Last year was an amazing period for the Joint Center. You can watch a 3-minute video reviewing our activities in 2015 by clicking here, and you can learn more about any of the activities below by clicking on the highlighted links. Below, please find an overview of the Joint Center, highlights of 2015, and our plan for 2016.

JOINT CENTER OVERVIEW

**Description:** The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public policy organization that produces innovative, high-impact research, analysis, and policy solutions that have a positive impact on communities of color. The Joint Center uses roundtables, public opinion research, policy papers, and social media to serve elected officials of color at all levels of government, with a particular emphasis on leadership (e.g., mayors, city council presidents, county executives, county commission chairs, state legislative floor leaders and committee chairs, and members of Congress). We are also providing infrastructure for thought leadership in communities of color through research and events.

**Values:** The Joint Center’s work advances equality and opportunity for vulnerable children and families from historically-marginalized communities. The Joint Center provides a forum for collaboration among African-American, Asian-American, Latino, and Native American communities, and empowers these communities to more effectively advocate for systemic change on their own behalf. We also believe that information, innovation, and partnerships (public/private, bipartisan, and multiracial) are key to solving social challenges and expanding access to education, workforce skills, employment, economic opportunity, health care, civic participation, quality neighborhoods, and other essential resources.

**The Need:** While Congress is polarized on many issues and courts provide limited opportunity for change, the key state and local elected officials of color in leadership positions who work with the Joint Center are poised to implement great change. Over 66% of people of color in the U.S. live in 10 states (CA, TX, FL, NY, IL, GA, NJ, NC, AZ, VA), and 87% of people of color live in 25 states (earlier states plus PA, MD, MI, OH, LA, SC, CO, AL, TN, NV, NM, MS, IN, CT, HI). Most of the key elected officials of color are from these areas (the South, West, and metropolitan areas in the East and Midwest), they understand our nation’s most significant domestic challenges, and they can play a significant role in structural change that expands opportunity. Many of these officials have professional training or experience in law, policy, business, or technology, have an interest in innovative policy, and are interested in public/private and multiracial partnerships. Often, however, they lack sufficient resources to identify and translate the best research and policy ideas and into actionable solutions. The Joint Center fills this void. The Joint Center’s network of innovative elected officials also represent the future leadership of our increasingly diverse nation.

**History:** The Joint Center’s brand recognition among government officials and experts enhances its ability to convene groups today. The Joint Center was established five years after the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to support a growing pool of black elected officials, and provided a platform for Shirley Chisolm, Maynard Jackson, Barbara Jordan, John Lewis, Doug Wilder,
Andrew Young, and many other policymakers. The Joint Center also collaborated with significant scholars, such as Mary Frances Berry, Taylor Branch, Ellis Cose, Kenneth Clark, Chris Edley, John Hope Franklin, David Garrow, Evelyn Higginbotham, David Levering Lewis, and William Julius Wilson. Joint Center speakers have included Barbara Bush, George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, Henry Cisneros, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, and many others. Click here for a 10-minute video on the history of the Joint Center from 2004.

In 2014 the Joint Center faced significant challenges that threatened its future, and the board appointed a new leadership team. The new team resolved the challenges, restructured the organization, hired new staff, and adopted a new work model with new tools to increase efficiency, productivity, quality, and impact.

**Board:** Scott Bolden (Managing Partner, Reed Smith), Anne Chow (Sr. VP, AT&T), Robert Hagans (former VP & CFO, AARP), A. Frederick Humphries (VP, Microsoft), Barbara Johnson (Partner, Paul Hastings), Spencer Overton (President, Joint Center); Beverly Perry (former Sr. VP, Pepco), Dr. Dianne Pinderhughes (Professor, Notre Dame), Robert Raben (President, The Raben Group).

**Key Team Members:** Spencer Overton (President, Professor of Law GWU, and former Justice Department Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General of Legal Policy), Jenalyn Sotto (Senior Policy Analyst), Dr. Ismail White (Director of Survey Research), Peter Groff (former President of Colorado State Senate), Samone Ijoma (Executive Assistant to the President), Andrés Macías (Public Policy Fellow), Morgan Butler (Digital Media Associate), and Neville DePass (accounting and administration).


**Venue:** The Joint Center is housed at the George Washington University Law School, which is attractive to academic, government, private sector, non-profit, philanthropic, and think tank representatives looking for neutral, nonpartisan spaces to discuss and work through today’s pressing challenges.
HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015

Roundtables for Top Elected Officials

**June Roundtable:** This three-day event on technology, financial services, energy workforce, and criminal justice brought 25 leading elected officials of color (state legislative floor leaders, committee chairs, and city council presidents) to Washington, DC. The 25 elected officials met at the U.S. Capitol Complex, the White House EEOB, and GW Law School with U.S. Senator Cory Booker, U.S. Senator Rand Paul, Democratic Whip U.S. Congressman Steny Hoyer, Congressional Black Caucus Chair G.K. Butterfield, U.S. Congressman Bobby Scott, Financial Services Ranking Member Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Judiciary Committee Ranking Member U.S. Congressman John Conyers, former U.S. Congressman J.C. Watts, former NAACP President & CEO & Kapor Capital Partner Benjamin Todd Jealous, National Telecommunications and Information Administration Administrator Larry Strickling, FERC Commissioner Colette Honorable, White House Director of Office of Urban Affairs, Justice, & Opportunity Roy Austin, and many others.

**December Roundtable:** This three-day event on voting, lessons of Detroit, and workforce development at the U.S. Capitol Complex, GW Law School, and the White House EEOB featured 25 state legislative floor leaders, committee chairs, county commission chairs, tribal chairs, mayors, and city council presidents of color. The officials met with U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, Asian Americans Advancing Justice President Mee Moua, NALEO Executive Director Arturo Vargas, U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Deputy Assistant Attorney General Justin Levitt, Brookings VP and Metropolitan Policy Program Director Bruce Katz, Former Detroit Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy President George W. “Mac” McCarthy PhD, Skillman Foundation President Tonya Allen, Detroit Deputy Mayor Isaiah McKinnon PhD, Deputy Assistant to the President and Counselor to the Vice President Don Graves, Sabio Coding Bootcamp Co-Founder Liliana Aide Monge, U.S. Department of Labor Deputy Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training Administration Eric Seleznow, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Jerry Abramson, White House Director of Office of Urban Affairs, Justice, & Opportunity Roy Austin, U.S. House Republican Conference Chairman Cathy McMorris Rodgers, U.S. House Assistant Democratic Leader James Clyburn, and many others.
Reports

**50 Years of the Voting Rights Act:** This 46-page report provided data on voter turnout, the number of elected officials of color, and racially polarized voting in the 50 years since the passage of the Voting Right Act of 1965. The report was featured in the *Washington Post*, the *Nation*, and other major publications.

**Diversity Among Top Senate Staff:** This 31-page report revealed that Latinos make up 16% of the population but only 2% of top Senate staff, and that African-Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population but less than 1% of top Senate staff. It provided six key recommendations for increasing diversity among top Senate staff. The report garnered feature stories in the *Atlantic*, the *Washington Post*, the *Associated Press*, and other publications, as well as mentions on Fox News, NBC's Today Show, and many other news outlets.
Hosted Events

**Gun Violence, Policing, and Mass Incarceration in Impacted Communities:** We organized four all-day sessions to hear from impacted communities on the intersection of race, gun violence, mass incarceration, and policing in impacted communities. We met in Washington, DC at GW Law School and the White House (June), in Richmond, VA (October) at Virginia Union University, in Milwaukee, WI (November), and Stockton, CA (December). The sessions collectively featured over 150 people, including religious leaders, youth activists, former incarcerated persons, law enforcement and other government officials, scholars, civil rights activists, gun violence prevention activists, and criminal justice reform advocates. We are partnering with the Joyce Foundation, California Wellness Foundation, the Kendeda Fund, and the Urban Institute to produce a report compiling findings from these meetings.

**Commissioner Policy Breakfast:** We hosted a breakfast with FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, FERC Commissioner Colette Honorable, California Public Utilities Commissioner Catherine Sandoval, and several other Public Service Commissioners of color to discuss energy, telecom, and technology challenges faced by people of color.

**Political Scientists Session:** We hosted a Joint Center session at the National Conference of Black Political Scientists 2015 Annual Meeting in Atlanta.

**Voting Panel in Selma:** We hosted a panel at the Selma Public Library on the 50th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday featuring former NAACP LDF head Ted Shaw and top Joint Center scholars.

**An Inclusive and Forward Thinking Spectrum Policy:** We hosted and spoke on a panel with the Progressive Policy Institute at the Rayburn House Office Building at the U.S. Capitol Complex.
Other Activities

**Met with President Obama** at a White House meeting with 18 civil rights and religious leaders to discuss policing and other key issues.

**Marched with John Lewis, President Obama, and President Bush**, to the top of the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the 50th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

**Presented at the White House** on the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act, and presented at or moderated several significant events, including sessions on **tech diversity at the U.S. Senate**, **voting at a Rainbow Push conference**, **policing in Baltimore at the Center for American Progress**, and **Congresswoman Marcia Fudge's civic participation braintrust** at the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference.

**Participated in the Movement for Black Lives National Convening** in Cleveland, Ohio with nearly 2,000 community leaders, advocates, and scholars.

**Growth**

**New Hiring:** This year we hired three new full-time employees--Public Policy Fellow Andrés Macías, Digital Media Strategist Morgan Butler, and Executive Assistant to the President Samone Ijoma. We also retained Director of Survey Research Dr. Ismail White and Peter Groff, who served as the third African-American State Senate President since Reconstruction.

**2015 Finances:** The Joint Center is housed at GW Law School, has no debt, and will continue to grow in 2016. In 2015, the Joint Center enjoyed generous support from several sources, including American Electric Power, American Express, Anheuser Busch, AT&T, BP, CenturyLink, Citi, Comcast / NBC Universal, CTIA, the Democracy Fund, DTE Energy, Edison Electric Institute, ExxonMobil, FedEx, FirstEnergy Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Google, GW Law, Honda, Information Technology Industry Council, the Joyce Foundation, JPMorgan Chase & Co., the Kapor Center, the Kendeda Fund, MasterCard, Microsoft, National Association of Broadcasters, New Venture Fund, Oracle, Pepco, PepsiCo, T-Mobile, the University of Texas at Austin Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Verizon, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

**PLANS FOR 2016**

**Providing Resources for Elected Officials of Color in Leadership Positions**

**Policy Briefing Papers:** We will publish papers on various policy topics, such as voting, workforce development, lessons of Detroit, technology, financial services, and criminal justice.

**Policy Videos:** We will produce and release 4-minute policy videos for elected officials of color on various topics, including voting, workforce development, lessons of Detroit, technology, financial services, and criminal justice.

**June Roundtable of the South:** Our three-day June Roundtable in Atlanta will include 25 African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American elected officials of color in leadership positions in southern states (Republicans and Democrats).

**December DC Roundtable:** This three-day Roundtable event for 25 African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American elected officials of color in leadership positions from around the nation (Republicans and Democrats) will focus on transition issues of importance to elected officials of color.

**Most Innovative Elected Officials:** We will research, identify, and recognize the 100 Most Innovative State & Local Elected Officials (Republicans and Democrats) who serve communities of color in the U.S.

**Community:** We will use social media, conference calls, and other tools to deepen our network of top elected officials who serve African-American, Asian-American, Latino, and Native
American communities (e.g., mayors, city council presidents, county commission chairs, state legislative floor leaders and committee chairs, members of Congress).

**Roster Of 11,000 U.S. Black Elected Officials:** We will partner with technology groups to update the Joint Center's traditional roster of black elected officials, and support other groups of color in updating Latino and Asian American rosters.

**Providing Infrastructure for Thought Leadership in Communities of Color**

**Think Tank of Color Lunch:** We will host a monthly lunch of fellows from think tanks who focus on issues related to race. Each participant will share with the group their current and upcoming projects that are related to communities of color. Confirmed participants include Economic Policy Institute Research Associate Algeron Austin, Georgetown Law Professor Paul Butler, Center for American Progress Senior Fellow Todd Cox, Wilson Center Director of Sustainability & Resilience Roger-Mark DeSouza, Howard University Associate Professor Michael Fauntroy, Urban Institute Senior Research Associate Jocelyn Fontaine, Center for American Progress Senior Fellow Sam Fulwood, Urban Institute Research Associate Martha Galvez, Aspen Executive Director, Latinos and Society Program Abigail Golden-Vazquez, Pew Senior Researcher John Horrigan, Center for American Progress Director of Legal Progress Michele Jawando, Institute for Women's Policy Research Associated Researcher Avis Jones-DeWeever, Urban Institute Policy Fellow Kilolo Kijakazi, Pew Director of Hispanic Research Mark Hugo Lopez, Brookings Institution Hamilton Project Managing Director Kristen McIntosh, National Council of La Raza Education and Workforce Development Deputy Vice President Peggy McLeod, Joint Center President Spencer Overton, AEI Resident Fellow Gerard Robinson, Center for Global Policy Solutions CEO Maya Rockeymoore, Wilson Center Vice President Andrew Selee, Howard University Ron Walters Center Director Elsie L. Scott, Urban Institute Low Income and Working Families Initiative Director Margaret Simms, National Collaborative for Health Equity Executive Director Brian Smedley, Joint Center Director of Survey Research Ismail White, and Economic Policy Institute Program on Race Director Valerie Wilson.

**Bipartisan Speakers Breakfast:** We will organize a breakfast series for an ideologically-diverse group of leaders of color, featuring top speakers such as congressional committee chairs and cabinet officials (co-hosted by INSIGHT America). Confirmed breakfast participants include Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles Executive Director Alfonso Aguilar, Latino Victory President Cristóbal Alex, National Black Chamber of Commerce Founder President & CEO Harry Alford, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Interim President Cristina Antelo, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Board Chair Roslyn Brock, US Black Chambers President Ron Busby, Baltimore Gas and Electric CEO Calvin Butler, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights President Kristen Clarke, National Urban League Senior Vice President for Policy Don Cravins, Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute Executive Director Mary Ann Gomez, Leadership Conference for Civil Rights President Wade Henderson, Microsoft Vice President Fred Humphries, National Action Network Executive Director Janaye Ingram, Congress of Racial Equality National Spokesman Niger Innis, American Association of Blacks in Energy President & CEO Paula Jackson, Gloucester Institute President & Founder Kay Cole James, Jack Kemp Foundation President Jimmy Kemp, Viacom Executive Vice President DeDe Lea, Corporation for Enterprise Development President Andrea Levere, Hispanic Leadership Fund President Mario Lopez, Asian Pacific American
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