2018 Accomplishments

Joint Center Community:

In 2018, the Joint Center emerged as the leader in the future of work in Black communities and congressional staff diversity.

On economic studies, we:
- Organized a future of work series with incoming House Education & Workforce Chair Congressman Bobby Scott
- Hosted a monthly discussion of experts on Black employment
- Became active members of the Partnership on AI and the Markle Rework America Task Force, and
- Produced key research to be released in 2019:
  - The most extensive survey on race and the future of work
  - Two reports on the future of Black workers, and
  - Three reports on apps and businesses of color.

On political studies, we:
- Released seven major reports on Hill staff diversity
- Raised public awareness in the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, MSNBC, NBC, the Hill, NPR, and other national and local outlets
- Produced outcomes:
  - Congress appropriating funds for paid internships, which increases opportunities and provides a more diverse pool of candidates for entry-level staff positions who have Hill experience; and
  - The hiring of the U.S. Senate’s only two Black Democratic chiefs of staff (including the only Black woman), only AAPI woman chief of staff, and second Latino chief of staff; and
  - The hiring of 20 top staff of color by newly-elected U.S. House Members, which so far represents a diversity top staff rate (31.3%) over twice as high as sitting House Members (13.7%).

With your continued support, we’ll continue to grow in 2019!

Details are below, and click here to watch our 3-minute video.

Thanks,
Spencer
Economic Studies: The Future of Work

Inserting Diverse Perspectives in Future of Work Discussions

The Joint Center spoke on racial inclusion at leading future of work events organized by AARP, The Atlantic, Governor’s Woods Foundation and the Economic Innovation Group, North American Think Tank Summit, Partnership on AI, Peter G. Peterson Foundation, and Public Knowledge.

Joint Center Economic Director Jessica Fulton talks research and racial economic justice at the Economic Policy Institute.

At a hearing before U.S. Senate Democratic Leader Charles Schumer and a dozen other U.S. Senators featuring six leading Black organizations on key issues facing Black communities, the Joint Center talked about the future of work and congressional staff diversity.

The Joint Center was invited to join the Markle Foundation’s Rework America Task Force (a leading group of experts focused on ensuring a skilled workforce for the future economy), and presented results from the Joint Center’s recent survey on race and the future of work.

We discussed “Connecting Research to an Agenda for Racial Economic Justice” at the Economic Policy Institute.
We participated in a 2-day Aspen Institute workshop on the Future of Work and Mobility at Google X in Silicon Valley (which resulted in this report on the future of work and mobility). We also participated on a roundtable on transportation and the future of work hosted by the Partnership for Transportation Innovation and Opportunity.

The Joint Center also travelled to Bentonville, Arkansas for the Conference on American Life and talked with Walmart CEO Doug McMillon about workforce development (Walmart is the largest private employer of African Americans).

We also engaged in strategic conversations with the National Skills Coalition, Georgetown’s Center on Education and Workforce, and Chief Performance Officers in New Orleans and Jackson.

The Joint Center presented new survey data at the Partnership on AI meeting in San Francisco

**Bringing Diverse Perspectives to Key AI and Data Privacy Discussions**

The Joint Center was invited to join the Partnership on AI in 2018, and presented recent Joint Center survey data at the group’s meeting of Members in November. We traveled to Silicon Valley and met with Sheryl Sandberg, other Facebook executives, and other civil rights experts to discuss the challenges of the platform being used to suppress Black voters, and we provided feedback for the Facebook civil rights audit. In 2019, the Joint Center will host a roundtable on the impact of data privacy on Black communities, produce a publication that identifies key issues on the topic, and will speak at the Data for Black Lives conference.
Experts and Members of Congress discussed the future of work in transportation at a roundtable organized by Congressman Bobby Scott and the Joint Center

Engaging the Congressional Black Caucus on the Future Economy

The Joint Center organized:

A Future of Work series with Congressman Bobby Scott, the incoming chair of the House Education and Workforce Committee, which included roundtable events on Transportation, Retail, and Federal Solutions.

The Congressional Black Caucus Preview Lunch, during which the CBC’s Executive Director and Policy Director previewed the CBC’s agenda for 2018.

A policy roundtable with the Congressional Black Caucus and ABFE—A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities, featuring CBC Chair Cedric Richmond, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (Incoming Science, Technology, and Space Committee Chair), Congressman Bobby Scott, and Congresswomen Sheila Jackson-Lee (House Budget Committee Member) and Lisa Blunt Rochester (Education and Workforce Committee Member).

The Joint Center moderated or participated as a panelist on the following CBC panel discussions:


Congressional Smart Cities Caucus Workforce Discussion organized by Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (Smart Cities Caucus co-chair and Energy and Commerce Committee Member)
Joint Center Workforce Policy Director Harin Contractor, Women’s March President Tamika Mallory, Demos Economist Dr. Algernon Austin, and Dr. Avis Jones DeWeever at the Black Policy Lab Summit

Black Policy Lab Summit CBCF ALC Session on the Future of the Economy for African Americans

CBCF ALC Session on the Black Family Today
Engaging the FCC

In February, the Joint Center sent a letter to Senate Democratic Leader Charles Schumer recommending the nomination of Geoffrey Starks as an FCC Commissioner, and after the nomination urged his swift confirmation. The Joint Center’s Workforce Policy Director Harin Contractor, who is a member of the Federal Communications Commission Advisory Committee on Diversity and Digital Empowerment, was appointed to lead the group’s subcommittee on providing recommendations to FCC Commissioners on bridging the digital skills divide.

Engaging Black Communities on the Future of Work

We wrote a leading essay, Black to the Future: Will Robots Increase Racial Inequality?, which was featured in the National Urban League’s 2017 State of Black America Report. We discussed the future of work and Black communities as a featured speaker at events organized by the African American Mayors Association, Blacks in Government (BIG), the Dialogue on Diversity, Multicultural Media, Telecom, and Internet Council, the national conference of ABFE-A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities, National Forum for Black Public Administrators, National Organization of Black County Officials, National Urban League, and UNC Institute of African American Research.
Spencer talked future of work in Black communities with Robert Traynham of Comcast Newsmakers

Media Engagement on Future of Work

Our work was covered by Comcast Newsmakers, the National Urban League’s podcast, Black Enterprise, the Michigan Chronicle, and other media outlets. We also issued a statement with Tanya Wallace-Gobern of the National Black Worker Center Project in response to President Trump’s Workforce Executive Order that was covered in the Washington Informer. We participated in the National Black Worker Center Project’s #BlackLaborDay social media conversation.

Using the Future of Work to Reduce Inequality in America’s Cities

Spencer delivered the Seventh Biennial Lecture of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights at Wayne State University Law School. His lecture traced the history of automation and Black labor (e.g., cotton gin and slavery, industrialization and the great migration), and the relationship between the future of work and the current inequality that persists in Detroit and many other metro areas.
Building a Platform for Black Economists

We provided a platform for Black economists and other experts to discuss the status of Black workers. The Joint Center’s Workforce Policy Director Harin Contractor hosted monthly discussions on Black jobs numbers with notable experts like Howard University’s Dr. Bill Spriggs, workforce expert René Bryce-Laporte, CLASP Postsecondary and Economic Success’s Angela Hanks, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities’ Tazra Mitchell, Urban Institute’s Constance Lindsay, the Progressive Policy Institute’s Michael Mandel, Former Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner Erica Groshen, Institute for Women’s Policy Research’s Chandra Childers, Joint Center Economic Policy Director Jessica Fulton, former U.S. Department of Labor Chief Economist Harry Holzer, Center for American Progress's Danyelle Solomon, and National Employment Law Project's Kemi Role.

Key Research on Black Communities and the Future of Work

We worked on several research projects:

We completed the most significant survey on race and the future of work—600 African Americans, 600 Latinos, 600 AAPIs, and 600 Whites. We found that young White, Latino, and Asian Americans were much more likely than young African Americans to believe that technology created more opportunity at work. The data also showed that African Americans and Latinos are more likely to seek additional training/education than White Americans.

We drafted three significant reports on apps and entrepreneurs of color: 1) An Introduction to Mobile Apps for Black & Latino Businesses; 2) App Development for
Black & Latino Businesses; and 3) Policies to Help Black & Latino Businesses Use Mobile Apps to Grow.

We drafted two significant reports on the future of work in Black communities: 1) The Future of Work in the Black Rural South; and 2) The Future of Work and Black Families.

The research above will be released in 2019.

**Political Studies: Congressional Staff Diversity**

**Published Seven Major Reports**

The Joint Center released seven reports that set the stage for the staff hiring season, including:

- *Racial Diversity Among Top House Staff*, which found that people of color make up 38% of the U.S. population, but only 13.7% of U.S. House top staff;

- *Six state-specific reports* with deep analysis of the racial diversity among top staff in the Washington, DC offices of both U.S. House Members and Senators in the congressional delegations of Delaware, Maryland, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia.

**Provided Guidance to Members During Hiring Season**

Immediately after the November 2018 elections when over 300 top staff positions needed to be filled, the Joint Center sent a series of letters to Congress calling for more top staff diversity, including:
A letter to Speaker-Designate Nancy Pelosi requesting that she fully staff the House Democratic Diversity Initiative, develop Democratic diversity goals for filling open positions, factor in staff diversity when determining committee assignments, disclose staff demographic data, adopt the Rooney Rule, and create a permanent nonpartisan House Diversity Initiative.

Letters to 22 House committee Ranking Members encouraging them to hire diverse staff in anticipation of becoming committee Chairs and doubling the size of their committee staff.

Organized over 60 national organizations and diversity stakeholders—including the NAACP, UnidosUS, National Urban League, NALEO, National Action Network, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the Lawyers’ Committee, and many more—in sending a letter to new and returning Members of Congress calling for hiring of diverse staff and adoption of key practices that facilitate diverse hiring.

Letters to Senate and House Republican and Democratic Steering Committee leadership recommending that a Member’s top staff diversity be a factor in assigning the Member to serve on or lead a committee.

**Tracked Top Staff Hiring of Newly-Elected Members**

The Joint Center developed a real-time tracker of top staff hiring by newly-elected Members, which revealed that newly-elected U.S. House Members hired 20 top staff of color through December 21, 2018. This represented a diversity top staff rate (31.3%) that is over twice as high as that of sitting House Members (13.7%). The Joint Center also developed a tracker to identify top staff of color hired by returning Members.
Senators Doug Jones, Kamala Harris, Catherine Cortez-Masto, and Elizabeth Warren all hired Chiefs of Staff of Color in 2018

**Applauded Progress**

The Joint Center issued press releases acknowledging key progress, including commending Speaker Designate Pelosi’s letter encouraging her Democratic House colleagues to hire diverse top staff, and the January hiring of the U.S. Senate’s only Black Democratic chief of staff by Senator Doug Jones (D-AL). We also sent out statements commending the December 2018 hiring of the U.S. Senate’s second Black and only Black woman Democratic chief of staff by Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), only AAPI female chief of staff by Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA), and second Latino chief of staff by Senator Catherine Cortez-Masto (D-NV). We also released a statement on racial inequity in staff pay.

**Public Education on Staff Diversity Before and Throughout Staff Hiring Season**

Spencer wrote two op-eds: "Capitol Hill must fix itself before it can fix the country" for The Washington Post and "A Congress of ‘firsts’ needs real diversity" for CNN. Don wrote “Congress must address racial pay inequity among staffers on the Hill” for The Hill. We also provided an initial analysis of and a deeper dive into the Senate Democrats’ July 2018 disclosure of staff demographic data.
Our research also garnered news coverage in:


DC outlets like The Hill, Hill TV, Roll Call, and TechCongress.

Major people of color outlets like #RolandMartinUnfiltered, DiversityInc, National Urban League podcast, Practicing While Black, BlackPressUSA, L.A. Sentinel, and Washington Informer.

Local news outlets in areas with Members of Congress who lack top staff diversity, such as the Tennessean, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and the Mississippi Link.
Collaborating with NALEO to Prepare Top Staff of Color

We continued our partnership with the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) in holding the Staff Up Congress Legislative Academy. The four-session legislative academy was held in September 2018 and covered various topics, including managing the appropriations process, understanding media, operating in the committee framework, and working across the aisle.
Spoke at and Sponsored Various Events

We spoke at various venues on congressional staff diversity, such as the Grassroots Professional Network (GPN) and the Government Affairs Industry Network (GAIN) (in conjunction with the Congressional Tri-Caucus Staff Associations), Harvard Kennedy School, Yale Law School, and Harlem Academy. We sponsored several congressional staff diversity events, such as the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus (SBLSC)'s 40th Anniversary Celebration (we co-sponsored with the National Urban League) and the National Bar Association's Legislative Day Reception.

Recognized with the Augustus F. Hawkins Award

For our work to increase congressional staff diversity, the Joint Center won the Washington Government Relations Group’s 2018 Augustus F. Hawkins Award for Leadership in Diversity.
Our History and Our Future

We Mourned the Passing of Togo West Jr., Fredric Leigh, and Ron Dellums

Togo West Jr. served as Joint Center President from 2004-2006, and had previously served in the administrations of Presidents Ford, Carter, and Clinton. In 1998 he joined President Clinton’s cabinet as U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Fredric Leigh served as the Joint Center’s Chief Operating Officer from 1994-1998, and also served as a Major General for the U.S. Army and dedicated his life to helping the African diaspora. Former Congressman and former Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums chaired the Joint Center’s “Dellums Commission,” which laid the groundwork for President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper Alliance, the Executive Alliance on Men and Boys of Color, and other projects focused on challenges faced by men and boys of color.
New Team Members

Our successful year would not be possible without our outstanding team. We hired:

Workforce Policy Director Harin Contractor, who previously served as economic advisor to U.S. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez.

Economic Policy Director Jessica Fulton, who previously worked at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth.
Communications Specialist Victoria Johnson, who served as a journalist reporting for the New York Daily News, Mashable, and other publications.

**Strategic Plan Feedback and Implementation**

In 2018, the Joint Center shared and discussed our draft strategic plan ([summary here](#)) with philanthropy in New York and Chicago, and with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Black labor leaders, the California Wellness Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Foundation, East Bay Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, PolicyLink, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, U.C. Berkeley Labor Center, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, several companies, and many others. We also obtained insights through our meetings with the founders of various think tanks that have grown quickly, including the Center for American Progress, the Bipartisan Policy Center, and the R Street Institute. We retained a consultant, Mark Sobol of Longwave Partners, to help us most effectively implement our strategic plan in 2019.
Regular Black TV News Appearances

Our good friend Roland Martin launched the only daily Black television news program, #RolandMartinUnfiltered, and Spencer made weekly appearances on the show.

Thanks to Our Supporters

Major Financial Supporters


Board

Thanks to our board, which consists of Barbara Johnson (chair), A. Scott Bolden, Paula Boyd, Robert Hagans, Chanelle Hardy, Spencer Overton, Dianne Pinderhughes, Robert Raben, and Paul Thornell.