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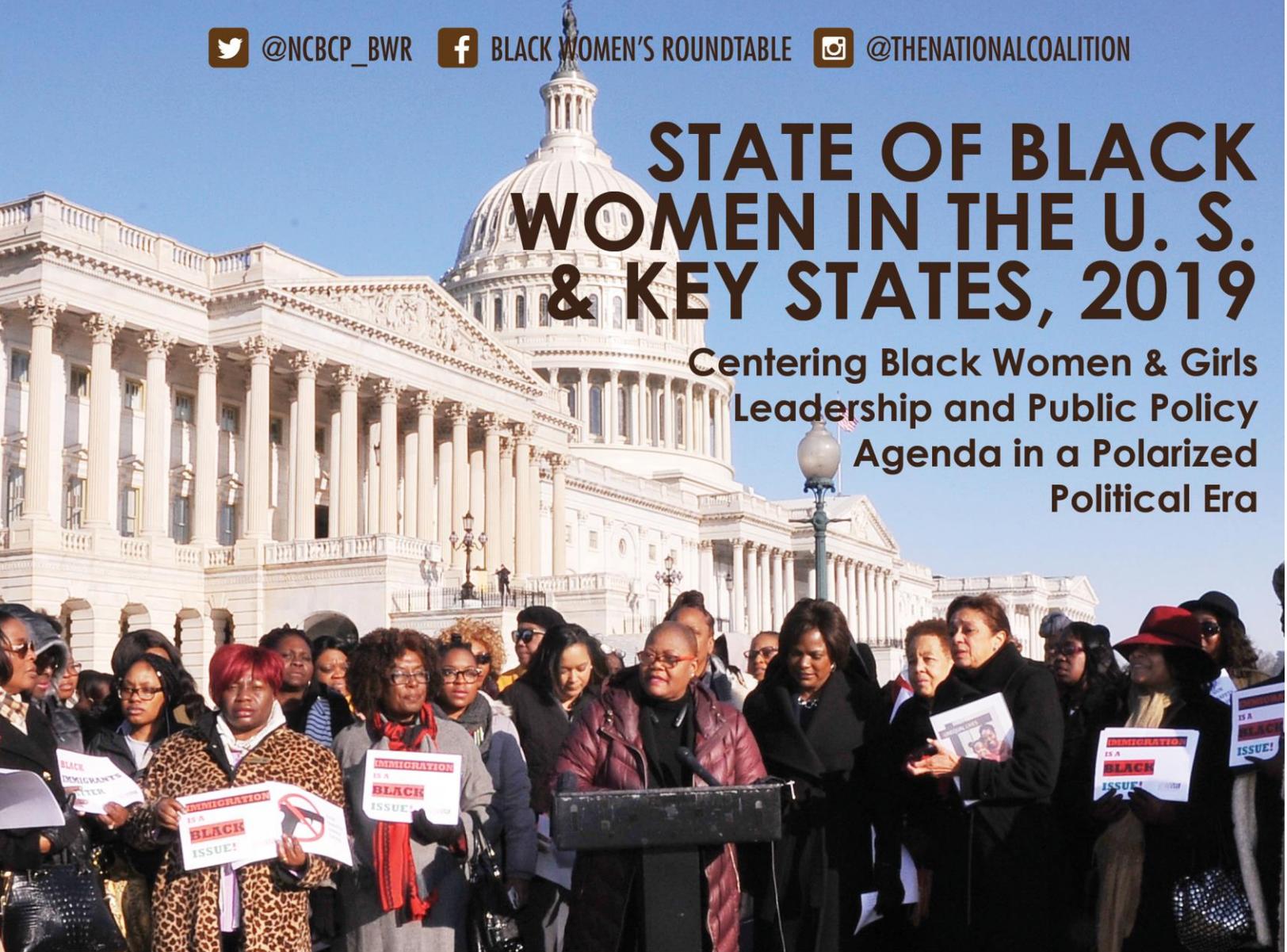
BLACK WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE



@THENATIONALCOALITION

STATE OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE U. S. & KEY STATES, 2019

Centering Black Women & Girls Leadership and Public Policy Agenda in a Polarized Political Era



BLACK WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE

A signature program of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

6TH ANNUAL REPORT

It's Our Time to Lead, Rise & Shine



A signature program of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Melanie L. Campbell

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

Avis A. Jones-DeWeever, Ph.D.

Editor-In-Chief, 2019 BWR Report
Senior Public Policy & Resource Development Advisor, Black Women's Roundtable
www.ncbcp.org
www.unitycampaign.org

Angela Angel, Esq.

Editing Assistant

Black Women in the United States, 2019

“Centering Black Women & Girls Leadership & Public Policy Agenda in a Polarized Era”

Executive Summary

Black Women in the United States, 2019, is the sixth in an annual series of reports released by the Black Women’s Roundtable, specifically developed to examine the overall conditions and concerns of Black women throughout the nation. This year’s report uncovers where Black women stand, juxtaposed between a historic electoral season which resulted in record-breaking political representation and the beginning of a high-stakes Presidential race that includes an exceedingly diverse slate of candidates, including the third Black woman ever to launch a Presidential bid. In many ways, this historic moment seems to be one in which Black women are asserting their power like never before. Yet, they still face substantial challenges related to a wide ranging of deeply entrenched issues that have seen little movement over the years. This year’s report takes a deep look at this dichotomy, and shares a multifaceted analysis of just where Black women are now, where we’ve been, and where we’re going. The following is a selection of key findings:

Black Women Make the Shift from Leading Voters to Political Power Brokers

- During the 2018 Mid-Term election, record numbers of black women ran for political office at all levels of government. Motivated by a negative political climate and a lack of candidates addressing their concerns and issues, and uplifted by other black women, hundreds of black women filed their candidacy for political office in 2018. The positions they sought ran the gamut from local commissioners to governors and U.S. Representatives.
- The first black woman was elected to Congress 50 years ago when Shirley Chisholm was elected from a Congressional district in Brooklyn, New York. Fifty years later, there are 25 black women serving in the 116th Congress. Five of the new black Congresswomen were elected to the U.S. House during the 2018 midterm election: Jahana Hayes (CT), a teacher; Lucy McBath (GA), a gun control advocate; Ilhan

Omar (MN), a state legislator; Ayanna Pressley (MA), a City Council Member; and Lauren Underwood (IL) a nurse. All are Democrats, and all, but one is 45 or younger.

- Unlike most of the first members of the Congressional Black Caucus, none represents a predominantly black district. Pressley’s district has the largest percentage of blacks in the population—26.7—and Underwood has the smallest percentage of blacks—2.9. Another difference between the new Members and many of their CBC colleagues is that except for Pressley, the new Members’ constituents are more likely to be suburban residents than urban dwellers.
- For the first time, a black woman ran a very credible race for governor, garnering 1,923,685 votes, 48.8 percent of the vote. Stacey Abrams came within 55,000 votes of winning in a state where her opponent, the Secretary of State, was accused of using tactics to suppress potential voters. Still, Abrams received 56 percent of the women’s vote and 63 percent of votes from young people (persons 18-29). Nevertheless, this race highlighted the continuing impact of race on elections in the United States. Only one-fourth of all white voters voted for Abrams compared to 88 percent of nonwhite people.
- Four African Americans won lieutenant governor’s races, but only one of the positions was won by a woman. Illinois elected its third woman lieutenant governor, Juliana Stratton (D), but she is the first African American to hold that position. She joined two other black women who were already serving as lieutenant governors in New Jersey--Sheila Oliver (D) and Kentucky--Jenean Hampton (R). Another big state level victory for Black women was the election of Letitia James, an African American woman, as Attorney General for the State of New York.
- One of the most exciting victories for black women during the 2018 electoral cycle was the election of 17 black women as judges in Harris County, Texas after a campaign labeled “Black Girl Magic.” The 17 joined two black women Harris County judges who lost races for the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, but retained their local judgeships.
- Currently, there are seven Black women mayors who over 7 of the 100 largest cities in America, and come April, the city of Chicago will be joining the list as two Black women advanced to a runoff election to become the next Mayor, only the second Black Mayor in the city’s history, and the first that will be a Black woman.

Why Black Women Vote and What They Want

- As part of its Unity'18 Campaign, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation conducted its 2018 Election Day Exit Poll of Black Women Voters. Over 1800 surveys were collected in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Michigan, and Mississippi.
- In the 2018 Midterms, the country experienced its highest voter turnout in 50 years. Four years prior, in the 2014 Midterms, it experienced the lowest in 72 years. In both years, Black voters showed up in proportions consistent to their population. We attribute this consistency to the strong sense of responsibility that Black voters have to voting, in particular Black women. In 2014, 2016, and 2018, more than 74% of Black women voters reported voting out of a sense of responsibility rather than to support a specific candidate.
- In 2018, Florida provided the first deviation from the responsibility motivation for Black women voters. In Florida, 43% of Black women indicated they came out to vote for a ballot initiative, 18% for a particular candidate and 38% out of a sense of responsibility. We attributed this shift in voter motivation to the tremendous effort of Amendment 4, which not only received more than 5 million votes, the highest of any other item on the Florida ballot, but it was also led by trusted Black leaders with deep roots in the Florida community.
- In our 2018 Exit Poll, we asked two questions to ascertain Black women's priorities, the first to rate the overall importance of an issue and the second to identify specific federal policies priorities for the President and the 116th Congress. Over seventy-percent (70%) of Black women surveyed rated the following issues as very important: Affordable Health Care; Criminal Justice/Policing Reform; Equal Rights and Equal Pay; Hate Crimes/Racism; Jobs/Employment; and Voting Rights.
- Black women made it clear that their top policy priorities were Protecting the Safety Net Programs (Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid) as well as access to Affordable Healthcare, as Fifty-percent (50%) of Black women surveyed identified protecting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security as their top policy

priority and one-third (33%) identified protecting Affordable Healthcare as their second highest policy priority.

- Protecting the safety net was important to Black women of all ages as Millennial and Gen Z Black women also valued these policies. Forty-nine percent (49%) of Millennial Black women (ages 25-34) identified Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security as their top policy priority; and thirty-two percent (32%) identified protecting Affordable Healthcare as their second highest policy priority. But Black women representing Gen Z (18 – 24 years old), prioritized Affordable Healthcare (51%) as their top policy priority, followed by protecting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security (31%) as their second highest policy priority.

Black Women Still Economically Fragile

- Black Women face a double economic barrier—the persistent devaluing of black women’s work that results in lower wages, economic instability, and expanding income inequality, and less overall wealth that limits their ability to strengthen and build their economic sustainability over the long term.
- In 2017, black women’s labor force participation rate was 60.3 percent compared to a little over 56 percent for white women, Asian American women, and Latinas, yet their work does not pay off in the same way.
- Black women working full-time, year-round workers earned only 61 cents for every dollar earned by white male workers compared to 77 cents for white women, 85 cents for Asian American women, and 53 cents for Latinas. This disparity can have lifetime effects — black women stand to lose an estimated \$946,120 over a 40-year career due to the wage gap.
- Black women are less likely than white women to occupy higher-level jobs, which tend to offer better benefits, greater mobility, and economic stability, and black women are more than twice as likely to work in lower paying service sector jobs than white women. In 2017, for example, 23.2% of black women workers worked in service occupations, compared to 11.6% of white women workers. Further, data suggest that these gaps for black women are growing – median weekly earnings in 2007 were 17 percent higher for white women than black women, but by 2017, median weekly earnings were 21 percent higher for white women than black women.

- More than 70 percent of black mothers are either the sole or primary breadwinners for their families, and another 14.7 percent are co-breadwinners in their families.
- Low-wage workers – many of whom are black women — are far less likely to have key employee benefits. As a result, Black women often have to spend more of their income to maintain their households. Black women with family caregiving responsibilities are estimated to spend as much as 41 percent of their annual income on caregiving-related expenses such as medical and travel expenses compared to white caregivers – male and female combined – who spend an estimated 14 percent of their income.
- Black women are disproportionately targeted by discriminatory behavior at work. Research examining sexual harassment claims filed with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission between 2012 and 2016, for example, found that black women were three times more likely to file sexual harassment claims than white, non-Hispanic women. Other research analyzing workplace discrimination claims indicate that many of the jobs where black women disproportionately work have higher rates of discrimination claim filings on issues such as pay discrimination and sexual harassment.
- Black women experience an enormous wealth gap when compared to white women. Tools often used for building wealth such as education, marriage and home ownership do little to reduce these stark disparities. In 2013, the median wealth for single black women without a bachelor’s degree was just \$500 compared to \$8,000 for white women without a bachelor’s degree. This gap persists even as black women experience educational gains. In fact, married black women with college degrees have less than half as much wealth as married white women *without* college degrees. Furthermore, data reveal that the wealth gap between similarly situated black and white women actually expands as they approach retirement age. Single black women in their 40s with college degrees have 24 percent of the wealth as their white counterparts (\$6,000 vs. \$25,000). But, by the time they reach 60, single black women have just 2 percent of the wealth of their white counterparts (\$11,000 vs \$384,000).
- To combat the wealth gap effectively, it is critical to address multiple factors that compound on one another. Increasing wages of black women is significant, but it

must be accompanied by access to better benefits. Black women must have access to quality and affordable healthcare to reduce unexpected costs. There also must be a new focus on strategies to address the overall lack of savings available to black women, from targeted efforts to increase participation in traditional 401(k) retirement vehicles and the stock market, to ensuring that black women have a fair opportunity to purchase homes, to developing alternative asset-building vehicles. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that government officials at all levels fully enforce anti-discrimination and consumer protection laws.

Increased Wages Essential for Lifting the Economic Well-Being of Black Women

- The Raise the Wage Act would gradually raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2024 and then index the wage to increases in the median wage to ensure that low wage workers will see the same rate of improvement in life as other middle - income workers. The Act also eliminates the tip minimum wage and gives full protection to workers with disabilities. Because of the low wages paid to Black women, relative to other workers, this Act disproportionately raises the wages of Black women.
- It's been estimated that 31.5% of Black women would get a raise from the Act, and another 9.5% would likely get a boost because they work at wages close to \$15 an hour and work among workers who will get a boost. As a result, roughly 40% of Black women would receive a wage increase if that bill became law.
- Almost half of Black workers live in states that have failed to raise their minimum wage above \$7.25, while over half of Americans are living in places where the minimum wage is already above \$7.25.

Black Women and Retirement Insecurity

- Economic fragility in working years, means a disproportionate reliance on Social Security among African Americans and particularly Black women. According to the Social Security Administration, in 2016, the average annual Social Security income received by Black women was \$13,426 as compared to \$14,994 received by Black men. And for unmarried Black seniors, a disproportionate number of whom are women, Social Security accounts for 90 percent or more of their income. As a result,

for Black women especially, Social Security remains an economic lifeline, and ultimately the last line of defense between just making it and complete destitution.

- It is likely because of the critical importance of Social Security along with the perceived threat to its existence at a time of skyrocketing deficits, that Black women indicated that protecting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security was their top policy priority for the 115th U.S. Congress in responding to the 2018 Black Women’s Roundtable/Essence Survey.

Black Maternal Mortality Remains Critical, But Change is Possible

- The United States is the only developed country where the maternal mortality rate has increased over the past two decades. When looking at black women specifically, maternal mortality is four times that of white women, and in some localities much worse. In New York City, for example, it is estimated that the rate of death during childbirth for black women is 12 times higher than their white counterparts.
- Black women “from all socio-economic backgrounds, experience higher rates of preterm births and infant mortality” than other women, suggesting that income is not the sole driving factor for poor infant health. For example, well-educated, high income, professional Black women have the same maternal mortality rates as white women who have less than an 8th grade education.
- The top complaint Black women have during and after childbirth is that their providers (MDs and nurses) didn’t listen to them when they tried repeatedly to tell them something was wrong.
- A key factor related to maternal mortality could be lack of proximity to medical care. A recent March of Dimes Study found that 5 million women live in counties considered “maternity care deserts,” with no hospital offering obstetric care and no obstetric providers. An additional [10 million](#) live in counties with limited access to maternity care.
- Other nations — and [California](#), an anomaly among the 50 states — have reversed pregnancy-related death trends. If they can do it, the rest of the nation can too. But to do so would require prioritizing studying the crisis and searching for solutions.

Discipline Disparities Plague Black Girls' K-12 Education

- According to the most recent federal data, Black girls' 12% suspension rate is much higher than girls of any other race and most boys; and research shows that dark girls are suspended and expelled more harshly than those with lighter skin.
- National statistics from U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, 2013-2014 Civil Right Data Collection show that: Black girls are 5.5 times more likely to be suspended from school as white girl; Black girls are more likely than any other race or gender to be suspended more than once; Schools are 3.5 times more likely to suspend Black girls with disabilities than white girls with disabilities
- Studies continue to show that teachers, administrators, and policymakers often overlook Black girls. Educators of all races and the students themselves often internalize negative stereotypes that impede effective ways to combat barriers.
- To help educators get past their own implicit biases and students' defenses, cultural competence training is recommended. To help students transition from defense mode to relationship building, self-awareness and cultural awareness, and an overall positive feeling about themselves is foundational for everything else.
- Mentorship also helps to disrupt the negative narrative many Black girls may be internalizing, by providing them access to the wisdom, experiences, and the survival skills of their elders.

Black Girls Too, Impacted by the School-to-Prison Pipeline

- Black girls and young Black women comprise just 14% of the general youth population, yet they comprise fully one third of girls and young women being detained and committed within the juvenile system.
- Data also suggest that 85% of the LGBT/gender-nonconforming girls in the juvenile justice system are girls of color, and that Black girls in this category are incarcerated at higher rates than white girls.

HBCUs are Rising, and So Are Black Women in Higher Education

- Today, Black women sit at the helm of roughly one-third of all HBCUs, as they serve as President of 31 of the nation's 105 Historically Black Colleges or Universities.
- The most recent federal data tracking college enrollment finds that as of Fall 2017, the nation's HBCU's have experienced a 2.1 percent increase from the previous year, after years of declining enrollment, while enrollments in all colleges and universities have continued their multi-year decline.
- Black women continue to lead Black male enrollment at HBCUs, as they do at colleges and universities overall, so much so, that this most recent enrollment gain at HBCUs can be fully attributed to the rise in Black women's representation on college campuses, as Black male enrollees have decreased during this same period
- According to research by Purdue University and Gallup, Black graduates of HBCUs tend to fair better in the post-college experiences than do Blacks who graduate from Predominately White Institutions, HBCU graduates were more likely to indicate that they outperformed their non-HBCU counterparts across a variety of indicators, including financial well-being (40% vs. 29%), social well-being (54% vs. 48%), physical well-being (33% vs. 28%), community well-being (42% vs. 38%) and living with a sense of purpose (51% vs. 43%). That said, as HBCUs rise, it stands to reason that so too will those who choose this path as their conduit to the college educational experience.
- Overall, Black women continue to excel in degree-attainment. During the 2016-17 academic year, Black women earned 67 percent of all associate's degrees earned by Blacks; 64 percent of all bachelor's degrees to earned by Blacks; 70 percent of all master's degrees earned by Blacks; 68 percent of all research doctorates awarded to Blacks and 65 percent of all professional practice doctorate degrees earned by Blacks.

Black Women Uniquely Vulnerable to Domestic Violence

- One of the leading causes of death for Black women aged 15-35 is domestic/intimate partner violence.ⁱ Although Black women comprise only 8% of the population, compared to 30% for white women, Black women are almost three times as likely to be killed as a result of domestic violence.ⁱⁱ Despite the prevalence of domestic violence in the lives of Black women, they are less likely to seek help and more likely to fight back.
- Where the relationship could be determined, 93% of Black women who were killed by men in single victim/single offender incidents knew their killers.
- More than 13 times as many Black women were murdered by a man they knew than were killed by a stranger.
- Of Black victims who knew their offenders, 58% of Black victims who knew their offenders were wives, common law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders.
- 91% of the homicides of Black females were intra-racial
- Domestic violence researchers surmise that Black women remain in volatile relationships longer than abused women of other races because Black women don't feel safe in the systems designated to help abuse victims, such as law enforcement or even women's shelters.
- From the police to jurors, the legal system is less likely to sympathize or even process the idea of Black female victims. A Black woman is 80% more likely to be convicted for killing her abuser

Immigration is a Black Issue

- It is estimated that at least 30% of the population in the United States who are eligible for DACA, are Black.
- There are 13 countries that had Temporary Protected Status at the beginning of 2017. Nine of those countries have lost this immigration status or have terminations pending, all at the hands of President Trump. Seven of these are Black majority countries; including around 70,000 people from Haiti, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia.
- According to a report issued by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), there was a 140% increase in removals of Africans in 2017.

Digital Discrimination Create a New Barrier for Black Women

- Companies are using algorithms to analyze data of perspective employees to determine more desirable hires. The algorithms would use past data to understand what will be successful in the future. These algorithms determined that females were promoted less frequently, tended to leave the job quickly and got fewer raises. It would then conclude that men are better hires, which perpetuating the historical gender bias of men as better employers.
- In many cases, Black women are the heads of their households and provide the sole household income. The effects of algorithmic discrimination in employment and housing can have long-ranging negative consequences on Black women and their families by crippling their ability to obtain the generational wealth that is achieved from higher-paying jobs that allow them increased opportunities for financial savings, investments and real estate acquisitions that could be passed along to current family members and future generations.
- Search engines and social media sites are not the only platforms where algorithms are used that discriminate against Black women. Financial institutions, insurance companies, education and the health care industry all use digital algorithms to determine the services, attention and care they provide to Black women.
- Algorithms used by big tech companies and other industries contribute to racial profiling and the systemic and institutional sexism, racism and discrimination that

marginalizes Black women and makes them vulnerable victims to these algorithms' ability to decrease opportunities for employment, housing, credit, education and health care—which harms the economic wealth and well-being of Black women, their families and communities.

Black Women Still Underrepresented, Underfunded in Tech & STEM

- Despite comprising 14.5% of the overall American private industry workforce, African Americans only account for 2.6% of Silicon Valley's labor pool. Contrast that to the fact that “in 2014 to 2015, black students earning a bachelor's degree in science, technology, engineering and mathematics accounted for 7.1 percent of graduates in those fields, according to the Department of Education.” Not to mention the countless others who graduated with degrees in marketing, law, communications, human resources, or other professions frequently dubbed “soft skills” that Silicon Valley companies also must fill.
- Across the country, Black women “comprise 4% of all female entrepreneurs running tech startups in the United States,” yet they are the nation's fastest-growing demographic of entrepreneurs. But in tech, they are the least likely to get funding from venture capitalists.
- According to a 2018 report by Project Diane, a biennial demographic study conducted by [Digital Undivided](#) on entrepreneurial trends among Black Women, “since 2009, Black women-led startups have raised \$289 Million in venture/angel funding, with a significant portion of that raised in 2017. This represents .0006% of the \$424.7 billion in total tech venture funding raised since 2009.”
- The number of Black women “who have received more than \$1 million in investment is growing, [but] the number is still small. In 2015, there were 12 black women who had raised more than \$1 million in funding...in 2017, there were 34.” The average raised by those who raised less than \$1million is only \$42,000, a 15% increase since 2016.

2019 Black Women's Roundtable

Organizing, Empowerment & Policy Priorities

By

Melanie L. Campbell

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

The Black Women's Roundtable (BWR) serves as the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation's leadership development, mentoring, intergenerational empowerment and power building arm for Black women and girls. The Black Women's Roundtable is at the forefront of championing just and equitable public policies that centers racial, economic and gender justice to promote health and wellness, economic security and prosperity, quality public education and global empowerment for and with Black women & girls in the South and key states including: AL, FL, GA, MI, MS, NC, OH, PA and the DC/MD/VA area.

In 2008, *BWR established its Intergenerational National Policy & Organizing Network*, a diverse group of Black women civic leaders representing international, national, regional, and state-based organizations and institutions to plan, strategize and implement its public policy, empowerment, power building and community engagement programs, campaigns and initiatives.

The 5th Annual BWR Report, ["Black Women in the U.S., & Key States 2018"](#) revealed that, "Black Women are Still the Foundation of Black Family Financial Power. For most Black women, work is not an option, it's a necessary precondition for survival for themselves and their families. As a result, some 70% of Black women are primary breadwinners for their family unit. This compares to only 24% of White women who are the critical lynchpin in their family's economic well-being. Even beyond primary breadwinning status, fully three-quarters (75%) of Black women who are breadwinners, are themselves the *sole* source of income for their families. Over half (55%) of all Black families with children are headed by a single mother. And among single mother-headed families, fully 46% live in poverty. In the face of over-representation in low-wage work, labor unions continue to be a key conduit to living wages and crucial benefits for Black women."

Further, "Black women are overrepresented in the public employee sector that is under attack, among those who are disabled, in poverty and in the criminal justice system. As immigrants, Black people and other people of color are disproportionately targeted for deportation and have a high level of difficulty entering the country in search of sanctuary."

To address the above challenges, The NCBCP's BWR will implement its *2019 BWR Racial, Economic & Gender Justice Empowerment Project* (BWR Justice Project '19) and expand its BWR state-based networks in CA, LA, MS and other states.

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 in this uncertain political climate.

Over the next 12 months, the BWR Justice '19 Project will:

- Focus on engaging the powerful intergenerational voices of Black women & girls to educate local, state and national leaders on importance of enacting public policies to improve economic opportunity, quality of employment and public education for black women, families and communities.
- Promote quality of life policies to secure health justice, affordable healthcare, raising minimum wage, protect Medicaid, Medicare & Social Security, reducing price of prescription drugs and other safety net federal and state-based policies.
- Promote the adoption of work/family and equity policies for women and working families to achieve economic security and prosperity now and for future generations including paid family leave, paid sick days, equal rights and equal pay.
- Develop national, state, local and state-based organizing campaigns and develop long-term strategies to win on our issues in key states in a racially polarized environment including criminal justice/policing, reform, hate crimes/racism, voting rights/protecting our democracy, immigration reform and more.

The Black Women's Roundtable will also launch its *SiSTAR Power Women's Empowerment Initiative* (BWR SiSTAR Power Project) in 2019 and will take to scale its women's economic empowerment and leadership development initiatives dedicated to empowering Black and underserved women to include: 1) SiSTAR Power - Take It To The TOP HBCU and Community College Women's Entrepreneurship Challenge; 2) Take it to the TOP Leaders Fellowship & Retreat; and 3) SiSTAR Power "Healthy, Wealthy, Wise" Online and Community Engagement Initiative.

The NCBCP will build upon its BWR *Power of the Sister Vote* Non-Partisan Campaign in 2019, to ensure the Black women's vote and leadership is respected and our issues are front and center in the 2020 Presidential Election Cycle. The BWR will also engage the 2020 presidential candidates by fielding its forth presidential candidates questionnaire

to find out what their vision is for the nation and share their presidential platforms. The questionnaire responses will be utilized to help to develop the 2020 BWR's Presidential Election Voter Guide to be released prior to the first presidential primary in November 2019.

2019 BWR Report Contributors

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

Avis Jones-DeWeever, *PhD, Senior Policy & Resource Development Advisor, BWR, Editor-In-Chief, 2019 BWR Report, President, Incite Unlimited, LLC, Board Member, NCBCP*

Ebony Baylor, *Director, Civic Engagement, National Urban League, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Lezli Baskerville, PhD, *President & CEO, NAFEO, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Clayola Brown, *President, A. Philip Randolph Institute, Board Member, NCBCP, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Felicia Davis, *Clayton County GA BWR, Board Member, NCBCP, Director, HBCU Green Fund, Convener,*

Linda Goler Blount, *President & CEO, Black Women's Health Imperative*

Jocelyn Frye, *Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress*

Holli Holliday, Esq., *Political & Data Senior Advisor, NCBCP, Chief Strategist, Holliday Advisors, LLC, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Carol Joyner, *Director, Labor Project for Working Families, Family Values @ Work, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Patrice S. Lawrence, *National Policy & Advisory Director, UndocuBlack Network*

L. Toni Lewis, MD, *Founder & President, Liberation Health Strategies, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Honorable Stephanie Moore, *Convener, Kalamazoo MI BWR, Mothers of Hope, County Commissioner, Kalamazoo County Commission, MI*

Barbara Perkins, *Co-Founder & President, International Black Women's Public Policy Institute, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Becky Pringle, *Vice President, National Education Association*

Tameka Ramsey, *Convener, Metro Detroit BWR, Owner, T. Ramsey & Associates*

Elsie Scott, PhD, *Interim President, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Secretary of the Board, NCBCP, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Rhonda Vonshay Sharpe, *President & Founder, Women's Institute for Science, Equity and Race*

Danyelle Solomon, *Vice President, Race & Ethnicity Policy, Center for American Progress*

Stacey Stewart, *President & CEO, March of Dimes*

Joycelyn Tate, J.D., *Technology Policy Senior Advisor, BWR, President & CEO, Tate Strategies, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Kristal High Taylor, *Founder, nFluence.us, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Jennifer Tucker, *Senior Public Policy Advisor, BWR, NCBCP, Member, BWR Public Policy Network*

Honorable Sheila Tyson, *Convener, AL BWR, ACBCP, County Commissioner, Jefferson County Commission, AL*

ⁱ Feminista Jones, *Why Black Women Struggle More with Domestic Violence*, <http://time.com/3313343/ray-rice-Black-women-domestic-violence/>

ⁱⁱ http://www.idvaac.org/media/publications/FactSheet.IDVAAC_AAPCFV-Community%20Insights.pdf;
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