil #	Bill Name	Sponsors	Summary
S. 463 H.R. 1185	The Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act (FAMILY Act)	Senator Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representative DeLauro (D-CT)	This bill establishes the Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave within the Social Security Administration and entitles every individual to a family and medical leave insurance (FMLI) benefit payment for a specified benefit period (up to 12 weeks). An FMLI benefit payment shall be coordinated with any periodic benefits received under a state or local temporary disability insurance or family leave program. It amends the Internal Revenue Code to impose a small tax on employers, employees, and self-employed individuals to fund FMLI benefits.
S. 2500	Federal Employees Paid Leave Act (FEPLA)	Representative Adam Smith (D-WA) Original Sponsor: Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)	This bill became part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2019. It had passed the House as a bipartisan law similar to the FAMILY Act above, but for federal employees. The Armed Services Committee amended the proposal to cover leave only for a new child. The President, who had not supported FEPLA, allowed it in the NDAA in exchange for the Space Force program. Several federal classifications have been excluded and fixes are being discussed.
S.920 H.R.1940	The New Parents Act	Senators Rubio (R-FL) and Romney (R-UT); Representatives Wagner (R-MO) and Crenshaw (R-TX)	This bill allows parents to use a portion of their future Social Security benefits for up to 3 months of paid leave after the birth or adoption of a child. Parents would have to retire later and or receive lower Social Security benefits upon retirement.
No bill #	The Cradle Act	Senators Joni Earnst (R-IA) and Mike Lee (R-UT)	Similar to the New Parents Act Above
S. 2976 H.R. 5296	Advancing Support for	Senators Cassidy (R-LA) and Sinema (D-AZ);	This bill allows taxpayers to receive an advance up to \$5,000 of their Child Tax

	Working Families Act	Representatives Allred (D-TX) and Stefanik (R-NY)	Credit (CTC) in the first year of birth or adoption of a qualifying child, to be repaid by CTCdeductions over a 10-year period. Those not covered by CTC can use their Earned Income Tax Credit, depleting those resources over time. The President mentioned this bill in his 2020 State of the Union address.
H.R. 1859	Working Families Flexibility Act	Representative John Katko (R-NY)	This bill allows tax-exempt savings accounts for the care of a new child. An individual who has earned income from employment during the past 12 months may make tax deductible cash contributions of up to \$6,750 in a taxable year to an account (maximum of \$24,000). The President has mentioned this bill publicly.

Harmful Proposals

With the exception of the FAMILY Act, the programs described in the table above are systems that provide time only to bond with a new child. Based on FMLA data, less than 25% of the population uses paid leave for that purpose, while 75% uses paid leave to provide care for a personal or family illness.

The New Parents, Cradle, and Advancing Support for Working Families Acts are all loans which ask workers to borrow from much-needed resources such as Social Security benefits or the Child Tax Credit to cover expenses while on leave. Each of these proposals provides too little money and not enough time, while relying on public programs that are already financially burdened. Weakening critical safety net programs is not a solution for paid leave - especially when they do not require the employer to recognize the leave.

Tax-free savings accounts offer benefits only to the wealthy, even though all taxpayers pick up the tab, in the form of lost tax revenues that could be spent on needed public services such as schools. These models aren't helpful to those who spend most of their earnings on daily living, with little money left to set aside. Furthermore, the amount one can set aside is small and the proposal offers no guarantee of time off and no job protection. A worker in crisis would have to allocate the funding in advance, count on their boss's willingness to let them take the time, and trust that their job will be there when they return.

Sponsors of these bills argue that they are at least a step and that something is better than nothing. Remember: a step isn't progress if it goes in the wrong direction.

We Are at a Crossroads

The next federal social insurance fund—paid family and medical leave—will benefit the largest population of aging Americans and the most diverse workforce in our history. Passing the FAMILY Act will cover everyone for all the reasons needed for care, helping small businesses to thrive and stabilizing our economy. For it to be most effective, the program must have a progressive wage replacement level so that low-paid workers can afford to use it; have an inclusive family definition, and guarantee all leave-takers have a job to return to. .

The #PaidLeaveforAll Campaign

The #PaidLeaveforAll Campaign is a growing collaborative of organizations working together to win federal paid family and medical leave for all workers by passing the FAMILY Act. It comprises leading policy experts, well-connected lobbying teams, and groups with

diverse field and communications capacity, like the Black Women's Roundtable. The campaign launched in December 2019 and aims to pass comprehensive paid family and medical leave by 2023. Join us in this fight to make sure that all people can take time to care no matter where they work, who they care for, when they need the time, or who they love. Join us at www.paidleaveforall.org.

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Mobilizing Black Women to Protect and Preserve Our Right to Clean Water

By:
The Honorable Stephanie L. Moore
County Commissioner
Kalamazoo County Government
Convener, Black Women's Roundtable, Kalamazoo

Water. The word inspires the thought of an infinite resource. It's unimaginable to think that accessing and managing this resource is one of the biggest environmental threats to every community in this nation and across the world. The issue of accessing water is not something that Black women can afford to disregard or ignore. It is critical that Black women across the globe start making ourselves a part of the overall conversation.

I'd like to offer up for discussion, a challenge. A challenge that offers further exploration, dialogue, and further efforts to integrate our passion for other, critical injustices with the greatest threat to all of us, the lack of access to clean water especially in the United States.

My state, Michigan, is the Great Lakes State. Not only is water a pristine and plentiful resource, but it is ground zero for water shutoffs, hepatitis and public health emergencies, PFAS¹¹ and other contamination, lead service line replacement, skyrocketing water and sewage bills.

Michigan is home to more than 76,000 miles of rivers and streams and has jurisdiction approximately 40 percent of the bordering Great Lakes. 41.5 percent of the state area is covered by water with 3,288 miles of coastline, 76, 439 miles of rivers and streams, 900,000 acres of inland

¹¹ perfluoroalkyl and/or polyfluoroalkyl substances are a broad group of substances that contain several classifications of chemicals and materials found in products such as non-stick cookware, dental floss, fast food containers, suede and carpet protectant, military fire retardant and more.

lakes and reservoirs and 6,465,109 acres of wetlands. No state is more water-covered than the Wolverine state which sits atop high-quality groundwater.

Flint, Michigan has become “the poster child” city for what happens when our water and sewer infrastructures are not properly managed. We only have to type the word “Flint” in Google and we will see article after article pointing the blame on politicians, the people of Flint, and even God. Yet, when we remove the emotionalism from the argument, what we are left with is a fact that is undeniable. While globally, some countries are embarking on new water and sewer systems; most cities in America have outdated infrastructure systems that are slowly crumbling and reckoning havoc on public health. Most of those cities with the dire infrastructure needs are also populated by Blacks, in particular Black women and children.

In 2019, while serving as Chairperson of the Kalamazoo County Commission, one of my duties was to assist in addressing emergency situations that impacted communities in our state’s fourth most populated county. I learned a term that has increasingly become an acronym that raises red flags throughout our state. PFAS or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances are a broad group of substances that contain several classifications of chemicals and materials found in products such as non-stick cookware, dental floss, fast food containers, suede and carpet protectant, military fire retardant and more. The presence of PFAS is especially prevalent in Michigan’s water due to our vast manufacturing and industry rich history. From paper mills to automobiles, and other industrial products, PFAS has leaked into local Michigan water systems.

As Commission Chair, I lead an effort to manage a PFAS crisis located across the street from my District. Residents had been drinking dangerous levels of PFAS in their water but were not aware until I persuaded local and state leaders to share the information with Kalamazoo residents. There wouldn’t have been a “PFAS emergency” if I hadn’t pressed the matter. Why? I

personally believe that leader from the State and even locally felt that it would've been easier to remain silent, just as they did with Flint. A key difference was this community was predominately white.

It's important for the reader to pay close attention to what I'm sharing because the moral consciousness of this country has long rested on the shoulders of Blacks, in particular Black women. Whether we find ourselves at the community level encouraging children to finish school or as elected officials challenging how and why policies exist, it has been because of our consciousness as leaders that we are able to address issues when others choose to look the other way or remain silent.

The PFAS issue in my County needed a Black woman who was already sensitive to the crisis happening in Flint to use her influence and status as a leader to address another water crisis to save a different community. Often, I wonder, if I had not been Chairperson at that time, would that community still be drinking unsafe water? Further, it leads me to wonder that if there is such a lack of regard for safe water in communities that are predominately white, what about our Black and other communities of color?

Where does that leave us as Black women, as in most cases, leaders in our homes and communities when it comes to addressing access to clean water?

Black women throughout this country will need to educate ourselves more on how unsafe water affects every part of our lives. Without safe water, one cannot meet the daily basic activities of living which impacts our health and the health of our children, families, and friends.

We must be willing and informed enough to address not only the level of safety in our water but the infrastructure that brings in and takes water away from our communities. Buildings and pipes in urban communities are some of the oldest structures in our nation. In addition, many

of the pipes that lay beneath those structures haven't been changed or updated in centuries. The tax base in our communities are often the lowest and therefore prioritized last. These are systemic issues that must be addressed, and local leaders must be held accountable to not only make promises of change, but make the changes happen.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer released her budget proposal over a year ago, which highlighted the need for major investment in water and water infrastructure. Some say that it was the largest proposed investment we've seen in Michigan in recent history. That investment includes \$120 million to improve Michigan's drinking water infrastructure and \$60 million to update the hydration stations in schools by making them lead-free. As elected officials and advocates for our Black children and Black communities, we will need to be at the table to not only mobilize the support for the budget but also to ensure that once the budget is passed that our communities are prioritized as the firsts to receive funding.

Water. There are companies seeking to privatize this natural resource. As Black women, we cannot allow the country nor nations throughout this globe to ignore the criticalness and the necessity for us to ensure that access to safe and clean water is a right and not a privilege. We must do all that we can to be at the forefront of this clean water movement, not only for ourselves but for our communities and children.

The Majority of Americans Believe in Reproductive Freedom, 77%

By Rene Redwood
Board of Directors, NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation

The state of reproductive freedom in the United States is dire. Emboldened by a U.S. Supreme Court with a majority hostile to the right to access abortion, the anti-choice movement and its political allies have launched an all-out assault on our fundamental rights, seeking to limit our ability to decide if, when, and how to raise a family at every turn.

But the grim reality we face is that for women of color and Black women in particular, the protections of *Roe* and the promise of reproductive freedom have never been fully realized. Black women and women of color are often the target of efforts to punish and control women, and we bear the brunt of the cruel and callous policies.

In the United States, where the rates of maternal mortality are [astronomically high](#)^{iv} across the board, Black women are dying from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth at a rate nearly [three to four times higher](#)^v than white women. To put it simply, Black women are dying [preventable deaths](#)^{vi} at alarming rates. The reasons for this are myriad and include lack of health insurance coverage, lack of access to care, and pervasive racism.

Black women face barriers to accessing reproductive healthcare that are both unrelenting and systemic. Take for example the discriminatory Hyde Amendment, which bans federal funding for abortion through Medicaid. For over 40 years, this dangerous policy has pushed access to care out of reach for millions of Americans.

This already egregious policy leads to disparities in access to reproductive care for the roughly [30 percent of Black women](#) ^{viii} enrolled in Medicaid. As researchers at Ibis Reproductive Health [explained](#) ^{viii}, “Historical oppression coupled with structural and economic inequalities contribute to economic disparities, resulting in the reality that women of color, especially Black and Latina women, are more likely to struggle to make ends meet, get their health insurance through Medicaid, and receive subsidies to enroll in Marketplace insurance plans.”

But that doesn’t mean there is nothing that can be done. In fact, across the country champions for reproductive freedom are taking bold action to address this crisis and dismantle barriers to care. In October 2019, California Governor Gavin Newsom [signed](#) the [Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act \(SB 464\)](#) ^{ix} into law. This critical legislation will save lives by addressing bias in reproductive healthcare and reducing the high rates of pregnancy-related deaths among Black women in the state. More specifically, this law requires perinatal care providers in California to undergo “an evidence-based implicit bias program” with refresher courses at least every two years. California’s new law also requires the State Department of Public Health “to track and publish data on pregnancy-related death and ever maternal morbidity.”

Medical experts like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists ^x [have](#) [noted](#) that “The racial and ethnic disparities in women’s health (including higher rates of preterm birth, maternal mortality, and breast, cervical, and endometrial cancer deaths among Black women) cannot be reversed without addressing racial bias, both implicit and explicit,” so laws like California’s are a crucial step in the right direction.

And it doesn't stop in California. According to [analysis from NARAL](#)^{xi} Pro-Choice America, over 20 measures seeking to address maternal mortality were passed in 2019 alone, making it “the most prolific trend in pro-choice legislation” of the year.

Thanks to [decades of visionary activism from women of color](#)^{xii}, ending the discriminatory restriction on funding for abortion care has become the party line for Democrats running for president in 2020. Even before this election, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) in 2015 introduced the first comprehensive piece of legislation to eliminate Hyde and similar funding bans, the [Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance \(EACH Woman\) Act](#)—and the latest iteration of the bill had [180 co-sponsors](#)^{xiii}.

The right to decide if, when, and how to raise a family is a fundamental value for Americans. Support for *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion care, is higher than ever—polls show that 77% of Americans support it.

The overwhelming majority of Americans believe in reproductive freedom. Our nation must address the unique barriers to accessing care that Black women face daily. We can do so by ensuring that Black women have self-agency and reproductive freedom is truly for *every bod*

The Health of Black Women

Black Women and Breast Cancer

*Tawana Thomas-Johnson
Vice President, Diversity and Inclusion
American Cancer Society, Inc.*

There is a major problem in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer when it comes to Black women. While overall breast cancer mortality rates have improved by more than 30%, Black women have not benefitted from this improvement. We are still more likely to die from the disease than white women and the disparity is growing in some cities at alarming rates.

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Black women, an estimated 33,840 new cases were diagnosed in 2019. Similar to the pattern among white women, breast cancer incidence rates among Black women increased rapidly during much of the 1980s, largely due to increased detection by mammography screening.

Our incidence of breast cancer is complicated by the fact that Black women have an increased risk for developing triple-negative breast cancer. It is twice as common among Black women and is considered to be more aggressive and have poorer prognosis than other types of breast cancer, mainly because there are fewer targeted medicines that treat triple-negative breast cancer. Studies have shown that triple-negative breast cancer is more likely to recur after treatment.

When it comes to mortality, breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death among Black women, surpassed only by lung cancer. Breast cancer death rates are about 40% higher in Black women compared to white women. The racial disparity is largely due to advanced stage at diagnosis, higher prevalence of obesity, comorbidities and unfavorable tumor characteristics as well as access and adherence to high-quality cancer treatment.

So, what do we do about these alarming data? Access to quality care is a critical issue. The reality is advances in cancer prevention and control are not being applied to Black women

equitably. Black women facing breast cancer are less likely to receive their care in a Commission on Cancer designated center and may lack trusted and culturally sensitive healthcare teams which can impact the quality of care and treatment completion. To achieve better breast cancer outcomes, Black women need an integrated, multifaceted approach to care that gives voice to Black women and their experiences. We need healthcare providers, advocacy organizations and our leaders to be more disruptive and intentional about supporting breast cancer efforts that support our unique needs. We must collectively address the massive gap in both research and clinical care when it comes to Black women.

Closing the gap in breast cancer disparities is also about we do as individuals. It's more than wearing pink during Breast Cancer Awareness month. It's about us as Black women making a commitment to take charge of our health by sharing lifesaving information with each and acting sooner rather than later when we notice changes in our breasts. We must talk with our healthcare providers about screening options, risk for breast cancer as well as about lifestyle choices that lower that risk, including maintaining a healthy weight, exercising every day, limiting alcohol, not smoking and eating a healthy diet that's low in processed foods, sugar and trans fat. Our health is our most important asset, and knowledge of how to take care of it is key.

Black Women and the HIV Epidemic: It Will Not End Without Us

The HIV Epidemic Will Not End Without the Black Woman

By

Dr. Helen Holton, Executive Director

National Organization of Black County Officials

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) was first diagnosed in the US in 1980, 40 years ago. It's a virus without a cure, and labeled today as an epidemic. It classified as a sexually transmitted infection or STI. Largely transmitted by having sex with someone who has the virus or through sharing injection drug equipment that's been used by an HIV positive person. A lesser form of contracting HIV is transmission from mother to child during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding. What does all of this have to do with our community? A whole lot.

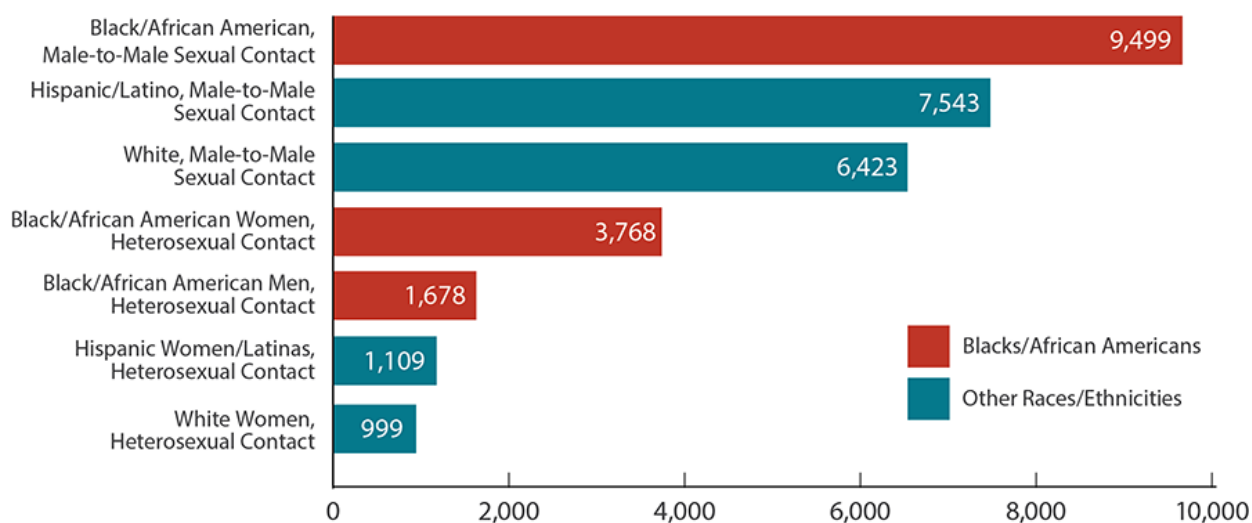
In 2018 the Health and Human Services Administration announced a once-in-a-generation plan to End the HIV Epidemic by eliminating new HIV infections in America. A bold challenge from the Administration, driven primarily by the opioid crisis. A valid concern is whether this aggressive plan constitutes a real and balanced campaign or is it exaggerated political media hype. Whichever the reason it offers an opportunity to improve the health and wealth of the Black community. Black same-gender loving men lead new infections by unprecedented numbers. This is not new news this has been a fact for more than a decade.

If the intent is to truly end the HIV epidemic it will not end without effective engagement of Black women. Black women are anchors in the Black community and have been since Africans landed on the shores of North America more than 400 years ago. We are the wives, mothers, grandmothers, God-mothers, sisters, aunties, and sister-girlfriends that touch every aspect of our community. What do we know about HIV and Black women? Collectively, not nearly enough.

The numbers don't lie and the numbers for Black women are cause for alarm. What's more alarming is that these numbers are easily understated due to the number of women who are sexually active and don't know their status.

How do we show up in the epidemic? According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), *"In 2018, African Americans accounted for 13% of the US population but 42% of the 37,832 new HIV diagnoses in the United States."* Hiveonline.org, a hub of positive reproductive and sexual health (University of California San Francisco), shares that, *"one in five new HIV diagnoses in the US are among women. Black women are 64% of women living with HIV in the US and 13% of the female population."* Black women are the 50% of new infections among heterosexuals. This is your wake call.

New HIV Diagnoses in the US and
Dependent Areas for the Most-Affected
Subpopulations, 2018



Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race.

Source: CDC. [Diagnoses of HIV infection in the United States and dependent areas, 2018 pdf icon \[PDF – 10 MB\]](#). *HIV Surveillance Report* 2019;30.

The health of Black women is vital to the health and wellbeing of the Black community. What makes HIV something we don't want to openly discuss? In a word, "STIGMA." Taking a line from the international award-winning film, 90Days, *"If you have cancer, people give you sympathy, but if you have HIV, you're branded with words that mean, 'does not deserve love.'"* Beyond the art and passion of cinematography in film, stigma is very real. It keeps us from living better and smarter lives. Ignoring the truth won't make it go away. The truth is this, prevention is available and can minimize your risk by as much as 92%.

In July 2012, the FDA approved the first HIV prevention drug, a Pre-exposure Prophylaxis known as PrEP. In order to be eligible to receive PrEP, your status must be negative, you must be educated about the drug, and undergo counseling. This is part of the education. PrEP is not intended to give the nod to careless sexual behavior. It drastically minimizes the chances of contracting HIV but it does not protect against other STIs. In fact, having an STI can increase your chance of getting or passing on HIV.

In the early days of prescribing PrEP the focus was on same-gender loving men. At that time Black men represented 44% of all new HIV infections in the US, with Black women accounting for 29% of that number. Even then numbers of new infections were disproportionate in the overall scheme of the virus. Jules Levin reported at the American Society for Microbiology at the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy in Boston, 2016, *"HIV prevention education and PrEP services may need to be racially focused and culturally relevant to increase PrEP uptake and decrease new infections in populations at the greatest risk."* An important addition to racially focused and culturally relevant is a high degree of trust and transparency by the messenger.

Prevention begins with education. Taking a proactive stance versus a reactive posture affects your present life and your future. It means knowing the facts and it begins with getting tested to know your status. As mentioned earlier HIV is in the category of STIs. Did you know HIV is not the only STI without a cure? Herpes, hepatitis, and the human papillomavirus are STIs without a cure as well. Once you contract any of these viruses you have it for life. The good news is they are all treatable.

Regardless of the stage of life you're in knowing your status empowers you to live a healthy life. Protection of your sexual health preserves your reproductive health. A comprehensive approach to your overall health and wellness in practicing safe sex begins with open and transparent conversations with your partner, prior to engaging in sex with a partner. Engaging in shared decision-making from a woman-centered collaborative process with your medical clinician is a good place to begin. There are multiple intersecting factors that impact your risk of HIV. It's up to you to drive your healthcare needs.

Whether your focus is safeguarding your reproductive health and family-planning or ensuring your post-menopausal wellness. Your sexual health matters along all points of the life-cycle continuum. Integrating your sexual and reproductive health and understanding what it means and how to prevent HIV and other STIs matters to the overall health and wealth of the Black community. What will you do to help end the HIV epidemic? The choice is yours and you have the power!

Why Should We Care About the Affordable Care Act?

Clayola Brown, President
A. Philip Randolph Institute

The great statesman, labor and civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph once said, “A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess.”

The right to affordable and accessible healthcare is tantamount to the civil, economic and social rights afforded to all Americans. Suppression or denial of these rights is discrimination.

One of the most glaring and more despairing issues faced by many minorities, has been race-based disparities in healthcare and healthcare services. Black Americans in general suffer disproportionately from cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity, among others.

The fact that Black Americans have a life expectancy that is nearly seven years shorter than white Americans is unacceptable. The fact that Black women suffer disproportionately from many preventable and chronic diseases is unconscionable.

When the nation’s health reform law, known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA), was enacted in March 2010, its aim was to reform both our private and public health insurance systems. It was a welcomed response to the need for accessible health care for most Americans—especially low income women and

families. ACA provides numerous rights and protections that covers families with subsidies, including the expansion of the Medicaid program, which makes it more affordable.

In addition, among ACA law's many goals: it increases benefits and lower costs for consumers, provide new funding for public health and prevention, bolster our health care and public health workforce and infrastructure, foster innovation and quality in our system, and more.

The ACA has helped 20 million people get coverage, but about 29 million people still lack health insurance. In addition, according to healthcare advocates:

1. **The Affordable Care Act has led to a significant drop in the number of African Americans who are uninsured.** Health care reforms associated with the ACA reduced the percentage of uninsured African Americans from 24.1 percent to 16.1 percent between 2013 and 2014.
2. **The passage of the ACA has greatly expanded access to quality health care for the African American community.** Nearly 6.8 million African Americans have become eligible for health coverage since the implementation of the ACA due to Medicaid expansion and the financial assistance available to qualified individuals.
3. **Increased funding for community health centers through the ACA will have a substantial impact on the African American community.**

The ACA has allocated approximately \$11 billion to fund community health centers, enabling them to increase the number of patients they serve. Nearly 25 percent of these patients are African American.

4. **ACA provisions provide access to preventive care at no additional cost; this may help curtail African American health disparities.** African American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than the larger U.S. population, even though they are less likely to develop the disease. Access to preventive care can help reduce this disparity, as earlier detection decreases the likelihood of death.

5. **African American women are eligible for additional insurance benefits, which can lead to better health outcomes.** The ACA provisions require that close to 5 million African American women enrolled in private health insurance have access to HPV testing, mammograms, and prenatal care, among many other preventive services, at no additional out-of-pocket cost.

However, despite the benefits of the Affordable Care Act, and despite the fact that millions have proven how important access to affordable health care insurance is for our health, there are others who are still trying to take away health care from families across the country. Not only will the denial and removal of affordable health care leave millions without coverage, but it would raise prices for people with pre-existing conditions and eliminate critical health benefits that women need, such as maternity care.

Black women have been historically identified as the principal “GO TO GURU” in our families. Even today—some Black families still entrust the keeping of the financial “numbers” to the wife and mother of the household.

Therefore, it only makes good sense for Women to lead the outreach in the fight to preserve the ACA. They serve as the trusted messengers to educate and engage their families and their communities. We must ensure with Our Voice and with Our Vote that the Affordable Care Act remains a “civil right” that we cannot afford to lose.

Black Women and Exposure to Violence

The Many Faces of Violence Against Women in the Black Community

By:

Karma Cottman, Executive Director
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Black women from the African Diaspora in the U.S. continue to remain at greater risk of intimate partner violence than women from other racial/ethnic groups. Resources from *Ujima: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community* help underscore this point: multiple studies tell us that African American and African Caribbean women experience intimate partner abuse at a rate of about 40%. That is significantly higher than the rates reported by white women (31%), Hispanic women (30%) or Asian Pacific Islander women (15%). The lifetime intimate partner violence rates for African American and African Caribbean women in one study were reported to be 27%. Moreover, the Centers for Disease Control reports that Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women have the highest rates of homicide, and that over half of these homicides are related to intimate partner violence.¹² In 2017, Black females were murdered by males at a rate more than twice as high as white females: 2.55 per 100,000 versus 1.13 per 100,000.¹³

¹² <https://ujimacommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Intimate-Partner-Violence-IPV-v9.4.pdf> (Visited February 18, 2020).

¹³ Violence Policy Center (2019). *When men murder women: An analysis of 2017 homicide data*. Retrieved from <http://vpc.org/studies/wmmw2019.pdf> (Visited February 18, 2020).

Current Issues to Address:

Violence Against Black Trans Women

Reports from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) highlight that violence against trans women and trans people of color is a national unaddressed crisis. Trans women were nearly twice as likely to experience sexual violence as other survivors of violence, and reported experiencing harassment, discrimination and police violence as well. Trans women of color constituted 40% of the hate violence homicides documented by NCAVP in 2017.¹⁴ In 2019, of the 22 known homicides of transgender people, 91% of the victims were Black women.¹⁵

School/Sexual Abuse Pipeline

The violence and bias that Black women experience begins in their youth in a myriad of ways, i.e., being stereotyped for not conforming to mainstream notions of “femininity” - seen as difficult, noisy, promiscuous or defiant, or punished for their use of profanity.¹⁶ Black girls also experience bias for their hairstyles. Black girls are also disproportionately subject to arrest and

¹⁴ <http://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NCAVP-HV-IPV-2017-report.pdf> (Visited February 18, 2020).

¹⁵ <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/transgender-day-remembrance-least-22-trans-people-killed-2019-n1086521>

¹⁶ See generally, Morris, Monique, Push-Out: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools (2015). Crenshaw, Kimberle, Ocen, Priscilla and Nanda, Jyoti. Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced, and Underprotected. African American Policy Forum, Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy at 24. 2015. Smith-Evans, Leticia, Goss Graves, Fatima and George, Janel. Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls at 6. The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. and the National Women’s Law Center. Sherman, Francine and Balck, Annie. Gender Injustice: System-Level Juvenile Justice Reform for Girls at 23. The National Crittenden Foundation, The National Women’s Law Center. 2015.

detention even when their non-conforming conduct occurs as a result of trauma¹⁷. Childhood trauma, particularly sexual abuse, is significantly tied to juvenile system involvement for girls.¹⁸

Intersection of Violence Against Women and Criminal Justice Reform

Notwithstanding the high rates of victimization, Black women are highly likely to be victimized yet again by the criminal justice system. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women “there is a strong link between violence against women and women’s incarceration.”¹⁹ Yet until recently, research, policy decisions, and analyses about African Americans and the criminal justice system were more heavily focused on Black men and boys, while much less attention was paid to the experiences of Black women and girls. Increasing numbers of women overall are being charged with crimes and incarcerated, however, there is very little attention paid to the trauma experienced by these women and girls. The number of women in prison increased at nearly double the rate for men between 2000 and 2012. Women now comprise 18% of the total correctional population and 25% of the probation population. A disproportionate number are African American women. According to DOJ’s Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2014, the imprisonment rate for African American women (109 per 100,000) was more than twice the rate of imprisonment for white women (53 per 100,000).

Institutional Violence & Economic Justice:

Discrimination on the basis of hairstyle follows Black girls into adulthood as they seek employment, and even housing, if their hairstyles do not represent what employers deem to be

¹⁷ Saada Saar, Malika, Epstein, Rebecca, Rosenthal, Lindsay and Vafa, Jasmin. The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls’ Story at 7. Human Rights Project for Girls, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, Ms. Foundation for Women. 2015.

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, A/68/340(2013) p.4

appropriate or professional. This can be especially difficult for Black survivors of intimate partner violence because stable employment and access to housing are crucial to support themselves and their families for safety. Consequently, several states, beginning with California, have enacted the CROWN Act (Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) to strengthen employment, housing, and education laws to protect against such discrimination.

Conclusion:

Black women are disproportionately vulnerable to violence because our daily lives rest in the intersections of race, class, and gender. This leaves Black women exposed and unprotected to violence across the continuum of intimate partner violence, community violence, and institutional/structural violence.

Action Items:

Support the Reauthorization of The Family Violence Services and Prevention Act (FVPSA) and The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). FVPSA supports lifesaving services including emergency shelters, crisis hotlines, counseling and programs for underserved communities throughout the United States, American Indian and Alaska Native communities and territories. It is the **ONLY** federal funding source dedicated to domestic violence shelters and programs. FVPSA was enacted in 1984 and was due to be reauthorized in 2018. It is administered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

VAWA was enacted in 1994. Its authorization lapsed in the spring of 2018, though it continues to receive annual appropriations funding. VAWA is landmark legislation that provides federal funding to improve the coordinated community responses of criminal and civil legal

stakeholders to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking. It is administered through the U.S. Department of Justice.

The need for funding and access to culturally specific services designed by and for Black survivors remains a priority of advocates. Access to designated funds to support culturally specific programming has proven successful for many service providers and communities. However, we must organize not only to reauthorize FVPSA and VAWA, but also encourage culturally specific programs that serve the Black community to apply for funding and assist with their sustainability. Policy and programming must prioritize reducing the risk factors for Black women so that resources and access to safety is for all and not just for some.

Time to Change the Culture of Violence: Support Training to De-Escalate Violence Before It Starts

By
Dr. Stephanie Myers and Diane Powell
Black Women for Positive Change

A national priority must be placed on “Changing the Culture of Violence in America, and the World.” A coordinated response is needed to the epidemic of violence sweeping across the United States, and the world. There is an urgent need for citizens to learn how to stop violence before it begins and legislation, training and programs are needed to train citizens, educators, law enforcement, youth, faith leaders, health professionals, employers and others, in techniques of De-Escalation of Violence. This can assist efforts to reduce and stop violence in volatile situations.

Statistics underscore the urgency of the issue in research conducted by the “Violence Policy Center” that shows, “...the black homicide victimization rate is four times the national homicide victimization rate, and more than six times the homicide victimization rate for whites. More than [85 percent](#) of black homicide victims are shot and killed with guns.” The ACLU reports that 40% of Black Women in America, will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

On May 1, 2019, Congresswoman Gwen Moore introduced the National De-Escalation of Violence and Community Safety Training Act (H.R. 2457) The goals of her legislation are:

- To help train individuals in effective and evidence-based de-escalation techniques to ensure that individuals at diverse levels of society have and retain greater skills to resolve conflicts, manage anger, and control implicit bias without the use of physical or other force, and for other purposes.

- To recognize that racism is both systemic and institutionalized with far-reaching effects on both political engagement and economic opportunities for minorities;
- To empower local communities through relationship-building and truth-telling; and emphasizes restorative justice as an essential component.

Congresswoman Moore's proposed legislation was written in collaboration with Congresswoman Moore's Legislative Office and Black Women for Positive Change. Under this legislation the U.S. Congress would authorize Five Hundred Million Dollars (\$ 500,000,000) in training grants that would be provided to de-escalation training centers at Schools, Faith Institutions, Non-Profits, Law Enforcement and Government agencies.

The U.S. Department of Health would be responsible for administering the De-Escalation of Training Grants by the Secretary awarding grants to eligible entities to provide training on de-escalation of violence to enhance community safety. Training provided through a grant shall include training on:

- Techniques to de-escalate situations to avoid violence;
- Understanding implicit bias and how it contributes to violence;
- Understanding how to promote racial reconciliation in communities affected by racial division that leads to violence and conflict;

Another component of the proposed legislation is to fund (1) Community Outreach; (2) Evaluation; and (3) Social Media Grants, that the Secretary shall award grants to eligible entities.

The purpose of those grants will be to:

- Disseminate to targeted populations information about de-escalation training provided through grants under paragraph
- To encourage such populations to participate in the training;
- Development of social media and online training tools to educate the larger public about the methods and goals of such de-escalation training; and

- Conduct of evaluations of the impact and effectiveness of such de-escalation training, include consideration of community stakeholders and those who have received such training.

If this legislation is implemented, it can help to “Change the Culture of Violence” by stopping violence before it starts. Conflict resolution, anger management and reduction of verbal violence can save lives and prevent violence. All citizens are requested to reach out to their Members to inform them about the urgency of this legislation. Current sponsors include: Rep. Hastings, Alcee L. (D-FL); Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, (DC); Rep. Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ); Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky (D-IL); Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, (D-TX); Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, (D-TX); Rep. Robin Kelly, (D-IL); Rep. Eric Swalwell, (D-CA); Rep. Ed Perlmutter, (D-CO); Rep. Theodore E. Deutch, (D-FL); Rep. Donna E. Shalala, (D-FL); Rep. Julia Brownley, (D-CA); Rep. Madeleine Dean, [D-PA]; Rep. Andy Kim, [D-NJ] Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX)

For more information contact: deescalate2020@gmail.com

Notes about the authors: Dr. Stephanie Myers is National Co-Chair, Black Women for Positive Change; Diane Powell is Chair, Pittsburgh Chapter, Black Women for Positive Change

The Fight for Black Bodies: Protecting Black Women and Girls in the Human Trafficking Epidemic

By:

Barbara A. Perkins, President

Chanelle Brown,
Lead Researcher, Policy Fellow

Stacie Fujii, Sr. Policy Advisor

*Public Policy Team
International Black Women's Public Policy Institute*

In 1865, America sought to officially abolish slavery and involuntary servitude in the United States by ratifying the 13th Amendment. Slavery, now called human trafficking, has made a comeback and its new version does not focus on race or gender specifically, but on the most vulnerable of society. Too often, Black women and girls are disproportionately victims of modern-day slavery. As women and members of the African diaspora, we must speak up for our women and girls; and as members of the global community, we must seek to create lasting policy initiatives that restore lives and achieve justice for survivors of human trafficking in the United States and abroad.

Human trafficking uses force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. According to the Justice Department, women and girls from the African diaspora are more likely to be trafficked as they represent 40 percent of sex trafficking victims within the United States. The federal agency reported that Caucasians made up 25.6 percent of sex trafficking

victims, followed by Hispanics at 23.9 percent, Asians at 4.3 percent and others at 5.8 percent.¹ The disproportionate representation of trafficked Black women and girls, held against their will and treated as oversexualized commodities, is reminiscent of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and is an open wound for the African diaspora that must be addressed.

The global criminal infrastructure promoting human trafficking is so massive that it will take all of us to end the crisis. Building awareness in all corners of our global community is the first step to eradicating human trafficking. The International Labour Organization estimates that the human sex trafficking industry generates nearly \$150 billion in revenues.² This exploitative system sadly profits off the welfare, stolen dignities and systemic abuses of its victims.

Oftentimes, the facts of modern-day slavery are hidden, misunderstood, ignored or unreported.

In the United States, there are more than 600,000 to 800,000 people being trafficked annually across international borders.³ Victims can be found in schools, places of worship, malls and neighborhoods, trapped in an endless cycle of despair. The State Department reports there are 24.9 million modern-day slaves in the world. Victims are sometimes hidden and removed from day to day society, and therefore, it is believed that the number of victims in the US is greater.⁴

<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf>

The US Congress passed *The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000* (Public Law 106-386). The law was the first comprehensive human trafficking law and involved a three-pronged approach which included prevention, protection and prosecution.⁵ On January 8, 2019, Congress passed *The Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act* (Public Law 115-425) in honor of formerly enslaved abolitionist Frederick Douglas's 200th birthday. It reauthorizes \$430 million in funds to ensure the government takes an integrated, holistic approach to fighting human trafficking for the next four years.⁶

Passing laws is helpful, however, more work must be done to properly address the invisibility of the missing. Black women and girls do not get mainstream media attention, are excluded from public outreach campaigns, and are not accurately reflected in the data about the missing. It is imperative that strong voices advocate for meaningful policy changes, timely national campaigns to locate the missing, and accurate data collection.

Pipeline to Slavery

Major risk factors that put Black girls at greater risk of being recruited as sex workers include living in socially identified high risk neighborhoods, being poor and/or uneducated, having inadequate job skills, and lacking strong social networks. "The average pimp has four to six girls and many are ages 13-14. These young ladies are raped, beaten, branded, contract sexually transmitted diseases within six months of being on the streets and are sold daily in the sex trade."⁷ Additionally, these young women are forced to participate in drug use as a way to distort their thinking and encourage dependence.

Runaway girls, as young as 13 to 17 years old, are especially targeted for trafficking by having their basic needs met in exchange for sex. The National Runaway Safeline reported that it

“noticed a disturbing and consistent increase in reliance on the sex industry for survival over the past two (13% increase), five (36%), and 10 years (100%).”⁸ Many have been recently emancipated from the foster care system. They become prey for street pimps and others, often other young girls, who assist pimps for financial gain.

Taking Personal Responsibility

It is critical that we all take time to educate ourselves on the warning signs so we can effectively identify victims. While all human trafficking cases are unique in nature and all indicators are not always present when spotting a victim, we should remain vigilant and aware of our surroundings. According to the Department of Homeland Security, some key questions to ask include⁹:

- Does the person appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or houses of worship?
- Has the child stopped attending school?
- Has there been a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?
- Is a juvenile engaged in commercial sex acts?
- Is the person disoriented or confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- Does the person have bruises in various stages of healing?

www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/indicators-human-trafficking

- Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?
- Does the person show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Is the person often in the company of someone to whom he or she defers? Or someone who seems to be in control of the situation?
- Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?
- Does the person lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?
- Does the person have freedom of movement? Can the person freely leave where they live? Are there unreasonable security measures?

Solutions

IBWPPI's top priorities are to ensure the safety, protection and empowerment of Black women and girls in the US and abroad. We advocate for the following:

- **Hold Leaders and Media Accountable.** Ask your leaders to prioritize human trafficking and demand timely national campaigns from the press to locate the missing.
- **Support Services for Survivors.** Survivors need wider access to culturally competent service providers that provide wraparound services that support Black women and girls. Providing survivors with permanent housing, drug treatment services, counseling and most importantly, educational and employment opportunities, lessens the chances of recidivism and improves their life outcomes.
- **Support Decriminalization.** States like California are a model in ending prostitution arrests for minors under the age of 18 years old. Minors should be referred to diversion programs instead of jail, juvenile hall or criminal court.
- **Advocate for Accurate Research.** Investment in robust research that looks at the state of human trafficking from a global level will help us understand the scope of the problem. We urgently need comprehensive data that will shine a spotlight on these affected populations by continent and country.
- **Pursue Preventative Measures.** Work to reduce the vulnerability of our women and girls at a grassroots level through engagement with culturally relevant organizations, community leaders, churches and schools. We can all play a role.

The International Black Women's Public Policy Institute (IBWPPI) abhors all forms of human trafficking and supports policy solutions that restore victim's human rights. As the only global public policy institute founded by, led by and dedicated to Black women, we are especially concerned about the trafficking of Black women and girls. We can all do something to help eradicate the sexual exploitation of our children, sisters, mothers and friends. Join the fight to raise awareness and support policies that will protect not only our women and girls, but all victims of human trafficking.

This policy paper was published on the International Black Women's Public Policy Institute's website on September 24, 2019. Visit its [website](#) to read the full paper.

1 <https://hellobeautiful.com/2933987/Black-women-trafficking>

2 <https://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/sex-trafficking>

3 <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015>

4

5 <https://www.state.gov/international-and-domestic-law/#laws>

6 <https://chrissmith.house.gov/lawsandresolutions/frederick-douglass-trafficking-victims-prevention-and-protection-reauthorization-act-p-l-115-425.htm>

7 <https://lasentinel.net/Black-girls-and-sex-trafficking-in-los-angeles-2.html>

8 https://www.1800runaway.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NRS-2018-Trend-Report_Final.pdf

9 <https://>

Securing the Vote in the Digital Age

Hacking Democracy: Voter Suppression Has Gone Digital

by
Joycelyn Tate, JD
President, Tate Strategies
Senior Policy Advisor, Black Women's Roundtable

Since the Reconstruction Era, African Americans have been the target of voter suppression tactics.^{xiv} Voter suppression schemes such as literacy tests; racial gerrymandering; voter identification laws; canceling legitimate voter registrations; blatant violence and intimidation; and misinformation and deceptive practices (example: false information about the time, place, and manner of voting) have all been used for over a century to deny African Americans the most fundamental right of civic engagement—the right to vote.^{xv}

While America's plague of voter suppression is as old as the nation^{xvi}, an unprecedented form of voter suppression emerged during the 2016 presidential election. During this election, digital advertising on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter was designed and specifically targeted to keep African Americans from voting.

The Senate Intelligence Committee reported that during the 2016 elections, the Internet Research Agency (IRA), a Kremlin-linked, information campaign operation, overwhelming used Facebook advertisements to target and suppress the voter turnout of African Americans in key metropolitan areas with well-established African American communities.^{xvii} More specifically, the Senate Committee reported that during the 2016 election, “[N]o single group of Americans was targeted by IRA information operatives more than African Americans.”^{xviii}

A recent study found that during the 2016 elections, nonwhites residing in minority counties (counties where the proportion of nonwhites is more than 50 percent of the population)

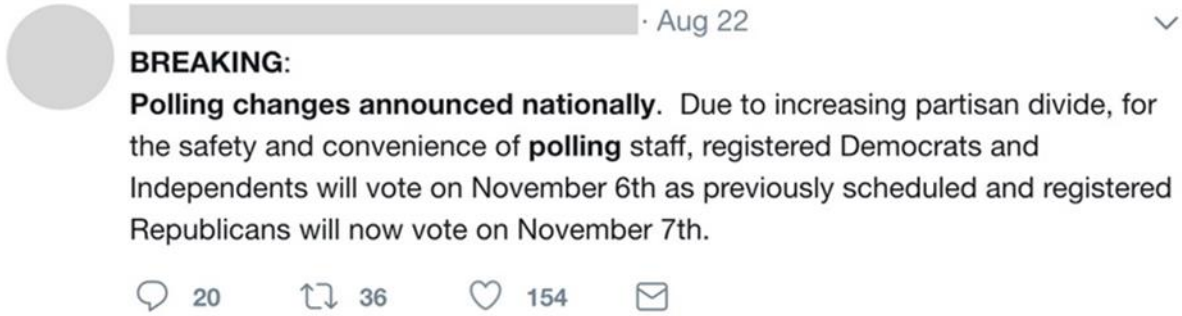
located in battleground states (where 2016 vote margins were less than +/- 5 percent) were eight times more likely than residents of other counties to be the target of digital voter suppression advertisements.^{xix} This study also found that the majority of the voter suppression advertisements were sponsored by groups that had not registered with the Federal Election Commission and did not provide public information about who they were.^{xx}

Many of the digital voter suppression campaigns targeting African Americans focus on disinformation (false information about the candidates or the time, place, and manner of voting), calls to boycott the election, and voter intimidation or threats.

DISINFORMATION



Source: Reddit.com



Source: Young Mie Kim, Voter Suppression Has Gone Digital (November 2018)

CALL TO BOYCOTT



Source: Young Mie Kim, Voter Suppression Has Gone Digital (November 2018)

VOTER INTIMIDATION



Source: Young Mie Kim, Voter Suppression Has Gone Digital (November 2018)

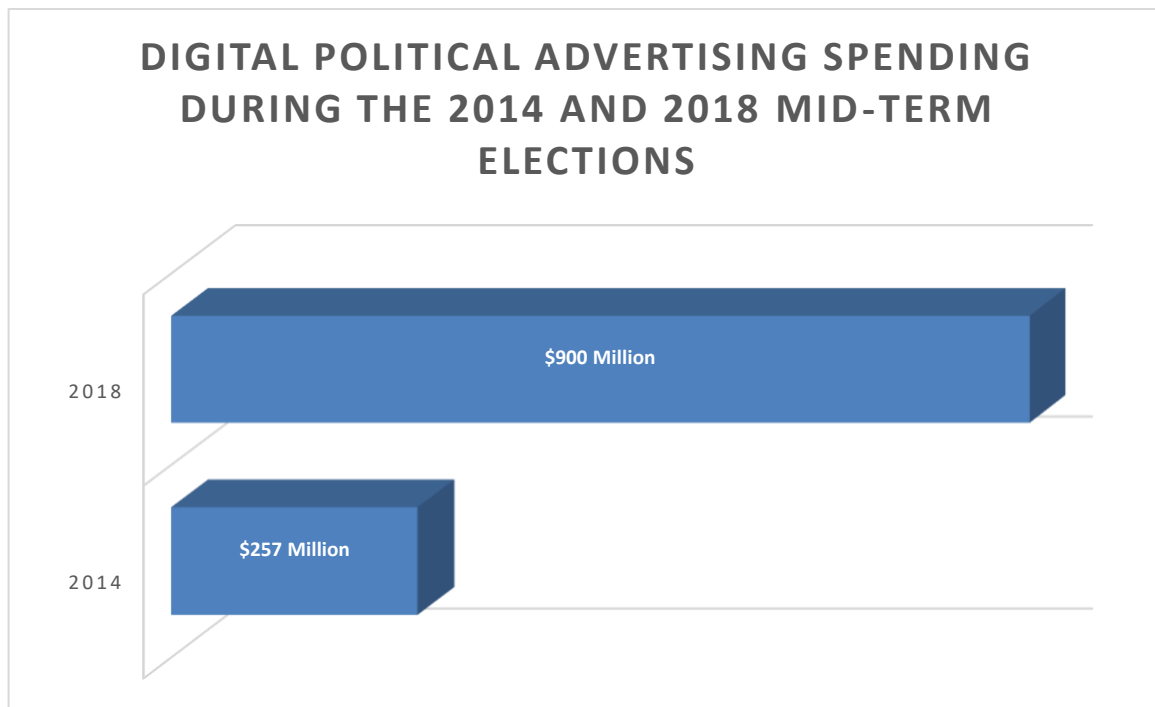
A prime example of digital voter suppression and election interference occurred on Election Day 2016. Williams and Calvin Johnson (who call themselves Williams and Calvin), two video bloggers claiming to be from Atlanta, Georgia, tried to convince their African American YouTube viewers that there was no point in voting, and it did not matter who won the election. During their YouTube video they said:

“My advice to Black people is not to go out and vote. The best thing you can do is stay home...” They went on to say, “We don’t have any other choice this time but boycott the election. Don’t go to vote. Only this way we can change the way of things.”^{xxi}



It was later discovered that Williams and Calvin were not from Atlanta and their social media pages were funded by a Russian propaganda account.^{xxii}

Digital voter suppression campaigns increased during the 2018 mid-term elections. During the 2018 election cycle, an estimated \$900 million was spent in digital political advertising^{xxiii}, which is two and half times more than what was spent for online political advertisements in the 2014 mid-term elections.



Source: Kantar Media

Research found that, during the 2018 mid-term elections, hundreds of messages on Facebook and Twitter were targeted to African Americans with the aim to discourage or prevent African Americans from voting.^{xxiv}

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed several bills aimed at protecting our democracy,^{xxv} but none of this legislation is currently moving through the Senate. There are also several bipartisan bills proposed in the Senate to defend our democracy from foreign interference,^{xxvi} but none of these bills have been passed.

The 2020 elections are fast approaching and Black women are alarmed at the Senate's absent sense of urgency to secure our democratic election process. Free and fair elections are the core definitions of a democracy. Public confidence and trust in our elections is paramount, so our nation cannot afford to sit by as Russia, China and other state and nonstate actors, both foreign and domestic, exploit our vulnerabilities, manipulate our elections, and undermine our democracy.

It imperative that Congress act post haste to passed legislation that defends our national security from foreign and domestic voter suppression and election interference; and provides state and county governments with the additional financial support they need to address election vulnerabilities and ensure election security.

Digital Voter Suppression: Threats to the Black Vote

Faye Anderson
Freelance Journalist

Since before the Voting Rights Act of 1964 the Black vote has been targeted by voter suppression. Black women's right to vote was challenged although women got the right to vote in 1920. There are many aspects of the historical tactics of voter suppression from literacy tests to lynchings. Many of the forms of voter suppression seen today include gerrymandering, moving polling places, voter id requirements and removing voters from the rolls by exact match systems. What is different today is that social media has become an integral part of the landscape. It's been used to get out the vote or suppress the vote. What makes digital voter suppression different is that it's harder to track and more insidious.

As reported by Vox, “The IRA (Internet Research Agency) targeted African Americans more than any other group through Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, Twitter trends, and more. “By far, race and related issues were the preferred target of the information warfare campaign designed to divide the country in 2016,” the Senate Intel committee wrote. The IRA also got unwitting targets to hand over personal information, sign petitions, attend rallies, and even teach self-defense classes.

Digital voter suppression includes various forms of data mining, privacy violations, and spreading disinformation while using social media, text messages and other forms of technology. Some aspects of both digital and on the ground voter suppression are legal making it harder to fight these injustices. However, digital voter suppression is exacerbated by tech company policies that will not remove false political ads.

A key challenge in addressing disinformation and digital voter suppression is that most people can't identify disinformation when they first see it. The same way they may respond to an email and click a link that will download a virus that will steal your information. In part, this is why it is so effective. In academic and political spaces, this concept is referred to as computational propaganda, where snippets of truth or facts are used to create a complete false narrative using technology.

There are currently five online campaigns targeting black voters. Many use issues important to the black community. Some examples are reparations, immigration, criminal justice and climate change. Many encourage black voters not vote for Democrats. Others tell them to vote but don't vote top of the ticket on the ballot. If there is any indication about what happened in 2016 as we get closer to voting some will eventually tell black voters not to show up at all, tell them they can text their vote, not wait in line, provide inaccurate polling information, and other various tactics to engage in forms of digital voter suppression.

As we learn about more about these tactics there are ways to combat them. And no it's not to turn off your phones, your computers and stay off line. This doesn't solve the problem. Here are some things you can do.

Acknowledge disinformation campaigns instead of denying it exist. One of the key weapons of disinformation is that it doesn't exist. The second is not knowing what disinformation looks like when faced with it and third is not believing that it has any impact.

When you see fake accounts or manipulated videos, report it on the platforms, and also ask supporters to report it as well. We know that there will be instances where the reports will indicate there are no violations because of "free speech" but the most important part of the

exercise is to help those that aren't able to identify disinformation on their own to look for the signs.

Every organization, political campaign, organizer, activists and those using these platforms for outreach should have a focused disinformation arm whose only purpose is to monitor, track and counter the disinformation.

Countering the disinformation narratives with facts is important and it must be done often. Many aspects of disinformation work because false amplification allows a dominant presence. The more people see the disinformation the more they believe it.

Monitoring is key to understanding how disinformation is monetized and weaponized. Organizers and activists need to be able to: 1) monitor online engagement; 2) report suspicious content; 3) share and disseminate the facts and counter narratives.

Many solutions also focus on the technical aspects. While cybersecurity has long been a priority, very little attention has been paid to the role of addressing and analyzing disinformation and the people using it. False narratives are shared by actual people. Some share because they believe them. The other reason is because of algorithmic amplification. As Kara Swisher, Recode, on Meet The Press explained “there are 1000 lies amplified to a million ears.” It’s imperative to understand that some of the content that you might see is there for the purpose of misdirection.

APPENDIX

Black Women's Roundtable, Pittsburgh in Focus

By:

*Rev. Judith Moore
Convener, Pittsburgh-Mon Valley
Black Women's Roundtable*

The **Pittsburgh-Mon Valley Black Women's Roundtable** (PMBWR) is comprised of Black women leaders who are passionate about working collectively to develop strategies and solutions to address the challenges in the Mon Valley and Pittsburgh areas. We advocate for marginalized Black women and girls by focusing on grassroots efforts on public policy, economic stability and social justice work.

The spotlight has been cast on the dire circumstances Black women face in Pittsburgh daily due to the recent City of Pittsburgh's Gender Equity Commission report which found Pittsburgh to be the "most unlivable city" for Black women in the nation.

Some highlights taken from that report:

- "Black girls and women, suffer from higher poverty rates, birth defect rates, death rates, unemployment rates, and school arrest rates than black girls and women in just about every other city examined in this study.
- 18 out of every 1,000 pregnancies for black women end in fetal death. On the other hand white women have 9 out of 1,000 premature baby that end in fetal death. Black mothers give birth to infants of low birth weight at twice the rate than white mothers.
- Black women find themselves working for less than any other racial group, male or female within Pittsburgh-Mon Valley areas. Actually white men make twice as much as black women.
- No Black teens are targeted and referred to police greater than Pittsburgh but to make matters even worst, black girls are targeted most."

Other challenges faced by Black women in Pittsburgh were highlighted in an article written by Brenton Mock, "**Pittsburgh: A Most Livable' City, but Not for Black Women.**"

- A 26 year old Black Woman stopped her car, leaving her children inside on the Homestead Bridge and jumped into the Monongahela River, June 14, 2019. A neighbor could not understand why she committed suicide because she did not display any signs of distress.
- Melanie Carter, Pittsburgh racial justice activist and rapper in 2017 was pushed on the ground as she video police officers harassing black youth at a local movie theater. The video showed a police officer calling the black youths “animals.”
- Yet another incident occurred September 24, 2019 where two black women were viciously beaten at Exxon Station on Northside of Pittsburgh. Allegheny County District Attorney Stephen Zappala supported the charges of simple assault after viewing the video. The video is a must see featured on Roland Martin Unfiltered. Pittsburgh-Mon Valley Black Women Roundtable and other community organizations protested until they shut the Exxon station down.

We have begun the process of bringing women together to dialogue about the solutions and create necessary action plans to take steps to rebuild our communities. Through leadership development, educational training and community building, the Roundtable will pursue equity that will infuse viability back into Pittsburgh and Mon Valley areas.

5th ANNUAL POWER OF THE SISTER VOTE POLL RESULTS

September 2019

Source: 2019 BWR/ESSENCE Survey



BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

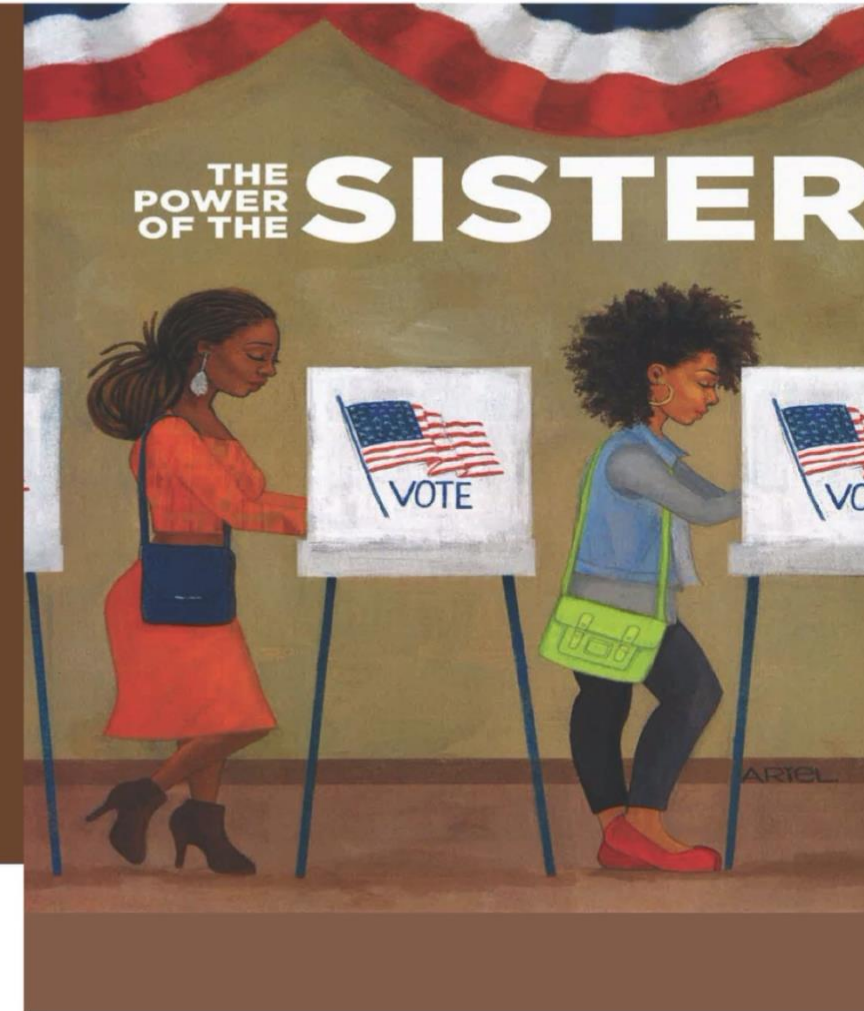
2019 marks the fifth year the Black Women's Roundtable has partnered with ESSENCE to conduct the Power of the Sister Vote Poll to gauge the political concerns, attitudes, and opinions of Black women across the country.

- ❖ The survey was fielded between August 14 – 20, 2019.
- ❖ A total of 1068 ESSENCE Insiders participated in the survey of Black women, Age 18+.
- ❖ Nearly 97% of the respondents are registered voters.
- ❖ The goals of the 2019 BWR/ESSENCE survey were to:
 - Collect feedback from Black women on their political outlook and issues important to their community.
 - Identify the top issues threatening Black women and their families.
 - Identify the top issues threatening to the U. S. democracy.
 - Voice their opinion on Trump's presidency.
 - Identify the priority issues Black women seek from 2020 presidential candidates.



ESSENCE

ESSENCE
insiders



BACKGROUND - PAST FINDINGS (2015 – 2018)

- For the past four years, **Black Women's Roundtable** and **ESSENCE** have partnered on a survey with the objective to understand the political attitudes and concerns of Black women.
- **In the first study in 2015**, we learned that 64% of Black women viewed voting as an important responsibility given the history of Black people. Black women overwhelmingly (78%) believed the Democratic party best represented their interest in comparison to only 1% who had trust in the Republican party. We also learned that affordable health care was the top issue for Black women.
- **In 2016**, the second study was conducted during the 2016 Presidential Election Cycle, and the confidence in the Democratic party increased to 85% with no change in support for the Republican party. Also, affordable health care continued to be the top issue for Black women.
- **In 2017**, the third study showed most Black women were actively involved in their communities and many were interested in running for public office. There was a significant decline of 11 % in confidence in the Democratic party, from 85% in 2016 to 74% in 2017; and President Trump received a failing grade from Black women in his first year in office. Further, affordable health care and criminal justice reform were tied as the top issues of concern for Black women, followed by, living wage jobs and quality public education tied as their top three issues of concern. Also, a third of Black women were concerned about the rise in hate crimes, a new issue that was added to the survey in 2017.
- **In 2018**, the fourth study identified Black women's concern about the rise in hate crimes as their #1 issue, rising 22 points over 2017. Affordable healthcare dropped from #1 and criminal justice/policing reform and gun violence/gun safety assumed the 2nd and 3rd priority.

2019 CURRENT KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ **Black women are paying attention.** Nearly 95% indicated that they plan to vote in the 2020 presidential election.
- ❖ **Black women priorities for the Black Community have shifted.** In 2018, the number one issue was Hate Crimes/Racism, up to 55% from 33% in 2017. **In 2019**, we see Black women more evenly focused on Criminal Justice and Policing Reform as the number one issue, separated by a mere 1% from Affordable Healthcare as the number 2 issue. While the rise in Hate Crimes/Racism and Equal Rights/Equal Pay were tied at number 3 as a key concern. This represents a 13 point drop from 2018 for concerns around Rising Hate and Racism, while concerns around Equal Rights/Equal Pay rose by 14 points.
- ❖ **Black women are concerned about safety and pocketbook issues impacting the Black family.**
- ❖ **Black women lift up Racism/Rise in Hate Crimes, Voting Rights/Voter Suppression tactics and the Rollback of Civil Rights as key issues threatening our democracy.**
- ❖ **For the third year in a row, Black women give the president a failing grade.** In 2019, 83% gave President Trump an "F" and 9% gave him a "D".
- ❖ **Black women's confidence in the Democratic Party remains flat.** Overall, 73 % of Black women, which was the same as in 2018, identified Democrats as the party that best represents their issues, however 23.6 % identified as Independents or non-affiliated and 0.01% as Republican. In contrast, **for Black women 25-35** only 45% agreed that the Democrats best represented their interest, with nearly 1/3 indicating that no party represents them.
- ❖ **Black women look to presidential candidates to address financial issues.**
- ❖ **If the 2020 Presidential Election was held today, Black women identified their top choices would be Biden (1st), Harris (2nd), Warren (3rd), Sanders (4th). Young Black women (18-34) identified their top choices are Sanders (1st), Harris (2nd), Warren (3rd), Biden (4th).**
- ❖ **The Rise in Hate Crimes/Racism strongly impacts Black women in their Community, Family and Democracy.**

Life or Death Issues Rise to the Top for Black Women

❖ **Black Community Priorities have shifted for Black women.** In 2018, the #1 issue was hate crimes/racism, up to 55% from 33% in 2017. In 2019, we see Black women more evenly focused on Criminal Justice and Policing Reform as the #1 issue, separated by a mere 1% from Affordable Healthcare as the #2 issue. While the Rise in Hate Crimes/ Racism remain a key concern at #3, a 13-point drop from 2018, it's now tied with Equal Rights and Equal Pay, which has risen 14 points as a concern from 2018.

MOST Important Issues (Participants Selected Top 3 from the List)					
	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
#1 - Criminal Justice and Policing Reform	48%	51%	43%	-	-
#2 - Affordable Healthcare	47%	35%	48%	52%	49%
#3 (tied) - Rise in Hate Crimes/Racism	42%	55%	33%	-	-
#3 (tied) -Equal Rights and Equal Pay	42%	28%	18%	-	-
Gun Violence and Gun Safety	35%	45%	-	-	-
Affordable Housing/ Gentrification	31%	-	-	-	-
College Affordability/Student Loan Debt	19%	14%	19%	35%	38%
Quality Public Education	14%	26%	37%	31%	38%
Violence Against Women/Girls	10%	-	-	-	-
Right to Reproductive Choices	8%	4%	3%	17%	17%
Entrepreneurship Opportunity	4%	8%	9%	8%	12%
Environmental Justice/Climate Change	4%	3%	6%	-	-
Quality Affordable Child care	3%	-	-	-	-
Immigration Reform	3%	3%	-	-	-
2020 Decennial Census and 2021 Redistricting	2%	5%	4%	-	-
Other	2%	4%	4%	5%	6%
Paid Family Leave/ Earned Sick Time	1%	3%	2%	11%	14%

Q. In your opinion, what are the top three (3) issues facing the Black community today?
(Participants selected top three from the above list)

*Top Issues for
Black Women 18-35
(Millennials and Gen Z)*

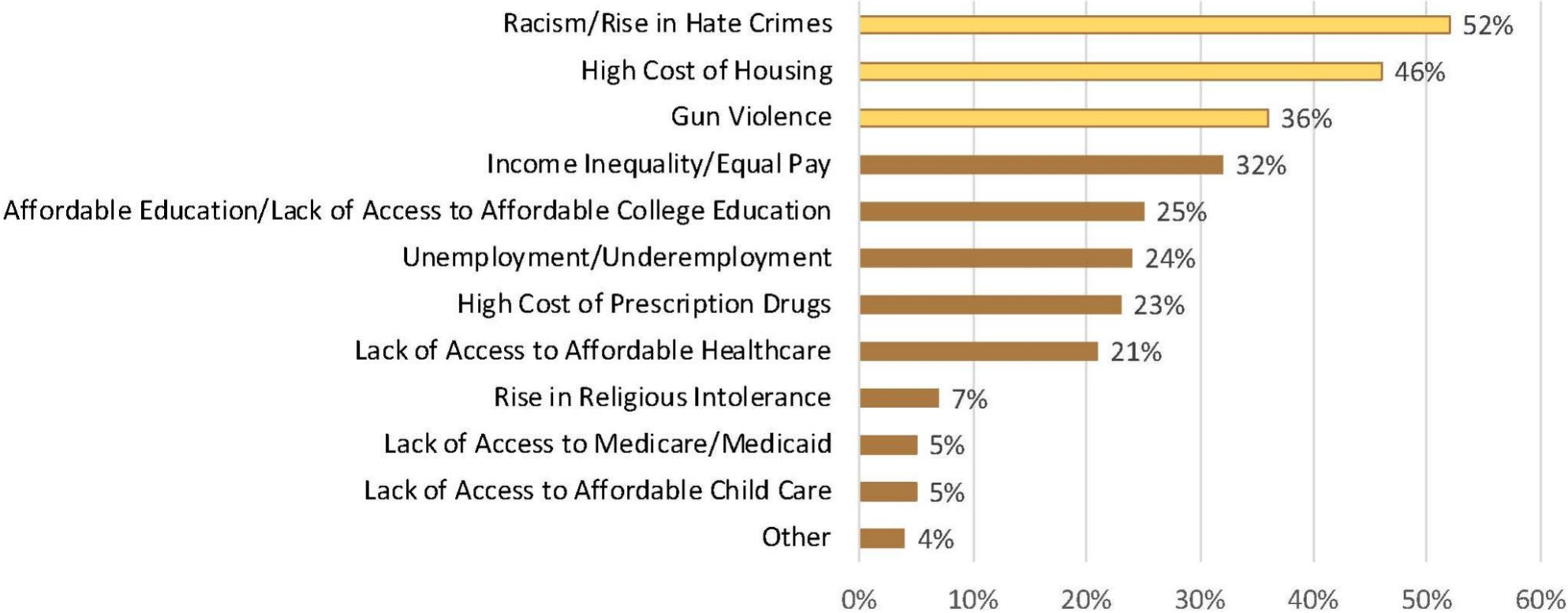
#1 Criminal Justice
and Police Reform
55%

#2 (Tied)
Affordable
Housing/
Gentrification and
Rise in Hate
Crimes/Racism
38%

#3 Affordable
Health Care
34%

Black Women Concerned about Race, Pocketbook and Safety Issues for Their Families

What are the top 3 things you believe are threatening you and or your family?



*Top Issues for
Black Women 18-35
(Millennials and Gen Z)*

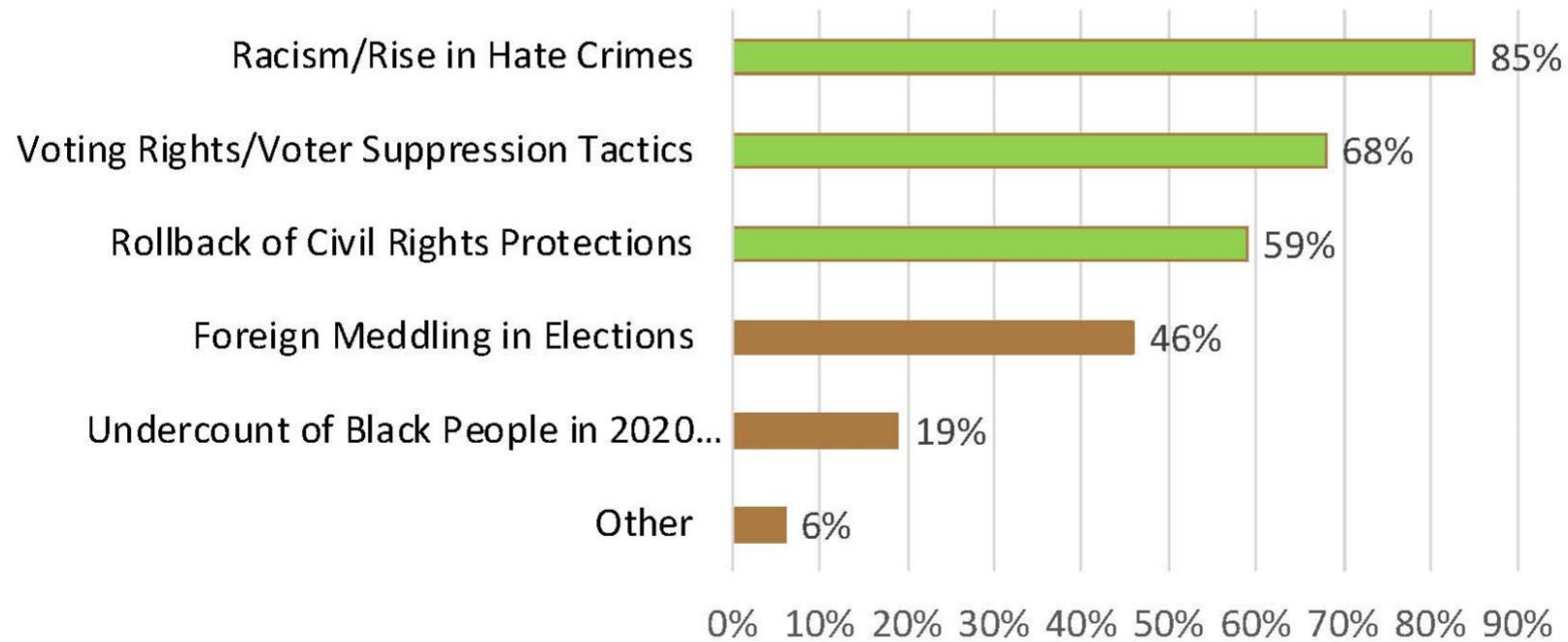
#1 High Cost of Housing
61%

#2 Racism/ Rise in Hate Crimes
46%

#3 Income Inequality / Equal Pay
40%


Black Women Identify Top Challenges Threatening U. S. Democracy

What are the top 3 things you believe are threatening our democracy?



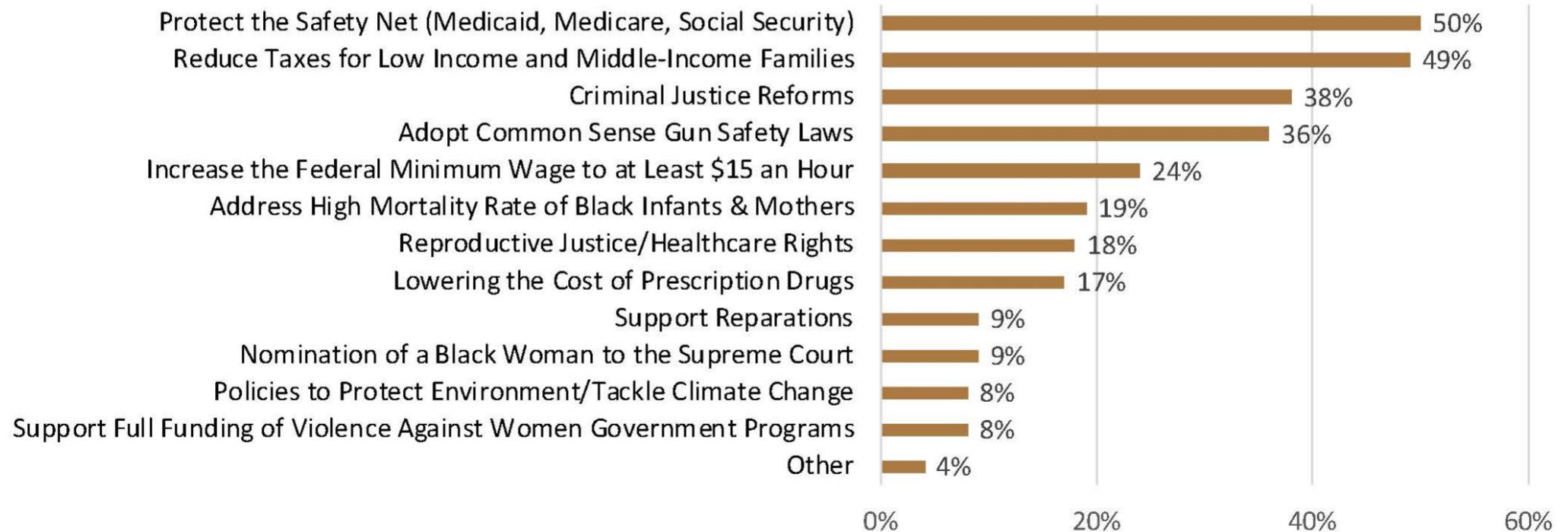
STILL FAILING... 3 YEARS LATER

How would you rate President's Trump's job performance over the past year? What letter grade would you give him?

Grade	2019	2018	2017
	83%	82%	81%

Financial Issues Top Demands Black Women have of Presidential Candidates

I will support the Presidential Candidate that Committs to the Following Issues I care about?



NOTE: Fifty-One (51%) percent of young Black women (ages 18-34) ranked addressing high mortality rate of Black infants & mothers as their #1 issue.

BLACK WOMEN IDENTIFY TOP PRESIDENTIAL CHOICES IF ELECTION WAS TODAY

Overall, Biden receives the highest support from Black women, Harris (2nd), Warren (3rd), Sanders (4th).

Overall: If you were to vote today, who would you vote for?	
Other/Prefer not to answer	26.0%
Joe Biden	25.0%
Kamala Harris	15.0%
Elizabeth Warren	12.0%
Bernie Sanders	10.0%
Corey Booker	4.0%
Beto O'Rourke	3.0%
Andrew Yang	1.4%
Donald Trump	1.0%
Julian Castro	0.8%
Pete Buttigieg	0.6%
Kirsten Gillibrand	0.3%
Bill de Blasio	0.2%
John Kasich	0.2%
Marianne Williamson	0.2%
Tim Ryan	0.1%
Tulsi Gabbard	0.1%

However, Black women Millennials & Gen Z (18-34) lean more towards Sanders (1st), Harris (2nd), Warren (3rd), Biden (4th)

18-34 Yr Olds: If you were to vote today, who would you vote for?	
Other/Prefer not to answer	26.9%
Bernie Sanders	18.9%
Kamala Harris	17.1%
Elizabeth Warren	13.7%
Joe Biden	10.3%
Beto O'Rourke	4.6%
Andrew Yang	2.3%
Donald Trump	2.3%
Corey Booker	1.7%
Julian Castro	1.7%
Tulsi Gabbard	0.6%
Bill de Blasio	0.0%
John Kasich	0.0%
Kirsten Gillibrand	0.0%
Marianne Williamson	0.0%
Pete Buttigieg	0.0%
Tim Ryan	0.0%

Note: All percentages were rounded to the nearest tenth.

For more information contact:

National Coalition on Black Civic Participation/Black Women's Roundtable @
bwrunity@ncbcp.org or (202) 659-4929.

Websites: unitycampaign.org essence.com



@ncbcp @essence



@essence @ncbcp_bwr



@essence @thenationalcoalition

HASHTAGS: #BWREssencePoll2019 #powerofthesistervote #wedeceide

- i <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/health/reports/black-womens-maternal-health.html>
- ii <https://www.census.gov/topics/public-sector/voting.html>
- iii <https://www.ncbcp.org/assets/2019BWRReportBlackWomenintheU.S.2019FINAL3.22.19.pdf>
- iv <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2019/05/02/469186/eliminating-racial-disparities-maternal-infant-mortality/>
- v <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/health/reports/black-womens-maternal-health.html>
- vi <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/ReportfromNineMMRCs.pdf>
- vii <https://www.guttmacher.org/evidence-you-can-use/medicaid-funding-abortion>
- viii <https://allaboveall.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Impact-of-insurance-bans-formatted-8.9.17.pdf>
- ix https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB464
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- xiii <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1692/cosponsors?searchResultViewType=expanded&KWICView=false>
- xiv Marsha J. Tyson Darling, “A Right Deferred: African American Voter Suppression after Reconstruction”, *History Now*, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (Summer 2018), available at <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-now/essays/right-deferred-african-american-voter-suppression-after-reconstruction> (last visited February 15, 2020)
- xv Id.
- xvi Grace Panetta and Olivia Reaney, “Today is National Voter Registration Day. The evolution of American voting rights in 242 years shows how far we’ve come — and how far we still have to go”, *Business Insider*, (September 24, 2019), available at <https://www.businessinsider.com/when-women-got-the-right-to-vote-american-voting-rights-timeline-2018-10> (last visited February 20, 2020)
- xvii “*Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence United States Senate on Russian Active Measures and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 2: Russia’s Use of Social Media with Additional Views*”, Report 116-XX p. 38, 116th Congress, 1st Session available at https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf (last visited February 20, 2020)
- xviii Id.

^{xix} Young Mie Kim, “Voter Suppression Has Gone Digital”, Brennan Center for Justice, (November 2018), available at <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/voter-suppression-has-gone-digital> (last visited February 22, 2020)

^{xx} Id.

^{xxi} Caroline Orr, “I Watched Over 100 Covert Russian Propaganda Videos On YouTube — Here’s What I Saw”, Arch Digital, (October 13, 2017), available at <https://arcdigital.media/i-watched-over-100-covert-russian-propaganda-videos-on-youtube-heres-what-i-saw-b854b69762f2> (last visited February 16, 2020)

^{xxii} Spencer Ackerman, Gideon Resnick, Ben Collins, “Exclusive: Russia Recruited YouTubers to Bash ‘Racist B*tch’ Hillary Clinton Over Rap Beats”, *Daily Beast*, (October 8, 2017, updated January 11, 2018), available at <https://www.thedailybeast.com/russia-recruited-youtubers-to-bash-racist-btch-hillary-clinton-over-rap-beats> (last visited February 18, 2020)

^{xxiii} “Political ad spending hits new record for 2018 midterm elections”, *Axios* (November 2018), available at <https://www.axios.com/political-ad-spending-hits-new-record-for-2018-midterm-elections-1541509814-28e24943-d68b-4f55-83ef-8b9d51a64fa9.html> (last visited February 15, 2020)

^{xxiv} See *supra* note vi

^{xxv} *H.R. 1 For the People Act* (expand Americans access to the ballot box, reduces the influence of big money in politics and strengthen ethics rules for public servants); *H.R. 2722 Securing America’s Federal Elections (SAFE) Act* (addresses election security through grant programs and requirements for voting systems and paper ballots); *H.R. 4617 Strengthening Harmful Interference in Elections for a Lasting Democracy (SHIELD) Act* (requires campaigns to report any illicit offers of assistance by foreign governments or agents), available at <https://www.congress.gov/> (last visited February 20, 2020)

^{xxvi} *S. 1060 Defending Elections from Threats by Establishing Redlines (DETER) Act* (imposing sanctions on countries that interfere in U.S. elections); *S.1356 Honest Ads Act* (applies requirements, limitations, and protections regarding political advertising in traditional media to internet or digital political advertising, and sets forth special rules for disclosure statements for certain internet or digital ads); *S. 1540 Election Security Act* (protects elections for public office by providing financial support and enhanced security for the infrastructure used to carry out such elections, and for other purposes), available at <https://www.congress.gov/> (last visited February 20, 2020)

