BLACK WOMEN DID THAT
A Call to Invest in the Civic Health of Black Women in America

NCoC
National Conference on Citizenship
Connecting People. Strengthening Our Country.

BLACKGIRLSVOTE

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

BLACK GIRLS VOTE

Black Girls Vote (BGV) is a national, nonpartisan organization with an objective of engaging, educating, and empowering Black women, particularly those 18-25 years old, to activate their voice by utilizing their vote. It is our mission to inspire Black women to use the political process to improve the quality of life for their families and the collective community.

Our organization is committed to uplifting the Black community through education and inspiring Black women to understand the public policy decisions affecting their lives. BGV seeks to bring change through advocacy, outreach, and building our strength in numbers.

We have helped transform American democracy by:

- Authentically meeting voters where they are, successfully registering 20K individuals to vote

- Advocating locally and nationally for policy to advance Black women's health, education, economics, and voting rights

- Investing in the next generation of civic leaders through the expanding Collegiate Ambassador Program, with chapters at Morgan State University, American University, North Carolina A&T State University, and Howard University

- Cultivating a social media platform to inform and educate a followership of 30K

- Creating access and amplifying opportunity for the multitude of brilliant Black women and girls

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a congressionally chartered organization dedicated to strengthening civic life in America. We pursue our mission through a nationwide network of partners involved in a cutting-edge civic health initiative and our cross-sector conferences. At the core of our joint efforts is the belief that every person has the ability to help their community and country thrive.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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PREFACE

"Black women did that," said CNN political correspondent Abby Phillip on November 6th, 2020. After the historic 2020 election, Black women were widely recognized as champions of democracy: turning out and organizing massive numbers of people amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Their arduous labor did not solely increase turnout–it also reinvigorated the spirit of democracy in communities that policymakers and governing bodies often neglect. From the work of Stacey Abrams, Latosha Brown, Nse Ufot, and countless other organizers, Black women were overwhelmingly credited for their extraordinary and monumental efforts to engage, educate, and activate Black voters. Along with the recognition of Black women organizers, the nation elected our first Black and South Asian woman vice-president–cementing Black women's efforts to uphold American democracy in history.

This electoral development is not new–Black women have organized in America since earning the right to vote. Because of their civic strength, it is essential to further investigate Black women's civic engagement practices as well as policies intended to improve their material realities. The student debt crisis, wage discrimination, and high maternal mortality disproportionately impact Black women. Subsequently, supporting Black women must not end at the ballot box: instead, it must extend to changes in legislation across the country. As stated by Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley from Massachusetts, "policy is our love language".[1]

This report, *Black Women Did That: The Need to Invest in the Civic Health of Black Women in America* seeks to expand current discourse concerning Black women's civic participation. Additionally, it aspires to provide policy recommendations to improve educational, economic, and health outcomes for Black women. We based our report upon data originally collected from the U.S. Census Bureau, and analyzed by the National Conference on Citizenship. As we outline our findings, we strive to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors affecting the civic engagement of Black women–a group that lies at the intersection of both racial and gender-based discrimination within the nation.

Black Girls Vote is producing this report to underscore the role Black Women play in our civic life and to recommend policy changes to address Black women's unique needs. Our motivation for publishing these findings is rooted in our commitment to supporting Black women as they utilize their vote as their voice. We hope that this report further encourages those committed to community empowerment and social betterment to uplift Black women's civic efforts. As the 2020 election demonstrated, an investment in Black women's advancement leads to society's amelioration as a whole.

-Nyki Robinson, CEO and Founder of Black Girls Vote

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strong civic participation is key to facilitating democratic responsiveness and advocating for a more equitable society. While Black women have recently begun to receive recognition for their contributions to the democratic process, discourse is often limited exclusively to election cycles. Additionally, previous research and political discourse had examined civic participation by race or gender, but has failed to address the unique position of Black women in politics and civil society. Thus, this report uses various civic health metrics, including electoral and non-electoral civic participation, as well as policy analysis rooted in BGV's three policy pillars (educational improvement, economic development, and healthcare access). In doing this, the report highlights the degree to which Black women's political participation and efficacy can manifest. Our findings and analysis illuminate the importance of identifying the unique struggles of Black women in America through an intersectional lens.

Key findings include:

Black women have high voter registration and voting rates. However, they fall behind in non-electoral participation, such as providing campaign donations, attending school board meetings, or calling public officials.

Black women had the highest voting percentage in local elections in 2018 (56.4%), highlighting their commitment to making their voices heard at all governmental levels.

To a significant extent, Black women prioritize political knowledge acquisition and dissemination. 71.5% reported that they frequently read, watch, or listen to news about political, societal, or local issues.

Policy recommendations include:

Education
Implementing alternative disciplinary practices in schools, increasing research of the incidence and effects of disproportionate punitive discipline of Black girls, and investing in Black women's access to postsecondary education through federal funding.

Economic Development
Prioritizing Black businesses in the nation's economic recovery plan, undertaking a federal compensation audit of all private and public employers, and creating employment pipeline programs for Black women.

Healthcare
Improving the health of Black women by addressing disproportionate maternal mortality and breast cancer rates, expanding Medicaid access at the state and federal level, increasing data collection and research of Black women's experiences with health care systems, and addressing the social determinants of health.

As depicted through our findings and recommendations, Black women's unique maltreatment and experiences of inequity require tailored policy responses that improve outcomes for their community. Societal praise of Black women and their contributions to civil society is insufficient. Instead, Black women need systemic change that allows them to empower themselves through strong civic engagement and equal opportunity.

DATA ANALYSIS

Our research brings together survey data collected and disaggregated by the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), whose mission is to strengthen civic life in the United States. Both NCoC and BGV believe that Black women's civic health is vital to the nation's democracy, and requires better understanding through intersectional comparative analysis. Further, this report focuses on data synthesized by NCoC from the Current Population Survey, including data on civic and electoral engagement practices by race and gender. Nationally, the survey incorporated people across sex, household income, employment status, educational attainment, and geography. The survey received responses from the following racial groups: White (only), Black or African American (only), American Indian/Alaskan Native (only), Asian (only), Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (only), and more than one Race and National Origin (RNO) category.

Political and Civic Engagement

The data helps us understand how Black women actualize their political efficacy. In response to the question "Did you give money or possessions with a combined value of more than $25 to a political organization, party, or campaign?," 93.4% of Black or African American people answered "no". The racial group with the highest affirmative response were White respondents, with 9.4% responding "yes" relative to 90.6% answering "no". In terms of providing money or possessions with a combined value of more than $25 to a non-political organization, Black or African American people were the second-lowest group to respond "yes" (41.4%) yet the second-highest group to respond "no" (58.6%).
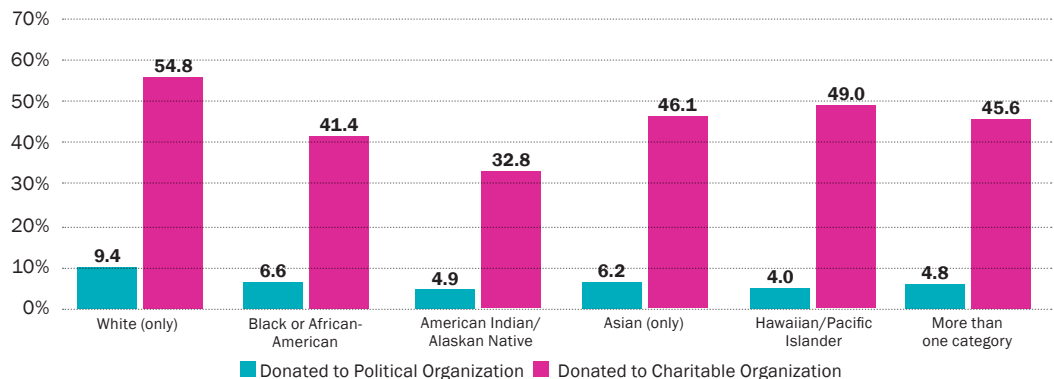
6.6%

of Black or African American people donated to a political organization

41.4%

of Black or African American people donated to a charitable organization

Chart 1. Donated $25 or More to a Political or Charitable Organization by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Donated to Political Organization	Donated to Charitable Organization
White (only)	9.4	54.8
Black or African-American	6.6	41.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	4.9	32.8
Asian (only)	6.2	46.1
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4.0	49.0
More than one category	4.8	45.6

Additionally, in response to the survey question, "Talk politics, societal or local issues with family or friends?" Black or African American respondents had the fourth-highest percentage of people who responded with "frequently" (38%). In response to the first survey inquiry, Black people may not have the same disposable income relative to their counterparts, specifically White persons in the United States. Consequently, they may not leverage political influence in the form of providing financial contributions to political organizations, parties, or campaigns. Pay disparities also exacerbate the inability of some Black women to contribute to political organizations or candidates. Similarly, in response to the second survey question results, Black or African American respondents demonstrate how matters of politics are reflected often on an intra-community level. Although conversations about societal issues and local politics are critical, determining Black people's political efficacy helps to determine if members of the group can act on these discourses.

Chart 2. Frequently Discuss Politics, Societal or Local Issues with Family or Friends

Legend: ■ Frequently ■ Infrequently ■ Not at all

Category	Frequently	Infrequently	Not at all
White (only)	39.7	39.2	27.4
Black or African-American	38.0	31.4	30.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	37.7	27.8	34.9
Asian (only)	32.7	31.7	35.6
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	31.5	36.1	32.4
More than one category	41.1	27.3	31.7
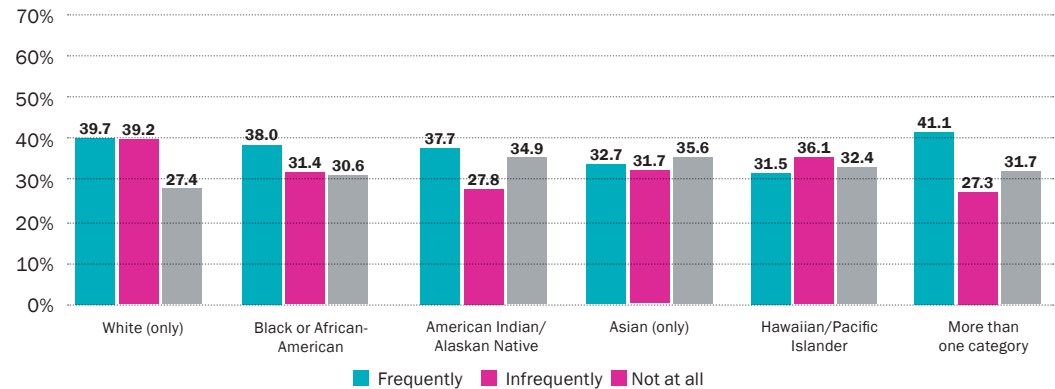
38.0% of Black or African American people frequently discuss politics, societal or local issues with family or friends

Although contemplating political efficacy by race or national origin is vital, significant insight stems from disaggregating data when considering race and gender simultaneously. Further, the NCoC disaggregated survey data concerning race and civic engagement for women only. This method allows for an intra-gender analysis between different racial groups—namely,

White (only), Black or African American (only), American Indian/Alaskan Native (only), Asian (only), Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (only), and more than one Race and National Origin (RNO) category.

Black or African American women had the second-highest percentage of respondents who answered "yes" in response to the question "Did you give money or possessions with a combined value of more than $25 to a political organization, party, or campaign?" (6.5%). Black or African American women, however, had the second-highest percentage of female respondents who responded "no" when asked if they gave money or possessions with a combined value of more than $25 to a non-political organization (56.4%).

6.5%

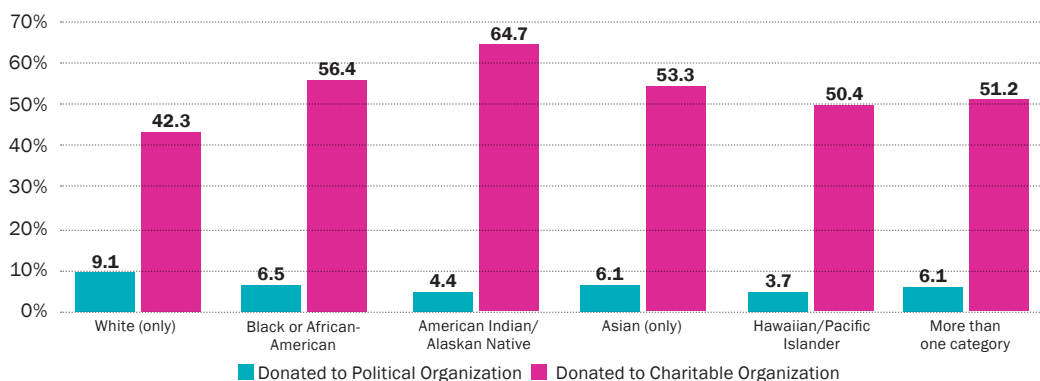*of Black women donated to a political organization*

56.4%

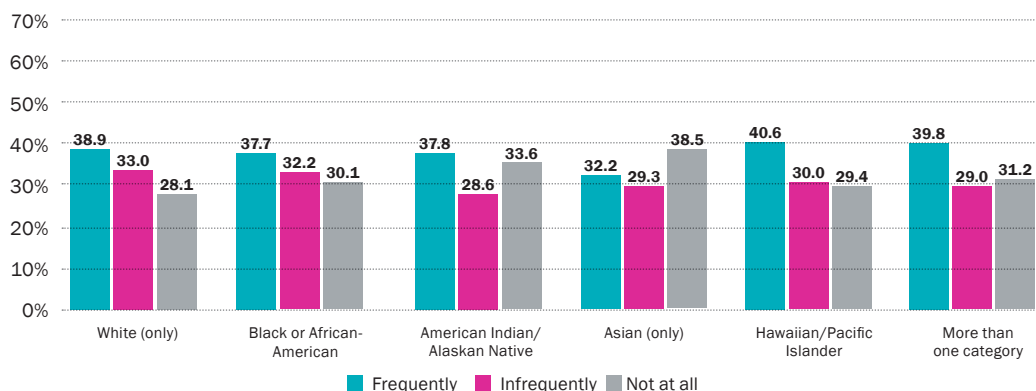*of Black women donated to a charitable organization*

37.7%

of Black women frequently discuss politics, societal or local issues with family or friends

Chart 4. (Women Only) Donated $25+ to a Political or Charitable Organization by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Donated to Political Organization	Donated to Charitable Organization
White (only)	9.1	42.3
Black or African-American	6.5	56.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	4.4	64.7
Asian (only)	6.1	53.3
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3.7	50.4
More than one category	6.1	51.2

In conjunction, Black or African American women held the second-lowest rates for "frequently" talking politics, societal or local issues with family or friends. Nevertheless, percentages were very close upon conducting an intra-gender comparison. Black or African American women (37.7%) were one-tenth percent behind American Indian/Alaskan Native women, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander women reported the highest percentage of 40.6%.

Chart 5. (Women Only) Frequently Discuss Politics, Societal or Local Issues with Family or Friends

Race/Ethnicity	Frequently	Infrequently	Not at all
White (only)	38.9	33.0	28.1
Black or African-American	37.7	32.2	30.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	37.8	28.6	33.6
Asian (only)	32.2	29.3	38.5
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	40.6	30.0	29.4
More than one category	39.8	29.0	31.2

As previous data illustrates, Black women could experience improvements in non-electoral acts of civic participation, yet still prioritize political knowledge acquisition and sharing to a moderate extent. Black or African American women sixteen years or older are one of the female racial groups with the highest amount of survey respondents who reported that they frequently read, watch, or listen to news about political, societal, or local issues (71.5%). This percentage rate is slightly higher than that recorded for Black or African American individuals sixteen years or older (71.2%). Nevertheless, it is significant to note that a combined 28.5% of Black female respondents reported infrequently reading, watching, or listening to news or information about political, societal, or local issues–or not engaging with news at all. Further research should consider the barriers that make politics inaccessible or dissuade these women from engaging.

For two survey questions, responses were lower than expected regarding those who affirmatively answered. When conducting a strictly-racial as well as intra-gender analysis through the lens of race or ethnicity, answers of "yes" to "Do something positive for neighborhood or the community?" were significantly lower than those who answered "no"–for all respondents. People may have replied "no," not realizing that they do engage in activities that provide community benefits without overtly being recognized as such. Similarly, digital activism has skyrocketed with the rise in recently recorded incidences of police brutality, racial profiling, and social injustice within the United States. In the context of this current study and future research, it is worth investigating if respondents engaged in more digital activism or political information sharing since the rise in national and local racial incidents.

Although non-voting political engagement survey questions revealed surprisingly low affirmative responses for all respondents, both Black male and female respondents had even lower non-voting civic engagement. For example, for the survey question "Did you attend a public meeting, such as a zoning or school board meeting to discuss a local issue?" only 9.7% of Black voters answered yes, lower than the average 10.7%. Black women had a slightly higher affirmative response, as 10.4% of Black women answered yes, although still lower than the average for all women respondents (11%). In response to the question, "Did you call or visit a public official at any level of government?" 8.2% of Black voters responded yes, lower than the average for all respondents (11.4%). 8.8% of Black women answered yes, also lower than the average for all respondents (11.5%).

**Table 1. Attended a Public Meeting by Race/Ethnicity & Women Only**

	Yes	Yes (Women Only)
White (only)	11.2%	11.4%
Black or African American (only)	9.7%	10.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	12.9%	14.0%
Asian (only)	6.0%	6.3%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (only)	9.6%	10.3%
More than one category	9.5%	10.4%

10.4%
of Black women attended a public meeting

Table 2. Contacted a Public Official by Race/Ethnicity & Women Only

	Yes	Yes (Women Only)
White (only)	12.5%	12.5%
Black or African American (only)	8.2%	8.8%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	9.6%	8.5%
Asian (only)	4.6%	4.6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (only)	6.7%	5.7%
More than one category	11.3%	11.7%

8.8%
of Black women contacted a public official
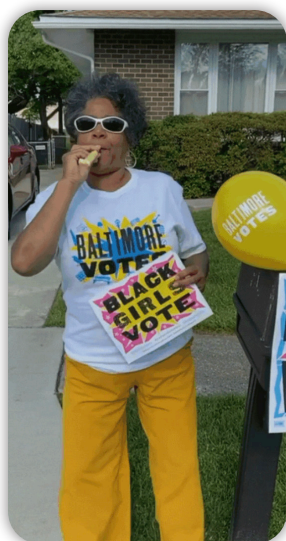
The low affirmative responses for these two questions highlight the inaccessibility to civic engagement beyond voting for Black women. For example, attending public meetings and calling representatives requires time that Black constituents may not have, despite the importance of making one's voice heard during decision-making processes rather than solely through voting. Black voters may also view civic engagement narrowly, although they may engage in activities that could broadly be defined as "civic engagement." Additionally, Black respondents had the second-lowest response to the survey question "Did you belong to any groups, organizations, or associations?" (19.2%). Black women were slightly more involved in groups and organizations, as 20.9% of Black women answered yes, although still notably lower than the 30.4% of White women who answered yes. This data highlights a substantial disparity, as collective action through groups, organizations, or associations is key to coalition-building efforts.
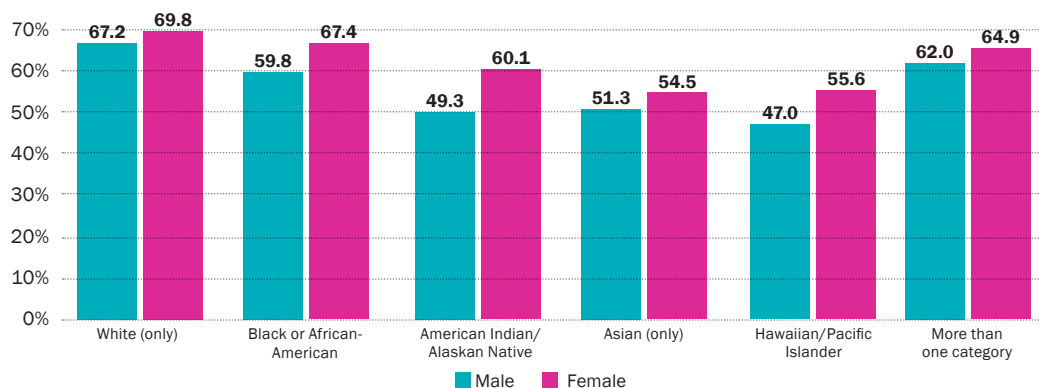
Voting and Registration

Along with civic engagement data, data was collected on the 2018 midterm election. 67.4% of Black women were registered to vote in the 2018 midterm election cycle, slightly lower the percentage for all female voters (68.5%), although higher than the average for all voters (66.9%). In comparison, 59.8% of Black men were registered to vote. The voting bloc with the highest registration percentage was White women at 69.8%. Black women had the second-highest turnout rate in the 2018 midterm elections, with 54.9% voting. These findings tell us that Black women are a high-turnout and highly registered voting bloc relative to other demographics. Although, there is minimal existing research on the voting trends of Black women.

67.4%
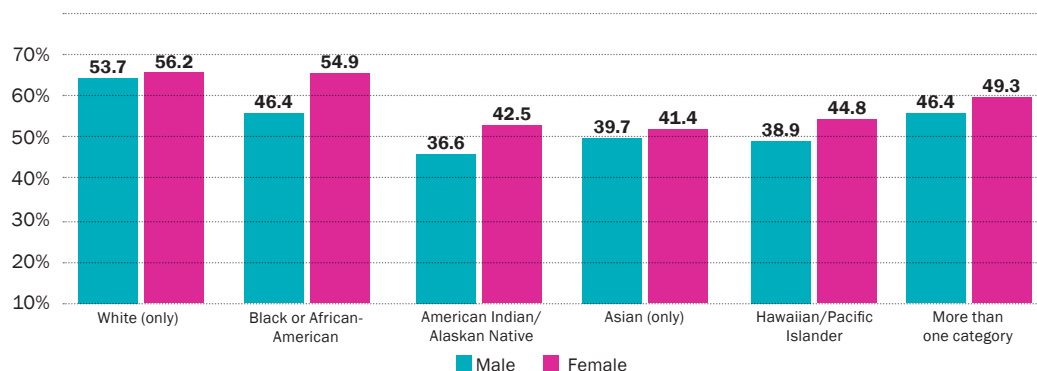of Black women registered to vote in the 2018 Midterm Election

Chart 5. Registered to Vote in the 2018 Midterm Election by Race and Gender

Race	Male	Female
White (only)	67.2	69.8
Black or African-American	59.8	67.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	49.3	60.1
Asian (only)	51.3	54.5
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	47.0	55.6
More than one category	62.0	64.9

54.9%
of Black women voted in the 2018 Midterm Election

Chart 6. Voting in the 2018 Midterm Election by Race and Gender

Race	Male	Female
White (only)	53.7	56.2
Black or African-American	46.4	54.9
American Indian/Alaskan Native	36.6	42.5
Asian (only)	39.7	41.4
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	38.9	44.8
More than one category	46.4	49.3

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and analysis of this report provide crucial insight into the civic participation of Black women and reaffirm that Black women represent a powerful, engaged, and influential voting bloc. From the data, we can hypothesize reasons for disparities between electoral and non-electoral participation, and strategize ways to mitigate disparities.

To expand our analysis beyond improving civic engagement, we now seek to measure the current relationship between the quantified civic health of Black women and ensuing policy implications. BGV is invested in bolstering Black women's full-participation within our nation's democracy and advocating for greater access to prosperity within their lives.

Thus, robust civic participation must generate policy tailored towards ending Black women's unique struggles. To highlight this connection between civic participation and policy outcomes, we have chosen to provide policy analyses and recommendations on three salient issues that impact Black women in America: education, economic advancement, and healthcare.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION #1
Education

Former President of South Africa and pivotal civil rights leader Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Black women, however, disproportionately face barriers to acquire an education difficult.

Scholars commonly cite the critical gains in high school and post-secondary graduation rates made by Black women–notably, relative to Black men. Black women, however, still lag behind many women of other racial groups. During the 2012-2013 school year, Black girls nationally had the lowest public high school average freshman graduation rate (AFGR) compared to White, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander female students.[2] One cannot consider comparatively low graduation rates without considering hyper-punitive paradigms employed within schools that are excessively imposed upon Black girls. In 2012, the percentage of Black female students that experienced suspension was more than the percentage of Hispanic, White, and Asian/Pacific Islander female students who had experienced the same disciplinary action (29% relative to 11.8, 9.4, and 7.9%, respectively).[3] Studies show that students who endure exclusionary forms of discipline, such as suspension or expulsion, are more likely to feel disconnected from school–increasing their chances of dropping out entirely.[4] Black women cannot begin to craft their bright futures if they are forced out of the classroom. Additionally, the lack of research examining the causal effects of punitive discipline of Black girls on educational matriculation, graduations rates, and overall life success hinders our ability to understand the full extent of the harmful effects.

In postsecondary education, the gains in education made by Black women from an intra-racial perspective cannot override the conversation around their lower graduation rates between genders. While Black women constituted 12.7% of the female population within the United States, only 8.5% of Black women of bachelor degrees earned nationally by women in 2012.[5] Guerra (2013) also found that the 24.1% college graduation rate of African American women (2004) has not proportionally increased relative to their White, Latina, and Asian American female counterparts.[6] Even more, respective to White women (30%), 21.4% of Black women had a college degree or higher.[7] Studies show that students with a higher education are more likely to be civically engaged.[8,9,10]

This documented positive correlation between civic engagement and higher education underscores that Black women, relative to other women of different racial groups, are excluded from opportunities to strengthen their civic participation–both in electoral and non-electoral capacities. Colleges and universities are often spaces wherein people formulate or fortify their political beliefs and practices.[11,12,13,14] Thus, it is problematic that these environments are still relatively inaccessible for Black women, who have much to gain from engaging with these institutions, largely due to disparities in pipelines to college.

Considering the aforementioned data, this report suggests the following policy recommendations:

- **Investing in Gender-Responsive Alternative Disciplinary Practices That Concurrently Account for Race; and**

- **Expanding Current Federal Scholarship and Grant Programs to Incentivize Black Women to Pursue Postsecondary Degrees.**

POLICY RECOMMENDATION #2
Economic Development

Graduating from a postsecondary institution, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, is lauded as an economic equalizer in the United States. While this idea is often touted, Black women who are full-time, year-round workers continue to make less than their White female peers (regardless of what postsecondary degree Black women obtained).[15] In conjunction, the gender wage gap discredits this belief when one considers race and ethnicity rather than gender solely. Full-time working women within the nation are paid 82 cents for every dollar earned by men–resulting in an annual loss of $10,194 in median earnings.[16] Nevertheless, disaggregating data by race and gender paints an intersectional picture of the gender wage gap within the United States. Notably, Black women often lose $941,000 over a 40-year career relative to White, non-Hispanic men. Dissimilar to their white female counterparts, Black women make 62 cents on the dollar to white men.[17,18]

Similarly, whereas women overall would have to work nine years longer than White, non-Hispanic men to close the lifetime wage gap across a 40-year career, Black women would have to work almost triple that time length (24.8 years) to close the lifetime wage gap.[19] Virtually, Black women's career earnings catch up to a man's career at age 60 when said Black women reach 84 years old.[20] This discrepancy intensifies when considering that Black women are more likely to hold lower-paying service jobs. The number of Black women who are "full-time minimum wage workers is higher than that of any other racial group".[21]

It is disdainful that Black women's lives, well into their retirement, are rife with economic inequity compared to White, non-Hispanic men and other women of different races. We cannot expect Black women to monetarily contribute to political and local organizations, movements, and candidates if a lack of wages excessively financially burdens them.

It is also critical to consider how current economic conditions precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic have further financially impacted Black women. The U.S. Department of Labor (2021) noted at the end of January, Black women's median weekly earnings "were $775, or 85% of those for White women ($912)[.]"[22] Black women's unemployment rate rose 11.6% from February 2020 to April 2020–the highest among Black and White men and women.[23] Therefore, an analysis considering both race and gender highlights how the lack of economic stability is detrimental to Black women. The same trends of financial struggle are unfortunately impacting Black-owned businesses as many struggle to stay afloat. On average, 8 out of 10 Black-owned companies fail within the first 18 months.[24]

During the pandemic, the obstacles of owning and operating a Black-owned business have worsened. Whereas White-owned businesses declined 17% between February and April 2020, Black-owned businesses declined by 41%.[25] While many large corporations and businesses have seen an increase in support following the tragic death of George Floyd and the expansion of racial injustice discourses, many small and minority businesses are still struggling. Black entrepreneurial endeavors should not only boom when public sentiment favors Black-owned businesses and products. Policymakers must institutionalize support of Black-owned companies so that Black entrepreneurship across the country is sustainable regardless of changing public opinion.

In turn, we propose the following policy recommendations to improve the financial standings of Black women within the United States:

- **Prioritizing Black Businesses in the Federal Government's Economic Recovery Efforts;**

- **Undertaking a Compensation Audit by Private and Public Employers; and**

- **Creating Employment Pipeline Programs for Black Women and greater Small Business Support for Black Women Entrepreneurs.**

POLICY RECOMMENDATION #3
Healthcare

Healthcare is a critical part of wellbeing and integral to maintaining a healthy society. Black women face measurable disparities in access to health care and experience lower quality care once they have access.[26] Economic insecurity, lack of access to affordable health care, inadequate housing quality, food insecurity, sexism, and racism all influence health and the likelihood of experiencing health problems.[27] These social determinants have compounding repercussions on Black women's health: they are more likely to be uninsured, face greater financial barriers to care, and are therefore less likely to access care (Women's Health Coverage 2018).[28] The next section will provide insight into Black women's health status through three key components: maternal health, health access, and data measures.

Black women are three to four times more likely to die a pregnancy-related death than White women.[29] This heightened risk of pregnancy-related death spans income and education levels.[30] Along with mortality, Black women also endure more health complications during pregnancy and birth than White women, such as postpartum hemorrhaging and preeclampsia.[31] Additionally, the physical weathering of Black women causes their bodies to age quicker than White women, indicating that addressing social determinants of health such as discrimination and stress are drivers of maternal health disparities.[32] Improving the quality of healthcare, from preconception through postpartum care, and addressing social determinants are critical levers for improving outcomes for Black women.

Along with disparities in maternal care, disparities in healthcare access negatively impact the health of low-income Black women.[33] They are more likely to be uninsured (20%) than White women.[34] Because Black women are more likely to identify as low-income, Medicaid, the joint state-federal program, provides insurance coverage for 17% of African American women. Further, Black women need access to healthcare that is of quality. The effects of poor quality care can be found in Black women's mortality rates due to breast cancer. While Black women and White women get breast cancer at similar rates, Black women are 40% more likely to die from the disease.[35] Racism and bias negatively impact Black women's quality of healthcare once they receive access, as some physicians may not prescribe the most effective, health- and life-conserving treatments to racial minorities. In addition to impaired access to quality health care, Black women also have disproportionate rates of disease, including heart disease and diabetes. Over half (57%) of African American women ages 45 to 64 are diagnosed with hypertension, twice the rate for same-aged White women (28%).[36] Increasing access to quality healthcare for Black women is integral for both preventing and managing ailments, thus improving the overall wellbeing of Black women.

A crucial step toward creating policy that improves the health of Black women is data collection. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Black medical community sounded alarms that race was absent from data regarding COVID-19 cases and deaths.[37] Consequently, researchers were likely masking excessive contraction and death rates among communities of color–primarily Black or African American communities. Subsequently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new guidance in June 2020, requiring all state and public health departments to report racial, ethnic, and other demographic data. This data allowed organizations to target efforts to improve COVID-19 outcomes in Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities, particularly in vaccine distribution efforts.[38] Given how the collection of ethnic data has been crucial in battling disparities in the COVID-19 pandemic, those collecting data must do so through an anti-racist lens. Medical research must align with social justice efforts to produce new research questions about medical racism and outcomes and ensure that all data collection is stratified by race and gender so that disparities are properly noted.

Considering the aforementioned data, we offer the following policies recommendations:

- **Address disproportionate maternal mortality rates by combating racial bias in healthcare, expanding postpartum care, and expanding access to doulas and midwives.**

- **Incentivize states to expand Medicaid access.**

- **Collect more data specifically on the health of Black women.**

- **Address the social determinants of health such as housing, poverty, education and transportation.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CONVERSATION

Black or African American women continue to show up for democracy within the United States–whether it be volunteering within their respective communities or voting in each and every election. They are the movers and shakers that remind those around them to prioritize collective betterment. Despite these values, policymakers set aside Black women's needs when formative legislative discourses occur. Incredible Black women like Shirley Chisolm, Former National Security Adviser Condolezza Rice, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, voting rights activist Stacey Abrams, and Vice President Kamala Harris are seen as political figures that have preserved democracy's sanctity. Nevertheless, community empowerment and political efficacy are practices that all Black women and girls should access. Achieving this requires investments in Black women's access to postsecondary institutions, just wages, and available medical care.

Therefore, this report's publication comes at such a pivotal moment globally, but especially within the United States. Anti-racist and anti-sexist dialogue often demand that Black women prioritize either their Blackness or womanness in key conversations. In reality, both of these marginalized identities converge to produce specific instances of discrimination across societal sectors. These unique instances of maltreatment and inequity require narrow policy responses as multifaceted as the women they intend to serve. In sum, societal praise of Black women and their contributions to civil society is not enough. Black women have needed and continue to need systemic change to empower themselves across different arenas. Black girls, like Ma'Khia Bryant, deserve to live lives filled with joy, growth, and opportunity. Subsequently, Black women and girls must be fully supported in their agency and collective voice. This is only possible when done through strategic policies and laws that empower them to be influential voters, devoted students, prudent business owners, involved consumers, and most importantly healthy Americans.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Unless otherwise noted, findings presented in this report are based on the National Conference on Citizenship's (NCoC) analysis of the U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) data. Any and all errors are NCoC's own. Volunteering and Civic Engagement estimates are from CPS September Volunteering/Civic Engagement Supplement from 2017 and voting estimates from 2018 November Voting and Registration Supplement.

Using a probability selected sample of about 150,000 occupied households, the CPS collects monthly data on employment and demographic characteristics of the nation. Depending on the CPS supplement, the single-year CPS sample size used for this report ranges from 225-52,651 (volunteering/civic engagement supplement) and 9,550-77,170 (voting supplement) residents from across the country. This sample is then weighted to representative population demographics for the district. Estimates for the volunteering and civic engagement indicators (e.g., volunteering, working with neighbors, making donations) are based on U.S. residents ages 16 and older. Voting and registration statistics are based on U.S. citizens who are 18 and older (eligible voters).

Because multiple sources of data with varying sample sizes are used, the report is not able to compute one margin of error for across all indicators. Any analysis that breaks down the sample into smaller groups (e.g., gender, race) will have smaller samples and therefore the margin of error will increase. It is also important that our margin of error estimates are approximate, as CPS sampling is highly complex and accurate estimation of error rates involves many parameters that are not publicly available.

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CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

State and Local Partnerships

NCoC began America's Civic Health Index in 2006 to measure the level of civic engagement and health of our democracy. In 2009, NCoC was incorporated into the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act and directed to expand this civic health assessment in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau.

NCoC now works with partners in more than 30 communities nationwide to use civic data to lead and inspire a public dialogue about the future of citizenship in America and to drive sustainable civic strategies.

STATES

Alabama
University of Alabama
David Mathews Center for Civic Life
Auburn University

Arizona
Center for the Future of Arizona

California
California Forward
Center for Civic Education
Center for Individual and
  Institutional Renewal
Davenport Institute

Colorado
Metropolitan State University of Denver
The Civic Canopy
Denver Metro Chamber Leadership
Campus Compact of Mountain West
History Colorado
Institute on Common Good

Connecticut
Everyday Democracy
Secretary of the State of Connecticut
DataHaven
Connecticut Humanities
Connecticut Campus Compact
The Fund for Greater Hartford
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
Wesleyan University

District of Columbia
ServeDC

Florida
Florida Joint Center for Citizenship
Bob Graham Center for Public Service
Lou Frey Institute of Politics
  and Government

Georgia
GeorgiaForward
Carl Vinson Institute of Government,
  The University of Georgia
Georgia Family Connection Partnership

Illinois
McCormick Foundation

Indiana
Indiana University Center on Representative
  Government
Indiana Bar Foundation
Indiana Supreme Court
Indiana University Northwest
IU Center for Civic Literacy

Kansas
Kansas Health Foundation

Kentucky
Commonwealth of Kentucky,
  Secretary of State's Office
Institute for Citizenship & Social
  Responsibility, Western Kentucky University
Kentucky Advocates for Civic Education
McConnell Center, University of Louisville

Maryland
Mannakee Circle Group
Center for Civic Education
Common Cause-Maryland
Maryland Civic Literacy Commission

Massachusetts
Harvard Institute of Politics

Michigan
Michigan Nonprofit Association
Michigan Campus Compact
Michigan Community Service Commission
Volunteer Centers of Michigan
Council of Michigan Foundations
Center for Study of Citizenship at Wayne
  State University

Minnesota
Center for Democracy and Citizenship

Missouri
Missouri State University
Park University
Saint Louis University
University of Missouri Kansas City

University of Missouri Saint Louis
Washington University

Nebraska
Nebraskans for Civic Reform

New Hampshire
Carsey School of Public Policy
Campus Compact of New Hampshire
University System of New Hampshire
New Hampshire College & University
  Council

New York
Siena College Research Institute
New York State Commission on National
  and Community Service

North Carolina
Institute for Emerging Issues

Ohio
Miami University Hamilton Center for
  Civic Engagement

Oklahoma
University of Central Oklahoma
Oklahoma Campus Compact

Pennsylvania
Center for Democratic Deliberation
  National Constitution Center

South Carolina
University of South Carolina Upstate

Texas
The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life,
  University of Texas at Austin

Virginia
Center for the Constitution at James
Madison's Montpelier
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

ISSUE SPECIFIC

Latinos Civic Health Index
Carnegie Corporation

Veterans Civic Health Index
Got Your 6

Millennials Civic Health Index
Mobilize.org
Harvard Institute of Politics
CIRCLE

Economic Health
Knight Foundation
Corporation for National & Community
  Service (CNCS)
CIRCLE

CITIES

Atlanta
Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

Chicago
McCormick Foundation

Kansas City & Saint Louis
Missouri State University
Park University
Saint Louis University
University of Missouri Kansas City

University of Missouri Saint Louis
Washington University

Miami
Florida Joint Center for Citizenship
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Miami Foundation

Pittsburgh
University of Pittsburgh
Carnegie Mellon University

Seattle
Seattle City Club
Boeing Company
Seattle Foundation

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