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BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT, INC. **SPECIAL EDITION**

DECEMBER 2020

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The Honorable Dr. Doris Sartor National President of Blacks In Government

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INSIDE:

MEMBERSHIP EDITION

MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER

Chris Mention, LLC PO Box 27040 Baltimore, MD 21230 |@chrismention

EDITORIAL

Editor: R. Chris Jones Phone: 347.618.8048 Email: chris.mention@icloud.com

ADVERTISING

Sales and Marketing: Marie Perry Phone: 240.535.1919 Email: buildadream2@gmail.

Account Manager: R. Chris Jones Phone: 347.618.8048 Email: chris.mention@icloud.com

SUBSCRIPTION

Circulation: Marie Perry Phone: 240.535.1919 Email: buildadream2@gmail.co

DESIGN

Creative Director: R. Chris Jones Graphic Designer: R. Chris Jones

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Chris Mention, LLC PO Box 27040 Baltimore, MD 21230 | @chrismention

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

BIG National Office 3005 Georgia Ave NW Washington, DC 20001 Phone: 202.667.3280 Emai: chris.mention@icloud.co Website: www.bignet.org

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Any future articles can be submitted to R. Chris Jones, chris.mention@icloud.com or Marie Perry, buildadream2@gmail.com no later than January 25, 2021 for future publications.

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT DESK

"WE ARE BIG!"

Welcome to the Special Edition Newsletter on Membership. Blacks In Government serves as an advocate of equal opportunity and professional development for Black government employees at the Local, State, and Federal levels and others dedicated to justice for all. We make this happen through our members. Our members are the foundation of BIG, and we are only successful through their implementation of the goals and objectives of Blacks In Government.

Our National Membership Committee develops and implements comprehensive membership activities directed to employees at all levels of government. The committee, chaired by Mrs. Monica Hedgspeth, ensures our membership activities project the philosophy, goals, and objectives of our organization.

This edition focuses on the outreach efforts of our National Committee. This newsletter recognizes our 2020 Sterling Award Winners, New Gold Plus, and New Life Members. It also contains frequently asked membership questions, and offers tools and tips for successful virtual meetings. The more we engage our members, the more active they will become. Thanks to the National Membership Chair for her efforts in assisting our chapters in recruiting and retaining members.

Visit: www.bignet.org

THE END



The Honorable Dr. Doris Sartor National President at Blacks In Government, INC

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#THINKBIG

Membership Edition

THANK YOU FOR GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER ENGAGING IN ADVOCACY, TRAINING, AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS.

BIG HAS BEEEN COMMITTED TO EQUITY, EXCELLENCE, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL EMPLOYEES FOR MORE THAN 42 YEARS.



From the National President's Desk

"WE ARE BIG"

Our National Membership Committee develops and implements comprehensive membership activities directed to employees at all levels of government.



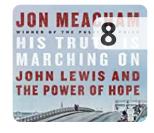
Greetings and Salutations Blacks In Government Family!

The Membership Connector.



Chapter Accomplishments

The Sterling Awards



Authors Row

"His Truth Is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope"



"Is Your Chapter Still Holding Chapter Meetings?"

Greetings and Salutations Blacks In Government Family!

Monica Hedgspeth National Membership Committee Chair at Blacks In Government, INC

We are super excited about this First Edition of "The Membership Connector" (that's what I would like to call it). Please send me an email and tell me what you think of this title.

This newsletter is where we can share and learn from each other. Although we can't physically be in each other's presence, we can still stay connected. I really missed seeing everyone at the 2020 NTI but we are and will remain a strong organization and we will survive these times together!!!!

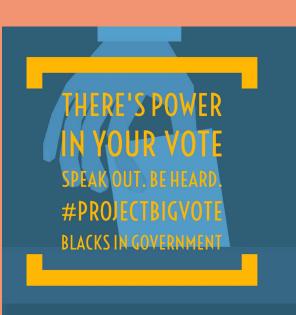
We have over 170 chapters located all over the country. With this Membership Connector, even in our virtual environment, we can become closer by sharing information. We can do this by highlighting, supporting, and championing our fellow chapters and members that are doing great things every day.

Also this is a place to share our concerns and challenges that will make us all better. And speaking of challenges, so we have a new membership database and yes can say we've had some challenges and we still have a few miles to go but I know if we work together there is nothing we can't work through to a positive end. I want to thank everyone for their patience and understanding as we work through these challenges, and just know that the Membership Committee is working hard to make sure that no one is disenfranchised from their benefits as a member. The Membership Committee will continue to respond to any questions or concerns you may have.

You can reach the membership team at membership.bignet.org or the National Membership Chair at membership.hedgspeth@gmail.com

Visit: www.bignet.org

THE END



MEMBERSHIP DESK

"We have over 170 chapters located all over the country."

CHAPTERS

Congratulations to the 2020 Sterling Award Winners!!!!!

SUBMITTED BY BIG STAFF MEMBER





CDC/ATSDR CHAPTER

When was the CDC/ATSDR Chapter established?

The CDC/ATSDR Chapter of Blacks In Government (BIG) was founded in June of 1988 and received its charter in 1989 in Washington, D.C., during the 10th Annual National Training Institute (NTI).

" Members can share the problems they are experiencing in the workplace"

What would you contribute to the success of your chapter and your membership retention?

We contribute our continuous family atmosphere as the primary reason for our chapter's success and membership retention. Everyone is treated like family, and the chapter ensures we are transparent in everything we do. Our slogan is "We are all in this together, no matter what!" and our members live up to it. We reach out to members when they have not renewed their membership. Our chapter consists of people who share the interests, concerns, and issues of our members. We solicit ideas and suggestions and implement these suggestions as voted on by the chapter members. Chapter leadership listens to the members, and that is key to retaining our membership.

Does the chapter have any "BIG Rock" initiatives?

The CDC/ATSDR "BIG rock" initiatives involve Weekly Prayer Calls, Resiliency Listening Sessions, and collaborations with the agency's OEEO, HRO, and other employee organizations. The chapter continuously provides opportunities and safe places where members can share the problems they are experiencing in the workplace. Also, we recommend they offer solutions to those problems or issues to bring them up to CDC Leadership. Several members of CDC Senior Leadership are and have been active chapter members for quite some time. Our members see that the chapter's leadership is doing everything they can to stand with them.

The members see that the chapter is active in various events. For example, the Resiliency Listening Sessions and Monthly



CHAPTERS

Orientation Meetings amid the stressful time of COVID-19 and racism were well attended and resulted in an increase in members. Membership sees how we give them the chance to speak and step up and take their place in the loop. Members want to be an involved in the fastmoving events that affect our world as government employees. Our organization can speak for them as they voice their views.

What encouragement or information would you like to share with other chapters?

We highly recommend that other chapters encourage their members to contribute to the chapter meetings, and accomplishments. Leadership should engage each member during all chapter activities. Potential members concerned about equity, excellence, and government opportunity should want to join your chapter.

Potential members see how active we are with our Lunch and Learns and events. The CDC announces chapter meetings and events with agency employees, members, and potential members. Communication is vital in displaying how the CDC/ATSDR chapter will continuously grow as a diverse and inclusive organization.



VA HDQTRS CHAPTER

When was the VA Chapter established?

The VA HQ (VAHQ) Chapter was established in 1979.

What would you contribute to the success of your chapter and your membership retention?

The contributing factors to the success of the chapter have been its focus on specific pillars:

Professional Development
Community Service and Outreach
Agency Involvement &
Communication
Membership Involvement

Membership has increased 5 to 10 percent each year for past three years. This growth is reflective of membership drives, activities, training, and engagement being open to the entire VA workforce. Additionally, continuous, and constant communication with current and potential members to encourage their involvement with upcoming chapter, regional and national events has been paramount.

Our biggest attraction for membership is Chapter's Professional Development courses. Our Chapter President has been in tune with employee's need for information. We provide a series of seminar ranging from Financial Retirement Preparation and TSP, Civility in the Workplace, Accountability and Your Career, Servant Leadership Principles to Lead Change and People, Developing Executive Core Qualifications, and many many more

Chapter Accomplishmeants continued on Page 16



"This growth is reflective of membership drives, activities, training, and engagement being open to the entire VA workforce "

AUTHORS ROW

His Truth Is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope

BY JON MEACHAM AND JOHN LEWIS

About the Author

Jon Meacham is a Pulitzer Prize–winning biographer. A contributing writer for The New York Times Book Review and a contributing editor of Time magazine, he is the author of the New York Times bestsellers The Hope of Glory, Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush, Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power, American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House, American Gospel, and Franklin and Winston. Meacham, who holds the Rogers Chair in the American Presidency at Vanderbilt University, lives in Nashville.

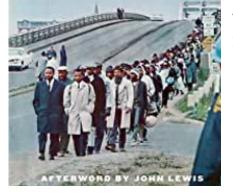
Editorial Reviews

"A valuable discussion of an extraordinary man who deserves our everlasting admiration and gratitude."—**The Washington Post**

"Meacham tells this story with his customary eloquence . . . a welcome reminder of the heroic sacrifices and remarkable achievements of those young radicals—20th-century America's greatest generation."—Eric Foner, The New York Times Book Review

"His Truth Is Marching On is well worth reading, especially for readers with an abiding interest in the intersection of religion and progressive politics

JON MEACHAM HIS TRUTH IS MARCHING ON JOHN LEWIS AND THE POWER OF HOPE



his voice calm but quaking with emotion. . . . Meacham takes the familiar story of the scars and bruises on John Lewis' body as literally an embodiment of the struggles of the civil rights era, and brings

alive with cinematic conviction the backstory of how specifically those blows came about."—**SF Chronicle**

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... an inspiring book that comes at a time when the world desperately needs inspiration."—**NPR**

"An elegant, moving portrait of a giant of post-1950 American history."—**Kirkus Reviews** "Meacham talks directly to the reader, his eyes burning,

"Embodiment of the struggles of the civil rights era,"

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Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. GEICO contracts with various membership entities and other organizations, but these entities do not underwrite the offered insurance products. Discount amount varies in some states. One group discount applicable per policy. Coverage is individual. In New York a premium reduction may be available. GEICO may not be involved in a formal relationship with each organization; however, you still may qualify for a special discount based on your membership, employment or affiliation with those organizations. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary, GEICO Gecko® image © 1999-2020. © 2020 GEICO. 20_252241

#THINKBIG

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION: HOW DO I JOIN BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION (BIG)?

ANSWER: You may obtain a membership application from the BIG website; http:// bignet.org/, under the Tab "Membership" there you will find the Membership packet with the application; you may complete that application and mail it to the National Office along with your payment amount. Also you may select the "Join online" tab at the top of the page and it will guide you to all the membership online tools.

QUESTION: HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO JOIN BIG?

ANSWER:

BIG has three main membership types: • Regular Membership \$35 annual membership

• Life Membership \$325 (you must be a regular member before you can become a Life member)

• Gold Plus \$250 (you must be a Life Member before you can become a Gold Plus member)

For additional information please access the membership packet on our website. http://bignet.org/

QUESTION: I AM A CURRENT MEMBER OF BIG HOW DO I ACCESS MY MEMBERSHIP PROFILE?

ANSWER: You may access your membership profile by going to the membership portal https://members. bignet.site/. Your user ID is your email address that is setup in your profile; we suggest using your personal email address. You then set up a password by selecting password reset on the log in screen. An email will be sent to you to follow the steps to setup your password.

QUESTION: WHEN DOES MY MEMBERSHIP EXPIRE?

ANSWER: BIG's Regular memberships are offered on a yearly anniversary based schedule, so your membership will expire one year and one day after the same day that you purchased your membership. Please make sure to access your membership record at least on a quarterly basis.

QUESTION: I HAVE HEARD PEOPLE SAY BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT NTI. WHAT EXACTLY IS THAT?

ANSWER: NTI stands for National Training Institute; years ago it used to be named "Conference" but BIG has evolved and offers a lot many more opportunities' " Your membership will expire one year and one day after"

Q&A continued on Page 18

IT'S ALL ABOUT Who you know.

Blacks in Government could save more with a special discount with GEICO!

GEICO, MEMBER DISCOUNT



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ORAL HEALTH PROMOTES OVERALL HEALTH

Keeping your teeth and gums clean is important to your overall health. Poor dental care can contribute to some diseases and can lower your body's resistance to infection.

Gum disease can also put you at a higher risk for heart attacks and strokes. Harmful bacteria can spread through your bloodstream and lead to the formation of blood clots. More than **75%** of Americans over age 35 have some form of gum disease and are at increased risk for heart disease.

Lower your risk for heart disease by taking good care of your teeth and gums:



Brush twice a day.

Brush your teeth and tongue in the morning and at night. Brushing gets rid of germs that can lead to bad breath and oral health problems.

(-)
\Box

Use mouthwash.

It reduces the amount of acid in your mouth and cleans hard-to-brush areas around the gums.

C	\smile

Floss daily.

It stimulates the gums, reduces plaque and removes tiny pieces of food stuck between your teeth.

~

Drink more water.

Drinking water after every meal helps wash out some of the negative effects of starchy and acidic foods and beverages.



See your dentist twice a year.

Your dentist can remove plaque, look for cavities and spot potential issues.



/company/gehahealth

Be mindful of sugary and acidic foods.

Sugar converts to acid in the mouth, which can erode tooth enamel and lead to cavities.

Sources:

"11 ways to keep your teeth healthy." Healthline Media, 13 November 2017.

(P)

"Oral health: Brush up on dental care basics." Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, Mayo Clinic, 3 May 2016.

"Caring for my teeth." DentalHealth.org, Oral Health Foundation, 2019. "Oral health: A window to your overall health." MayoClinic.org, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER),

1 November 2018.

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knowing you've planned ahead to protect it.

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FLTCIP20272

Is Your Chapter Still Holding Chapter Meetings?



Although we are in this "Social Distant" environment it is still so important that we stay in touch with each other and keep the business of the organization flowing. The good thing is that there are so many ways that we can do that and sometimes it almost feels like we are in the same room. Below are a few virtual meeting tools that you can use to have chapter meetings and even have social events. Also are a few tips and tool to make your meeting flow smoothly....See you on the screen!!!!!

Virtual Meeting Applications: Zoom - <u>http://zoom.us/</u>

Google Hangouts - <u>https://</u> hangouts.google.com/

Google Meet - <u>https://meet.google.</u> <u>com</u> GoToMeeting – <u>https://goto.com/</u> meeting

Tips to have a Great Virtual Meeting:

• Use the Video Option – We want to see faces when we communicate with each other it makes it a little more personal.

• **Dress for the meeting-** although is sooo comfortable to have a meeting in your pajamas. Let's keep it business and besides who know what you have on the bottom.

• Stage your video area – Keep in mind people aren't just seeing you they can clearly see the objects and items in the room you're broadcasting from. Maybe arrange it so the camera is not showing the mess the kids just made. • More Light is Better – Video quality is dramatically improved with more light and you definitely want to be seen now that you go through the trouble of putting on clothes.

• **Try to Look into the camera** – When your speaking try to look into the camera it give the appearance of eye contact.

• Do your own tech support before you start – this is crucial , do a test run especially if you have slide you want to show are want to log into a website during your meetings

Well that's it folks...best wishes on your meetings and see you on the BIG screen!!!!!

Visit www.bignet.org

THE END



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CHAPTERS

Chapter Accomplishmeants continued from Page 7

topics. It is important to find information to help employees develop and grow for the betterment of themselves, BIG, and the agency.

Our chapter members strive to ensure we support VA's simplified mission for caring for our veterans. Annually, we provide care packages for our homeless or disable veterans. We volunteer countless hours during annual VA Medical Center Winterhaven Stand-down events. We provide donations of resources, onsite support, and food to veterans and their families in need. We recognize our chapter members who have served not only for Veteran's Day but extending information career development, professional growth, and networking.

We've shown our footprint in the community, that members want to be a part of. We've shown immediate response to our VA medical workers and first responders by providing dozens of hand sanitizers, gloves, masks to continue medical support to patients during the COVID-19 outbreak. such as: Walk in American Heart Association campaign, AARP food preparation, food prep in DC Central Kitchen and Martha's Table, donated business attire to those returning to the workforce, participate in our agency VA2KWalk support healthy work/life balance, and much much more.

Does the chapter have any "BIG rock" initiatives that they are working on?

- Hosting quarterly "Real Talk" series with internal/external Senior Executive Service officials focusing on Executive Core Qualifications and professional development for federal employees.

- Participating in Quarterly Diversity and Inclusion Council Meetings with senior agency officials. - Hosting Agency Martin Luther King, Jr and Black History Month Programs for the last 4-6 years working in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. These programs have included participation from the Agency Top Leadership and/or designated representatives.

- We Give Back!! We adopted a local elementary school in DC Metro area. Annually, we provided school supplies, equipment as response to COVID-19, and other items for over 300 needy students.

What encouragement or information would you like to share with other chapters?

I would encourage chapters to continue reaching out to their members to find what interests them. Find ways to satisfy those interests and implement them. It's important to have a group membership committee.

Our Chapter Membership Coordinator Joy Muhammad is AMAZING. She is on it. She is finding employees desiring involvement. She helps them get signed up for BIG quickly, even gained some Lifetime memberships right away. Some people get turned away when navigating the online membership process, she is ready to assist. She helps navigate them through the process. Ms. Muhammad makes our membership more successful.

Empowering our chapter members to implement their ideas or show their talents goes a long way. Network to bring fresh information, people, and/or resources to chapter members is very effective.

Make membership with BIG sound exciting and worthwhile. Offer training courses to anyone in the agency and always close out with recruitment statement.

Become a Member of BIG.

"Focusing on Executive Core Qualifications and professional development for federal employees"

CHAPTERS



CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER

Chapter date established?

May 1997

What would you contribute to the success of your chapter and your membership retention?

The Central Florida BIG chapter has a vision that was established collectively by its leaders and members. Our chapter has an unwavering commitment, not only to educate about career opportunities in government, but to also ensure inclusion; growth and advocacy are afforded to all! We are also community partners, recognizing that our responsibility goes beyond our jobs but to support those in need and promote the general welfare of those we represent.

Any "BIG rock" initiatives?

Although the pandemic has impacted us all in so many ways, we didn't rest. We saw this challenge as an opportunity to serve those in need. We brought in a General Medicine physician to share with our team some of the stressors we are all facing but to provide hope. This was a hugely successful session for the membership. In addition to that, we have: • Provided COVID Outreach meals to 3 government agencies (May 2020) • Led a Voter registration campaign (July 2020) • Provided a Back to School Supply Giveaway to a local elementary school -(August 2020)

- Raised funds to feed a Women's shelter
- a Thanksgiving meal (November 2020)
- Nationally recognized with the 2020

Sterling Membership Award for growth in membership

What encouragement or information would you like to share with other chapters?

The landscape in which we operate has changed and so must we! I encourage you to innovate, find new ways to be active in your chapter as well as your community. You are still relevant and needed. Recruit, Retain and Recruit some more! The difference you can make today will leave a lasting impression on those you serve.

Don't stop thinking BIG!



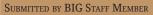
"We saw this challenge as an opportunity to serve those in need"

Visit: www.bignet.org

THE END



NATIONAL Why your membership matters to BIG?



BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT, was organized in 1975, and incorporated as a non-profit organization, under the District of Columbia jurisdiction in 1976. BIG was conceived at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (DHEW) Black Federal employees at the Parklawn Building in Rockville, Maryland. Initially, the umbrella organization would address only the problems at the Federal level. However, it was soon determined that state, county, and municipal Black employees faced the same employment problems. BIG consist of over 6,000 members throughout eleven regions.

BIG believe that Blacks in Government should be afforded the recourse to address adverse situations without fear of reprisal/retaliation, to empower and unite Blacks in all segment of government and to advocate for equal employment and general welfare of Blacks.

BIG's Goals and Objectives are centered on addressing systemic racism:

- Be an advocate of equal opportunity.
- Eliminate practices of racism and racial discrimination.
- Develop and promote programs to

enhance ethnic pride and educational opportunities.

- Establish a mechanism for the gathering and dissemination of information.
- Provide a nonpartisan platform on major issues of local, regional, and national significance affecting Blacks in government.

Some of BIG's National Initiatives and **Programs are:**

- BIG's NOW Generation focus programming for young professionals of BIG under the age of 40 looking to enhance their success and become leaders in the workplace.
- Darlene Young Leadership Academy a developmental program designed to develop future public service leaders through providing assessment, experiential learning and individual development activities and opportunities.
- Future Leaders in America's Government programs exposed pre-college students to careers in government and develop future leaders.
- National Training Institute provides training that will enlighten civil servants about the issues that affect the public they serve. The training supports professional development and self- improvement that can lead to career advancement and upward mobility.

"BIG's Goals and Objectives are centered on addressing systemic racism"



 Science, Technology, Engineering, Math Academy provides academic and social support to high school students, so they have the competencies to become successful STEM professionals.

• Training in Communications Academy is aimed at helping young people acquire the communication skills they need for success in the workplace and in life.



TOP TEN REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN BIG! BIG WORKS FOR YOU...

BIG is the only organization dedicated to the interests of the African American public servant.

BIG IS AN ADVOCATE

BIG speaks out on issues affecting the government workplace. BIG testified before the Congress on legislation reforming the EEO process, racial discrimination in government, and affirmative employment. BIG also spoke out on the disparate rate of discharge of African Americans from the federal service, the national performance review, and downsizing.

BIG had a public hearing on the assault against affirmative action.

BIG IS AN EMPLOYEE SUPPORT GROUP

If you have a problem on the job, our BIG chapter can be an excellent resource for help and counsel.

BIG IS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Every year BIG sponsors a national training institute which brings together national leaders and experts from around the country to address Black government workers.

BIG IS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Your BIG chapter can be a strong force in the community helping to fight such community problems as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, AIDS, illiteracy, and voter registration.

BIG IS NETWORKING

By becoming a member of BIG, you are becoming a part of an organization that includes workers from all levels of government and all areas of the public workforce.

BIG IS A CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We can accomplish together what you cannot do alone. With BIG you can work toward your goals with people with similar goals.

BIG KEEPS YOU INFORMED

BIG keeps you up to date with the latest developments affecting the African American government employee.

BIG RECOGNIZES YOUR

Frequently Asked Questions continued on Page 21

NATIONAL

"The umbrella organization would address only the problems at the Federal level."

#THINKBIG



Q&A

continued from Page 11

than just a regular conference. So it was soon decided to change the name to Training Institute. This is an annual event hosted by BIG in different parts of the country where we offer personal and professional development training opportunities.

QUESTION: ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON THE LOCATION OF THE CHAPTER I JOIN?

ANSWER: No, You may join any chapter you would like to join, however we do recommend joining a chapter that is physically accessible to you so that you can participate with in person chapter events and attend meetings.

QUESTION: HOW MANY CHAPTERS DOES BIG HAVE?

ANSWER: Currently BIG has approximately 170 chapters and is broken down into eleven (11) regions located in various states all over the country, included Puerto Rico and Hawaii. To see if there is a chapter in your state you can view a diagram of the locations on the BIG website; <u>http://</u> <u>bignet.org/</u>under the tab "Membership"

Visit www.bignet.org

THE END

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2020 NEW GOLD PLUS AND NEW LIFE MEMBERS!!"

NEW GOLD PLUS

At Large/Undecided

• Michael T Outen

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- Monica Dorsey
- Gloria A. Johnson
- Gloria J Hill

Region VI

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- Thomas Scott
- Faithy D. Wren
- Terri-Michelle Lewis
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- Region VII
- Kathy R. Rivers

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Phadrea Ponds

Region IX

- Ramika Lawson
- Lorraine Watkins
- Robin Braxton
- Barrett Y Wade

Region X

- Dr. Charles A. Horne
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Region XI

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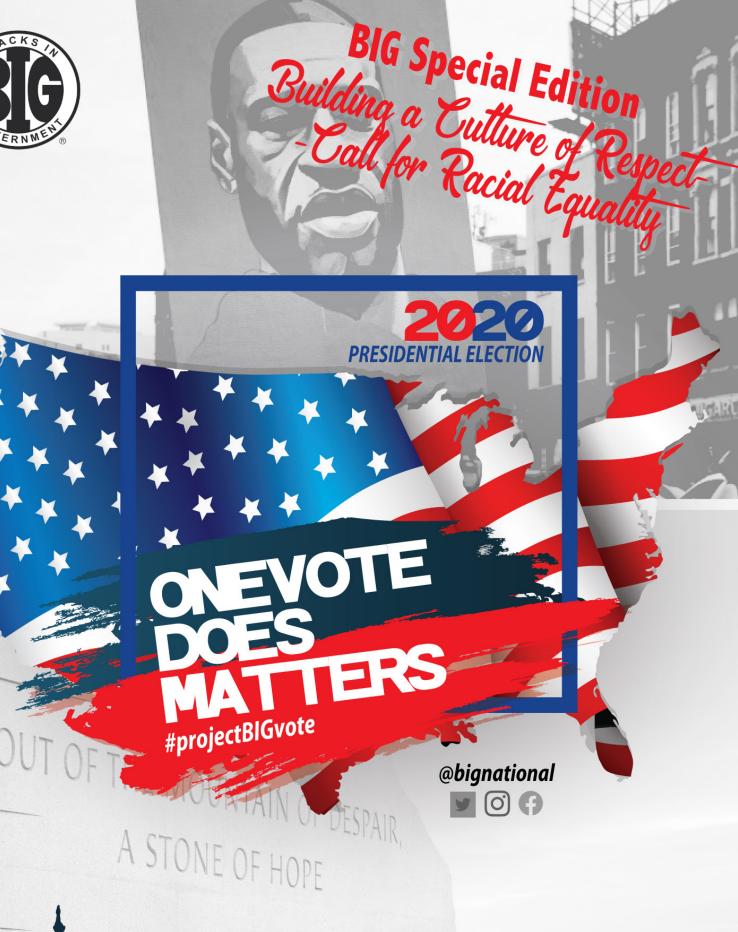
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