



2019 Technology and Inclusion Agenda

As America's Black think tank, the Joint Center believes innovation and inclusive tech policies in areas like education, skills development, entrepreneurship, and infrastructure are critical to expanding opportunities in Black communities. At the same time, failure to think about race in designing systems and tech policy can lead to significant challenges, such as the facilitation of discrimination in hiring practices, financial services, housing, education, insurance, law enforcement and surveillance, advertising, and political participation.

The Joint Center's survey data and research on Black communities allow us to maintain a deep working partnership with the Congressional Black Caucus and bring an important perspective to tech policy tables like the Partnership on AI and the Markle Rework America Taskforce.

The Joint Center's 2019 Technology and Inclusion Agenda focuses largely on original data and research on technology and Black communities, as well as convening discussions that educate Black Washington, DC thought leaders (e.g., Congressional Black Caucus, social justice non-profits).

Research and Writing

The Joint Center will author, publish, and release several research reports, issue briefs, and fact sheets relating to tech policy in 2019, including:

- Four reports on the future of work
- Three reports on apps and businesses of color
- One report on a comparative racial survey (oversamples of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and White Americans) on the future of work, including perceptions about technology, automation, acquiring skills, and PreK-12 curricula
- One report on survey data of obstacles African Americans face in acquiring new skills
- One report that documents privacy challenges facing Black communities
- Four or more op-eds elevating Joint Center tech policy research
- Policy briefs on emerging jobs in the Black community
- Survey on views on the economy and African Americans

- Collaboration with and sharing of research with organizations that serve other affected communities (e.g., NALEO, UnidosUS, Asian Americans Advancing Justice)

Roundtables, Meetings, and Other Activities

Joint Center staff will meet with policymakers, business leaders, and researchers to elevate Joint Center research and ensure Black thought leaders understand tech policy discussions. We will engage in several activities, including:

- Hosting roundtables on the future of work with local leaders in four cities across the country (Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Philadelphia)
- Hosting a convening of stakeholders and experts interested in data, automated decision-making, and the Black community
- Hosting a Congressional Black Caucus Agenda Preview Luncheon
- Collaborating with the Congressional Black Caucus's TECH 2020/Diversity Task Force to educate Members and staff on tech sector policy issues
- Hosting a Good Jobs for Black Workers Congressional Briefing in Collaboration with Georgetown University and the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee
- Hosting trainings on tech policy and related topics (e.g., Higher Education Act reauthorization) for key stakeholders
- Hosting regular Twitter chats to promote awareness of the Black employment situation as it relates to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' monthly Employment Situation Report
- Convening a June dinner for a select group of federal tech policy professionals for input into the Joint Center's strategic direction and research agenda
- Hosting bi-monthly policy roundtables
- Assembling an advisory council of experts from academia, industry, civil rights, and non-profit tech
- Attending several conferences and convenings related to the future of work, AI, and other tech policy issues
- Engaging fully as a member of both the Partnership on AI and the Markle Rework America Taskforce
- Hosting a tech policy session during CBC ALC weekend in September
- Modernizing the Joint Center website
- Hiring a strategic events coordinator to manage events

Joint Center Staff

The Joint Center will hire a tech policy expert and an economic analyst in the next two months ([positions here](#)).

SPENCER OVERTON

President

Spencer Overton is the President of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, which was founded in 1970 as the Black think tank. Today, the Joint Center focuses on the impact of innovations like artificial intelligence and automation on the future of work and economic development in places like Detroit, Memphis, and the rural Black Belt of the South. The Joint Center also works to increase diversity among congressional staff.

Spencer chaired Government Reform Policy on the 2008 Obama presidential campaign, and on the Obama transition, he served as a lawyer in the General Counsel's office and as a member of the Technology, Innovation, and Government Reform (TIGER) policy team. During the Administration, Spencer served as Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Legal Policy, the “think tank” of the Department of Justice. After leaving the Department, Spencer held several roles on the 2012 Obama National Finance Committee, including teaching fundraising and chairing a fundraising program that raised \$25 million.

Spencer is also a tenured Professor of Law at George Washington University, where he teaches race and the law, property law, and election law. He is a co-author of [5G, Smart Cities, and Communities of Color](#) (2017), and the author of the book [Stealing Democracy: The New Politics of Voter Suppression](#) (2007) and several academic and popular articles. Through his work on national election law commissions, Spencer helped shape the contours of the modern voter ID debate and he led an effort that resulted in Iowa restoring voting rights to 98,000 Iowans who had completed their sentences.

Spencer is an honors graduate of both Hampton University and Harvard Law School, he clerked for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Damon J. Keith, and he represented large companies for four years practicing law at the firm Debevoise & Plimpton.

JESSICA FULTON

Director, Economic Policy

Jessica is currently the Economic Policy Director at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Prior to joining the Joint Center, she served as External Relations Director at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth. She has also held positions at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute and the Chicago Urban League. Jessica is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and serves as Board Chair of The Black Swan Academy. Jessica earned a bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Chicago and a master's degree in

Economic Policy Analysis from the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business at DePaul University.

HARIN CONTRACTOR

Director, Workforce Policy

A self-described data nerd, Harin loves working on problems, looking for creative solutions, and helping people make connections to enhance their goals. Previously, Harin worked at a tech start-up that used government data to empower communities and worked in the Obama Administration at the U.S Department of Labor as the Economic Policy Advisor to the Secretary. Harin is a graduate of the University of Georgia and the University of Chicago.

VICTORIA JOHNSON

Digital Communications Specialist

Victoria joins the Joint Center team as the Digital Communications Specialist. She's a former journalist with robust newspaper and magazine experience including reportage on policy and arts for New York Daily News, New York Amsterdam News, Mashable, Vulture, and more. She earned her bachelor's degree in communications at CUNY: City College of New York and a master's degree in urban reporting at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism (formerly CUNY: Graduate School of Journalism). She also volunteers for ScholarCHIPS, a program dedicated to helping college-bound teenagers with incarcerated parents.

About the Joint Center—America's Black Think Tank

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, founded in 1970, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. The Joint Center's mission is to inform and illuminate the nation's major public policy debates through research, analysis, and information dissemination in order to improve the socioeconomic status of Black communities in the United States; expand their effective participation in the political and public policy arenas; and promote communication and relationships across racial and ethnic lines to strengthen the nation's pluralistic society. We tailor our solutions to be accessible and we collaborate with those with shared interests (e.g., Latinx organizations) to maximize impact.