



# Black Women

in the US 2017:  
*Moving Our Agenda Forward  
in a Post-Obama Era*



A signature program of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*“Our nettlesome task is to discover how to organize our strength into compelling power”  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**The Black Women's Roundtable (BWR)** is the women and girls empowerment arm of The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (The National Coalition/NCBCP). The BWR promotes health and wellness, economic security & sustainability, education and global empowerment as key elements of success. **BWR established its Intergenerational National Policy Network in 2008**, which is comprised of a diverse group of Black women civic leaders representing international, national, regional, and state-based organizations and institutions. Together, the BWR membership represents the issues and concerns of millions of Black people who live across the United States and around the world.

The 2016 Presidential Election Cycle unleashed a growing racial and gender divide in our nation that has birthed a highly toxic political environment, increased racial tensions in communities and appears to be ushering in a reduction and devolution of federal domestic policy funding to states that is threatening to reverse hard won federal policy victories and executive actions during the Obama Administration Era. These victories included affordable health care, reproductive rights, workers' rights, LGBTQ rights, voting rights protections, religious freedom, immigration reform, policing & sentencing reform, environmental protections, reducing school to prison pipeline, support for public education; protecting social security, Medicare and Medicaid expansion and more.

In the first 60 days of the Trump Administration and 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, rollbacks in progress have already begun from a recent failed attempt by GOP leaders to repeal the Patient Protection & Affordable Healthcare Act (Obamacare) with no viable replacement, to judicially challenged Muslim Bans, moving to build a wall on the Mexican border, initiating mass deportations of undocumented Americans, promoting increased use of private prisons; reversing gains in policing reform & workers' rights, initiating unsubstantiated voter fraud investigations and deregulation of consumer protections. Also, in many states there is an elevation in attacks on women's rights, workers' rights and voting rights.

**The BWR 2016 Report**, “Black Women in the U. S. & Key States, 2016: *Power of the Sister Vote*,” also revealed the importance of the NCBCP having a special focus on the South in its section, “*Investing in Black Women's Leadership and Work in the South Should be a National Imperative*,” written by Latosha Brown, Project Director, Grantmakers for Southern Progress, NFG. An excerpt of this section stated, “Supporting Black women's leadership in the South is fertile ground for advancing

social inclusion and progress. Many organizations and progressive efforts are being led by Black women and women of color. Further, according to the U. S. Census, over 55% of the Black population resides in the South.

Over the past seven years, the NCBCP has invested a significant amount of its resources to supporting black women and youth-led leadership and base-building in several states in the South (AL, FL, GA, NC), as well as in MI, OH and PA; and plans to elevate that support and work moving forward. The 2016 BWR Report also unveiled that “throughout the South there are strong civic organizations and social justice groups led by brilliant and committed black women. Further, The South receives the least amount of philanthropic investment of any other region in the country. Additionally, programs that support Black women and girls in the South also receive less philanthropic, public and private investment than other communities. According to the *Unequal Lives* report commissioned by the SRBWI (Southern Rural Black Women’s Initiative), Black women and girls’ organizations in the South receive less than 1% of all philanthropic investment in the region.”

In order to assess the impact the new political landscape is projected to have on our work moving forward, the NCBCP hosted its Black Politics & Power Building Organizing Convening in Atlanta on January 27 – 28, 2017. Over 60 of our NCBCP board members, BWR and Black Youth Vote conveners, partners, donors and allies, engaged in critical strategy discussions to expand, build and strengthen Black political and voting power in the South and other key states across the country by developing a long-term strategy. Key organizing sessions included: 1) Developing a Strategy to Fund Our Own Politics; 2) Leveraging Our Voting & Political Power in a Trump Presidency Era & 115th U. S. Congress; 3) Expanding Our Voting & Political Power in the States: *Local, State to National (2017 – 2022)*; 4) Organizing for Census 2020/Redistricting Key for the Economic & Politic Empowerment in Black America; and 4) Special Presentation - Women's March on Washington, Next Steps.

### **Moving From Strength to Power**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once wrote, “Our nettlesome task is to discover how to organize our strength into compelling power.” As the BWR went deeper into its strategic planning process in 2016, it became clear how important it was to more effectively leverage these tremendous strengths into compelling power. Black women’s voices were being marginalized in public policy and even in progressive coalitions. Undoubtedly, Black communities needed to build power in the Obama era. The current political climate makes the work of the BWR even more critical.

***Over the past year, the BWR went into deep listening mode to develop a collaboratively informed picture of what it meant to build power, for what and for whom.*** As part of the BWR’s participation in the *Make It Work* campaign in 2016, we reached more than 200,000 women in *Kitchen Table Conversations* to identify top equity priorities for Black women. Partnering with *Essence Magazine*, BWR also conducted an extensive opinion poll that reached more than 1,200 Black women. These efforts were followed up with town hall meetings, forums and voter mobilization campaigns across seven priority states (FL, GA, NC, PA, OH, AL, MI) to further refine our priorities.

We conducted our signature BWR strategies to promote the well-being of black women and girls through our annual national summit, annual policy forum, *Healthy, Wealthy, Wise Women’s Empowerment and Power of the Sister Vote Initiatives*. Further, the BWR’s national and state-based networks were highly focused in maximizing the power and influence of the Black women’s vote in the 2016 Presidential Election. The BWR partnered with *ESSENCE Magazine*, *Labor Project for Working Families/Family Values @ Work*, NCBCP and BWR state-based Networks and others in 2016 to

achieve these goals. Finally, The National Coalition convened key leaders and partners in January 2017 to collectivize our observations and develop action plans based on our findings.

**The main findings from this more than one year listening process are:**

1. *There are large, untapped communities of motivated, passionate Black women leaders that are committed to advocating to improve conditions in their communities.* They are seeking safe, collaborative spaces where they can work with others who share their values and respect their time and contributions. The Southern Region shows particularly untapped promise.
2. *Black communities in the South are hard hit by more than a decade of public policy assaults including deep cuts in public programs, but these impacts are often ignored by the press, politicians and even many progressive coalitions.* For example, Black women and their families are more likely to be negatively affected by funding cuts because as workers, they are disproportionately more likely to be employed in the public sector. Attacks on public workers, public benefits and civil rights are all examples where Black women are disproportionately targeted.
3. *Although the South is hard hit by adverse public policies, it is also home to some of the most cutting edge, savvy organizing in the country.* Black women are leading initiatives that are making a difference in local communities – on school boards, in criminal justice reform, at the statehouse and in their neighborhoods. Alabama is a stunning case in point where key urban communities including Birmingham elected Black women to elected office in record numbers in 2016, including five judges.

**The BWR believes it is vitally important for Black women’s perspectives, methods and leadership to be supported in these critical times to achieve genuine equity in America.** Black women are overrepresented in the public employee sector, among those disabled, in poverty and in the criminal justice system. As immigrants, we are targeted for deportation and have more difficulty entering the country in search of sanctuary. The time is now for the NCBCP’s Black Women’s Roundtable to leverage its unique role as a diverse, intergenerational engagement table to raise the visibility of and support for this important intersectional work in our communities.

The National Coalition and BWR are on the verge of an exciting transition that roots our work firmly on the frontlines of change in this country. By prioritizing Black women-led organizing and focusing more intensively on the South and other key states, we are headed in a vital new direction that will help amplify the voices and power of communities deeply affected by this new policy context.

# Black Women in the US, 2017

## Moving Our Agenda Forward in a Post-Obama Era

### Executive Summary

By:  
Avis A. Jones-DeWeever, Ph.D.  
*Editor-in-Chief*

Black Women in the United States, 2017, is the Fourth Annual Report by the Black Women's Roundtable (BWR) meant to provide an in-depth analysis of the needs and condition of Black women throughout the nation. This year's report, however, is positioned somewhat differently than previous publications. At the dawn of a new political era, we thought it wise to not just describe how Black women are faring, but instead, examine their challenges and needs through a prescriptive lens. As such, in this year's report, we don't merely highlight a variety of indicators related to the Black woman's experience, instead we very purposefully lay out a path forward towards continued action on those issues that are most critical to our needs, even in the face of a very different political landscape. As such, this year's report is focused around five pillars: Black Women's Health & Humanity; Black Women and Education; Black Women's Politics and Perspectives; Entrepreneurship & Technology; and finally, Challenges and Change Agents—Telling Our Stories.

Included herein are the voices of scholars, advocates and practitioners; each with deep expertise and involvement in the issue-areas covered throughout the report. What follows is well beyond theory. It is a practical sharing of not only where Black women are today, but how we move forward to create a better tomorrow.

The following are some of the key findings from the report:

#### ***A Sense of Responsibility and the Importance of Jobs Drove Voters to the Polls***

- ❖ NCBCP Exit Polls in Charlotte, North Carolina and Cleveland, Ohio following the 2016 Presidential Election. Survey results found that Black voters were drawn to the polls less in support or even against any particular candidate, but rather, because of a strong sense of responsibility to vote.
- ❖ Ohio voters were especially motivated by a sense of responsibility as more than 4 in 5 indicated that responsibility was their greatest pull to the polls, while only 5.6% came mainly to support a specific candidate and just while 8.7 % indicated that they were primarily motivated to vote against a candidate.



- ❖ While most North Carolina voters were drawn to the polls out of a sense of responsibility as well, the degree to which responsibility was their primary motivator was well below the Ohio (63.5% vs. 83.9%). Instead, North Carolina voters were three times as likely as Ohio voters to be motivated to vote in support of a specific candidate (15.9% vs. 5.6%). And just 11.5% were motivated to vote specifically against a candidate.
- ❖ Overall, the top issues for Black voters in Ohio and North Carolina in the Presidential election were jobs/employment, followed by quality education and affordable healthcare.

### ***Black Women Expanding Political Power***

- ❖ In both 2008 and 2012, Black women redefined voting history by becoming the largest demographic group to cast ballots in an election. In 2016, not only did Black women continue to vote at high levels, they also expanded their grasp on political power. Black women increased their numbers in Congress (from 20 to 21 women) and for the first time in 18 years, a Black woman, Kamala Harris was elected U.S. Senator.
- ❖ Two of three African Americans elected Mayor in a top 100 city were women, and smaller jurisdictions in Arizona, Arkansas and Florida, each elected their first Black woman mayor.
- ❖ Several cities that witnessed high-profile police killings (Orange County, Florida; Chicago, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri) each elected Black woman prosecutors.
- ❖ The state of Texas elected its first Black woman Sheriff, Zena Stephens.
- ❖ Jefferson County, Alabama elected nine Black women to the judicial bench.
- ❖ In the state of Georgia, a key battleground that is demographically shifting rapidly, 29 counties have an absolute majority of Black women as registered voters.
- ❖ In an effort to further expand political power in the future, a new Initiative is poised to be launched which aims to leverage the power of Black women in ministry to provide civics education to the next generation of Black voters.

### ***Black Women and Girls Are Caught in the Crosshairs of Human Trafficking***

- ❖ According to the Justice Department, just over 40% of sex trafficking victims are Black, far outpacing White (25.6%), Hispanic (23.9%), Asian (4.3%) and Other (5.8%) victims.
- ❖ Women are slightly more than twice (68 percent) as likely as men (32 percent) to be trafficked for sex.
- ❖ There are several resources available for combatting human trafficking including city-based Human Trafficking Task Forces, Trafficking Hotlines (available in select states), and the International Black Women's Public Policy Institute's ARCH Initiative, which focuses on meeting the specific needs of Black women and girls impacted by human trafficking.

### ***Black Women's Health Still in Peril***

- ❖ Although the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act survived political threat and remains the law of the land, Black women are still disproportionately effected as part of the 24 million Americans negatively impacted by states that refused to accept Medicaid expansion.
- ❖ Black women continue to face a wide range of alarming health disparities, including heart disease, breast cancer, HIV, maternal mortality and exposure to violence.
- ❖ Over a third of Black women in the workforce still have no access to paid sick days
- ❖ In the face of challenges, Black women must prioritize and engage in radical and intentional self-care. This includes creating safe and inclusive spaces to learn from one another, while also continuing to hold elected officials accountable for policies that help to improve overall health and well-being.

### ***Black Girls Ensnarled in the Juvenile Justice System for Non-Criminal Acts***

- ❖ Black girls are 2.7 times more likely than White girls to be referred to the juvenile justice system from other social service agencies such as schools, mental health facilities or the child welfare system. They are often accused of committing “technical” violations such as truancy, running away, underage drinking and being “hard to control.” Such violations make up nearly a third (31%) of the offenses that are responsible for Black girls being incarcerated.

### ***Black Women Excel in Higher Education, but Still Have Room to Grow in STEM***

- ❖ Black women earned 67% of Associate Degrees and 65% of Bachelor Degrees earned among Blacks. And while all women across race are more likely to complete higher education than their male counterparts, Black women outpace their male peers by more than any other group.
- ❖ Black women though, continue to lag behind when it comes to those enrolled in a major reflective of the STEM Fields (10.6% Black women vs. 19.3% Black men respectively).
- ❖ Moving forward, it's critical to continue the collection of Civil Rights data collection related to education, and to nourish a greater focus on expanding STEM opportunities and achievement for Black girls.

## ***Black Women Are Building Businesses and Breaking into Tech Entrepreneurship***

- ❖ Black women remain the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs. As of 2016, there were an estimated 1.9 million Black women-owned firms, employing 376,500 workers and generating \$51.4 billion in revenues.
- ❖ Between 2007 and 2016, the number of Black woman-owned firms increased by 112%, more than doubling in number and far out showing the overall 45% increase among all women-owned firms.
- ❖ Although for years, Black women have led the nation in business start-ups, breaking into the Tech space has typically been significantly more difficult, as the majority of tech startups led by Black women receive virtually no venture capital funding.
- ❖ The average amount of venture capital funds raised by Black women founders is just \$36,000. That compared to \$1.3 million in venture capital funding raised by White men for *failed* business ventures.
- ❖ Currently, less than 20 Black women-led tech startups have raised more than \$1 million of the \$28.3 billion in tech investment funds.
- ❖ Despite the challenges, some Black women tech founders have broken through by raising more than \$1 million dollars to grow their companies including people like Camille Hearst, Co-Founder and CEO of Kit, who raised \$2.5 million for her social recommendation platform; Kelle James, Founder and CEO of Mercaris, who raised \$3.4 million for her organic and certified agricultural commodities exchange; and Jessica Matthews, Founder and CEO of Unchartered Play, who raised \$7 million for her renewable energy start-up.

Part I:

Black Women's  
Health, Justice and Humanity

# Black Women's Bodies:

## The Political War for Our Health and Tools for Our Triumph

L. Toni Lewis, MD  
*Health Equity and Social Justice Strategist*  
*Immediate Past Chair, Healthcare, SEIU*

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”  
- Audre Lorde

In the 2016 BWR report, Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever laid out the common health disparities that exist for Black Women in the US and noted the political landscape at the time, “Black women continue to suffer, now facing a reality in which they are not only likely to find themselves on the wrong side of health statistics, but also at the mercy of state political actors. . .”<sup>1</sup> In 2017, the stakes are historic. Our healthcare continues to be under imminent threat. Even the continuance of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act does nothing to address the 24 million Americans still left behind in states that chose to forego the expansion of Medicaid coverage. These states are home to a disproportionate number of Black Women, and unless their health care needs are addressed, their well-being will continue to be in jeopardy.

Although the threat of repeal and replace for now, has been averted, health statistics related to the condition of Black women remain alarming. A Google search of “Black Women” and “Health Disparities” will find a list of trends for as long as we have been tracking data - heart disease, breast cancer, HIV, maternal mortality, violence. The list is painfully long. The maternal mortality rates for Black Women - in some states are 3 to 4 times higher than White women. This led Black mother and OB-GYN Dr. Joia Crear-Perry to declare before the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights last year that “Black women are dying around the world, and Black Women in the U.S. need to be placed in the context of an international crisis.”<sup>2</sup> That’s right - an International Crisis.

By recent reports Black teen girls have gone missing - and under-reported.<sup>3</sup> Also, as of February 2017, 7 transgender women, 6 of them Black, have been murdered.<sup>4</sup> 2017 is on track to be one of our deadliest years. Unfortunately, this is nothing new. Whether it’s the focus on health stats, or reading about Henrietta Lacks, or the roots of modern gynecology and slavery - health care in the U.S. has not only neglected Black Women; it has declared war on our bodies.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ncbcp.org/news/releases/5Black\\_Women\\_in\\_the\\_US\\_2016.pdf](http://www.ncbcp.org/news/releases/5Black_Women_in_the_US_2016.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.theroot.com/the-Black-maternal-mortality-rate-in-the-us-is-an-inter-1790857011>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/Black-teens-are-reported-missing--and-far-too-few-people-notice/2017/03/14/1956199c-08ee-11e7-93dc-00f9bdd74ed1\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.4626f6cdc7f1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/Black-teens-are-reported-missing--and-far-too-few-people-notice/2017/03/14/1956199c-08ee-11e7-93dc-00f9bdd74ed1_story.html?utm_term=.4626f6cdc7f1)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hrc.org/blog/hrc-mourns-jaquarrius-holland-third-Black-trans-woman-killed-in-louisiana-t>

So, what to do?

Another thing that is consistent through our history is the resilience, genius, creativity, and community building of Black Women: Harriet Tubman, Shirley Chisholm, Ida B Wells, Fannie Lou Hamer, and millions of unnamed sisters; our champions in healthcare - Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL), Dr. Donna Christian-Christensen, Dr. Rometrius Moss, Dr. Mary Bassett and Dr. Camara Jones, Laphonza Butler, to name a few of thousands.

First things first - *this battle needs us whole and strong*. As the flight attendants say as we prepare to take off, we as Black women advocates need to “put our masks on first.” Because this work is so charged with history, politics, mortality and many moving parts, it is CRITICAL to create spaces for self-care and work-life balance within the fight for Black Women’s Health. We must love and support each other. We must create safe inclusive spaces and learn from each other.

In addition to radical and intentional self-care, we need to handle our policy and our politics.

Our politics - Black women should own this moment and lead a movement to improve our health. We should hold our current elected officials at all levels of government accountable for our lives and the lives of our future. Prepare to run for, support Black Women running for, and create more conversations about Black Women in office. Our politics matter. If anything has become abundantly clear since 2008, it’s that health is politics by other means.<sup>5</sup>

Our policy - Our policy platform for Black women’s health should include prioritization at all levels of government, investment in community-informed and culturally relevant and driven strategies. Programs and initiatives like the National Birth Equity Collective’s “Campaign for Black Babies,”<sup>6</sup> The Center for Reproductive Rights “Black Mamas Matter Toolkit,”<sup>7</sup> and The Congressional Black Caucus’ Healthcare Brain Trusts’ resources including *The Kelly Report*<sup>8</sup> all provide excellent blueprints.

Ready for this battle?

It is truly a fight for our lives.

Black Women’s Lives Matter.

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<sup>5</sup> Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011)

<sup>6</sup> <http://birthequity.org/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.reproductiverights.org/document/Black-mamas-matter-toolkit-for-advancing-human-right-to-safe-respectful-maternal-health-care>

<sup>8</sup> <https://cpcbaintrust-kelly.house.gov/media-center/kelly-report>

# The Movement for Families is Growing in the States: Paid Family and Medical Leave and Paid Sick Days

By:

Carol Joyner

*Labor Project for Working Families in Partnership with  
Family Values @Work*

Colds and flus happen to nearly all of us – and certainly to our kids -- on a regular basis and require a day or more of care. Also at some point, nearly everyone will need a longer time to recover from a serious illness, welcome a new child or care for a seriously ill loved one. The United States is one of very few countries with no standard for paid sick days (PSDs) or paid family and medical leave (PFML) .<sup>1</sup> More than 180 other countries provide some form of paid parental leave, and 155 countries mandate paid sick time. Because we lack a national standard for paid time to care, several state and local jurisdictions have passed legislation ensuring families don't have to choose between caring for themselves or a loved one and making ends meet. These wins are paving the way for national standards that will help everyone.

Both paid family and medical leave and paid sick days policies address how working people secure paid time to care, but they are different policies and it is important to distinguish between them.

**Paid Family and Medical Leave** pertains to an extended time to recover from illness or a medical procedure, to bond with a new child, or to care for a seriously ill loved one. Only 14% of American workers have access to paid family leave provided by their employers and only 40% have access to temporary disability insurance<sup>2</sup> (self-care). Four states and the District of Columbia have stepped up to make certain that working people can take time to care without sacrificing their livelihood. Coalitions and legislators in many other states are fighting for the same right. These comprehensive paid family and medical leave policies differ to some extent but the best policies incorporate these features:

- ✓ Challenge the old fashioned notion that only women care for people. The best policies promote gender equity and include all caregivers: moms, dads, foster and adoptive parents, same-sex couples and trans parents. This is why “maternity leave” only policies are outdated and ineffective.
- ✓ Offer a medically approved period of time. Many doctors have proposed specific periods for healing. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommend a minimum of 12 weeks for bonding with a new child<sup>3</sup>.
- ✓ Create sustainable funding through social insurance programs that pool small contributions to ensure workers can draw a portion of their wage while on leave. They also appropriate funding for implementation, promotion and enforcement.
- ✓ Fight for a comprehensive definition of family because grandparents are caring for their grandkids, and chosen family members are caring for each other.
- ✓ Incorporate job protection for all leave-takers, because how can people take time to care if they end up losing their job as a result?

Al-nisa Smith and her husband work and live in NJ but neither of their employers offers paid family leave. Recovering from a C-section, bonding with their new baby and supporting their 5-year-old who has autism would have been impossible. But NJ has a statewide law for both temporary disability insurance (TDI) and paid family leave (FLI). Al-nisa took 14 weeks to recover from surgery (8wks) and bond (6wks) with the baby and her husband took 6 weeks to bond. “I was confined to bed, plus I had emotional things trying to get back to being me,” said Al-nisa. “Having him there making sure we got through every day without any real issues, was awesome. He had the opportunity to bond with the baby as well.” The calm was a boost to their five-year-old as well. (Family Values@ Work story collection, “The Impact of Their Lives” [www.familyvaluesatwork.org](http://www.familyvaluesatwork.org))<sup>3</sup>.

### The National Momentum - Paid Family Leave

<b>Paid Family Leave: Care for Self, New Baby, or Care for Seriously Ill Family Member</b> <sup>4</sup>						
	<b>CA</b>	<b>NJ</b>	<b>RI</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>DC</b>	<b>FMLA</b>
<b>Started</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2018-20</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>1993</b>
Eligible #	13M	3.7M	392,000	6.4 M	530,000	200M+
*Weeks Per Year	6	6	4	12	8 bonding/ 6 family	12
**Weeks for Self-Care	52	26	30	26	2	12
% of Wage Pay	55% p/week	66.7% p/week	60% p/week	67% p/week	90%/50% p/wk	UNPAID
Max Pay	\$1,129 p/wk	\$615 p/wk	\$795 p/wk			UNPAID
Job Protection/Anti-Retaliation (Anti-Ret)	Anti-Ret	Anti-Ret	Job Pro (fam.care only)	Job Pro	Anti-Ret	Job Pro
Coalitions in the following states have a good chance of winning PFML in the next two years: CT, MA, OR, VT and WA. Many others are building campaigns.						

**The Family and Medical Insurance Act (FAMILY Act)** is a federal bill introduced by Senator Gillibrand (NY) and Representative Rosa DeLauro (CT). It uses the rules for FMLA, but provides pay for up to 12 weeks through a social insurance fund<sup>5</sup>. Nearly all workers are included. It has a broader definition of family and anti-retaliation language.

**Paid Sick Days (PSDs), often called Earned Sick Time,** are the short-term period of time required to recover from a cold or flu, care for a sick child or attend a doctor’s appointment. Many legislators and coalitions have expanded the concept to “Sick and Safe” days in order to address the volume of



workers, often women, who need to take time to seek shelter or take legal action after experiencing domestic or sexual violence.

Nearly 36% or 40 million Americans lack a single paid sick day<sup>6</sup>. Among workers who are employed in low wage jobs, 70% lack paid sick days, including 80% of tipped workers and food servers who interact with the public, handle our foods and work in close proximity to co-workers. According to research by the Center for Disease Control<sup>7</sup>, half of the restaurant employees surveyed indicated that they work while sick because they won't get paid otherwise. Missing just three days of pay can be the equivalent of losing a month's worth of groceries.

The lack of PSDs can also be devastating to our health. Coming to work sick increases the number of workplace injuries, lessens routine health screenings<sup>8</sup> and increases the likelihood that children will go to school sick.

Felix Trinidad was a hardworking, devoted husband. He was a grocery store worker and union organizer who knew he should get his intense stomach pain checked out but couldn't take unpaid time off to see a doctor. When he finally went to the emergency room, his employer docked his pay. The diagnosis: late-term stomach cancer. Just a short time later, Felix Trinidad died, leaving behind a wife and two young children.<sup>9</sup>

Networks and coalitions have focused investment in local and state coalitions across 40 jurisdictions. This investment is proving to make our nation healthier. Since 2006, the number of workers with PSDs has increased 7%<sup>6</sup>. The chart below details the momentum of PSDs wins increasing the number of those who can recover from illnesses and still put food on the table.

<b>Paid Sick Days (PSD) Wins Across the Nation</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Locations</b>
2006	San Francisco, CA
2008	Washington, DC
2011	CT; Seattle, WA
2013	Jersey City, NJ; Portland, OR
2014	CA; MA; Oakland, CA; East Orange, Irvington, Montclair, Newark, Passaic and Paterson, NJ; New York, NY; Eugene, OR
2015	OR; Emeryville, CA; Montgomery County MD; Tacoma, OR; Bloomfield, Elizabeth, New Brunswick and Trenton, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; Tacoma, WA
2016	AZ; VT; WA; Berkeley, Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Monica, CA; Chicago and Cook County, IL; Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN; Morristown and Plainfield NJ; Spokane, WA
Coalitions Are Fighting to Win PSDs in: MD, RI, NJ, and multiple cities and counties	

**The Healthy Families Act (HFA)**<sup>9</sup> is the federal bill introduced by Senator Patty Murray (WA) and Representative Rosa DeLauro (CT). It requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide 7 PSDs and for businesses with fewer than 15 employees to provide 7 job-protected unpaid days to recover from illness, care for a sick loved one, address concerns related to domestic violence situations or attend a medical appointment.

Both paid family and medical leave and paid sick days have gotten a great deal of attention in the media. Forward thinking companies, especially technology companies, have promoted these benefits as a means of attracting and retaining talent. Candidates have run on paid leave and other work and family policies like childcare. Do not be fooled. All policies are not the same. Here are a few policies that are masquerading as good work and family policies that just don't cut it.

**President Trump Paid Family Leave Proposal:** Only for birth mothers, 6 weeks of care. It excludes: non-birth parents; care for loved ones; and self-care; and is funded by Unemployment Insurance (insufficient and not sustainable).

**Representatives Fisher (NB) and King (ME), Strong Families Act:** Voluntary program for employers who provide up to 2 weeks of FMLI at full pay. The employer would receive a tax credit of up to 25% of the payments to employees. The time period is an insufficient period of time, tax incentives subsidize those companies who would offer it anyway and ultimately are paid by the public. This will not expand leave for low-wage workers who need it most.

**Senator Lee (UT) Working Families Flexibility Act:** This bill has been introduced for a few decades now to change the overtime obligation of employers to their employees. It "allows" employees to receive comp time at the same 1.5 hours instead of overtime pay as required under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The problem is, the employer gets to decide when people can take their comp time. Above all, workers get to spend more time with their families only after being forced to work more overtime – time away from their families.

Finding time to care for oneself or a loved one has always been a challenge for Black women. When the New Deal passed in 1935<sup>10</sup>, a deal made with southern segregationists excluded domestic and agricultural workers. That meant more than 70% of Black workers were denied legal wages, Social Security and later Medicare. For most White families of means, Black people were the caregivers. Today, although our attachment to the workplace remains relatively high, job quality (wages and benefits) lags behind. Despite a dearth of research and polling on work and family policies for Black women, we can glean from related studies that Black women are less likely than White women and Asian women (in disaggregated numbers) to have access to paid sick days and paid family leave.

- To the extent that Black women are overrepresented among low wage-workers<sup>11</sup>, they are a significant portion of the 70% who lack paid sick days.
- According to 2014 research<sup>12</sup>, 62% of non-Hispanic Black women had access to paid sick days compared to 60% of all women, 63% of non-Hispanic White and 67% of non-Hispanic Asian women. Worst of all is the low percentage of Hispanic women (46%) with access to PSDs.
- Access to employer sponsored maternity leave or paid family leave increases with education attainment<sup>13</sup>, suggesting that lack women with college degrees have greater access to PFL than Black women without college degrees. This is also seen in research on access to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)<sup>14</sup>, showing that single, non-college educated women experience few if no benefits from this unpaid national program. Comparatively, the paid leave program, in California, shows greater impact for single, non-college-educated, non-White women.

- Similarly, public sector employers also offer greater leave packages owing to unionization, collective bargaining and other pro-worker practices. The degree to which Black women are highly represented in public sector jobs they are also more likely to have access to PFML.

It's long past time to change the status of the United States as nearly the only nation that does not guarantee paid time to care. All people regardless of race, sexual orientation, physical ability, income or geography must be able to care for themselves and loved ones without risking their economic security. Local and state momentum is building, but there are many states due to geography, population density, and political infrastructure that will not be able to pass a state or local law. We need national policy on these issues. And we need to be at the table to make sure that policy reaches those who need it the most.

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# Exploitation of Black Women and Girls: Caught in the Crosshairs of Human Trafficking

By:

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Human trafficking exploded onto the international scene as a horrific violation of human rights in the late 1990s. Human trafficking involves the exploitation of a person typically through force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of forced labor, involuntary servitude or commercial sex.

Women, men and children are trafficked throughout the world, including in the United States for commercial sex and forced labor in such places as agricultural fields, mines, restaurants, private homes, construction sites, massage parlors, nail shops, hotels and resorts. Nearly 21 million people are trafficked globally with women representing just over half (55 percent) of trafficked persons.<sup>1</sup> Human trafficking is a criminal enterprise that yields \$150 billion in illicit profits annually.<sup>2</sup>

In 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) (P.L.106-386), as amended, which set a broad policy and programmatic agenda that emphasizes: preventing trafficking; protecting and assisting victims and survivors and; prosecuting traffickers. In 2015, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA) (P.L. 114-22) was enacted bringing more attention and resources to victim services, child sex trafficking, interagency coordination and anti-trafficking training. JVTA expands the definition of traffickers to include anyone who buys sex that involve children under 18. It promotes safe harbor laws that treat minors who are found engaging in commercial sex as trafficked victims, not to be prosecuted, but instead directed to appropriate services, including child welfare, victim services, rape crisis and social services. JVTA encourages states to pass safe harbor laws.

An actual count of how many and who is trafficked in the United States does not exist and is virtually impossible to obtain because of the illicit nature of trafficking.<sup>3</sup><sup>4</sup>Limited available data only provide snapshots of the human trafficking narrative and its impact on specific populations and communities. Estimates suggest that up to a possible 17,500 women, men and children are trafficked in the U. S.<sup>5</sup> each year. However, some data suggest as many as 100,000 children are vulnerable to sex trafficking, including LGBT youth, youth in the juvenile justice and foster care systems, and youth who are homeless.<sup>6</sup>

The 2016 National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Hotline and the Polaris BeFree Textline data provide an important thread in the human trafficking narrative. In 2016, the number of cases (calls are recorded as cases) jumped by 35 percent to a total 8,042.<sup>7</sup>

The table below shows the race/ethnicity for the Hotline callers who provided this information. It's important to note that it is possible that information about the existence of the hotline may have not penetrated equally across different populations. However, among those who did utilize this resource, the NHTRC/Polaris analysis of callers found that sex trafficking victims are generally trafficked by their intimate partner and labor trafficking victims are lured during their search for work.

## 2016 NHTRC Hotline Users by Sex, Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Women/Girls	Men/Boys
Latino	649	353
Asian	629	66
White	526	45
African/African-American/Black	347	72

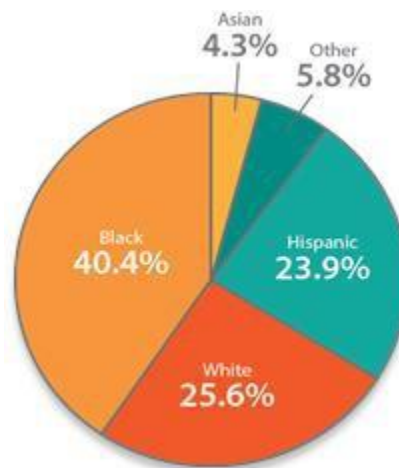
Source: NHTRC and Polaris (2016)

There is very little attention to the root causes that make people vulnerable to being trafficked, which includes poverty and social status, gender and racial inequity, sexual orientation, violence and emotional instability.<sup>8</sup> These factors, especially when combined, put Black women and girls, and other women and girls of color, at the greatest risk of being trafficked.<sup>9</sup>

It is imperative that policymakers, advocates, service providers and other stakeholders connect the dots between social justice and human trafficking. The historical and continued devaluation and subjugation of Black women and girls in United States to racial and sexual degradation and discrimination leave them particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.<sup>10</sup> Traffickers prey on vulnerability.

Data from the much quoted 2011 Justice Department study of the nation's first, but limited, systematically collected human trafficking data found the greatest of number of sex trafficking victims were Black.<sup>11</sup> In this same study, women were slightly more than twice (68 percent) as likely as men (32 percent) to be trafficked for sex. The data were not reported specifically for women by racial/ethnic group.

## Incidents of Sex Trafficking by Race, 2008-2010



Source: The Human Trafficking Reporting System (HTRS), Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

Strong and vibrant action in communities and states will determine how effective the” anti-trafficking in persons” movement is in eradicating this vile criminal activity. The recommendations and resources below are offered to complement and support work at the local level.

## Activities and Resources

- January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. This is a great time to host a Forum or some other event to raise awareness in the community about human trafficking. Remember, you don’t need to wait until January to do something that helps your neighbors learn more about this problem.
- Does your city have a Human Trafficking Task Force? These Task Forces are teams of local law enforcement and service providers that partner with federal and state investigative, enforcement and regulatory agencies and resources to develop and implement a plan to response to human trafficking. These Task Forces are funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. Check with the Mayor’s office or the Chief of Police to find out if your community has a Task Force? For more, <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/>
- Many communities have social service organizations that provide counseling and shelter to homeless women and youth, many of whom are trafficking survivors working to reenter the community. Find out about these groups in your community. The Freedom Network is a national Coalition of service providers that promote a rights-based approach and put the needs and narrative of trafficked persons at the center their work, to learn more, contact them at <https://freedomnetworkusa.org/>
- Contact the International Black Women’s Public Policy Institute (IBWPPI) to learn more about its human trafficking program. IBWPPI’s ARCH Initiative is a coalition of organizations that focuses on the trafficking of Black women. Its work includes: testifying before state legislatures and the U.S. Congress; and sponsoring forums, town hall meetings, workshops and other events to both raise awareness about the issue and/or funds to aid and assist trafficking survivors. To learn more, visit <http://www.ibwppi.org/policy-corner/>
- Find out if your state has a Hotline law that calls for the hotline poster to be displayed in local businesses, usually in the restrooms. These hotline posters had been very effective in providing trafficking victims critical information that they can control, and use when they have a private moment. For more about hotline laws, visit: [https://act.ncjw.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/2016/06/Fact-Sheet\\_National-Trafficking-Hotline-Posting-Laws\\_Updated-2016.pdf](https://act.ncjw.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2016/06/Fact-Sheet_National-Trafficking-Hotline-Posting-Laws_Updated-2016.pdf)
- Find out if your state has a safe harbor law to address sex trafficking of minors. These laws automatically treat sex trafficked minors as victims and therefore bar prosecution of them as criminals. These laws operate under the premise that a minor cannot give consent. Some states have passed Vacate laws to completely vacate a trafficking victims’ record of criminal actions committed as a result of being trafficked. Learn more at [polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/2014-State-Ratings.pdf](http://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/2014-State-Ratings.pdf) or

<http://advocatingopportunity.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Fifty-State-Survey-Safe-Harbor-Laws-and-Expungement-Sealing-and-Vacatur-Provisions-with-Related-Statutes-for-Trafficked-Persons.pdf>

- For more than a decade, United Methodist Women (UMW) has raised awareness about human trafficking. Since 2010, UMW has reached over 36,000 people with educational activities. The group’s human trafficking reports and fact sheets are available at <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/human-trafficking>
- Rights4Girls is a human rights organization working to end sex trafficking and gender-based violence in the U.S. In addition to fact sheets and reports about the lives of girls and teen women, Rights4Girls’ “No Such Thing” Campaign seeks to eradicate the term “child prostitute” and to educate the public that the minor who are involved in child sex trafficking are victims of rape, and/or sexual assault and abuse. Learn more at <http://rights4girls.org>

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# Black Women and Girls in Prisons

By:

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While much attention has been focused on the overwhelming share of Black men and boys that are incarcerated in the United States, there has not been a similar attention focused on the extremely high rates of Black women and girls struggling to survive in America's prisons, jails and juvenile facilities. While Black women make up 13% of the female population and Black girls make up 14% of the youth population, they make up 49% of the women who are incarcerated<sup>9</sup> and 33% of the Girls who are incarcerated in juvenile facilities.<sup>10</sup> Often incarcerated for survival related crimes, these women and girls often face more trauma and little rehabilitation when in prison - meaning that when they leave the facility they often struggle even harder to survive.

But, over the past few years there has been significant evidence that the tide may be changing. Both in the adult and juvenile populations there has been a slowing of growth or decline in the 2000s. This reduction has many sources (mainly an overall reduction in crime), but, the pathways for Black women and girls into the correctional system are still far too plentiful and the pathways out of the system too few. This section seeks to explore the trends of Black women and girls in the prison system both nationally and in Black Women's Roundtable affiliate states<sup>11</sup> and provide policy recommendations to ensure that incarceration is not the end of the road for these women and girls.

## **Black Women in the Adult System**

In both percentages and rates of imprisonment, Black women make up a considerable portion of the American prison system. As of 2015, Black women were imprisoned at a rate of 103 per 100,000 in their demographic as compared to 52 per 100,000 and 63 per 100,000 for White and Hispanic women respectively. But, this number has been steadily decreasing over time:

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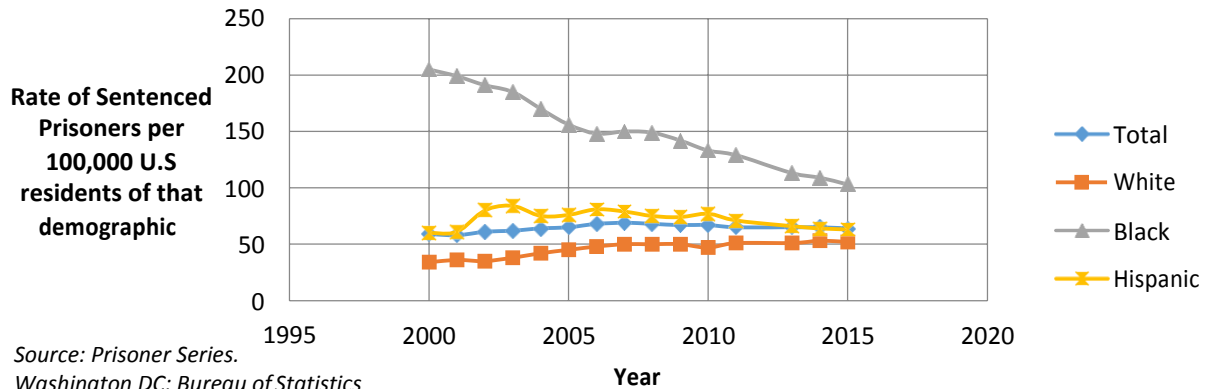
<sup>9</sup> *Prisoners in 2015, BJS*

<sup>10</sup> Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, OJJDP

<sup>11</sup> Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania



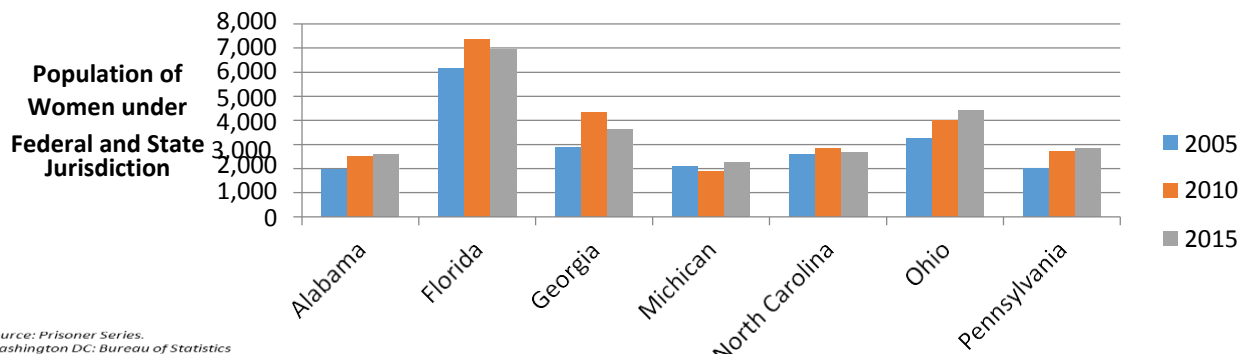
## Estimated Rate of Women Under State and Federal Jurisdiction by Race from 2000-2015



In 2000 the rate of imprisonment for Black women was around 205 per 100,000 which is a decrease of nearly 50% in 15 years<sup>12</sup>. In that same time period the rate of incarceration for White women rose 56%.

But, not all states have had the same degree of change. When looking at BWR affiliate states between 2005 and 2015, all saw increases in the number of women incarcerated in their states while the degree varied significantly with Michigan and North Carolina having the smallest growth and Alabama and Pennsylvania having the largest growth.

## Population of Women Incarcerated in State and Federal Facilities in BWR Affiliate States 2005, 2010, 2015

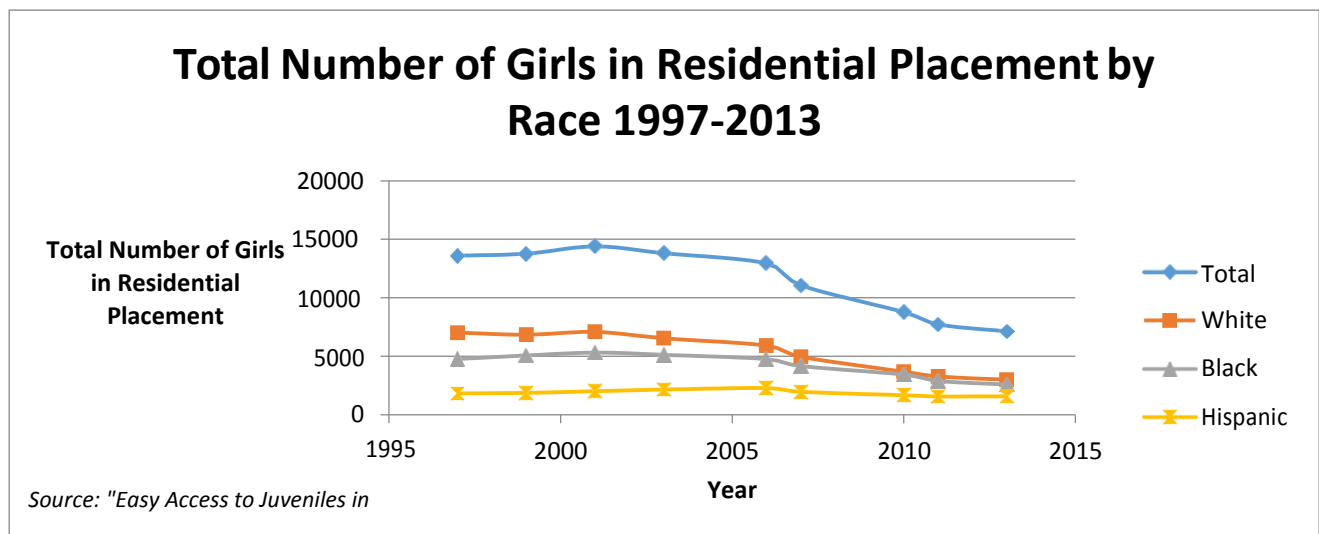


<sup>12</sup> Prisoners in 2015, BJS

Too often, the facilities where Black women are placed are incorrectly staffed - as of 2015, in the entire prison system only 35% of staff (both guards and other types of support staff) were women<sup>13</sup>. This often leaves women in facilities without a trusted face. While this is an important factor overall in the rehabilitative process, it also has a significant impact on the victimization that Black women face in correctional settings. Black women are often made doubly vulnerable by both their race and their gender. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics - Women and Black people experience high rates of inmate on inmate and staff on inmate sexual violence<sup>14</sup>. This is in addition to frequently being denied medical, mental health care and drug rehabilitation services which would make women ready to reenter the world. Experiences of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, on top of inadequate preparation for discharge make reentry even more difficult. As it stands, the national recidivism rate for women overall hovers around 45%<sup>15</sup>.

### Black Girls in the Juvenile System

It is not only women who have had to bare the experiences of mass incarceration - Black girls too often find themselves pushed into juvenile (and sometimes even adult) facilities where they go unsupported and are often left vulnerable. Of the 7,125 girls currently in residential placement (a range of placements from wilderness camps to correctional facilities) 2573 are Black, 2894 are White and 1568 are Hispanic. While there are technically fewer Black girls than White girls in juvenile facilities the comparative rate of incarceration, discussed in the introduction, is the cause for concern. Furthermore, it should be noted that a significant number of the Girls of color in juvenile facilities identify as either LGBTQ or Gender Non-conforming - estimates put it at about 40% of the girls of color identify as a sexual or gender minority<sup>16</sup>.



<sup>13</sup> *Jail Inmates in 2016, BJS*

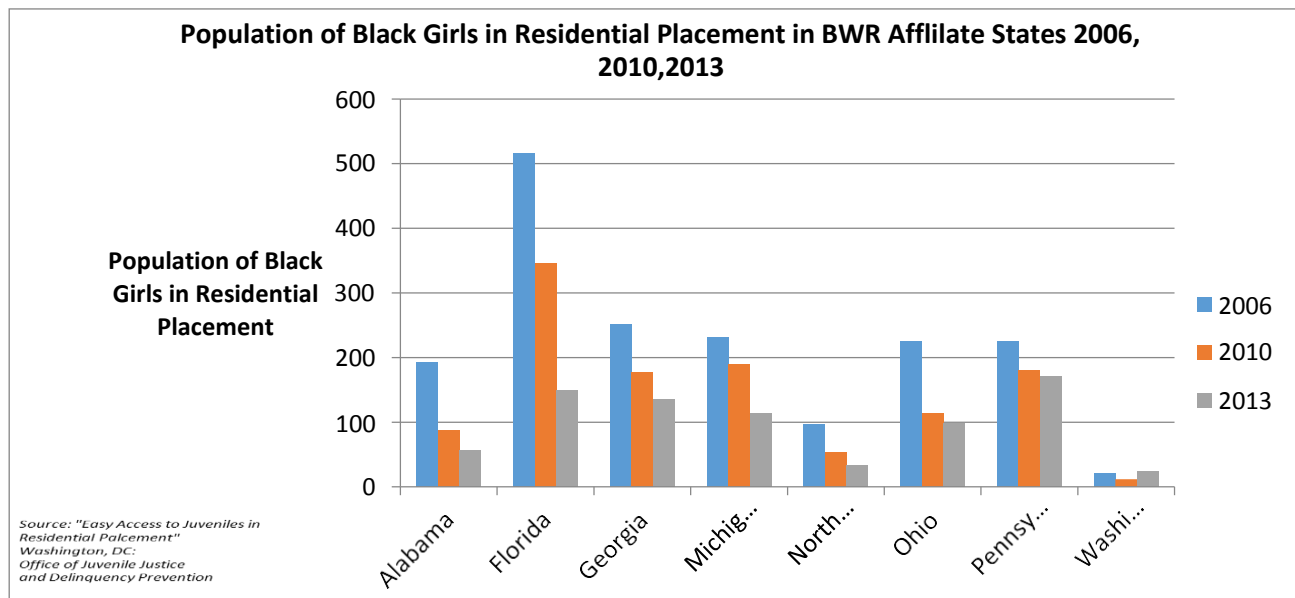
<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/wo.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.nationalcrittenton.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Gender\\_Injustice\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nationalcrittenton.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Gender_Injustice_Report.pdf)

Black girls who are put into the juvenile justice system are often not put there by violating criminal statutes but are rather often punished for being children. Black girls are 2.7 times more likely than White girls to be referred to the juvenile justice system from other social services where they should be safe like school, mental health facilities and the child welfare system<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, often the violations they commit are not even actually crimes but rather status offenses and technical violations - behaviors that are not formally considered criminal and are either common aspects of the youth experience or signals of trauma or instability such as truancy, running away, underage drinking and being “hard to control”. These types of violations makeup 31.2% of the offenses that girls were in prison for.<sup>18</sup>

When looking specifically at BWR states it seems to follow the trends of the rest of the country with significant reductions in the numbers of Black girls in residential facilities. Between 2006 and 2013, Alabama and Florida had the steepest declines in incarcerated Black girls at 71% and 70% respectively while Washington, DC was the only BWR location with an increase of 14% in the number of incarcerated girls.<sup>19</sup>



Inside of correctional facilities girls fare similarly to their adult counterparts. While boys are slightly more likely to be victimized by staff while in a juvenile justice facility than girls, Black children are significantly more likely to be victimized than their White peers<sup>20</sup>. This is especially important considering the common histories of trauma that girls come in with when they enter correctional facilities. According to the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement; 42% of girls had reported past physical abuse, 44% past suicide attempts, and 35% reported past sexual abuse<sup>21</sup>. With these histories

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/dmcbd/asp/display.asp?year=2013&offense=1&display\\_in=3&displaytype=rri](https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/dmcbd/asp/display.asp?year=2013&offense=1&display_in=3&displaytype=rri)

<sup>18</sup> Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, OJJDP

<sup>19</sup> Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, OJJDP

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/flilcsvjf12.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/240703.pdf>

in mind, it is increasingly clear that the best place for Black girls is not in locked facilities where they are often re-traumatized.

### **Looking Forward for Incarcerated Black Women and Girls**

The correctional system needs to be a place where Women and Girls are able to find rehabilitation not more marginalization. While we have seen success in the past few years, in the coming years there are certain areas that will become of increased importance:

- Support state and federal bills and initiatives that:
  - Increase the amount of data collected specific to Black women: It is very difficult to identify and pinpoint what is needed for Black women specifically without adequate data
  - Institute state task forces that deal with disproportionate minority contact in adult prison populations.
  - Expand the access to drug and mental health treatment outside of facilities to end the imprisoning of the addicted and mentally ill.
  - Prohibit the incarceration of girls who commit status offenses, violate court orders and are victims of sex trafficking.
  - Provide community alternatives to incarceration for girls struggling with mental health, trauma and drug abuse - prison is not a hospital.
- Continue to push for states to become compliant with the Prison Rape Elimination Act which sets a series of guidelines to protect inmates from sexual violence - currently only 10 states are completely PREA compliant, none of them being BWR affiliate states.
- The State Attorney General has a considerable amount of power over the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems in their states in 2018 BWR Affiliates: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Michigan will all have Attorney General races. Pay attention to their platforms and push them to take pro-women of color stances.
- Become involved with the stakeholders of your juvenile justice State Advisory Group.
- Continue to support services that protect and build up girls and young women in your communities by donating, volunteering and mentoring in your community.

### **Conclusion**

While great strides have been made in the past few years concerning Black women and girls in the criminal and juvenile justice systems, it is increasingly clear that, looking forward, the focus needs to be not just on ensuring that more gains are made, but also that regressive policies that seek to imprison thousands of Black girls and women in facilities that do not meet their needs. This will mean staying vigilant in your states –watching for judge and Attorney General races, being involved with your Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group and supporting the community institutions that are often the first point of support and contact for marginalized women and girls. The U.S. prison system has the potential to ensure that women and girls are rehabilitated and sent back into their communities prepared to be engaged citizens and community members –but only if we continue to keep the pressure on.



**Part II:  
Black Women's Education**

# Black Women and Girls in Education

By:  
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Education is a civil right. This phrase should not be spoken lightly, and especially without a full understanding the history of public education in this nation. *Brown v. Board of Education* and its progeny *Brown v. Board II* was part of a deliberate strategy to tear down the intentionally unequal and racist educational structure in America that was contributing to the under education of Black children. It is important to acknowledge and honor the progress we've made as a country since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first signed. Today, more students than ever are being taught to college- and career-ready standards and dropout rates are at historic lows. The high school graduation rate is at an all-time high – at 82 percent. And, since 2008, a million more Black and Hispanic students have enrolled in college. These are notable gains, but there is much work to be done before we can say we've achieved equity and excellence in education for all of America's children. Today, African-American and low-income students stand far behind their peers in almost every indicator of school achievement. And, today, the most affluent students are still six times more likely to complete college than students with the lowest family income. Similarly, the state of Black women and girls in education has progressed since the 1950's. However, challenges still remain, and inequities and stereotypes continue to plague the ability of Black students, particularly women and girls, to fully progress in the American educational system.

The good news is that Black women, despite the odds, continue to excel in education when given the chance. Equality of educational opportunity is still an uphill battle that must continue to be fought. Currently, the majority of Black students attend public schools (approximately 15.6 percent of public school students are Black).<sup>22</sup> Within the schools, Black students disproportionately attend schools with higher concentrations of poverty than their White peers. These schools with higher proportions of students from low-income families have higher numbers of inexperienced teachers in the classroom.<sup>23</sup> And, within the schools, almost 40 percent of Black students attend highly segregated schools, (i.e. 90-100 percent minority).<sup>24</sup>

Students attending high-poverty schools continue to have unequal access to advanced coursework and necessary funding and supports.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, Black students are disproportionately enrolled in schools that lack quality resources and inexperienced teachers and rigorous course offerings.<sup>26</sup> This

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<sup>22</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>23</sup> Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls, A Call to Action for Educational Equity (2014), available at [http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/unlocking\\_opportunity\\_for\\_african\\_american\\_girls\\_report.pdf](http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/unlocking_opportunity_for_african_american_girls_report.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2014). *Civil Rights Data Collection: Data Snapshot (College and Career Readiness)*. Retrieved from: [www.ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-College-and-Career-Readiness-Snapshot.pdf](http://www.ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-College-and-Career-Readiness-Snapshot.pdf); U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2011) *Comparability of State and Local Expenditures Among Schools Within Districts: A Report From the Study of School-Level Expenditures*, by Ruth Heuer and Stephanie Stullich, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from: <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/title-i/school-level-expenditures/school-level-expenditures.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls, A Call to Action for Educational Equity (2014), available at [http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/unlocking\\_opportunity\\_for\\_african\\_american\\_girls\\_report.pdf](http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/unlocking_opportunity_for_african_american_girls_report.pdf); Civil Rights Data Collection, U.S. Dep't of Educ. Office for Civil Rights, Issue Brief No. 3, Data Snapshot: College and

lack of course offering results in Black girls having limited opportunities to enroll in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) courses.<sup>27</sup>

From the beginning, before they even get to kindergarten, Black women face barriers in education as young Black girls. The alarming statistic, originally revealed in the 2011-12 Civil Rights Data Collection, and reaffirmed in the most recent 2013-14 collection, tells us that Black preschool children are 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than are White preschool students.<sup>28</sup> For Black girls, while they represent 20% of female preschool enrollment, they are 54% of female preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions.<sup>29</sup>

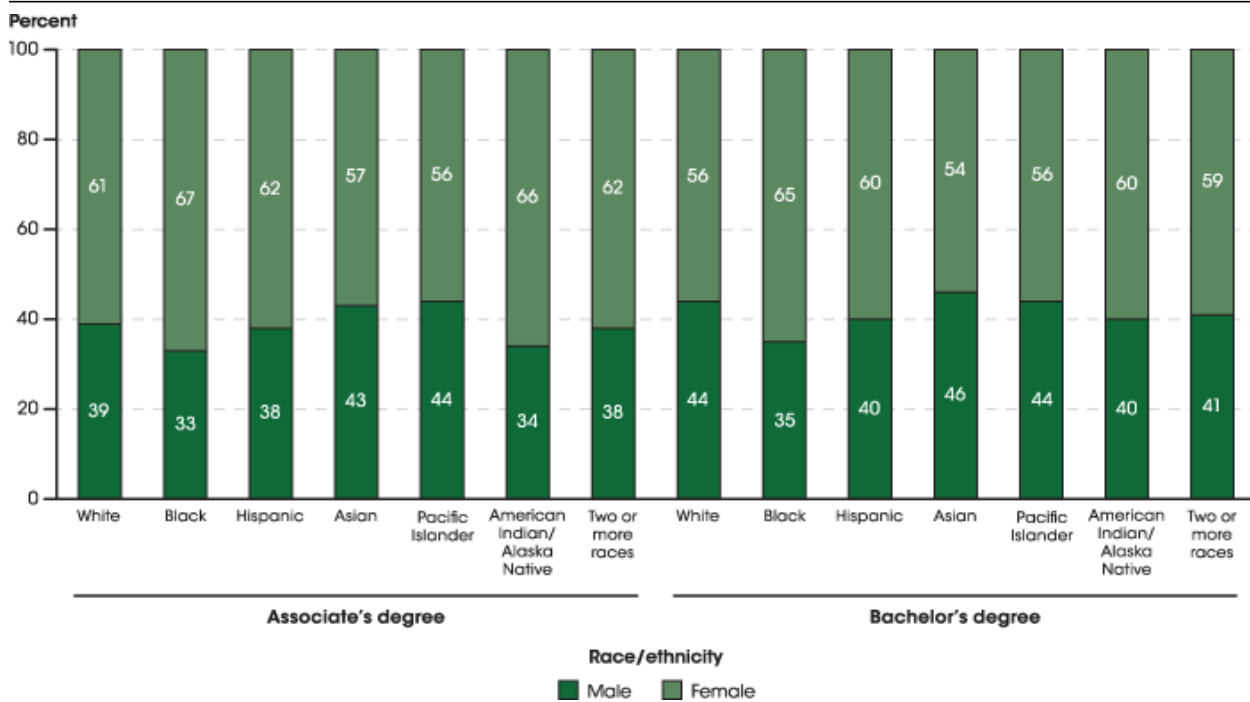
In kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the data reveals that Black students are 3.8 times more likely to be suspended than are White students and nearly twice as likely to be expelled—kicked out of school with no educational services—as are White students.<sup>30</sup>

Contributing to this disproportionate and disturbing phenomena, is the existence of law enforcement in schools. We know that 1.6 million students have no counselors, yet have a law enforcement officer in their school. The data reveals that **Black students are more likely to be disciplined through law enforcement with**

Black students 2.3 times as likely to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest as White students.

**The first step to providing equality of educational opportunity MUST be to keep Black children learning in the classroom – not in the jail cells.**

As mentioned earlier, the good news is that despite the odds, Black women still graduate with degrees in higher education at a higher rate than all of their counterparts, including White women.



Career

Readiness 1 (2014), available at <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/>

<sup>27</sup> Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls, A Call to Action for Educational Equity (2014), available at [http://nwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/unlocking\\_opportunity\\_for\\_african\\_american\\_girls\\_report.pdf](http://nwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/unlocking_opportunity_for_african_american_girls_report.pdf)

<sup>28</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Civil Rights Data Collection, U.S. Dep't of Educ. Office for Civil Rights, A First Look, June 2016, available at <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/>

<sup>30</sup> *Id*



- Black women earned 67 percent of the associates degrees and 65 percent of the bachelor's degrees.<sup>31</sup> (See Table below)

But when Black women enroll in STEM fields, their percentage of degrees lag significantly behind Black men (10.6 percent versus 19.3 percent respectively).<sup>32</sup>

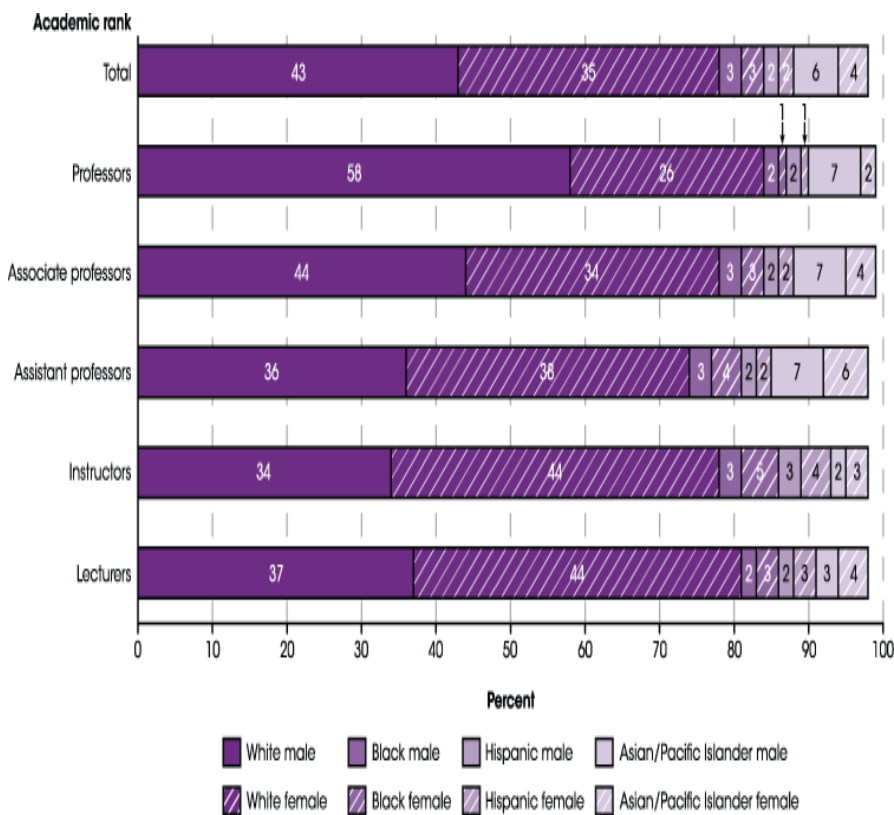
Black women also lag behind their counterparts in Academia, where the most recent data show that 43 percent are White males, 35 percent were White females, 3 percent were Black males, and only 3 percent were Black females.<sup>33</sup> Among full-time professors, Black women represent only 1 percent of the faculty, whereas 26 percent were White females.<sup>34</sup>

*Percentage distribution of associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees conferred to U.S. citizens by degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex: 2012–13*

**NOTE:** Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

**NOTE:** Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Estimates are based on full-time faculty whose race/ethnicity was known. Detail may not sum to 100 percent because data on some racial/ethnic groups are not shown.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education



As this country continues to deal with the reality of a new Administration that is hostile to public education, the Black community must continue to demand accountability by the

federal, state and local governments that are responsible for ensuring a quality and equitable public educational opportunities for our children. The flexibility given to the States under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 is only beneficial if the States are held accountable for the equitable education of all children. Transparency of the data is critical in this effort and support for the

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2016* (NCES 2016-007), [Degrees Awarded](#).

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2009 through Fall 2014, Completions component. (This table was prepared November 2015.)

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *The Condition of Education 2016* (NCES ), [Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty](#). Located at <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>

<sup>34</sup> Id

investigatory and enforcement authority of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights is fundamental to this process.

### **Recommendations**

1. Fully support the public education system where the majority of Black girls are educated. This includes fully funding the Every Student Succeeds Act, particularly Title I that supports schools with a high proportion of low-income students and keeping the resources in the public education system,
2. Continue to fully support and encourage the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights to investigate the extent to which school discipline policies disproportionately impact girls of color and conduct compliance reviews of school disciplinary practices that specifically involve the intersection of race and gender discrimination or stereotypes, implicating both Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.<sup>35</sup>
3. Fully support annual data collection and reporting of educational data, such as the Civil Rights Data Collection,
4. Continue racial and socioeconomic diversity and integration efforts through support of federally and locally driven strategies,
5. Improve STEM opportunities and achievement for Black girls,
6. Increase the maximum Pell Grant award to support higher education degrees for Black women and girls.

Of course, money isn’t everything, but every student has the equitable right to resources allocated through the federal, state and local level. Those extra dollars could be the difference between providing more culturally competent, experienced and qualified teachers in the classroom that helps a Black female student stay in school or out of trouble. Those extra resources could mean a school can offer AP Physics and expand that same student’s horizons to a career in STEM fields. Or, those resources could be the difference between a guidance school counselor encouraging a student to attend college versus a school law enforcement officer putting her on a path through the school to prison pipeline. Education is the foundation for advancement in the Black community and Black women and girls have overcome too many barriers to allow the clock to turn back now.

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<sup>35</sup> Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls, A Call to Action for Educational Equity (2014), p. 39. Available at [http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/unlocking\\_opportunity\\_for\\_african\\_american\\_girls\\_report.pdf](http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/unlocking_opportunity_for_african_american_girls_report.pdf);

# Vocational Alternatives for A Changing Workforce

By:

Patricia Hobson

*Commissioner, Office of the Mayor of the District of Columbia*

*Talents and Appointments, Office of Employee Appeals Board*

Today's society renders a college education as both a blessing and a curse. That is especially so if a student does not go on to pursue additional degrees that guarantee a sizable payday upon completion. The blessing is the rich, diverse and expanded knowledge that one acquires from a college education. College additionally provides a smooth transition into independence with still enough structure to keep your eye on the intended goal. Additionally, the melting pot of people who are on the same journey, who are at a similar stage of life can provide friendships and contacts that can be accessed throughout a lifetime. All of that was and still has very real benefits. However, all of that can accompany a staggering mountain of debt at a time when one is just entering the workforce and most have to work their way up to a wage that can sustain a comfortable life. All of that being said, it is imperative that we look at other options to advance. A four-year degree may not fit that equation for everyone.

On the backdrop of the recent Oscar nominated movie, "Hidden Figures," we got an up-close look at the tremendous contributions that African American women made in our nation's exploration into space. These women were degreed in the Sciences and Math. We saw also how all the protagonists kept their ear to the ground, recognized the oncoming shift in the skill set required going forward and preempted their inevitable obsolescence by acquiring the skills needed to continue to advance.

There is a lot of emphasis being placed on attracting more women in general and African American women in particular, to fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, also known as "STEM" programs. It is being encouraged but there is a lot of ground to make up. As noted in a News.mic article written by Jon Levine, African American women took home a total of 684 STEM degrees in 2012 as opposed to 6777 for White women and 8478 for White men. The disparity is staggering. He quoted Nola Hylton, an eminent University of California research scientist as saying that it is necessary to start exposing Black girls early to STEM careers, but because of the deficit of role models in the various fields, Black girls often feel discouraged from pursuing the hard sciences even though the aptitude is very much there. In addition to exposing more young people to STEM programs, there are other opportunities for growth to consider. Here are four ways to advance without racking up so much debt: (1) Apprenticeships; (2) Certifications; (3) Fellowships; and (4) Entrepreneurship.

**APPRENTICESHIPS** should be embarked upon earlier in life. Preferably out of high school.

Apprenticeships are two things. First it is a job, second it is schooling. When you think of apprentices, you often think of vocations that are usually associated with men, i.e. plumbing, electrical work, HVAC, welding just as examples but today's apprenticeships come in many, many areas including the Medical field. Another big one is Cybersecurity. It is working side by side with a subject matter expert until you can be on your own with the task. During your apprenticeship you are being paid so doing that right out of high school offers rewards.

**CERTIFICATIONS** conversely can be obtained at any stage of life. A person can reinvent themselves any number of times by getting certifications in fields that interest them. Present trends are showing that there is going to be a lot of movement in the housing market, for example. There are perfect indicators that this is imminent because history shows us that when there has been a downturn in this industry it is usually followed by a boom. What happens is construction slows down because the demand is not as great, because inventory has not kept up with the demand, what inventory is there is in high demand. This field provides a bright spot for future growth. Within that one field there are several areas for work. There is work for appraisers, home inspectors, stagers, real estate agents and the list goes on. None of these jobs require a four-year degree but instead you get a certification that opens the windows wide for a good income.

Within the medical field, there are many areas that are in high demand that give you an entry point into this industry that do not require a four-year degree. In the surgical field they are using more and more “robots” to do certain procedures. It is an area that has a lot of dynamism around it because people who endow themselves with expertise in this modality would have any number of options for growth going forward. A lot of it becomes on the spot training and by virtue of just being there, you are exposed to cutting edge technology in real time.

The workforce is getting so fluid and dynamic that in some fields, by the time you get a four-year degree, the information in the field has become obsolete. Your degree may give you a baseline knowledge but it is not until you get in the area of work that you are seeing the changes as they come.

**FELLOWSHIPS**. These are not entry level opportunities but rather a more in-depth exposure and knowledge of a field you are already familiar with. Best example of this may be a surgeon who is offered a fellowship by a hospital to learn plastic surgery. Obviously there is already a high degree of knowledge and expertise in the field but a fellowship will take you to an even higher level. If someone has been working in a certain field for many years, loves what they do, seeking a fellowship makes sense because it can catapult you to a very high level of subject knowledge maybe providing you with the expertise to write papers, write articles or even a book because of your increased knowledge.

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**. Statistics show that African American women owned businesses have grown by 322% since 1997, making them the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs in the United States. Some of the most successful entrepreneurs, i.e., Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Steve Jobs, who by the way advanced his life’s work by getting a certification in calligraphy did not obtain a four-year college degree. They had a business model, pursued it and in turn provided jobs for countless people. This cannot and should not be ignored.

The good news is that there are ways to navigate through professional challenges and tailor career paths for intergenerational African American women that position them toward unimpeded growth. Remember this, whether you are deciding on how to advance your own career or are an influencer in someone else’s life, this is good information to have. The world is changing, what made sense even five years ago may require new thinking today. Opportunities abound!! Go find them!!!

# Women in Ministry Civics Education Initiative

By  
The Honorable Helen Holton  
*Executive Director*  
*National Organization of Black County Officials, Inc.*

The recent change of leadership in America has served as a clarion call that something has gone awry in our nation. This past presidential election was the most vicious, vile, and divisive electoral display of democracy in decades and possibly ever. It was Abraham Lincoln who said in November 1863, “Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” It is evident that it has not perished yet it is crippled and clearly not reflective of a united nation. What happened and how we arrived here is a question still reeling in the minds of many.

The pathway to inclusive civic engagement and participation for African Americans climaxed with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Since that time many have fought to defend the Act. Too often it has been under attack. It is important to keep it intact and ensure equal access of the vote to African Americans and others citizens denied the right to vote. The challenge we face today is reclaiming a sense of ownership and action for a hard fought right not understood and valued for what it represents to our inclusion in the fabric of American democracy.

There was a time when civics education was an integral element of primary education in public schools across America. The National Assessment for Educational Progress in the past tested students at grades 4, 8, and 12 on their civics literacy. In 2013, their governing board made the decision to drop testing of civics and American history for grades 4 and 12 as a money-saving measure. Today, students are tested on civics literacy at the eighth grade level only. African Americans, particularly in urban cities lag behind all dominant ethnic groups in civics literacy.

Once again, we in the African American community must wake up and resume our duty to educate our children and others in our community on the importance and significance of being civically astute on the organization and operation of American governance. According to the United States Constitution the federal government came into being to address six specific purposes: unity, justice, domestic tranquility, defense, promotion of general welfare, and securing liberty for all.

Voting is strengthened when we know the issues we are voting for and why. When we understand the process and the relevance of our engagement we are a more powerful force to be acknowledged for the issues that matter to us. Too many have paid too high a price for our right to vote and inclusion.

The civics literacy levels of our students across the nation are less than admirable. Most of our nations educational focus is directed toward students being college and career ready. However, if they are not educated in effective citizenship how will they fare as active and participative voters and advocates for things that matter in our communities?

Our issues are America's issues, whether they are access to affordable healthcare, quality public education, equal pay for equal work, jobs with livable wages, or criminal justice reform, among others. We need our voices to be heard not only in the village square but also in the ballot box. We have fought too long and too hard not to be included as contributing American citizens in shaping the agenda of our nation. The responsibility rests with us to do what we can do to make a difference in a substantial and meaningful manner.

We were energized and motivated to do our part when President Barack Obama was a candidate seeking the office of President. In retrospect as we are continuing to study and determine what did not go well during his presidency, we must look to our lack of participation in the mid-term elections. This clearly speaks to our lack of understanding of the vital role of strong civics education. Whether by design or choice, the absence of this critical element of education is bearing fruit not in our favor.

Women are leading figures in our community. We are mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, and village-moms; we are primary caretakers and head-of-households. In many cases we are the primary and/or sole-decision maker in the family. Most of us work outside the home with responsibility over essential aspects of home stability – housing, finances, health, and education decisions. We are the essential messengers of information within and throughout our community. As such, the future of our race largely rests on the shoulders of women.

It is appropriate to recognize the role of the Black church in our gains in public education and voting rights. Albeit more than 50 years ago, it still stands as relevant that our greatest efforts toward inclusion in America were carried through the strength of the church. The church in the 21st century is not as relevant as it once was, yet it is still a place of refuge and hope for many women. We are at a place in time that has created an opportunity for the church to become relevant again and for women to lead without upstaging the role and recognition of the Black male.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor said, "...divisive rhetoric and a culture of sound bites threaten to drown out rational dialogue and debate. We cannot afford to continue to neglect the preparation of future generations for active and informed citizenship." It is in this vain that the following initiative is in the planning stages to be launched this spring. Women in ministry in the Black church live within a construct of discrimination and oppression because we are women.

In the church, women are the dominant teachers of doctrine and discipline in Sunday School, Church School, New Members Class, Missionary Societies and other areas where information is taught that shapes and influences future generations. Working with women in ministry, many of whom are pastors with the ability to make civics education a priority within their charge and an additional opportunity for those that do not pastor in the traditional sense to touch the lives of young people within their respective ministries.

The initiative in the works is designed to support civics education of young people to introduce and interest them in becoming more civic-minded as they mature and reach the age of voting. Utilizing technology and social media as the platform for education has the potential of reaching far more people beyond those that physically show up in church. This program has the potential for exponential growth into other sectors of our community. It is in line with the work of the National Coalition for Black Civic Participation and connects the dots for a stronger and more unified community of action.

# HBCU Sustainability & Role of Black Women's Leadership

By:

Felicia Davis  
*Director*

*Building Green Initiative/HBCU Green Fund  
& CAU Sustainability Coordinator  
Thomas W. Cole Research Center*

Desegregation has dramatically impacted enrollment in historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The HBCU share of black students has declined to less than 10 percent and many black colleges struggle for survival. These institutions award roughly 15 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded to blacks. In spite of the many challenges, according to a Gallup-Purdue University study measuring well-being, HBCU graduates found their college emotionally supportive and almost twice as many HBCU graduates indicated their institution prepared them for life outside of college compared with non-HBCU black graduates. Most HBCU graduates report "thriving in purpose well-being"<sup>36</sup>.

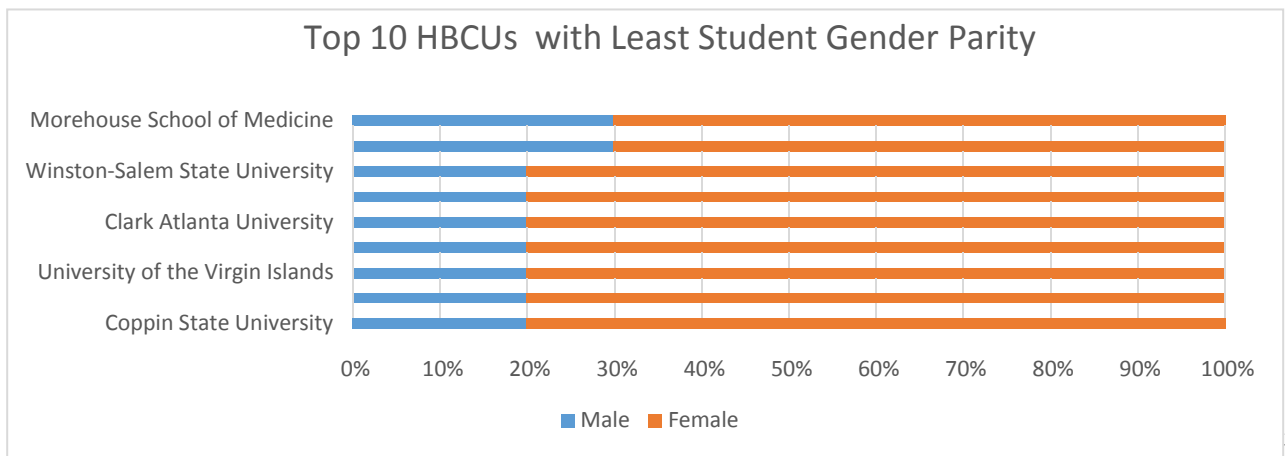
Last summer, black women eagerly tweeted the Root.com article declaring black women "the most educated group in the US" noting that "by both race and gender, a higher percentage of black women (9.7 percent) are enrolled in college than any other group..."<sup>37</sup> Black women now constitute more than 60 percent of black college students and more than 65 percent of black graduates at the associate, bachelor's, master's and doctorate levels<sup>12</sup>. At a growing number of HBCUs the student population is overwhelmingly female. For a brief moment in time the HBCU higher education sector also outpaced the national average for hiring female college and university presidents of any race.

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/10/28/survey-finds-big-differences-between-black-hbcu-graduates-those-who-attended-other>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.theroot.com/black-women-now-the-most-educated-group-in-us-1790855540>

### Top 10 HBCUs with Least Student Gender Parity



38

At the same time that black female students were making significant gains in college matriculation, an impressive number of Black women ascended to the leadership serving as HBCU presidents. Sadly, this promising trend stalled in 2016 when four highly accomplished black women HBCU presidents were terminated, a couple retired and one passed away. It also appears that women are held to a higher standard as they enter a formerly male dominated arena.

One of the greatest challenges facing HBCU presidents is fundraising. Presidents are responsible for soliciting on behalf of institutions that are experiencing the strain of educating students that cannot afford to pay tuition while working to transform tuition-driven revenue models. These institutions function with older buildings and systems often in need of upgrades. Older buildings cost more to operate and maintain. Energy efficiency upgrades would significantly lower operating costs and in many cases, pay for themselves in a relatively short period of time. Unfortunately, many HBCUs lack the up-front capital needed to execute retrofits that would generate savings and make the institutions more financially stable.

Spelman College in Atlanta is one of the only HBCUs ranked among the nation’s greenest campuses by the influential Princeton Green Review. Spelman possesses a demonstrated commitment to stewardship that is actualized through its Sustainable Operating Plan: applying sustainability principles to new and existing building; services such as dining and parking and a high level of student engagement. Spelman also has one of the largest endowments among all HBCUs, it is almost ten times the size of endowments of neighboring Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University. Spelman has invested in cost saving upgrades that also create a positive learning environment. All HBCUs would benefit from infrastructure upgrades.

Most elite institutions have implemented campus sustainability policies and upgrades to maximize efficiencies and create a more sustainable campus environment for their students. Investments in energy efficiency generate multiple dividends that help to grow endowments. Black college students are beginning to advocate sustainable practices for their institutions and there is a noticeable growth in environmental clubs and activities. The 2014 HBCU Green Report<sup>39</sup> surveyed 40 HBCUs about their sustainability practices and found that 78 percent measure and track energy usage and costs over time. This is a critical first step toward greater efficiency, however, as is the case with many statistics measuring progress, black campuses lag behind their mainstream counterparts.

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/cmsi/Changing\\_Face\\_HBCUs.pdf](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/cmsi/Changing_Face_HBCUs.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> [http://buildinggreennetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/HBCU\\_Green\\_Report\\_2014.pdf](http://buildinggreennetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/HBCU_Green_Report_2014.pdf)



Former President Ruth Simmons was the first black president of an Ivy League institution and the first woman president of Brown University. Simmons led the way in the supporting research into Brown’s historic ties to slavery. In 2003 she appointed a Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice that inspired other elite institutions to conduct their own internal studies. Today, our nation’s oldest and most well-endowed elite institutions are acknowledging the contribution that the institution of slavery made to their establishment and prosperity. These institutions can afford to partner with and invest in the sustainability of their sister HBCUs.

In an effort to tackle infrastructure challenges head on, a group of millennial HBCU alumni have established the HBCU Green Fund. Lead by three dynamic young black women, the Green Fund draws upon proven green revolving loan and crowd-funding strategies to target investment in cost-saving HBCU energy reduction projects. The group is mounting a strategic campaign to inspire well-endowed institutions to also invest. Improving campus buildings and infrastructure will help to stabilize HBCUs, reduce leadership transition and ensure the long-range sustainability of HBCUs, arguably the black community’s greatest asset.

TABLE 1: Postsecondary Degree Attainment by Level and Sex, 2009

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Black Men %</b>	<b>Black Women %</b>
<b>Associate’s</b>	31.5	68.5
<b>Bachelor’s</b>	34.1	65.9
<b>Master’s</b>	28.7	71.8
<b>First Professional</b>	38.0	62.0
<b>Doctoral</b>	33.5	66.5

**Part III**  
**Black Women's Politics & Perspectives**



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# The 2016 Presidential General Election Voter Protection Project: A Preliminary Analysis of NCBCP 2016 Exit Poll Data Ohio and North Carolina

By  
Gabrielle Gray  
*Howard University Graduate Political Science Association  
Research & Field Partner, NCBCP Unity '16 Campaign*

Notwithstanding emancipation, the abolishment of slavery and the passage of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, voting rights for African Americans continue to be systematically denied and suppressed. The passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, more than a hundred years later, brought some relief, but organized formal and informal efforts to limit the voting rights of African Americans have persisted.

In the 2016 General Presidential Election, the Howard University Graduate Political Science Association (HUGPSA) organized and led a Voter Protection Project that focused on promoting the voting rights and participation of all Americans, especially African Americans, whose voting rights have been compromised historically. Such efforts allowed Howard University students and Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Fellows to participate in poll monitoring and exit polling on Election Day.

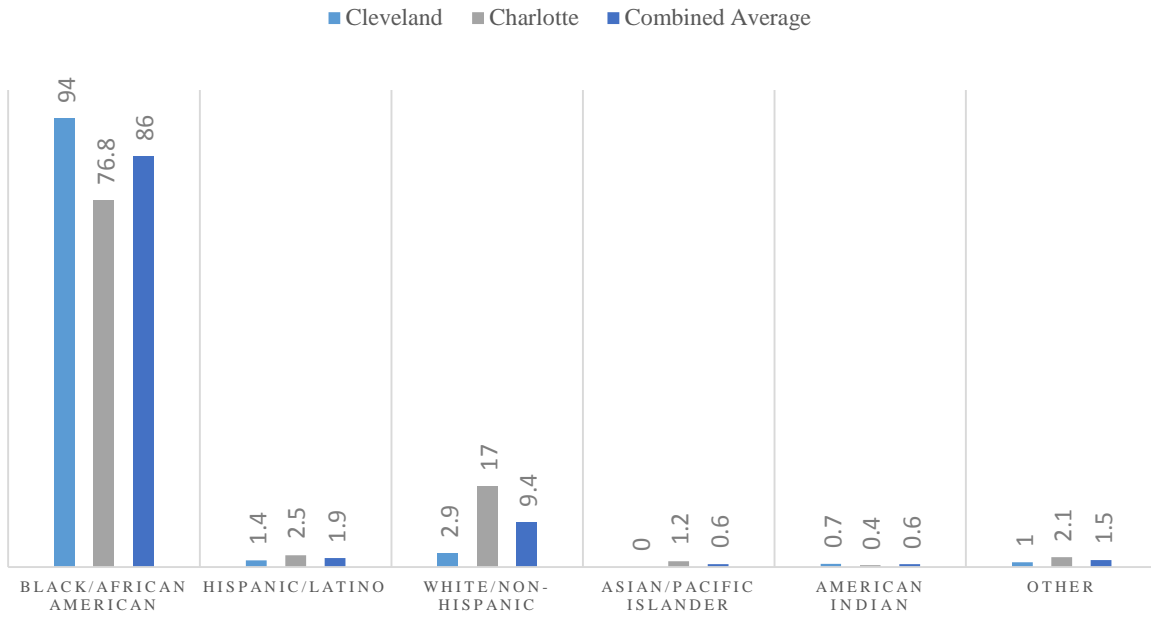
Data collected by HUGPSA, as a field and research partner for the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP)'s Unity '16 Campaign and the Ronald W. Walters Leadership and Public Policy Center, offers insight on the Black electoral experience. In keeping with the legacy of Dr. Ronald W. Walters, the project followed actions taken during previous election cycles by Dr. Walters, the NCBCP, the African American Leadership Institute at the University of Maryland, Dr. Tyson King-Meadows, the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS), and the Ronald W. Walters Leadership and Public Policy Center.<sup>11</sup>

A preliminary analysis of the NCBCP 2016 Exit Polls collected in Charlotte, North Carolina and Cleveland, Ohio evaluates the Black voting experience.<sup>11</sup> These states, like many others, have documented cases involving voter suppression, especially in areas with large African American populations.

## **Demographic of Voters**

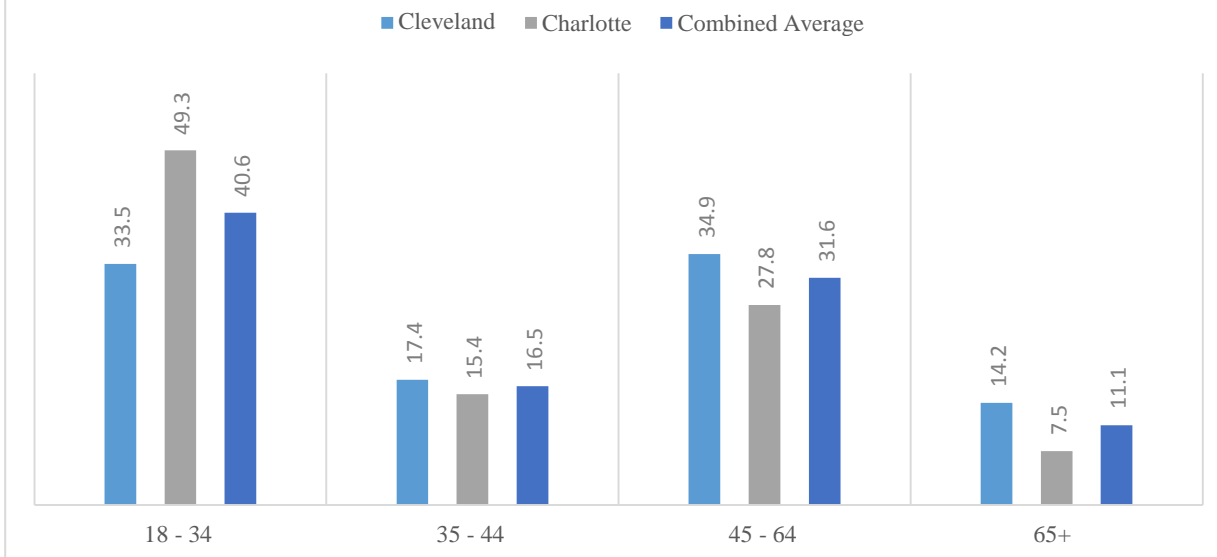
With the interest of analyzing the Black voting experience, the data presented solely represents the Black voters polled in the respective states. A total of 531 surveys were collected in Charlotte ( $n=244$ ) and Cleveland ( $n=287$ ) on Election Day.<sup>11</sup> Blacks/African Americans were intentionally oversampled in both states (86.0 percent).

## RACE/ETHNIC ORIGINS OF RESPONDENTS



**Note:** Percentages may not add to 100 due to missing data. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

## AGE OF RESPONDENTS

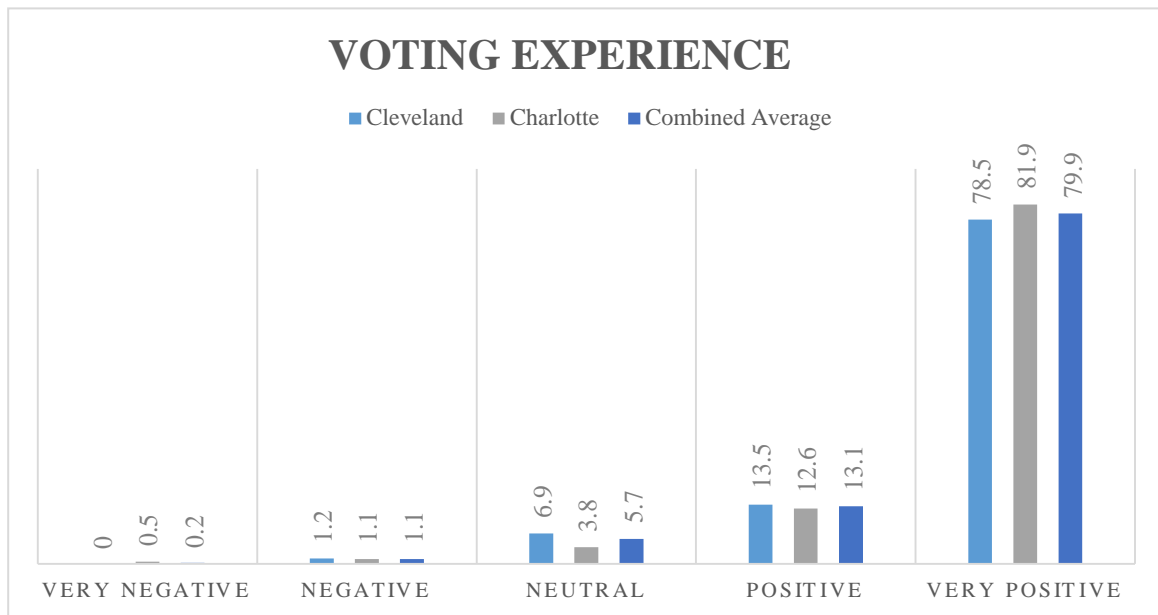


**Note:** Percentages may not add to 100 due to missing data. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Combined, 62.6 percent of the voters identified as female, and 72.2 percent were between the ages of 25-64. Of the combined sample, 39.2 had a high school education or less. Slightly over half of the population sampled (50.8 percent) were employed full-time, and 83.1 percent had a yearly income of less than \$50,000.

### Voting Experience

The overwhelming majority of voters polled were repeat voters (86.8 percent overall, 84.1 percent in Charlotte, and 88.8 percent in Ohio), most of whom had a positive (13.1 percent) or very positive (79.9 percent) experience voting. This is true for both males and females surveyed in Ohio and North Carolina. A higher percentage of older individuals (aged 65+) had a positive or very positive voting experience (83.0 percent), compared to millennial voters (72.5 percent). In Ohio, 12.6 percent of millennial voters recorded having a very negative, negative, or neutral voting experience. These results however, are not statistically significant.



**Note:** Percentages may not add to 100 due to missing data. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Second to having no problems voting on Election Day (98.3 percent), a small percentage of voters (0.5 percent) identified their name not being on the voting list and problems with the machines as being issues experienced on Election Day. Women were 0.6 percent more likely to have issues voting than men; however, these results were not statistically significant.

Since the landmark Supreme Court decision in the 2003 case of *Shelby v. Holder*, voter suppression laws including strict voter id laws have been enacted in states such as Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Ohio, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin. In 2013, the Court of Federal Appeals ruled North Carolina’s voter id law unconstitutional, resulting in a sharp increase of voters who were not required to show id on Election Day. In Charlotte, 91.3 percent reported they were not required to show identification to vote. Of the 8.7 percent who were required to do so, despite the Court’s ruling, 78.6 percent produced a driver’s license as formal identification.

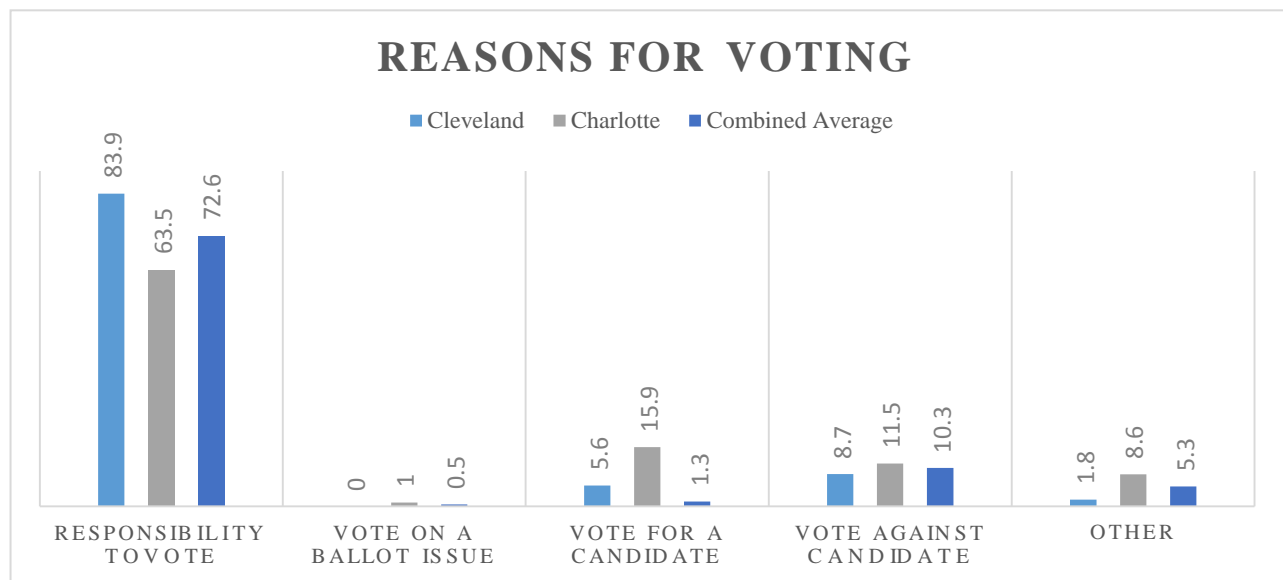
North Carolina is an exception. Other states, such as Ohio, continue to have voter id laws. In Cleveland, 99.2 percent of voters reported having to show identification; 78.5 percent used a driver’s license. Other forms of identification used included Student id, utility bill, pay stub, and military id.

### Issues and Reasons for Voting

In the United States, Blacks have fought through a long history of social control efforts. As an expressive activity, Black electoral participation asserts citizenship previously denied, and acknowledges barriers to Black suffrage. It is reasonable to claim Black electoral participation is rooted in the Black struggle for citizenship and a recognition of past oppression. Results from the exit poll suggest that Black electoral participation is a rooted in a responsibility to the greater good of Black interests (i.e., protection of rights).

Data from exit polls conducted in Cleveland show 83.9 percent of voters acted on a feeling of responsibility to engage in the political process in the current election; 5.6 percent of voters voted in support of a specific candidate, and 8.7 percent of voters engaged in order to vote against a particular candidate.

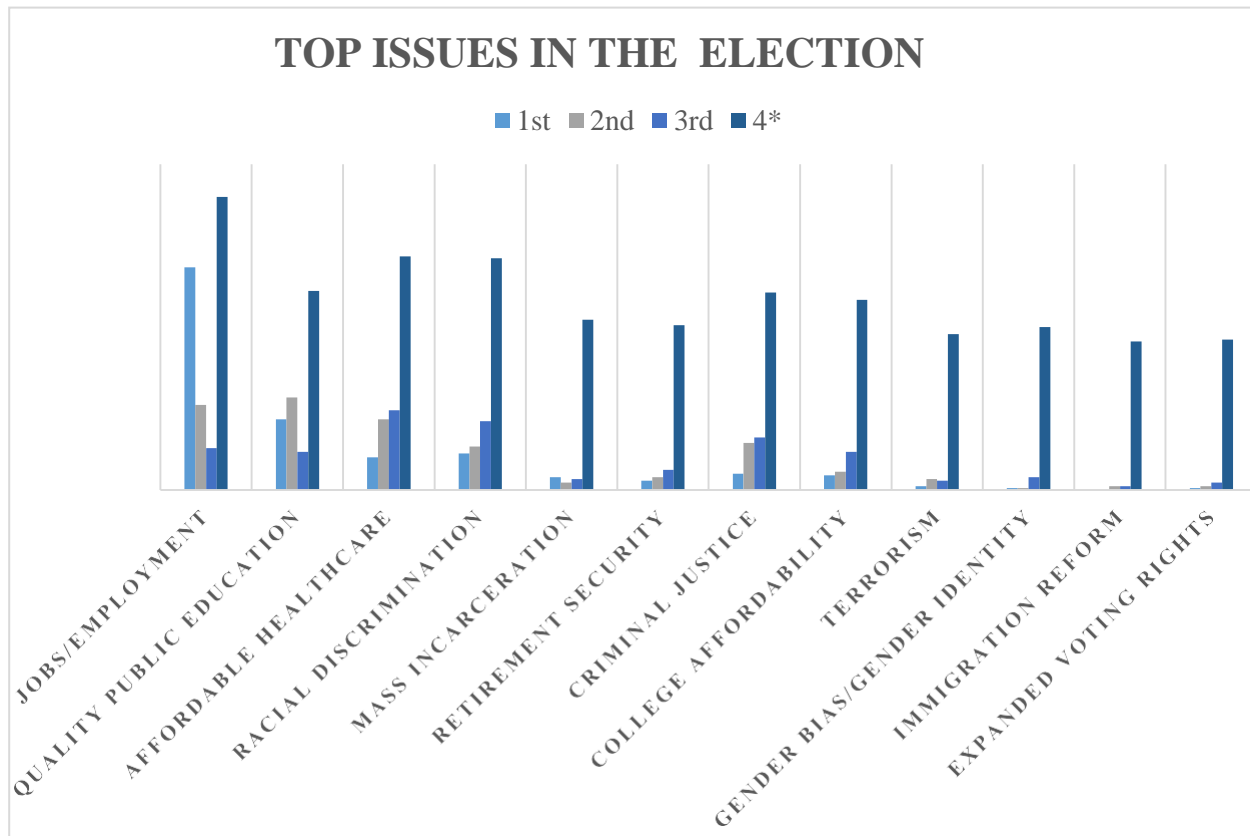
Exit polls data gathered in Charlotte provide an alternative perspective of motivations for voting. Of the voters polled, 63.5 percent acted on a feeling of responsibility to engage in the political process in the current election; 15.9 percent voted in support of a specific candidate, and 11.5 percent engaged in order to vote against a particular candidate. Other motivations listed for participation included: uncertainty, first time voting, and “*Because Trump is a racist and can’t be president.*”



**Note:** Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Individuals aged 65 years old and above responded it was their ‘responsibility’ to vote at a higher percentage than other age groups in both Charlotte and in Cleveland. Men also reported that it was their ‘responsibility’ to vote at a slightly higher percentage than women. Neither of these claims is statistically significant.

The top three ranked issues of importance for Black voters in the election were: 1) Jobs/Employment, 2) Quality Public Education, and 3) Affordable Healthcare. These issues also polled high in the Essence poll. Non-ranked issues identified as important to Black voters were: 1) Jobs/Employment, 2) Affordable Healthcare, and 3) Racial Discrimination.



**Note:** Data represents North Carolina and Ohio combined.  
 \*Issues check as important, but not ranked.

## Conclusion

The results of this study provide a unique perspective on Black voting behavior that is often not captured on national opinion surveys due to lack of representation in sampling. Data collected in the exit poll offer a unique perspective on the experience and motivational factors for Black electoral participation in the 2016 presidential election. Although the data suggest Black voters did not experience negative experiences on Election Day, it is important to note the data presented in this preliminary analysis were collected in racially polarized communities. The addition of data collected from NCBCP partner affiliates in other key states with a past and current history of voter suppression can be used to identify key characteristics of the Black voting experience in America.



# The Road Ahead for Black Women and Electoral Politics

By:

Dr. Elsie L. Scott

*Founding Director*

*Ronald W. Walters Leadership and Public Policy Center*

*Howard University*

During the November 2016 election, Black women continued to increase their political power by running for and winning electoral positions. They increased their numbers in the U.S. Congress by one (from 20 to 21 women). Most significantly, for the first time in 18 years, a Black woman, Kamala Harris, was elected U.S. Senator.

Two of the three African Americans elected mayor in the 100 largest cities were women—Catherine Pugh, Baltimore and Sharon Weston Broome, Baton Rouge, LA. In addition, Coral Evans became the first Black woman elected mayor in the state of Arizona by winning the mayoral race in Flagstaff, Arizona. Earlier in 2016, Shirley Washington became the first Black woman mayor of Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Black women also won in smaller municipalities such as Dania Beach, FL where former Washington Mystics player, Tamara James, was elected mayor.

## **Black Women Mayors in Cities with 50,000+ population (using 2010 Census data)**

<b>State</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Mayor</b>	<b>Pop. Size</b>	<b>Service Began</b>
<b>TX</b>	San Antonio	Ivy R. Taylor	1,327,407	2014
<b>MD</b>	Baltimore	Catherine Pugh	620,961	2016
<b>DC</b>	Washington	Muriel Bowser	601,723	2015
<b>OH</b>	Toledo	Paula Hicks-Hudson	287,208	2015
<b>LA</b>	Baton Rouge	Sharon Weston Broome	229,493	2017
<b>NY</b>	Rochester	Lovely A. Warren	210,565	2014
<b>LA</b>	Shreveport	Ollie S. Tyler	199,311	2014
<b>WA</b>	Tacoma	Marilyn Strickland	198,397	2010
<b>CA</b>	Fontana	Acquanetta Warren	196,069	2010
<b>CT</b>	New Haven	Toni Harp	129,779	2014
<b>MA</b>	Cambridge	E. Denise Simmons	105,162	2016*
<b>MI</b>	Flint	Karen Weaver	102,434	2015
<b>CA</b>	Rialto	Deborah Robertson	99,171	2012
<b>CA</b>	Compton	Aja Brown	96,455	2013
<b>IN</b>	Gary	Karen M. Freeman-Wilson	80,294	2011
<b>GA</b>	Albany	Dorothy Hubbard	77,434	2012
<b>NJ</b>	Camden	Dana L. Redd	77,344	2010
<b>AZ</b>	Flagstaff	Coral Evans	65,870	2016
<b>MI</b>	Pontiac	Deirdre Waterman	59,515	2013

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Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University; various local newspapers.

\*Also served from 2008-2009

Significant victories for Black women were attained in the criminal justice and judicial arenas. Some victories were tied to outrage related to police shootings and prosecutorial actions associated with the cases. Black women were elected prosecutors in several places that witnessed high-profile police killings—Orange County, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; and St. Louis, Missouri. In Texas, Zena Stephens became the first African-American woman elected sheriff in that state. The biggest victory, in terms of numbers, was achieved in Jefferson County, Alabama where nine Black women ran for judicial seats and all won; and the first Black woman was elected prosecutor in the state of Alabama. At the state judicial level, a Black woman who was appointed to a vacancy on the Minnesota Supreme court won election to a full term.

The victories and the defeats of 2016 must be used to motivate more African American women to seek public office at all levels. In 2017, there are gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey. In addition to governor, state legislative elections will also be held in these states. In 2018, all seats in the U.S. House of Representatives will be open, as well as most state legislative seats. This is an opportunity to increase the number of Black women legislators from the present number of 266 (Source: Center for American and Politics). Mayoral elections will be held in 27 states in 2017, including Atlanta, Detroit, New Orleans, Raleigh, and Charlotte. In addition, women should compete for electoral positions in small cities and towns as well as county government positions.

Black women candidates tend to have similar life experiences as the people they represent, therefore, they are more likely to put forth policies and legislation to address issues such as domestic violence, college affordability, minimum wage, quality and affordable healthcare and criminal justice reform. Surveys conducted by Essence Magazine and the Black Women's Roundtable confirms that these issues resonate with Black women. With support from women's organizations, a new group of qualified and motivated women can be recruited to run for office. They need to know that they will have fund-raising, organizing, and other support necessary for victory.

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# Federal Special Elections and Advocacy in 2017

By:

Ebony Baylor

Assistant to Senior VP for Policy

*National Urban League Washington Bureau*

After the 2016 election cycle, many organizations are looking for ways to keep their base engaged for the 2018 midterm elections. There are elections that take place every year throughout the country which allow civil rights organizations to consistently organize their constituency bases. Most elections do not have the same appeal or publicity as the presidential election, but their importance should not be minimized or overlooked. This article discusses the upcoming 2017 Congressional special elections and how these elections can serve as an organizing mechanism to prepare for the 2018 Congressional midterm elections.

As the country settles under the Trump Administration, presidential appointments and the 2016 election cycle have created great opportunities for organizations to mobilize their base for the upcoming Congressional special elections. Several sitting members of Congress have vacated their seats to accept presidential appointments or newly elected positions. Many of the presidential appointees are from states that were swing states in the Obama elections and were considered states to watch during the most recent presidential election.

- The first special election will take place in the California's 34<sup>th</sup> District previously held by Xavier Becerra who is now the state's attorney general. This primary will take place on April 4<sup>th</sup><sup>11</sup>. Typically, California's special elections have low turnout creating a mobilization opportunity for organizations in the movement. Every vote will count and the base that turns out will be a winner in this election.<sup>11</sup>
- The next election is on April 11<sup>th</sup><sup>11</sup> in Kansas' 4<sup>th</sup> district for the new CIA Director Mike Pompeo's seat. This will be a winner takes all election with no runoff election. The district has been won by Republicans since 2002 with them winning by at least 20 points.<sup>11</sup>
- Georgia's 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional special election to replace the Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price will be held on April 18, 2017, if needed the runoff election will take place on June 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>11</sup>
- In South Carolina's 5<sup>th</sup> District, the special election will replace Mick Mulvaney who is now the new director of the Office of Management and Budget. The primary election is May 2<sup>nd</sup> and the general election is June 20<sup>th</sup><sup>11</sup>. South Carolina has party based primaries, if no candidate receives 50%+1 in the party primary, there will be a party primary runoff on May 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>11</sup>
- The final special election will be in Montana to replace Ryan Zinke, the nominee for Secretary of Interior on May 25<sup>th</sup>.<sup>11</sup>

It is important for advocacy organizations to run grassroots voter education programs making sure their base is registered, still active on the voter rolls, and voting in special elections. Since the pre-clearance

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provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is no longer active, organizations must be proactive to ensure their base is voting. Though these special elections might not yield a favorable candidate for your organization, they keep your base engaged and educated about those representing them even if the elected officials are not their choice.

Also, there are gubernatorial elections taking place in Virginia and New Jersey and municipal elections throughout the country. Please check with your Secretary of State or Board of Elections for the 2017 election calendar, if applicable.

After these special elections, organizations must move swiftly from the election phase to the advocacy phase to continue strategic outreach, and build and strengthen relationships with the elected officials who speak for your base. In 2015, the National Urban League created an advocacy department within its Washington Bureau. This Bureau's purpose is to measure the relationships the National office and the affiliate movement have with all members of Congress who represent our Movement. The relationships are measured through a database and those with access can see all meetings and correspondences that take place with the elected officials and hold them accountable for the commitments made to our organization. Also, this creates streamlined communication so our messages and asks of the elected officials are unified and consistent.

### ***Black Women Analysis***

Black women have consistently turned out in high numbers, particularly during presidential elections, with a large percentage of those voters choosing democratic candidates. Black women turnout in the 2012 Presidential election reached a record high of 70 percent. In the CNN Exit Poll for the 2016 Presidential Election, 94 percent of black women stated that they supported Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. The black women turnout has been shown to swing down ballot races, including gubernatorial elections, as well. For example, in 2013, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe received 51 percent of the women vote, although only 38 percent of white women supported him. Notably, he received 91 percent of the black women vote, along with other women of color, which accounted for the majority of the 51 percent women vote (<file:///C:/Users/Ebaylor/Documents/WOCvoters3.pdf>).

As candidates for Governor evaluate the political landscape in Virginia, they must ensure that they engage the black women voting bloc or risk losing the election. In approaching the 2018 Mid Term elections we must consider that, black women were the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest voting bloc in the 2014 Mid Term elections, making up 40.8 percent, while white women were the highest at 45.5 percent. Although 40.8 percent is not as impressive as the 70 percent in the 2012 presidential election, comparatively, Hispanic and Asian women turned out at only 20.3 percent and 19.9 percent, respectively (<http://statusofwomendata.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SWSouth-Political-Participation-2.24.pdf>).

The black women voting bloc is very important and can be influential in filling the gap for candidates where white women support is low, and as such, it is imperative that black women remain civically engaged and persistent with lawmakers and influencers to ensure that our voices are being heard and our priorities are being met.

In conclusion, the upcoming special elections along with the gubernatorial and municipal elections in 2017 can be used to keep the base engaged in the political process. Once the elections are over, Civil Rights organizations must continue to advocate, measure relationships, and work with all elected

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officials who represent and allocate funding for the Black community.

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# Black Women Mobilize to Stop Georgia Gerrymandering

By:  
Helen Butler

*Convener*  
*Georgia Black Women's Roundtable*

*Executive Director*  
*Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda*

In advance of the 2016 election cycle, Georgia House Minority Leader Stacy Abrams set off a brushfire reporting that people of color made up a large majority of the 1.5 million new residents that moved to Georgia since the last census. In fact, more than 80% of new Georgians are non-White. Demographers predict that Georgia will be “majority minority” by 2030. Today, almost half of Georgia’s 159 counties are 30% Black and 20 counties have Black populations of 50% or more. The stage is set for competitive elections and more diverse representation at the State level.

Georgia boasts the largest Black caucus in the nation with a membership of 61 out of 236 or 25% and demographic trends favor the establishment of Georgia as a highly competitive or “battleground” state. Currently Georgia Republicans enjoy a comfortable majority of 74-46 in the House and 35-15 in the Senate, however shrinking incumbent margins of victory have motivated a move by the Republican majority to make as few districts as possible truly competitive by “packing” opposition voters within single districts and diluting overall impact.

Typically, district lines are redrawn following the United States Census but Georgia legislators are getting an early start drawing new lines to further limit competition. In a public statement reported by AP, former Attorney General Eric Holder called the plan to take Black voters out of swing districts, “political map-rigging at its worst”. The Georgia Coalition for the Peoples’ Agenda/Georgia Black Women’s Roundtable is working in coalition with other civil rights and civic organizations to identify individuals impacted by the proposed gerrymandered maps. Although it is illegal to draw districts based on race or ethnicity, now that the Voting Rights Act has been eviscerated, eliminating mandatory preclearance, race has once again become the defining issue in Georgia redistricting. One of the districts impacted by this proposed “redistricting scheme” is held by a Black female representative.

Rural Hancock County has the largest Black population (73%) out of the 159 Georgia counties. Dozens of Black registered voters were purged from the election rolls and were finally restored in a settlement after the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights sued the county in federal court. The Hancock County Board of Elections actually sent sheriff’s deputies to have targeted (mostly Black) voters appear in person to prove that they live in the county. These practices would have formerly required preclearance.

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For those that may think that it is not about race, it should be noted that the White mayoral candidate, R. Allen Haywood, won that election, defeating incumbent Mayor Williams Evans Jr., who is Black. Haywood was then ruled ineligible to take office due to a felony conviction, and Evans won in a new election.

There is much work underway in Georgia to educate and mobilize Black voters about the relationship between the vote and drawing of lines to determine representation and power. In Hancock and twenty-eight (28) other Georgia counties, Black women are the absolute majority of registered voters. Efforts to activate, protect, and realize the power of the Black women's vote statewide is critical. Women are making significant gains at the local level with the gain of one Black female State Senator, one Black female and one Latina State Representative for a net increase of three women of color. This trend continues with several Black female candidates vying for municipal offices, including one of the youngest to run for office, Mary Pat Hector (participant in the Georgia Black Women's Roundtable and National Youth Director for National Action Network). These trends for Black women as elected officials and the power of Black women as the majority of registered voters in 28 counties call for efforts to ensure their collective voting strength is not diluted.

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**Part IV:**  
**Entrepreneurship & Technology**



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# Success for an Entrepreneur and Business

Rene Redwood  
CEO, Redwood Enterprise LLC

*“Successful entrepreneurs and thriving businesses practice achieving intentions.”*

Fortune.com, CNBC, and the US Women’s Chamber of Commerce proclaim, “Black women are the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs. “As of 2016, there are an estimated 1.9 million African American women-owned firms, employing 376,500 workers and generating \$51.4 billion in revenues. Between 2007 and 2016, the numbers of African American women-owned firms increased by 112% - more than doubling in number and far out shadowing the overall 45% increase among all women-owned firms<sup>1</sup>”.

”Overall, women-owned firms average \$143,431 in annual revenues per firm, with White women-owned firms averaging \$201,948 in annual revenues, and \$26,550 among African American women-owned firms”. While there is much excitement about the rates of Black women's entrepreneurship, little is said about the comparatively small revenue generation of these businesses. Why?

An entrepreneur is not the same as a business. To be a business is a conscious decision to seek self-directed revenue for the delivery of products or services. There is an intentionality to shift from being an individual, to be an institution.

Indicator of Success: Have a Social Security Number (SSN) and an Employer Identification Number (EIN)

Business is the practice of making one’s living by engaging in commerce. The owner deliberately focuses the entrepreneurial spirit toward business creation. As an entrepreneur my intention is inspired by ideas and independence, not motivated by profit. As a business my intention is on resources in terms of time management, talent utilization, and treasury.

Indicator of Success: Registered or certified as Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSB) or Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Businesses (EDWOSB) or Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC). Businesses, just like voters, have to register to be counted.

Success is achievement of intention. For an entrepreneur success is a journey of personal development and wellbeing. Business is structured by design intending to yield profit as a standard for measuring achievement and success. Many women entrepreneurs are pinged to start up a business when their employment situation devalues them, fails to aligns with their principles, or they yearn for a better way to care for themselves and their families.

Indicator of Success: Does the mission and practices of the business reflect your values? Do you love what you do? Does the business yield financial security, future opportunities, and create wealth?

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Success is an acronym for seven practices on “how to” make a business thrive. It’s a prescriptive approach to the fundamentals for entrepreneurs to create path for success in business.

“S” of Success is for Sunrise and Sunset: Start the day with gratitude and grace. Throughout the day, practice awareness of your daily decisions for they form habits. Approximately 31 million Americans—nearly 10 percent of the American population have “lazy habits<sup>2</sup>” such as staying up late, missing breakfast, skipping workout.” These repeated behavior patterns carry over into the day-to-day operations of the workplace. For women owned business, the owner is 50% of the workforce<sup>3</sup>. Practice self-care to be your best self. Bring your day to an end when the sunsets – rest and revitalize. Take time for living life well - as the entrepreneur fuels business innovation and sets a trajectory for growth.

“U” of success is Ubiquitous meaning opportunities are omnipresent or always available when entrepreneurs run with their unique strengths, are open to take risk that is informed by experience and aptitude, willing to ask for help and guidance, and receptive to teaming or collaborative business with others that mitigate your weakness while adding value to your offerings.

“C” in success is for Capabilities or capacity to achieve results and inspire confidence from your customers or clients by demonstrating the core competencies of the business: Talent (what are the unique, native strengths); Attitudes (energy and determination to be of service), continual development of Skills and Knowledge (staying current or offering innovative solutions); and Style (way of interacting, grace, smartness not arrogance).

“C” is also for Cash Flow. Access to timely and predictable resources is a systemic challenge to women entrepreneurs who face bias and institutional barriers to the financial support needed to fuel their businesses. Only 56% of Black women startups in technology raised outside investor funds averaging only \$36,000 compared to the typical failed startup, most often led by White men, usually raises \$1.3 million in backing<sup>4</sup>. Set a realistic budget on actual costs for doing business. Seek counseling from business resource entities CDFI (Community Development Financial Institutions that are committed to developing and growing businesses as an economic driver for neighborhoods), angel investors, or subcontracting to a prime contractor (sometimes called Tier 1 business partner) who holds the financial liability for the project. Remember to have a contract or memorandum of agreement that: protects your IP (intellectual property); guarantees payments on a set timetable; provides you as a small business the protections you need for revenue to cover your actual costs to execute including travel and administration; and client recognition for your service contribution to the success of the contract.

“E” in success is for Execute with Excellence by delivering great results that meet or exceed expectations, to do so on time, and within budget. Know from the onset how winning is defined and take responsibility for actions that lead to the desired outcomes not just doing activities. Be confident and expect to win. Remember past performance speaks to reputation; current performance is about producing results now to promote or seed future business.

“S” is for See success. Sense success, feel it. And Share success for you do not achieve it by yourself. Give thanks for all experiences for they help you grow. See every encounter as a market opportunity. Know your “value” in terms of cash, wealth, and importance. Be confident – your manner, demeanor and temperament say more about what you can do than your credentials.

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And the last “S” of Success is for Spirit. Connect to your Spirituality or whatever gives you the inner strength to persevere. Have faith, believe you can succeed, and make a plan that is actionable and profitable. Profit is more than financial it's also about feeling good about contributing to society knowing you have done your best. Spirit is one’s disposition and living with an attitude of gratitude.

Set intentions. Take action. Succeed. Successful entrepreneurs and thriving businesses practice achieving intentions.

- 1) The 2016 State of Women-Owned Businesses Report, Commissioned by American Express OPEN
- 2) From Success.com “How 16 Successful Entrepreneurs Start Their Days” <http://www.success.com/article/how-16-successful-entrepreneurs-start-their-days>
- 3) Over the past 20 years, the average size of women-owned firms has barely changed. In 1997 the average woman-owned firm had 1.1 employees in addition to the owner and in 2014 these firms had 0.9 employees in addition to the owner. Business Report commissioned by American Express OPEN.
- 4) 2016 Report by Digital Undivided \_

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# Black Women Are Changing the Face of Tech Entrepreneurship

by

Joycelyn Tate, J.D.

*Tate Strategies*

*BWR Senior Technology Advisor, NCBCP*

For generations, Black women have had a strong tendency toward entrepreneurship. Black women have been successful entrepreneurs in industries as varied as cosmetics to construction. This fact also continues true for Black women in the tech industry. While the overwhelming majority of tech startups led by Black women receive virtually no venture capital funding<sup>11</sup>, Black women are still managing to launch and grow thriving tech businesses.

Black women have the strategic vision, technical skills and experience that investors look for in tech founders. But what gives Black women entrepreneurs an addition edge toward success in the tech sector is their unique set of problem-solving and networking skills that they have developed through learning how to navigate the challenges of racism and sexism in the tech industry.<sup>11</sup>

The systemic biases that challenge Black women throughout the tech ecosystem have made Black women tech founders keenly aware that waiting for the established tech sector support and venture capital community to reform is not an option. Instead of relying on the prevailing tech sector for support and investments, Black women tech founders are creating and seeking new networks and structures of venture capital funding and support to grow their businesses.

A new crop of investors is breaking with the conventional thinking of the venture capital sector. These new investors realize that investing in the talent and business acumen of Black women tech founders can move the tech industry into a new era of successful and profitable innovation. These investors include women like Arlan Hamilton, founder of Backstage Capital<sup>11</sup> and Joanne Wilson, founder of Gotham Gal Ventures<sup>11</sup> and the investors of Harriet Angels Syndicate<sup>11</sup>, which focuses on investing in exceptional Black women tech founders.

Black women are also creating their own support networks within the tech community. DigitalUndivided<sup>11</sup> and Black Female Founders<sup>11</sup> are examples of organizations that are founded by Black women to provide support, resources and access to investors for Black women tech entrepreneurs. DigitalUndivided also offers Black women tech founders an accelerator program that includes a curriculum for developing sustainable businesses.

Another source of support and funding for Black women tech founders is city governments that are looking for inclusive and innovative ways to grow their economies. Programs and initiatives like the JumpStart program in Cleveland, Ohio<sup>11</sup>, Inclusive Startup Fund<sup>11</sup> in Portland, Oregon and the Inclusive Innovation Incubator (In3), a partnership between the District of Columbia and Howard

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University<sup>11</sup> are examples of ways that cities are taking the lead in providing Black women-led tech startups with access to capital and support.

While new investment and support opportunities are a welcomed change from the traditional tech sector's response to Black women, it is still difficult for Black women tech founders to obtain the same level of investments as their White male counterparts. Currently, less than 20 Black woman-led tech startups have raised more than \$1 million of the \$28.3 billion in tech investment funds.<sup>11</sup>

One of the main reasons why most venture capital firms do not invest in Black women-led tech companies is because of the lack of diversity within the decision-making ranks of the investment sector.<sup>11</sup> Among 71 venture capital firms with a combined \$160 billion in assets under management, about 1% of the senior investment team are Black. Some of the most prominent investment firms do not have a single woman or non-White person in an investment leadership position.<sup>11</sup> Another reason investors do not invest in Black women founders is because they do not view investing in Black women as a risk worth taking.<sup>11</sup> Until the investment sector becomes more diverse and inclusive, and shifts its paradigm of thinking about Black women-led tech companies, they will miss the opportunity to invest in Black women who can be the tech game-changers of tomorrow.

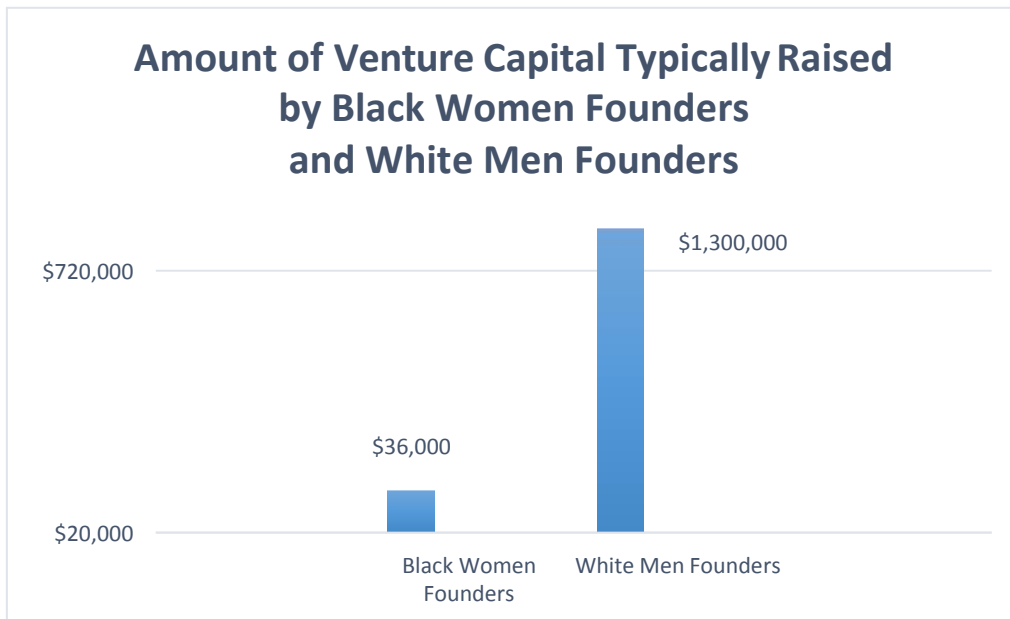
Despite the investment challenges that Black women tech founders face, some have been successful in raising \$1 million or more in investments to grow their companies. A few of these women are: Alicia Thomas, founder and CEO of Dibs, who raised \$1 million for her company that gives users access to real-time pricing for boutique fitness workout classes; Reham Fagiri, co-founder and CEO of AptDeco, who raised \$1.5 million for her online marketplace for buying, selling and delivering pre-owned furniture; Camille Hearst, co-founder and CEO of Kit, who raised \$2.5 million for her social recommendation platform where people share products they like; Kellee James, founder and CEO of Mercaris, who raised \$3.4 million for her organic, non-GMO and certified agricultural commodities exchange; and Jessica O. Matthews, founder and CEO of Uncharted Play, who raised \$7 million for her renewable energy tech startup.

Regardless of the challenges that confront Black women as tech founders, they continue to overcome the odds-- just they have done in other business sectors. By contributing their enthusiasm for creating something new and a passion for answering unmet needs, Black women tech founders are continuing the rich legacy of Black women entrepreneurs.

**BLACK WOMEN FOUNDERS WHO HAVE RAISED  
\$1 MILLION OR MORE IN OUTSIDE INVESTMENT**

<b>Founder</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Investment Capital Raised</b>
Heather Hiles	Pathbrite (sold in 2015)	\$12.0 million
Jean Brownhill Lauer	Sweeten	\$7.3 million
Jessica O. Matthews	Uncharted Play	\$7.0 million
Julia F. Alexander	Execoline	\$6.9 million
Tanisha Robinson	Print Syndicate, Inc.	\$4.2 million
Kellee James	Mercaris	\$3.4 million
Camille Hearst	Kit	\$2.5 million
Cheryl Contee	Attentive.ly	\$2.0 million
Reham Fagiri	AptDeco	\$1.5 million
Jewel Burks	Partpic	\$1.5 million
Asmau Ahmed	Plum Perfect	\$1.5 million
Viola Llewellyn	Ovamba	\$1.3 million
Alicia Thomas	Dibs	\$1.0 million

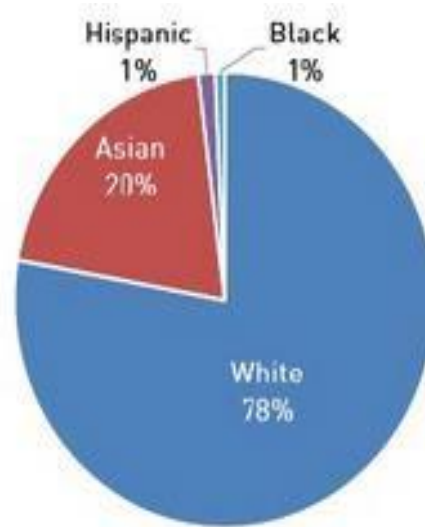
Sources: The #ProjectDiane Report, et al.



Source: Wired

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- The average amount of venture capital funds raised by Black women founders is \$36,000. That is compared to the typically *failed* startup, that is typically founded by a White male that raises an average of \$1.3 million in venture capital funding.

## ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF VENTURE CAPITAL FIRMS



Source: The Social + Capital Partnership

- One of the main reasons why most venture capital firms do not invest in Black women-led tech companies is because of the lack of diversity within the decision-making ranks of the investment sector.
- Among the top 71 venture capital firms with a combined \$160 billion in assets under management, about 1% of the senior investment team is Black.

## Venture Capital Firms without Minority Leaders

Fund	White	Minority	Total	%Minority
<b>1. Bessemer Venture Partners</b>	13	--	13	0%
<b>2. Greycroft Partners</b>	9	--	9	0%
<b>3. Scale Venture Partners</b>	7	--	7	0%
<b>4. First Round Capital</b>	7	--	7	0%
<b>5. Accomplice</b>	7	--	7	0%
<b>6. Sutter Hill Ventures</b>	7	--	7	0%
<b>7. US Venture Partners</b>	6	--	6	0%
<b>8. Founders Fund</b>	6	--	6	0%
<b>9. Meritech Capital Partners</b>	6	--	6	0%
<b>10. Madrona Venture Group</b>	6	--	6	0%
<b>11. Tenaya Capital</b>	5	--	5	0%
<b>12. Pelion Venture Partners</b>	5	--	5	0%
<b>13. Union Square Ventures</b>	5	--	5	0%
<b>14. Atlas Life Sciences</b>	5	--	5	0%
<b>15. SV Angel</b>	5	--	5	0%
<b>16. Foundry Group</b>	4	--	4	0%
<b>17. Tiger Global Management</b>	3	--	3	0%
<b>18. Index Ventures</b>	3	--	3	0%
<b>19. Lowercase Capital</b>	2	--	2	0%
<b>20. Blumberg Capital</b>	2	--	2	0%
<b>21. Bluerun Ventures</b>	2	--	2	0%

Source: The Social + Capital Partnership

- Of the top 71 venture capital firms, 21 (30%) do not have a single minority in an investment leadership position.



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## Diversity & Inclusion Challenges in Tech

By

Shireen Mitchell

*Founder, Digital Sista, Speaker, Social Analyst & Diversity Strategist  
Social Media Consultant, NCBCP*

*“If the tech industry continues to ignore the skills and insights that Black women bring to business, they will lose a key competitive advantage for future growth. The tech industry's current view of diversity and inclusion focuses on assimilation into the established tech culture rather than fostering the value of new and innovative perspectives that Black women can offer. Until the tech industry shifts its paradigm of thinking about diversity and inclusion as a human resource issue to an essential element that is critical to future success in an evolving marketplace, many tech companies will fall short of their potential to maximize their full growth and relevance.” ~ BWR Black Women in the US Report 2016*

This quote depicts the current problems for the tech industry in 2017. Twitter hasn't been able to scale or be sold and Uber is in crisis management - spending millions of dollars to address accusations of sexual assault and harassment (Kokalitcheva, 2016; Yohn, 2017). Tech companies have a diversity problem. And it's a problem that could have been avoided if the industry actually “valued” the skills and “insights” of Black Women.

“For women of color, the cumulative effect of these slights is compounded by a striking lack of racial diversity—and all that attends it. Stephanie Lampkin, who was a full-stack developer (meaning she had mastered both front-end and back-end systems) by age 15 and majored in engineering at Stanford, has been told when applying for a job that she's “not technical enough” and should consider sales or marketing—an experience many White women in the field can relate to. But she has also, for instance, been told by a White woman at a conference that her name ought to be Ebony because of the color of her skin” (Mundy, 2017).

As Stephanie's case illustrates, the “value” and “insights” of Black women are not only minimized within the industry, but Black women also have to deal with the intersecting challenges of both gender and race. But instead of just lamenting the problem, Stephanie decided to do something about it. So she developed an app, Blendoor that is specifically designed to combat bias (unconscious or otherwise) in the hiring process. Through her app, resumes are rendered race and gender neutral by eliminating any pictures, names or pronouns related to the applicant. In that way, applicants are judged only on qualifications and not advanced or held back (even unconsciously) due to race, ethnicity or gender. Though this doesn't solve all the problems Black women as well as other women and people of color face in the Tech space, it's an important start. And it's a start that was innovated by a Black woman determined to create change.

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Part V  
Challenges & Change Agents  
*Telling Our Stories*

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# A Voice from Birmingham: Raise the Wage

By:  
Councilwoman Sheila Tyson  
*Birmingham City Council*  
*Convener, Alabama Coalition on Black Civic Participation*

“This is a very simple issue. Either you’re in favor of raising wages for hardworking Americans, or you’re not. Either you want to grow the economy from the middle out and the bottom up so that prosperity is broad-based, or you think that top-down economics is the way to go. “President Barack Obama April 30, 2014. Now, nearly three years after that statement from our former president, we are still fighting for the same change.

Federal minimum wage has not increase since 2009. I can’t comprehend how or why our members of Congress will not get on one accord with this issue. Just consider the minimum purchasing power to survive. We have seen the price of gasoline and food increase since 2009. We will not even bring into the discussion shelter and utilities. But our ability to buy those very items we need to survive and travel to earn a wage has not changed for many Americans. A study released this year by the Pew Research center says that, “Overall, 52% of people favored increasing the federal minimum to \$15 an hour, but that idea was favored by just 21% of Trump supporters (versus 82% of Clinton backers). And while large majorities of blacks and Hispanics supported a \$15 federal minimum wage, 54% of whites opposed it.” While seeking office, President Trump said federal law should increase minimum wage to \$10.00. Why can’t all members of Congress come together on this issue?

The federal law minimum wage allows the minimum that can be paid. Local governments can always do more. San Francisco’s minimum wage will be \$15 by 2018. Progressive. In an effort to support an increase, in 2015, Birmingham, Alabama City Councilors passed an ordinance on graduated wage increase for just the employers in city. The state legislature blocked this from happening. Blocked the effort to improve the quality of life or even allow a little more breathing room for its residents. Now we have another effort on trying to get this done. Representative Juandalynn Givan (District-60) pre-filed a bill that will create a state minimum wage of \$10 for workers. She understands how important this is right now because we have people who are barely making ends meet. We need the majority of the members in Congress across both sides of the aisle to come together to help make this happen for all AMERICANS. A Pew study shows that fewer than 45% of the people making the minimum wage are 16-24. That implies that the other percentage could be adults with families. Or even an adult with a mortgage. The minimum wage needs to be increased. I plea this with you on behalf of Birminghamians, Alabamians and all Americans.

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I also want to take this opportunity to encourage you to vote no on all future attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Americans used their voices to convey how they felt and will feel on future attempts to repeal the repeal the affordable care act. Such an effort to take away affordable health care is a change with effects that could have substantial impacts on coverage, access to care and on the public health system. The simplest repeal of the ACA would undo it entirely and return health insurance coverage more or less to where it was before the ACA's passage, when 16% of Americans were uninsured. That translates to emergency rooms being overflowed with non-emergency patients. But this will be the only way the non and underinsured will receive medical attention because they do not have access to affordable care. The bill would result in over 20 million people losing health insurance by 2026. It would also eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund and drastically cut the federal contribution to the Medicaid program. In the state of Alabama, such a change can cause some people who are under insured in poor communities to die from diseases. Because in states like Alabama, the Medicaid programs have strict eligibility – childless adults almost never qualify. Since 2007, the Medicaid program has over 300,000 people. But in June 2016, more than 1 million Alabamians qualified for the program. That is why we urge each member of Congress to save the Affordable Care Act. Saving ACA can cause Doctors like Doctor John Waits, who saw a need to bring affordable health care to poverty stricken areas across the state of Alabama to continue to save communities.

Health and Income. It is my prayer that the Congress of this great United States of America will remember why they chose to seek political office and to think about that when they vote on minimum wage or any future attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. I urge you to remember to make change to improve the lives of all. Not just big business. But the everyday American that is struggling to work overtime to pay for their necessities. Be the voice for all.

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# Florida Black Women's Roundtable

## Agents of Change

By:

Salandra Benton

*Convener, Florida Black Women's Roundtable*

*Florida Coalition on Black Civic Participation*

*State Community Organizer, FL AFL-CIO*

The Florida Black Women's Roundtable under the leadership of Salandra Benton has proven to be successful as it has impacted and inspired over 9,000 Black women and girls across the State of Florida.

Through public policy forums, leadership training, civic engagement and issue education campaigns, FCBCP provides women with a platform for their voices as well as skills training to be used in the political process to improve the quality of life for themselves and their communities. Florida Coalition on Black Civic Participation (FCBCP) has conducted over 25 roundtables in 13 counties in Florida: Broward, Brevard, Orange, Osceola, Escambia, Hillsboro, Indian River, Leon, Martin, Miami-Dade, St. Lucie, Palm Beach and Volusia. The organization has also brought in high profile TV personalities/celebrities as guest speakers such as: Vivica Fox, Janet Hubert, Charles Dutton, Isaiah Thomas, Demetria McKinney, Alonzo Mourning, and Glenda "Judge" Hatchett, among others.

FCBCP'S work has been recognized on both national and global levels. The organization has received media coverage outside of the U.S. from Canada news outlets and also has been invited to London, England and Africa to assist in convening a Black Women's Roundtable.

Some Women Impacted and Inspired by FCBCP & the Black Women's Roundtable include:

**Sheena, Orlando, FL-** Became a single mother at the age of 14. She was kicked out of school and everyone turned their back on her and counted her out. FCBCP mentored her and gave her the option of joining our Black Youth vote program and she accepted. Putting the right people around her allowing her to finish high school and go on to graduate from college. We transitioned her into the Black Women's Roundtable where after years of being mentored she herself became a mentor to young middle and high school girls going through everyday challenges from academics to rape victims. Sheena went on to have the courage to run for Florida State Representative in 2016 at age 33. To this day she continually credits her success to BWR for giving her a chance and not counting her out almost 20 years later.

**Alberta, Melbourne, FL-** A registered nurse who wanted more out of her job. She knew she had a voice that could help other women but didn't have the platform. She joined BWR where we gave her a space to develop and find her calling. Alberta constantly helps our Black woman and girls with consultation on health care and wellness while also leading her community on economic development and the importance of economic security. She says she will not stop until she secures land big enough to open a strip mall where all stores and companies are Black owned.

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**Rasheedah, Orlando, FL-** A young mother who had to take care of her family while her husband was away in jail. Our community of women showed her unconditional love and support throughout the hard times. She returned the favor with our youth through BWR. She is currently a leader from BWR who is now an owner of her own Boutique. With the support of BWR she donates her boutique to 15 underserved young girls every Saturday to teach them how to sew, self-value, and build their self-esteem. She successfully hosted her first fashion show that showcased the handmade work from the girls that attended on Saturdays. Rasheedah and her husband who is now back home, both continue to do great work in their communities.

**Deanna, Stuart, FL-** She was a young girl from the projects who had low self-esteem who thought there was nothing outside of her hometown, and even if there was she never thought she will see it. Before we let her go down the wrong path we put her in the BWR program so that she can see what it was like to be surrounded by woman who wanted what was best for her and not kick her while she was down or because of where she was from. She felt like an equal for the first time. After she spent time with these women she realized that woman just like her once from the projects could make it out, have self-worth, and become something more than what society had planned for her. Her first time leaving the state was as an adult when FCBCP gave her a scholarship to go to the White House two years ago. The impact was so heavy on her that now her daughter is in BWR starting a second generation of leadership.

**Charlotte, Jacksonville, FL-** A single mother that wanted to get involved in civic engagement so we made her a Black Youth Vote coordinator, now with BWR. We gave her the tools to develop into something special. She is now in the position to travel to and from Georgia and Florida to mentor young girls and put two of her daughters through Medical School.

**Johnica, West Palm, FL-** A young mother faced with challenges living in South Florida. BWR helped her find her voice and embraced her journey. Her drive led her to receive a PhD from the University of Miami. She serves and helps Black women in Belle Glade which is one of the poorest cities in Florida. During her free time, she travels with BWR to talk to women and girls from low income communities about how to take care of themselves. After learning about the importance of economic development and economic security through BWR, she is now looking to open up her own health center this summer, so she can expand and continue the work around Black women and health disparities.

These are just some of the cases on why we can't stop our work regardless of our situations. There is too much good to go around and it would be selfish not to share BWR with other women around the state.

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# Black Women's Footprints in the Shifting Sands of Time: Updating Models for Power, Success, and Influence

By:

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich, Ph.D.

*CCEJ, Inc. President/CEO*

*Board Member, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation*

Many of the events, which celebrate accomplishments of African American women, also are intended to advance our agenda, our priorities and our economic aspirations. Laudatory tributes are offered to the distinguished icons who have, over many years, led these persistent battles for equality and justice. Their names are invoked to remind audiences of the Black women warriors who taught us - by example as well as by exhortations - how to lead and to negotiate for power, how to use influence and plan long-term strategies, and how to keep our dignity while simultaneously protecting ourselves..... all of this, usually with no funds and begged, loaned or borrowed working-resources. We mention the following, regularly:

- **Heroine Fannie Lou Hamer**: the Voting rights fire-brand, severely beaten and disfigured in her quest for Black voters' rights in her deep south region, as well as even within the deliberative halls of the Democratic National Convention;
- **Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm**: Pioneering school teacher, the first Black woman to be elected to the U.S. House of Representative and the first Black woman --- and the first African American of any gender to run for the office of U.S. President;
- **Dr. Dorothy Irene Height**: Civil Rights and Women's Rights leader, for 55 years head of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) - still located in the magnificent edifice bearing her name, the purchase of which she herself orchestrated to its completion. That NCNW Headquarters is located exactly between the White House and the Nation's Capitol building, on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC;
- **Dr. C. DeLores Tucker**: Feminist leader and political power-broker for Black Elected Officials (BEO's) and most especially, Black women with political aspirations, and co-founder of the National Women's Political Caucus, in collaboration with Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan and others;
- **Mrs. Coretta Scott King**, Co-leader for equity, justice and freedom, at the side of her martyred husband, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with their companion- civil rights leadership couple,
- **Mrs. Evelyn Gibson Lowery** and her husband, the Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, who, with Dr. King, co-founded the transformational Southern Christian Leadership Conference

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(SCLC), marched and led SCLC (both the men's and the women's branches), together in the front of countless "Marches' for Justice", across the country.

- **Marion Wright Edelman, Esq.**, founder and CEO of the Children's Defense Fund reminds us that "SERVICE is the rent which we pay, for living on this earth, " deeded to us by these and other iconic ancestors.

The template, for identifying leaders among African American women and for providing examples of success, power and influence, has gradually shifted, and the venues in which Black women excel, have changed and evolved. In the era in which many of the Black icons matured, gained prominence and rose to leadership, were often service- institutions and non-profit-type organizations. Often, they organized community-based institutions - or found opportunities for leadership in social service organizations. Today gender discrimination barriers remain- more pronounced for Black women than for most non-Black women, thus suggesting that those positions, institutions and environments in which Black women leaders **have** found opportunities and have thrived, offer examples that should be positively considered by younger women leaders, looking for access and opportunity today.

In my last book, Sound Bites of Protest, one chapter is devoted to the highest U.S. national political institutions, the chapter titled " Black Women Are Credible Presidential Candidates." Of course, some people, reading this today, might stage-whisper: "Our current examples in Washington, DC. - shouldn't be very hard to defeat in fair and open elections - especially if voters think more carefully about whom they elect to important public offices." And it's all about brains and preparation, not wealth!

Over the years, I have written - and spoken publicly - about one modern example of Black women's productive venues for powerful and successful performance - the political arena. In Sound Bites the analytical approach of the chapter mentioned above, views the United States Congress through the prism of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). The current CBC composition today (in 2017) reflects encouraging changes when compared with observations made in 2002, in the chapter in my book.

These "She-roes" almost always are called "the shoulders on which we all stand." They also are the strong, role-models who have inspired many contemporary Black women leaders, who today, have the difficult challenges, both of replicating these accomplishments and of advancing further toward the goals and changes which these icons have guided us in reaching, thus far. Modern African American women leaders, in exchange for our own inheritance from these icons, are charged with identifying, recruiting, and inspiring younger women for the service and leadership roles, going forward, in the interest of African American accomplishment and continued success and influence.

Black Women icons, many of them now in their shared state of permanent repose, have served those of us who remain on earth. But as new and less familiar national threats and obstacles challenge our families, communities and us as women, we must assure that we up-date our leadership examples. We must publicly and repeatedly, acknowledging additions to this expanding reservoir of talented, dynamic Black women who now are leaders in their own right and have added strength to our communities.

Changes in the dynamics of many urbanizing communities, present options not as accessible or available to many of our icons. These opportunities - and the outcomes for many Black women today, can be seen in subtle changes in, for example, public organizational service, institutional leadership and - believe it or not - in politics.



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One of the most visible venues in which Black women increasingly have become influential, have been in Federal, state and local government, elected, appointed or as volunteers.

The days of community organizations and small service organizations as incubators for successful African American women, are less frequent. Preparation of our leaders through neighborhood initiatives is more difficult and made more obsolete by social communications technology and the tools of instant messaging and transmission of "news".

Briefly, today in 2017, the 49 elected members of the CBC, are almost equally divided between: men: (28), and women (21). These numbers are not exact parity, but they improve on the ratio from 2002, when CBC totals were Men (21) and Women (14).

There was greater imbalanced but fewer in actual total African Americans in the House:

**2002:** (Total= 35 African Americans) ----- **2017:** (Total = 49 African Americans.

Of great interest also is that, in 2002, there were 0 (ZERO) African Americans in the United States Senate, while today, in 2017, three out of the 50 U.S. Senators are African Americans: female -Senator Kamala Harris, from the State of California, male – Senator Tim Scott, South Carolina; and male-Senator Corey Booker, from New Jersey. Also, the House of Representatives' statistics include among its 2002 count of "Black women", two Representatives from U.S. non-state units of government: Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton from the District of Columbia; (who still pushes for Statehood for her base) and The Honorable Donna Christian Christianson, who represented the Virgin Islands when analysis of Black women members in 2002. occurred. It must also be noted here that former Senator Carol Moseley Braun, the first Black woman ever elected to serve in the U.S Senate (1993-1999) also ran for the U.S. Presidency.

Finally, the core concern which has driven my thoughts and writing in this essay, as well as during the many years which the advancement of African American women has preoccupied my research, my commentary and my advocacy work, has been this: women - including Black women - can become anything they choose to become, provided that two conditions are met:

- 1) Opportunity and access - without unnatural barriers and deliberate obstacles blocking our natural and inevitable advances toward our successes; and,
- 2) All humans, including Black women, have to be able to imagine their possibilities.

We have to be able to have some idea, no matter how faint, of what it will be like to become what we envision becoming, or have seen.... somewhere, somehow, even if only in dreams.

The Icons, on whose shoulders we still stand, must now also include additional, more contemporary versions of successes, power and influence, with dignity. We must mention them, by name, "early and often," (to quote Dr. C. Delores Tucker's channeling of Mayor Richard Daley), ... when they are in our midst, and also, even more, when they are not.

Please! Visit the **Congressional Black Caucus's**-Web Site. Learn the names, preparation, accomplishments, and similar possibilities for others, especially Black women, of the CBC Congress women **and** men, and three African American Senators serving today. We also must require that our

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detractors and adversaries not falsely assume that, since some Black women's heroes and icons have passed on, the causes for which they advocated, championed, and suffered, are now left unattended, without the protectors, champions and guidance - through the sand-storms of time, .....like, NOW. They taught us a lot of what we know....and we have not forgotten those lessons. **We** are still here. Our ranks have not been decimated!

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Education (2010)