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Issue #SE1



BIG Special Edition *Building a Culture of Respect - Call for Racial Equality*

2020
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

**ONE VOTE
DOES
MATTERS**

#projectBIGvote

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JULY 2020

this issue

CALL TO ACTION

06

I CAN'T BREATHE

07

"CRIES OF THE UNARMED BLACK MAN."

16

"RISING ABOVE THE STORM"

20

BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT

3005 GEORGIA AVENUE, NW | WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001-3807 | (202) 667-3280 | WWW.BIGNET.ORG



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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.com

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

DESIGN

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

PRINT

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
Email: chris.mention@icloud.com
Website: www.bignet.org

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Welcome to our Special Edition Newsletter on “Building a Culture of Respect—Call for Racial Equality.” This publication was sparked by the death of Mr. George Floyd. This tragedy demonstrates our nations’ need to overcome racial injustice as a matter of grave urgency.

“You don’t fight racism with racism, the best way to fight racism is with solidarity. (Bobby Seale)”

Any future articles can be submitted to R. Chris Jones, chris.mention@icloud.com or Marie Perry, buildadream2@gmail.com no later than September 15, 2020 for future publications.

“SYSTEMIC RACISM—Where we are”

The Honorable Dr. Doris Sartor
NATIONAL PRESIDENT at BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT, INC



National Blacks In Government (BIG), Inc. prepared this Special Edition Newsletter on “Building a Culture of Respect--Call for Racial Equality” to address different perspectives of racism and inequality related to the various areas of social justice, health, legislation, military veterans, criminal justice, and other factors. BIG can look forward to future editions on this critical topic.

The recent and highly-publicized deaths of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Georgia, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, and countless others have left many of us feeling sad, angry, and deeply frustrated over these events. What happened to George Floyd exposed the systemic racism in our nation. Systemic racism is reflected in disparities in many forms; prosperities, regarding wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, health care, education, civil rights, police brutality, and education, among other factors. This is a historic time and, too important for us to remain silent.

National Blacks In Government’s Preamble and Goals and Objectives are centered around addressing systemic racism.

P R E A M B L E

We believe that Blacks in government should have the opportunity for full, complete and equitable access to jobs, education, advancement, housing and health services, and that they must

have recourse in adverse situations without discrimination because of race.

We further believe that Blacks should unite in order to obtain and secure the rights and privileges of full citizenship participation. It is necessary to develop a mechanism for inclusion, growth and power for all present and future Black employees in Federal, State and local governments.

Therefore, we, the members of Blacks In Government ® (BIG), in order to act as an advocate for the employment and general welfare of Blacks employed in Federal, State and local governments and to establish a national network of Black Federal, State and local government employees, do hereby establish this constitution for a national organization of Blacks in government.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To be an advocate of equal opportunity for Blacks in government.
2. To eliminate practices of racism and racial discrimination against Blacks in government.
3. To promote professionalism among Blacks in government.

SYSTEMIC RASICM
continued on Page 5

Special Edition

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

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



From the National President's Desk

"SYSTEMIC RACISM—Where we are"

Systemic racism is reflected in disparities in many forms; prosperities, regarding wealth, income, criminal justice

6



CALL TO ACTION | "Your Vote Matters"

Voting is a critical function of our democracy.



I CAN'T BREATHE

Thoughts and Perspectives from Former National President



"Cries of the unarmed Black Man."

I.Can't.Breathe. Those three words heard around the world have galvanized a new generation of protesters and activists



"RISING ABOVE THE STORM"

Unwarranted systematic attack on our Black Brothers and Sisters by Law Enforcement, the integrity of an unjust Criminal Justice System

SYSTEMIC RASICM
continued from Page 3

4. To develop and promote programs which will enhance ethnic pride and educational opportunities for Blacks in government.
5. To establish a mechanism for gathering and disseminating information for Blacks in government.
6. To provide a nonpartisan platform on major issues of local, regional and national significance that affect Blacks in government.

Blacks In Government went on record in support of the efforts being put forth to bring to justice all law enforcement individuals involved in the callous act of violence, to yet another African-American male. BIG is currently working through its National committees on moving forward with addressing critical issues reference the spotlight that has been shined on systemic racism since the tragic death of George Floyd. BIG is listening and we are taking action.

BIG has partnered with more than 16 Black national policy-making organizations who are part of a task force charged with developing a clarion statement on the need to reform the criminal justice system. The immediate need for this statement was made evident by the horrific murder of Mr. George Floyd. This task force will identify strategies to address all aspects of our health, economic, and social well-being. We have joined with these like-minded organizations to:

- Call for legislation to address

criminal justice reform to examine police accountability, community relations among law enforcement, and public safety concerns.

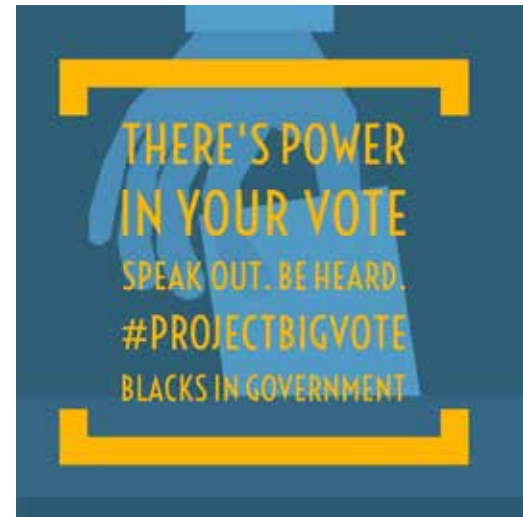
- Support our youth in the Black Lives Matter movement in their non-violent protests for the murder of George Floyd. In part, their demands call for an end to the criminalization, incarceration, and killing of our people.
- Use our collective vote to support those who will act on reform. We must elect government officials who are responsive to our demands, at the local, state, and national level.

These organizations include, but are not limited to:

- The World Conference of Mayors
- Historic Black Towns and Settlements Alliance, Inc.
- NAACP
- Southern Christian Leadership Foundation, Inc.
- One Hundred Black Men
- National Congress of Black Women
- National Black Leadership Commission on Health
- National Policy Alliance, just to name a few.

We must acknowledge that racism actually exists, get involved with organizations that are fighting it, and finally, elect government leaders and policy makers who are responsive to our needs, at the local, state, and national levels.

Our various National committees such as AE/EEO, Legislative, Health, NOW Generation are moving forward with **SYSTEMIC RASICM**
continued on Page 21



“ Racism is a refuge for the ignorant. It seeks to divide and to destroy. It is the enemy of freedom, and deserves to be met head-on and stamped out. (Pierre Berton)”

CALL TO ACTION | “Your Vote Matters.”

SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE TONI PEARSON,
CHAIR, PROJECT BIG VOTE



Voting is a critical function of our democracy. Many things in the federal, state, and local levels are decided by Voting and the resultant elected official pursuing their platform issues. It’s, therefore, surprising that many people stay away from the ballot; even though they could determine the future of their local community, state government and our federal government. No matter what side of the political divide you subscribe to, your voice via your Vote is important. The primary step to address the resultant lack of social and medical services delivery in our communities, COVID19 mortality imbalance and the unjust judicial system burden experienced by many in the Black and Brown communities is to Register and Vote.

Now is the time to Vote at the Local (school boards, city councils, local elected offices, etc.) State, (legislature representatives, top state offices, judges, etc.) and National elections (Congress, President whom all come with influential appointees) to affect the needed life experience changes.

Elections have consequences that effect us all. Now is the time to speak loudly and specifically claim what you expect/demand from “our” elected representatives that serve us. Assure all your family members, friends and acquaintances are Registered and Vote to enact the requisite changes necessary to guarantee the quality of life services

our communities need to not only survive but to exceed our existing expectations, and live the quality of life we have earned and deserve!

This is a rare opportunity in our lives where all age groups, ethnicities in the United States and around the Globe are showing up and showing out by expressing their common outrage to systemic racism exhibited by law enforcement, reflected in the lack of requisite quality medical services/ providers allowed by “our” elected officials. So many of our ancestors have paid the ultimate price for our ability to Vote, be counted and speak truth to power.

We can’t Vote if we don’t timely Register. If you don’t Vote, sit down and don’t complain.

Every states’ Election Center with voter registration requirements, guidance and process is posted on www.BIGnet.org under Project BIG Vote.

Our 2020 mantra now and must consistently be Register and Vote in Local, Statewide and National elections.

If not now, then when?
Project BIG Vote

Visit: www.bignet.org

THE END

“ So many of our ancestors have paid the ultimate price for our ability to Vote.”

I CAN'T BREATHE

Thoughts and Perspectives from Former National President

SUBMITTED BY THE HONORABLE J. DAVID REEVES,
FORMER NATIONAL PRESIDENT,
BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT



For the past two weeks, I have been consumed with delving into the history of African-American culture from as early as the arrival of the first slave ship to the shores of Virginia in 1619 to present day. I revisited books I've read in the past, watched numerous documentaries, viewed media broadcast and movies, etc. I found myself viewing segments of *Roots* and *Twelve Years a Slave*, *The Hate U Give*, *The Black Klansman* and other leading films on Black life. I reviewed video footage of the Civil Rights Movement, the March on Washington, Black lynching, and Blacks whose lives were ruined during the Macarthy Era.

I've explored the fields of politics, sports, theater, music, science and technology, literature and culture. And I found myself being totally consumed with these thoughts almost every waking moment. Eventually, my journey lead me to the recent murders of Black men and women at the hands of the police across this nation. I painfully revisited footage of George Floyd and Philando Castile, Eric Gardner and others. Tears which I could no longer contain rolled from my

eyes as I listened to their words and imagined it was me rather than them crying painfully, I can't breathe, I can't breathe". The pleas echoed like thunder from the skies, yet, it was as if those sworn to serve and protect us heard not a word. But They must have because as I observed life ooze from their weakening bodies until there was only silence.

Then quickly, my tears turned to rage, and for the first time, the words Black Lives Matter took on an entirely different meaning not only in my head, but more important in my heart. But as I pondered all that I had revisited and taken in over a 15 day period, I realized from 1619 to the present one clear thread reached out to me, more than any other—we are a people who more than anything else have endured great suffering. Yet we are still here.

Choose any time in American History: slavery, reconstruction, the Depression, the World Wars, the Civil

I CANT BREATHE
continued on Page 22

“Transformational
thinking requires
thinking BIG!”

#THINKBIG

About BIG!

SUBMITTED BY ALICE MERCER, AE/EEO CHAIR

Blacks In Government ® (BIG) was established in 1975 and incorporated in 1976 by a small group of Black employees at the Public Health Services, a division of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). The organization was viewed as essential to the Black civil service employee, based on several racially motivated problems faced by the HEW Black employees. 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 general employment problems. Since we were founded, we have responded to the need for Blacks in public service to organize around issues of mutual concern and use their collective strength to confront workplace and community issues.

Blacks In Government remains committed to our goals to promote EQUITY in all aspects of American life, EXCELLENCE in public service, and OPPORTUNITY for all Americans. We must continue to invest and support investment in American communities, based on need, rather than wealth; saving our communities involves us all and the health of our communities impacts us all. Blacks In Government continues our commitment to speak up where ever and whenever we see injustice; we cannot, nor will we, stay silent about things that matter; we recognize and know that the road towards change starts with listening, but does not end there. With persistence, courage and commitment, we pledge to implement actions to effect change. Freedom matters -- not only for some, but for all; our voices matter; and our actions matter. Most important, our God given rights to live and breathe matters. Blacks In Government continues our commitment to the future of race in our society; our children



are counting on us to secure a future where all humans are created equally.

Black Lives Matter just as much as other lives. We support and charge forth with a call for Racial Equality as we work towards building a Culture of Respect condemning the conditions that have led us to this moment; condemning the violence that has claimed Black and Brown lives; expressing our sorrow to the families and other loved ones forever and irrevocably marred by the senseless and premature end to countless lives -- whose names are known, unknown and yet to be known; and committing to continue our work to address institutionalized racism; and to promote EQUITY in all aspects of American life, EXCELLENCE in public service, and OPPORTUNITY for all Americans.

Blacks In Government calls for a movement that pushes this country further to the end goal of eradicating discrimination and racial inequality in all segments of our society and condemning the conditions that have led us to this moment. It is up to us to continue a legacy that our Founders entrusted to us; to be advocates of equal opportunity and to eliminate practices of racism and racial discrimination against Blacks in government and in all segments of society. We must do our part to make the world a better place for the next generation.

“Black Lives Matter just as much as other lives”

Our moment is now.

Visit www.bignet.org

THE END



How the 2020 Census will invite everyone to respond

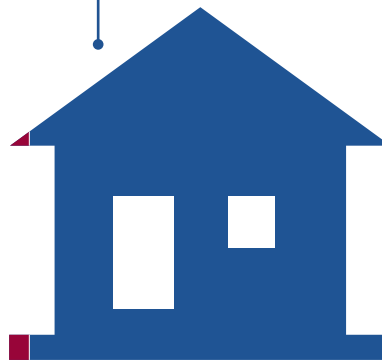
Nearly every household will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census either in the mail or from a census taker.

95% of households

will receive their census invitation in the mail.

Almost 5% of households →

will receive their census invitation when a census taker drops it off. In these areas, the majority of households may not receive mail at their home's physical location (like households that use PO boxes or areas recently affected by natural disasters).



Less than 1% of households

will be counted in person by a census taker, instead of being invited to respond on their own. We do this in very remote areas like parts of northern Maine, remote Alaska, and in select American Indian areas that ask to be counted in person.

Note: We have special procedures to count people who don't live in households, such as students living in dorms, people living in nursing homes, or people experiencing homelessness.

2020CENSUS.GOV

D-FS-GP-EN-135

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your future
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United States®
Census
2020



2020
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CDC/ATSDR Chapter Blacks In Government Host Inaugural Resiliency Listening Session

SUBMITTED BY

DR. DEBORAH A. McCLANAHAN -
BIG NATIONAL THIRD VICE PRESIDENT

As Coronavirus numbers continue to rise in the United States, so does police brutality, riots, protest, and a call for police reform! Amongst all, the African American population appear to be affected the most. As if things could not get any worse, the roar and outburst about systemic racism has been the topic amid celebrities, political figures, athletes, news networks, corporate America, within federal organizations, and other communities around this nation.

Every day, leaders and members of the CDC//ATSDR Chapter of Blacks In Government, located in Atlanta, GA, strive to serve as advocates for equal opportunity and provide professional development for Black government employees working within their federal agency and for their members working at the Local and State government sectors. Their goals and objectives are to promote EQUITY in all aspects of American life, EXCELLENCE in public service, and OPPORTUNITY for all Americans.

Following the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, leaders of the chapters



received an abundance of emails from CDC workers asking how would the local chapter respond to the employee's inquiries about systemic racism? The leaders responded with the development and

implementation of a program designed to provide a safe space to listen to stories from those who had experienced racism and or discrimination.

The chapter hosted a Resiliency Listening Session, the first of its kind! On Thursday, June 11, 2020, Dr. Deborah McClanahan, the chapter's Past President and current BIG National Third Vice President served as the Moderator for the 90-minute session. Chapter President, Danny Wade, invited members and non-members to call in to the Skype line to listen and or to share their stories about experienced racism. During the session, participants shared stories that they had experienced within and outside of the agency.

Their stories were filled with pain and emotions. Several non-African American leaders and managers joined the call and expressed their desire to join the race to break race barriers and to make a

“ Listen and or
to share their
stories about
experienced
racism”

#THINKBIG

difference within the workplace. For the first time in the chapter's history (1989), talking about systemic racism and discrimination in a safe space was provided for callers and the depth of their stories were impactful and hit to the core of many listeners.

Throughout the session, Dr. McClanahan played several clips from the fierce eulogy conducted by Rev. Al Sharpton during George Floyd's funeral services. One of the powerful clips revealed these commanding words, "George Floyd's story has been the story of black folks. Because ever since 401 years ago, the reason we could never be who we wanted and dreamed to be is you kept your knee on our neck. It's time for us to stand up in George's name and say, 'Get your knee off our necks!'"

Dr. McClanahan also read a script from Jane Fonda. Jane Fonda appeared on CNN to speak about the protests following the death of George Floyd and stated, "Because we're white, we have had privilege. Even the poorest of us have had privilege. We need to recognize that, and we have to understand what it is that keeps racism in place: the policies, redlining, banking policies, mortgage policies."

Participants who were too frail to speak during the discussion were able to type comments in the chat session. Others who opted not to speak but wanted their stories shared, sent emails to the Moderator and requested reading of their correspondence. Near the end of the listening session, participant Angela-Glaude-Hosch

(Visual Information Specialist), shared a written memoir of her own with the group that summarized the meaning of the entire 90-minute discussion. Since the Resiliency Listening Session, Angela has joined Blacks In Government, along with nine other CDC participants, including the agency Union President, NCIPC Director, a former FLAG student, and other agency leaders and employees.



The information received from the listening session that pertained to interagency racism will be discussed with the agency leaders during the quarterly held BIG & CDC Leadership meeting in July 2020. BIG will discuss key problems, recommend solutions and set benchmarks to close the gap on systemic racism resulting from real live stories shared. BIG will continue to monitor the benchmarks to ensure that the gap is lessening and emphasize that our nation's current state of affairs requires the attention of all leaders to champion social justice and end racial inequality.

Under the leadership of President Wade, the CDC/ATSDR chapter of Blacks In Government continue to

make major strides!

The chapter's Executive Committee meets quarterly with the agency CDC Chief Operating Officer (COO) and bi-monthly with the Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (OEEO). The agency leaders have exemplified true professionalism and supports BIG in working through issues discussed. Together, we are making a difference!

- 1 <https://time.com/5848624/george-floyd-memorial-minneapolis/>
2. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/tv/celebrity/jane-fonda-says-even-the-poorest-of-white-people-have-privilege-we-need-to-recognizethat/ar-BB14VPiN>

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Eliminating Health and Wellness Barriers

Submitted by Anita Neal Powell
Chair, National Health and Wellness Committee



“One must come to grips with their health and wellness as it relates to: age, race, environment and climate”

Blacks In Government call for a culture of respect and racial equity includes understanding the barriers for health and wellness, which exist between cultures regarding respecting each other’s identities and racial categories. In late January 2020, the country learned of and exposed to the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). A virus that has changed the lives of all people. To combat this deadly disease, one must come to grips with their health and wellness as it relates to: age, race, environment and climate in which they live, work or go to school and access to resources.

Center for Disease Control serves as the lead government agency to provide health and wellness information, resources, materials and research on the status of CORVID-19 by state, tribal, local and territorial. Conversations can start within the agency leadership across the country on respecting each other’s race equity, diversity, cultural bias, underserved communities, employee’s rights, mental health, and the impact of coronavirus with underlying health conditions,

especially within the African American community. To develop partnerships with national, state and local leadership, Congressional Black Caucus Health BrainTrust, Office of Minority Health, Census Bureau, employee organizations, community based and/or nonprofit organizations, businesses and faith-based communities to eliminate health and wellness barriers.

The partnership can engage in conversations and roundtable discussions at the National Training Institute, community forums, and study circles on working together to build a culture of respect and race equity from the diverse population of participating organizations. Participating organizations will provide feedback on how to identify and implement a strategic plan of action, sponsorships, time limits, disseminate information and reach out to targeted audiences.

Visit www.bignet.org

THE END

STAYING POSITIVE: Join The National Executive Vice President Pick Three (3) Challenge

SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE SHIRLEY A. JONES, ESQ.,
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT



NATIONAL

This is crazy! You don't need me to tell you we are living through unprecedented times. But, to stay sane through it all we have to lean on one another, albeit at a distance, and remain positive. To do that, I participate in a group text with a few friends and we communicate each day with both serious messages and fun stuff. So, despite the social distancing and stay at home orders, staying in touch with each remotely breaks up the cycle of work, eat, sleep, repeat, work, eat, sleep, repeat.

But, we are all results driven people, so there has to be more, right? And, to that end, I thought about what else I can do during this period of isolation. There's only so much house cleaning I can do and those home projects I wanted to get done require me allowing others in my home. So, I decided I would focus on three simple personal goals I always find an excuse to put off - water, walking, and crosswords puzzles.

First, drinking more water. I have always known the health benefits of drinking more water but I had so many good excuses not to. I couldn't drink water on the drive into work because what if I got stuck in traffic. Similarly, running

in and out of meetings during the day was my next excuse. Besides, I thought I needed caffeine more than just water. And, finally, if I drank too much water after work I figured it would disrupt my sleep. But, now all of those excuses are gone, and my first pick in this challenge is to drink more water throughout the day and I have been doing just that.

Second, for years I have had a treadmill here at home just collecting dust. I went from working out twice a day and playing in several softball leagues to all of that coming to a screeching halt as I climbed the career ladder. And, the ankle surgery in late 2016 definitely sealed the deal I would not run around those bases any more. But, no more excuses, the treadmill is clear for takeoff and I have been getting on it every day.

But, how do the crossword puzzles fit into these personal goals. Well, I used to love doing crossword puzzles and statistics show mind games keep you sharp as we age. But, who has the time? I actually always kept crossword puzzle books in my office so I could do them as I ate lunch at my desk but I never found the time. Well, now I do have more time on my hands so

I downloaded a crossword puzzle app. And, I have been having a ball doing them.

So, those are three ways I have broken up the monotony and to work on some personal goals during these trying times. And, I am asking you to do the same with my Pick 3 challenge where you select three simple yet important goals you can focus on while adhering to the social distancing guidelines. To hold each other accountable, reach out to me by email, text, Facebook or LinkedIn and let me know your 3 goals. Come on, you know how to find me and I would love to hear from you.

Visit www.bignet.org

THE END



Cries of the unarmed Black Man.

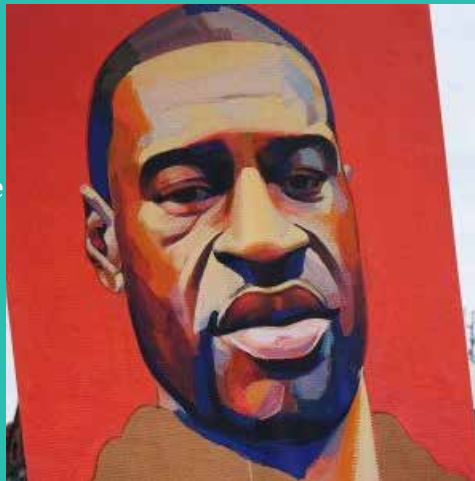
Stephan Matthews
NOW GENERATION COORDINATOR.

We all saw the video and heard the cries of the unarmed black man, George Floyd, screaming for his mother as he laid dying on the ground, with a police officer's knee on the back of his neck. I.Can't.Breathe. Those three words heard around the world have galvanized a new generation of protesters and activists, because we've had enough. We're tired of seeing our people dying on the streets. George Floyd was not the first unarmed black man to die at the hands of law enforcement but combined with COVID 19, stay at home orders, and social distancing, it was time to take a stand. Enough was enough.

Injustices have plagued the black community for hundreds of years. Now, a new generation is ready to step up and out in the forefronts in the shadows and footsteps of the greats like Martin Luther King, Jr., Congressman John Lewis, and countless others who sacrificed their lives to fight for civil rights and equality for black Americans. Their peaceful protests and marches were broken up by those who did not want to see equal rights for blacks in America.

Over 50 years later, it's as if history is repeating itself. However, Most important, remember that those peaceful marches and protests set the stage for real change in our Country, including the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Yet, there was so much work still to be done.

History has shown that protests indeed works to bring about real change in our Country. Protests also hold our elected officials accountable by putting pressure on them to ensure that they represent us and the issues that matter most to us. There is, however, more that can be done to see real change



in our Country. Poet Lindsay Young (@Lindss_tastic) summed it up best. She stated, "Resistance is not a one-lane highway. Maybe your lane is protesting. Maybe your lane is organizing. Maybe your lane is counseling. Maybe your lane is art, activism. Maybe your lane is surviving the day. Do not feel guilty for not occupying every lane. We need them all." So, as we protest injustices, let us also remember that we all play a role in this fight, no matter our background, our socio-economic status, or where we went to school.

So, where do we go from here? How do we use "our lane" to make real change in our Country? That's simple: Vote. Volunteer. Educate.

Educate yourself and those around you on the issues affecting marginalized communities. Also, discover where the need is in your community, and once you determine where the need is, volunteer. Find an organization in your community that's already working to correct those issues, and if one does not exist, start one. And finally, and most important, VOTE. Vote as if your life, my life, depended on it because it does. As former President Barack Obama once so eloquently stated, "Don't boo, vote." Voting ensures that we elect officials who will make sure our voices are heard in spaces, and at tables of power, we may not have an invite to join just yet. Let's vote not only in Presidential elections but also in our state and local elections. Voting ensures essential issues such as police reform and equal rights for all Americans are at the forefront of discussions and debates.

Cries of the...
continued to Page 18

Life and Herstory

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE VOTE

***INSIDE**

THEME:

**AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE VOTE
FEATURING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
LESSON PLANS**

PUBLISHED BY ASALH FOUNDERS OF
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

“This Is Why Your Vote Matters”

SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE SHIRLEY A. JONES, ESQ.,
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT



“There are black and brown women in Zoom meetings and conference calls maintaining professionalism, biting their tongues, holding back tears, and swallowing their rage, while they endure attacks from a pandemic AND police.” I found that quote compelling as it was shared last Friday afternoon by one colleague at my agency. Later that night and into the weekend as protests broke out, I found it telling there are some who can no longer swallow that rage and have taken to the streets in protest. Disparities in health care, in employment, in housing, and disparities in treatment by those who take an oath to protect and serve and by those who deputize themselves to make “citizens arrests”, the collective pots of our African American communities simply boileth over.

One D.C. brother interviewed during the protests pointing to his heart said “I got a lot of pain right in here and I just don’t know what to do about it.” Well, I say take that same passion you have today to the ballot box for your state and local elections. There is usually so much passion around Presidential elections but you rarely see that same passion around state and local elections. But, as we have

all seen during this pandemic and during these protests, our state and local leaders make a huge difference in our day to day lives. And, more important to this situation, it is our state and local leaders that allow the continuance of practices within local police departments that set the tone for what these officers did here both actively and complicity. We should not condone violence and looting, but those who nonviolently exercise their First Amendment Rights during these protests represent a pot that boileth over and a sentiment from the African American community and those who stand on the side of right that 21st Century policing should not look like Jim Crow policing.

I work for a nonpartisan agency and I volunteer for a nonpartisan non-profit, both of which are dedicated to accountability. The tenets of both stand for sharing the facts and letting the facts speak for themselves. Here, the facts show that recommendations from a 2015 report from the U.S. Department of Justice on Minneapolis policing were largely shelved rather than implemented. Here, the Minneapolis Police Department

This Is Why Your VOTE Matters
continued to Page 26

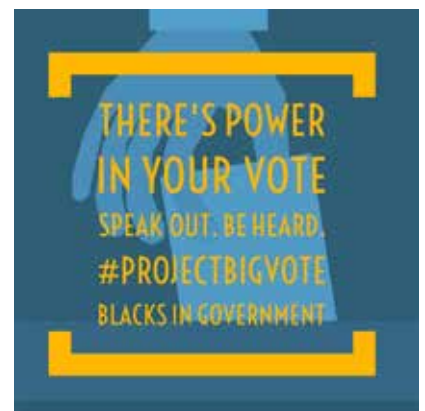
Cries of the...
continued from Page 16

So, to my fellow millennials, generation Z, and to the generations after that, let’s get to work, let’s remember the sacrifices of our ancestors and the generations that came before them, let’s continue to fight for the change we want to see, let’s continue to protest against injustices peacefully. Let’s continue to share our stories with others and educate them on what it’s like to be black in America. Let’s start those uncomfortable conversations with our peers about racial inequalities. Let’s volunteer and organize and help those most in need within our communities. As New York Times best-selling author, and the first black woman to become the gubernatorial nominee for a major party in the United States, Stacy Abrams stated, “Democracy only works when we work for it, when we fight for it. When we demand it.”

The fight against injustice is far from over. So, let’s roll up our sleeves and get to work!

Visit: www.bignet.org

THE END



Racism – Military Service and African American Veterans!

NATIONAL

“But to end systemic racism throughout our country, African Americans can't do that by themselves. It takes white Americans and the majority of America to help do that.”
(Retired Maj. Gen. Dana Pittard)

SUBMITTED BY MS. SHEILA STEVENS
MVEP OUTREACH COORDINATOR,
BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT

People of color have served in every war fought in and by the United States of America. What may surprise everyone; however, is when financial interests were threatened, people in power have always enforced policy changes. In the military, these changes relates to who could serve, or how they could serve. This country armed people of African descent when it was in their interest, such as to fight the Native Americans and the French. But as they enslaved more of them they became fearful of allowing them to be armed or possess any power “lest the slave overtake the master.” This mentality prevails today in society and the military.

African Americans experiences in the military has not varied significantly from the disparate treatment and segregation characteristic of American society. White supervisors and managers being promoted over better educated and qualified African Americans in the workforce is the same variation seen in the military. African Americans and non-white military personnel are promoted, but at a disproportionate rate as their white counterparts. Following the emancipation of black men, women and children in 1865, many people of color were killed by white mobs and former slave owners who were not willing to accept the end of slavery and racial subordination. This same has been instilled in white Americans

today. The lack of accepting people of color as their equal brings hatred into their hearts.

Military service was believed to be a means to racial equality for African Americans. However, from the Civil War to World War II most African American veterans were not welcomed home or honored for their service. African American veterans faced hatred and racism even during times of peace. Despite the terror exacted on African American veterans many were determined to fight for equal rights, contributing to the creation of many organizations started as part of the Civil Rights Movement. There is not a more deserving group of men and women who deserves equality, recognition and acknowledgment than the African American veteran - men and women who have risked their lives to defend this country's freedom only to have freedom denied because of the racism which continues to exist in the United States of America. Even in 2020, most African American desiring to serve in the military will find they have two wars to fight - one while serving in the military, the other when discharged and return home to the “Land of the Free”.

Today, the Department of Defense is under pressure from Congress to expose and correct its white supremacy problem. Although it is clear there is a problem, the department doesn't treat membership in white supremacist organizations as a sole rationale for discharge.

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#thinkBIG

THE END

“RISING ABOVE THE STORM”

Dr. Charles Horne
LEGISLATIVE REVIEW CHAIR
BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT, INC



The recent and highly-publicized deaths of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Georgia, and countless others have left many of us feeling sad, angry, and/or frustrated over these events. Each and every one is loved by their families and whose lives mattered; and are now lost forever to the violence fueled by racism, indifference, and white supremacy woven into the fabric of our nation.

Their deaths, like many others, serve as National tragedies that have left us fighting for justice. At the same time, we are at war with a novel virus—COVID-19, which is disproportionately affecting Black Americans (according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Blacks make up 22% of all COVID-19 even though they represent just 12.7 % of the population).

We are combatting the virus of COVID-19; the virus of injustice; the virus of prejudice; and the virus of inequity.” (End Quote Dr. Doris Sartor, President,

National Organization of Blacks in Government)

As a result of the unwarranted systematic attack on our Black Brothers and Sisters by Law Enforcement, the integrity of an unjust Criminal Justice System has been called into question.

To answer this clarion call, a series of crucial meetings of key operatives of leading organizations of “Color” were held to collaboratively develop strategies to confront and/or eliminate laws, negative policies, legislation and practices that result in the death of far too many People of Color, specifically our Black Brothers and Sisters.

These meetings, as hosted by the Honorable Johnny Ford, and key members representing the World Conference of Mayors (WCM) and Historic Black Towns and Settlements, established a Task Force charged with the duty to develop and implement an Action Plan to chart a course to further reform the Criminal Justice System.

As further quoted by Dr. Sartor,

”What happened to George Floyd exposed the systematic racism in our nation. Systemic racism is reflected in disparities regarding wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, health care, education, civil rights, law enforcement, prosecutorial and judicial misconduct.”

As a member of the Task Force representing our National Organization, I proudly stand in solidarity with more than 16 Black national policy-making organizations who are part of this august body.

Please join me, and our National President, in strengthening our resolve to address the issues of racial injustice across the full spectrum of the criminal justice system.

How long must we continue to allow this out of control system to dictate our well-being without being challenged or held accountable?

Rise Above The Storm
continued on Page 25

SYSTEMIC RASICM
continued from Page 5

addressing critical issues reference the spotlight that has been shined on systemic racism since the tragic death of George Floyd.

1. National AE/EEO Chair, is working with her committee, in continuing and enhancing our initiatives regarding our mandate to eliminate practices of racism and racial discrimination by conducting Train-the-Trainer training for members in all 11 regions:

A. Complaint Advisors are being trained to assist others through the different complaint processes to include but not limited to:

- Educating the membership/potential members on their rights and responsibilities in the different processes
- Explaining the importance of documentation
- helping articulate, organize and summarize concerns/allegations
- Provide assistance/review in drafting documentation
- Emotional aspect of complaint processing
- Avoiding entering the complaint processing conducting monthly webinars

•B. Agency Compliance and Review Teams are being trained to review and monitor affirmation employment and equal employment opportunity within their workplace to include but not limited to:

- Equipping team members with the skills, abilities and competencies to correctly monitor and review their

- workplace demographics
- Compiling/analyzing statistical analysis and provide feedback
- How to interpret affirmative employment and equal employment opportunity data
- Having a working knowledge of regulations and guidelines for the reporting requirement (MD-715, 462, MD-110, EEO1-4, etc.)
- How to conduct an agency visit at all levels of BIG
- How to articulate, organize and summarize concerns/allegations
- C. Racism and Disparate Treatment Forum – provide a comprehensive framework of redress from all vestiges of discrimination in the workplace, inclusive of Racism and Disparate Treatment Forums (R&DTF)
 - Allow members to discuss charges of adverse, disparate and inappropriate treatment toward them as minorities in the workplace
 - Provide documentary evidence of adverse impact and disparate treatment in the workplace
 - Allow BIG to work with agencies to develop strategies and plans to address issues and concerns of minority employees and
 - Provide preventive maintenance strategies and awareness against current public policy that may lead to discriminatory practices.
- D. Due to the postponement of the 2020 National Training

“Blacks should unite in order to obtain and secure the rights and privileges of full citizenship participation.”

SYSTEMIC RASICM
continued on Page 24

I CANT BREATHE

continued from Page 7

Rights Moment, and now our cry that Black Lives Matter, in every instance we have endured great suffering. Yes, there have been moments of accomplishment such as gaining citizenship, the right to vote, school integration, affirmative action, and others, but these all came after often the loss of many Black lives. And usually they came slowly. And no matter where we have turned we have been betrayed by all components of government, be it the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches. If this were not so, there would have never been a need for the establishment of an organization called Blacks In Government, nor would its continued existence remain so relevant, even to this day.

For this reason I have long believed that race is, and has always been the most divisive issue of this nation, Our preamble to our Constitution reads: “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal” yet there has never been much truth in these words. White privilege has from the very onset been so engrained within American culture it causes one to ponder if our forefathers could have honestly been that naïve. Perhaps without saying it they meant all “white men are created equal” for even at that time, women were still considered to be a lower class of citizen. Yet, for the first time in my lifetime I believe that the George Floyd murder has begun to open some eyes of white American, who have never understood or accurately conceptualized the true meaning of white privilege and have gotten a glimmer of its truth after witnessing the knee of a white police officer on the neck of George Floyd. It is for this reason, I believe that people of all ages, races and beliefs have taken to the streets across this nation, and the world at-large and now take no fear in

saying “Black Lives Matter”. Just a year ago, these words were shunned to almost a whisper, so much so even our own people, challenged the phrase publicly, denouncing them diluting the thought by echoing “All Lives Matter”. And while I would be the first to argue that all lives matter it was not “all lives” that have been consistently and repeatedly being taken needlessly at the hands of police across this nation. This country has not seen white America this outraged over civil injustice since they witnessed fire hoses and vicious dogs being unleashed on peaceful protestors during the 1960s Civil Rights Moment.

Yet this is just the tip of the iceberg. No one can deny that since our first arrival to America, Blacks have made substantial progress, but always at great costs to our people, as a whole. However, a closer look reveals that injustice continues to exist. It has just been cleverly disguised in more sophisticated ways. For example, according to the NAACP data on Racial Disparities, Black Americans still make up 34% of the American prison population, while making up less than 12% of the general population. African-Americans are five times more likely to be incarcerated for crimes, and serve longer sentences than their white counterparts. And combined, African-Americans and Hispanics made up 56% of all incarcerated citizens, based on 2015 data. The Department of Labor reports that 27.4% of Americans continue to live below the poverty line, yet 45.8% percent of young Black children under the age of 6 live in poverty, many at a level severe enough to place their lives at risk. But getting to the heart of my subject today, on average, of the approximate 3.2 million people living in America today approximately 1,000 are shot and fatally wounded by law enforcement each year. Disproportionally during the years of 2015-2019 approximately 90-100 deaths have occurred annually to Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement. Yet sadly

“And while I would be the first to argue that all lives matter it was not “all lives” that have been consistently and repeatedly being taken needlessly at the hands of police across this nation”



only 1% have resulted in criminal charges being filed against these officers so their injustice was never brought to trial. Such statistics suggest that it is impossible for any Black person in America to be unarmed when it is our blackness that they truly fear most.

It is for this reason, that I suggest following actions for your consideration:

1. The nation’s resistance to holding serious conversations on race must be dealt with. More than anything else, race continues to be the proverbial “elephant in the room” for almost every injustice that has occurred. I believe now may be the time when Black people can capture the empathy of particularly white Americans. While some will take no interest, we must more than ever place race on the agenda of every city, county, state or Federal legislature in America and force their eyes to witness the evils of racial injustice. And we must follow this agenda until the issue becomes not only comfortable for us to discuss but for white America. Ironically, Benjamin Franklin said “Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.”

2. We must continue to exercise our right to peaceful assembly and be as diligent as we were during the Civil Rights Era bringing with us the hands and hearts of people of all races and cultures to join us in this fight.

3. VOTE! Every election at every level is a necessity for our people. Voting remains the most critical weapon we have to bring about visible change. Ensure that those sensitive to our interest are placed in critical leadership positions at all levels of government.

4. PRAY! I still believe that God is the great arbiter of the Universe and while

there is still much to do, when I look closely my tears quickly vanish when I marvel at where God has brought us from since our arrival to America. The scriptures teach that the first will be last and the last will be first. God will make good on His promise. But this, if white Americans fear our blackness now, they should be thankful that all we desire is justice and equality, and not revenge. I dare not close without giving homage to the hundreds, perhaps thousands of lost lives to lynching, societal injustice and police brutality throughout our history, many of whose names have been lost to the pages of a silent history. Last, I ask that we all pause in a collective, individual moment of silence for those who have paid the ultimate price in establishing the Black Lives Matter movement. May their names forever be remembered.

- Trayvon Martin, Sanford, FL, February 2010
- Eric Gardner, New York, NY, July 2014
- Michael Brown, Ferguson, MO, August 2014
- Laquan McDonald, Chicago, IL, October 2014
- Tamira Rice, Cleveland, OH, November 2014
- Walter Scott, Charleston, SC, April 2015
- Freddie Gray, Baltimore, MD, April 2015
- Sandra Bland, Waller County, TX, July 2015
- Philando Castile, Minneapolis, MN, September 2016
- Botham Jean, Dallas, TX, September 2018
- Pamela Shanty Turner, Baytown, TX, May 2019
- Ahmaud Arbury, Brunswick, GA, February 2020
- George Floyd, Minneapolis, MN, May 2020
- Rayshard Brooks, Atlanta, GA, June 2020
- ...And countless others. May they all Rest In Peace.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES! Now let us all take a deep breath and BREATHE!

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THE END



“While some will take no interest, we must more than ever place race on the agenda of every city, county, state or Federal legislature in America”

SYSTEMIC RASISM continued from Page 5

Institute, the EEO Institute will be held virtually to increase awareness of discrimination complaint processes and policy issues. The workshops are centered on discrimination in the workplace and current issues, such as the following, but are not limited to:

- “Ask Office of Federal Operations (OFO),” on August 25, 2020; and Mr. Dexter Brooks will be the presenter
- The different avenues to address workplace disputes
- A roundtable discussion with

We must acknowledge that racism actually exists, get involved with organizations that are fighting it,

racism

3. Legislative Committee Chair is co-chairing Task Force dealing with systemic racism and educating members on needed legislation to address this issue.

4. We encourage our members to engage in actions that challenge bias and unfair practices, such as:

A. To take a personal stand against racism and racial discrimination, members can take the following actions:

- Speak to it. If you experience or observe discrimination or someone's rights being

enforcement agencies

- Mocking process
- Real life cases updates
- Keeping attendees abreast of most recent updates.

2. NOW Generation Coordinator, is conducting Town Hall Forums to provide open forums for those 40 and under and others to speak out on the current climate of our country to include discussions on systemic

violated say something

- Know your rights and responsibilities and share them with others
- Always seek to understand the other person's position

B. Writing letters to members of Congress and the Senate

- US Senate (www.senate.gov)
- US House of Representatives (www.house.gov)

C. Sign a petition, such as those found on the NAACP

(<https://naacp.org/campaigns/we-are-done-dying/>) and Change (www.change.org) websites.

D. Vote, both nationally and locally.

E. Communicate with your local and state government officials about how they can help end racism in the communities they represent.

F. Work to make the American dream of an inclusive society a goal for all of us, and not just for some.

5. We can actively work with our agencies to:

A. Provide a safe environment where employees can address discrimination, concerns, allegations, issues, etc., without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

- Hold individuals accountable for discriminatory act(s)
- Provide management/employee self-awareness training to address their individual bias (Why we do what we do)

B. Address the need to speak openly about race and impress the importance of diversity in hiring, training, promotions, and all human resource areas.

C. Hold leadership accountable for progress on diversity and inclusion progress. Are we creating opportunities or forums for employees to dialogue about pressing social concerns?

- Are we providing the tools and training to have crucial conversations?

- Are we listening to everyone’s voice?
- Do we have the right policies in place?
- Are we communicating with compassion and focusing on human connection with our team?

D. Create opportunities for self-reflection and development. We all have biases—conscious and unconscious. Provide exercises for self-evaluation and training programs (such as cultural competency, unconscious bias, and respectful workplace training) to help determine personal strengths and opportunities.

Resource:

<https://strategichrinc.com/systemic-racism-what-can-i-do-to-fight-it/#:~:text=Create%20ongoing%20feedback%20loops%20with%20customers%2C%20partnerships%2C%20and,beyond%20to%20bring%20an%20end%20to%20systemic%20racism> .

We call upon everyone to voice their concerns in a candid, respectful dialogue so our nation can move forward in addressing systemic racism in all forms.

We must renew our call to action as individuals, within our communities, and, as an advocacy organization.

As an organization, we stand together in giving voice to the underrepresented, promoting social justice, equity, excellence, and opportunity for all. We must push back the fear of raising our voices and challenge biased actions and unfair practices. Most of all, we can listen and educate ourselves and others. As Maya Angelou stated, “When we know better, we do better.”

As members of our respective communities, we learn and work best when we engage with those that do not look, think, or act like us. We must step outside our comfort zone and be open to learn from people different from us and not be afraid to ask questions about things when you don’t know something about someone else’s background. This is how we grow compassion and bridge gaps that could



otherwise be filled with unawareness, or worse, intolerance. Remember, for many in our communities, racism has always been a difficult topic of discussion. We must initiate these difficult conversations and strive to create an environment where diversity, tolerance, and acceptance of our differences are valued above all.

The AE/EEO Committee is working with agencies, regions, and chapters to develop collaborative working environments to assist agencies to achieve the Model EEO Program. We are working with enforcement agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Merit System Protection Board, Office of Special Counsel, Department of Labor, and Office of Personnel Management to address workplace conflict, racism, and racial discrimination.

It is our time, to act rather than react; to be agents of change, rather than complainers; to create rather than criticize; to be courageous in challenging situations; to exercise our right to vote; and to remain vigilant, and voiceful

SYSTEMIC RASICM
continued on Page 26

SYSTEMIC RASICM continued from Page 25

against social injustice, systemic racism, and discrimination.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

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THE END

This Is Why Your Vote Matter continued from Page 18

reported that Derek Chauvin, the sole police officer arrested for the death of George Floyd, had 18 prior complaints filed against him but only 2 were closed with discipline, letters of reprimand in his file. The Department reported that uncharged former officer Tou Thao had 6 complaints filed against him with one still open and 5 closed with no discipline. Here the facts show that disparate policing didn't stop with Minneapolis having its first Black Police Chief no more that racism ended with America having its first Black President. That's because it takes more than one person. It takes everyone who stands on the side of right, regardless of race, gender, age, or nationality, to say you are going to take it from the streets to the ballot box to elect leaders who will make the changes you desire. If your pot boileth over, make your vote count.

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THE END

Rise Above The Storm continued from Page 20

While it is true that we, as members of the Task Force, embrace and support peaceful and strategically planned protest, we do not condone acts of violence and destruction.

Now is the time to be resolute in our defiance against these forces of evil and destruction that have targeted our Black Population. Therefore, let us stand strong, and in the faith to boldly “Rise Above the Current Storm” of injustice and racial discrimination.

It is our quest that we, therefore, stand in support of H.R. 7120, “The George Floyd in Policing Act” as well as H.B. Title 3. “Justice in Policing Act” inclusive of “Chokeholds as a Civil Rights Violation.” This bill is currently being held up in the Senate. Further review of the Proposed Legislation to defund the Police is deemed bad legislation on its face and should not be supported by BIG.

The Senate introduced legislation titled, “Just and Unifying Solutions to Invigorate Communities Every Where Act 2020.” I view this piece of Legislation as a further affront to Black Communities and further provides incentives to carry on unjust activities under the guise of law enforcement. Additional reform Legislation being introduced by the Senate deserves careful scrutiny as it is designed to protect Law Enforcement vis a vis “Qualified Immunity.”

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THE END



We must acknowledge that racism actually exists, get involved with organizations that are fighting it,

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on Social Media
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“Passing of Congressman John Lewis and Rev. Dr. C. T. Vivian”

Mr. Calvin Stevens,
 REGION IV COUNCIL PRESIDENT



The National Organization of Blacks In Government, Inc. sends our heartfelt condolences to the families of The Reverend Doctor C. T. Vivian, former President of The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and The Honorable U. S. Representative, John Lewis. We join the nation in mourning the passing of these iconic Civil Rights leaders.

These two great leaders' lives and legacies are forever enshrined in the civil rights annals for their courage, commitment, and unwavering determination in the fight for justice, fairness, equality, and peace for all in these United States of America. Congressman Lewis's life's journey, from the Student Non-violence Coordinating Council, beatings in crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge, to becoming a member of the U. S. Congress, has been about making a difference. As a Member of Congress, he courageously led and consistently spoke out on behalf of the disinherited. He admonished us always to Give it all You've Got and Make Good Trouble.



In this time of passing the baton and our country being at the crossroad in continuous fights for social justice, fairness, equality, and peace, the pathway is clear. They never gave upon us, and we must now stay the course to finish the fight that Congressman Lewis and Reverend Vivian led throughout their lifetime.

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