



A Message from our President

In the movie *Hidden Figures*, African American female NASA mathematician Dorothy Vaughan (played by Octavia Spencer) predicted that an incoming IBM computer would displace “human computers” in the 1960s. In anticipation, she learned the computer language Fortran, and she taught it to her team of women mathematicians. When the IBM computer arrived, the mathematicians were ready. They took over the new jobs operating the IBM.

The same thing is happening today.

Automation is displacing workers across the nation. For example, grocery stores are installing self-checkout lanes. Manufacturing plants increasingly use industrial robots. Driverless trucks, buses, and cars will soon be commonplace. Advances in artificial intelligence will accelerate this automation.

The transformation could hit communities of color especially hard. For example, at the Joint Center we found that just twenty occupations with a high risk of automation account for about a quarter of all jobs held by African Americans. These include various types of drivers, cashiers, retail salespersons, security guards, waiters and waitresses, food preparation workers, secretaries and receptionists, accountants, construction laborers, and others.

At the same time, artificial intelligence could lead to a surge of jobs and wealth for communities of color. For example, our communities’ entrepreneurs and workers could be pioneers in maintaining and servicing driverless buses, trucks, and cars, and dominate the field as it grows. Construction workers of color could be on the cutting edge of operating and servicing robots that lay bricks and do other digital construction, and open their own construction companies. Thousands of other possibilities exist. If strategically deployed, communities of color could use artificial intelligence and other innovations to leapfrog ahead in wealth, jobs, and income in just a generation.

Further, new technologies could reduce the cost of quality health care, education, and transportation, making these services and others more accessible.

At the Joint Center, we are working to help leaders who represent communities of color prepare for the future. How can we mitigate challenges like job loss? How can workers acquire "new economy" skills and jobs? How can local entrepreneurs capitalize on these changes to grow businesses? How can we use innovation to improve quality of life in our communities?

How can we use innovation to advance equity?

We are focused on devising solutions in three areas: 1) the future of work, 2) the future of entrepreneurship, and 3) the use of technology to improve quality of life in communities of color.

We need you.

As leaders in your communities, you have critical insights about how best to serve your constituents. As we do our research at the Joint Center, we need to hear from you. We need to hear your questions, your best practices, and your ideas about how we can be helpful to you in your work.

Thank you for sharing your time and ideas with us, and we look forward to getting to know you over the next two days. We hope this experience is meaningful, and we look forward to continuing to work together in the coming years to expand opportunity in our communities.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer A. Overton". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Spencer Overton
President
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

2017 ROUNDTABLE OF THE MIDWEST PARTICIPANTS

Oscar Bedolla, Director, Department of Community & Economic Development (Cincinnati, OH)

Alisha Bell, Vice Chair, Wayne County Commission (Detroit, MI)

Garry Bulluck, Deputy Chief of Mobility Innovation, City of Detroit (Detroit, MI)

Evelyn Burnett, Vice President of Economic Opportunity, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (Cleveland, OH)

Jill Ford, Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, City of Detroit (Detroit, MI)

La Shawn K. Ford, Chairman, Small Business Empowerment & Workforce Development Committee (Illinois)

Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor (Gary, IN)

Sherry Gay-Dagnogo, Caucus Chair, City of Detroit (Michigan)

Stephanie Howse, President, Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (Ohio)

Clarence Hulse, Executive Director, Economic Development Corporation Michigan City (Michigan City, IN)

Mattie Hunter, Majority Caucus Whip (Illinois)

Bert Johnson, State Senator (Michigan)

Brett Jones, President, Evergreen Energy Solutions (Detroit, MI)

Walter Lanier, Director of Multicultural Affairs & Community Engagement, Milwaukee Area Technical College (Wisconsin)

Leslie Love, State Representative (Michigan)

Theresa Mah, State Representative (Illinois)

Julian Marsh, Executive Director, Gary Housing Authority (Gary, IN)

Mara Candelaria Reardon, Vice Chair, Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs (Indiana)

Andrew Stein, Executive Director and Vice President, City Year (Detroit, MI)

2017 ROUNDTABLE OF THE MIDWEST SPEAKERS

Oscar Bedolla, Director, Cincinnati's Department of Community & Economic Development

Garry Bulluck, Deputy Chief of Mobility Innovation, City of Detroit

Evelyn Burnett, Vice President, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress

James Craig, Chief, Detroit Police Department

Warren Evans, Chief Executive Officer, Wayne County, Michigan

Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor, Gary, Indiana

Anika Goss-Foster, Executive Director, Detroit Future City

Nicole Isaac, Head of U.S. Public Policy, LinkedIn

Brett Jones, President, Evergreen Energy Solutions

Alden Loury, Director of Research & Evaluation, Metropolitan Planning Council

Rodrick Miller, President & CEO, Ascendant Global Consulting

Dr. Mallory O'Brien, Director, Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission

Spencer Overton, President, Joint Center for Political & Economic Studies

Dr. George Swan III, Managing Director, GW Swan Group

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About the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

The Joint Center was founded in 1970 as the Black think tank. Today, the Joint Center remains anchored in the Black community and collaborates closely with organizations from other communities, like the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials. We focus on the impact of automation, artificial intelligence, and other innovations on the future of work, economic development, and quality of life in communities of color. We also work to increase diversity among staff in Congress.



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