



May 30, 2008

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to send you a copy of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies 2007 Annual Report, highlighting lessons learned and new directions. In two short years, we will be celebrating our 40th Anniversary and we are excited about sharing our new approaches, collaborative partnerships, and commitment to a better America.

The Joint Center's knowledge and critical thinking will continue to take center stage in policy deliberations at all levels of government. Today, we are engaged in the search for real world solutions to pressing social and economic problems. Relying on past, present and future supporters, we know the Joint Center will contribute in transformative ways towards a brighter future for us all.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. B. Everett", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ralph B. Everett
President and CEO

KNOWLEDGE

SOLUTIONS

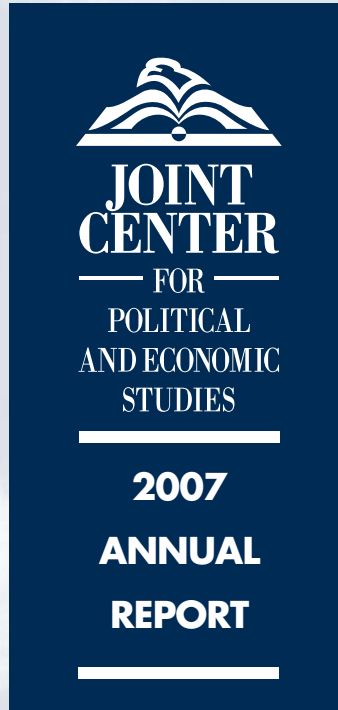
RESULTS

RESULTS



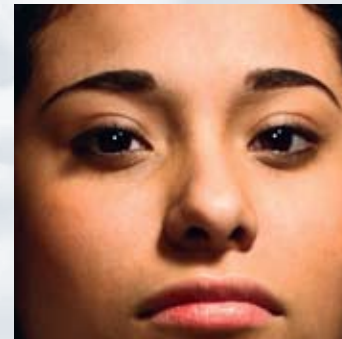
KNOWLEDGE

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RESULTS

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“...LEADING THE WAY TO A MORE PROMISING AMERICA FOR ALL PEOPLE—

RELENTLESSLY EXPLORING POLICY OPTIONS AND INSPIRING ACTION AT ALL LEVELS

OF SOCIETY—IS A CHARGE THAT THE JOINT CENTER MUST AND WILL KEEP.”

RALPH B. EVERETT, PRESIDENT AND CEO, JCPES

ABOUT THE JOINT CENTER



Founded in 1970, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is one of the nation's premier policy and research institutions, and the only such institution focusing primarily on the concerns of African Americans and other people of color.

Established to encourage black political participation and to meet the needs of black elected officials, the Joint Center has played an influential role in shaping local, state, and national policy. Since that time, it has helped the number of black elected officials grow nationally from fewer than 1,500 to more than 10,000.

Today, the Joint Center continues to focus on improving the socioeconomic status of African Americans and other people of color through its contributions of high quality research and informed analysis to critical policy debates. Elected and appointed officials at all levels of government, as well as other organizations, look to the Joint Center for its input and advice on a wide range of issues, as well as its assistance in better understanding the black electorate and the concerns of their constituents.

In conducting research and policy analysis and in disseminating the information it produces, the Joint Center employs a nonpartisan approach to building partnerships and coalitions across government and the policy development community in order to broaden and strengthen the impact of its work.

LEADERSHIP

Chairperson's Message

The Honorable Joyce London Alexander
Chair of the Board of Governors



Along with its rich history and legacy of success in cultivating social change, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies continues to carry the weight of responsibility to help our great nation achieve its essential promise of equal justice under law.

The fundamental idea that has sustained the Joint Center over the past 37 years—and which continues to invigorate our sense of purpose today—is centered on the resolve that African Americans will be the authors, and not the victims, of events. Over the years, this organization has nurtured the wide expansion of black representation and galvanized the body politic with a sense of mission and purpose on a range of social and economic issues critical to bringing equity, opportunity and collective responsibility to all.

To be sure, other voices for change have brought great progress. However, new and evermore daunting challenges have emerged, and with them new obligations for the Joint Center to enliven the policy process with a fresh perspective and to inform the national debate with heightened urgency, new ideas and solutions.

There has never been a more critical time for “America’s premier black think tank” to be a force for change—and to re-tool and revitalize the Joint Center for the tasks ahead. I know I speak for every member of the Board of Governors when I say that we are committed to that goal. We are proud to be policy leaders who facilitate the beneficent programmatic research thrust of this great organization.



President's Message

Ralph B. Everett
President and CEO

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies has entered an era of growth and expansion to address new challenges confronting our nation and will continue to be a leader in shaping new solutions for pressing societal problems.

It has been nearly four decades since our organization was founded to increase black political participation and help set the nation on a course towards greater equality. Over the years, the Joint Center has built a legacy of success by contributing high quality research on social and economic issues that provide the impetus for elected officials to craft critical policy solutions, and providing leadership in new approaches that have impacted issues affecting African Americans and other people of color.

Today, we are faced with new and evermore complex challenges and risks to health and well-being, economic security, environment, and other facets of life that we must do everything we can to enhance the Joint Center’s ability to continue

to propel the historic dream of justice, equality and opportunity for all people.

The time is right to carry our legacy forward with a renewed energy. Today, African Americans are more influential now than ever before in Congress, state houses, and local governments across the country. Businesses and civic organizations are showing new resolve in confronting many of the entrenched social problems that have blocked our fellow citizens from pursuing the American Dream. The electorate is crying out for new ideas and movement in new directions. Our goal is to generate these ideas and propel solutions.

As the Joint Center moves forward with a strategic focus on spurring innovation, generating policy options and promoting leadership on issues that matter most to our nation, we will strengthen and expand our network of scholars and experts. Building on the establishment and subsequent achievements of our Health Policy Institute, we have a model

for creating additional core institutes to serve as centers of excellence that will drive policy development in three arenas—media and technology, civic engagement and governance, and education and workforce opportunity.

We have charted a new course on such critical issues as climate change, health equity, and mortgage lending practices, among others having profound effects on communities across this nation. The Joint Center is committed to ensuring that all Americans, especially African Americans and other people of color, are engaged and their interests are well represented whenever agendas are created, policies are established and laws are written.

In this exciting era of change and possibility, the Joint Center is responding to seismic shifts in the way the world works—adapting, innovating—but always within the context of our knowledge and critical thinking that will shape the solutions leading to real world impacts.



HISTORY

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies was created in 1970 to lend a hand to African American leaders as they traveled the uncharted road from civil rights activism to mainstream American politics. Its most prominent founders were Dr. Kenneth Clark, a renowned social psychologist, and Louis Martin, the legendary newspaper editor who had become a key presidential adviser on issues affecting black America.

As the heir to a rich legacy of activists and scholars—from the early abolitionists to the civil rights leaders—the nonpartisan Joint Center began its work with an emphasis on translating hard-won voting rights into practical improvements through political empowerment. Coming in the wake of the social turmoil of the late 1960s, its founders established it as

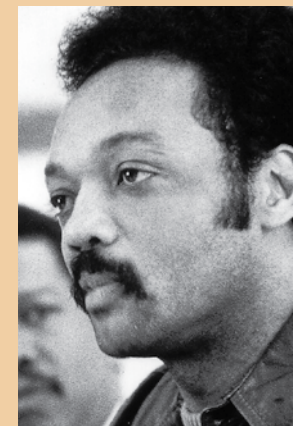
an apostle of the nation’s political system, heralding it as the best way for black people to achieve racial equality.

Known initially as the Joint Center for Political Studies, the organization set down to work at a time when black politicians were just beginning to expand black representation on school boards, city councils and in state legislatures around the country—and when the total number of black elected officials numbered fewer than 1,500. By creating a reliable foundation of information, technical assistance and networking activities, the Joint Center sought to strengthen the capacity of this emerging political class to further their influence within the system, as well as their own effectiveness to bring lasting improvements to the communities they represented.

Throughout the 1970s, the Joint Center built upon this foundation and set into motion other organizations such as the National Conference of Black Mayors and the National Conference of Black State Legislators. It sponsored seminars and technical assistance programs for elected officials, emerging politicians and other civil leaders. It became the nation’s foremost authority on the African American electorate and its elected leadership, regularly publishing the National Roster of Black Elected Officials and important guidebooks on black politics that are distributed at the major party conventions.



As it matured, and under the leadership of longtime President Eddie Williams, the Joint Center sought to expand its focus beyond political training and into the world of policy research, ideas and debate—in fact, to become a first-rate think tank with a focus on the concerns of African Americans and other people of color. Williams himself defined the organization’s aim as follows: “to identify public policy issues that have implications for black Americans...to be both a center for intellectual discovery and a wellspring of practical political knowledge.”



In 1990, the Joint Center added a word to its name, becoming the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. A new, heightened focus on social and economic issues was suited to the concerns of an emerging group of politicians who now represented racially diverse districts and, while still concerned about protecting civil rights, were also concerned about the bread and butter issues plaguing impoverished neighborhoods.

To that end, the Joint Center has worked to develop the capacity to produce reliable research and public policy analyses, yielding data that could be used by all politicians and policymakers to help all America in dealing with the issues of race, poverty and disadvantage.

Today, with the number of black elected officials having grown over 10,000 nationwide, the Joint Center looks to its future as an essential resource for elected officials and other policymakers as they seek to identify and address America’s key social and economic challenges—ever mindful of its historic mission and its longstanding commitment to strengthen America’s commitment to justice and equal opportunity for all.



LOOKING FORWARD

New Approaches, Core Values: Strategies for the Future

The Joint Center has worked to ensure equal access to opportunity and create lasting social and economic gains for African Americans by promoting and expanding black political participation. By means of policy relevant research and analysis, the Center has strengthened its support and outreach to an ever-growing number of black elected officials at all levels of government.

These elected officials have helped to eliminate egregious vestiges of segregation and inequality in the United States, thereby securing dramatic improvements in the individual life circumstances of many African Americans. Nevertheless, far too many still face racial discrimination and other roadblocks to realizing the American Dream. Members of low-income communities of color continue to confront the serious problems of unemployment and economic insecurity, crime ridden neighborhoods, health disparities, and seriously under-funded schools.

At a time when the challenges spurred by globalization are growing in complexity for all Americans, especially disadvantaged people of color, the Joint Center is strategically reorganizing into core Institutes. Building on the success of the Health Policy Institute (HPI), there will be centers of excellence in four key policy areas.

The Joint Center Health Policy Institute

HPI was launched six years ago to play a leadership role in reframing policy debates on health and refocusing attention on dangerous disparities. Our research and analysis is helping to generate new policy recommendations and provide solutions for longstanding health equity concerns. In an era of soaring health care costs, state budget constraints and an enormous national deficit, we need a renewed commitment to addressing existing health disparities. Focus areas include:

- Identifying and addressing the many determinants that can improve health outcomes;
- Increasing resources for prevention;
- Informing policy and practices aimed at reducing infant mortality and improving maternal and child health;
- Reducing risk factors and supporting healthy behaviors among children and youth;
- Improving mental health and reducing factors that promote violence;
- Optimizing health care access and quality; and
- Creating conditions for healthy aging.

The Joint Center Media and Technology Institute

Through this Institute, the Joint Center will focus on the media and higher technology's evolving role in increasing political participation, economic advancement, and social well-being among African Americans. The Institute will work with a diverse community of experts, including scholars, industry representatives, public officials and consumers, to make contributions in cutting-edge research, publications, information portals, and policy debates on this important topic. Areas of focus will include:

- Improving access to information and technology;
- Identifying important "new media" issues: private ownership, concentrated media ownership and the impact of the quality of programming;
- Providing recommendations for reform in business practice and public policy to government and industry decisionmakers;
- Promoting awareness of media sources; and
- Assessing the effects of convergence on old and new media.

The Joint Center Civic Engagement and Governance Institute

This Institute will strengthen the Joint Center's long-held tradition of energizing political participation and increasing public policy awareness. Research will examine relevant developments in the public, private and non-profit sectors and their effects on African Americans and other people of color. Focus areas will include:

- Strengthening the National Policy Alliance and leadership skills of black elected officials;
- Building coalitions with other organizations that represent black public officials;
- Analyzing African American political participation and enforcement of voting rights statutes;
- Conducting polls of African Americans to determine public policy issues of significance;
- Supporting emerging leaders; and
- Maintaining a roster of all black elected officials.

The Joint Center Education Policy and Opportunity Institute

Given that African Americans are more likely than others to suffer higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and enrollment in failing schools, this Institute will focus on education and workforce development. Cutting-edge research and analysis will help uncover new ways to advance greater equality in educational opportunities and workforce options. Priority will be given to developing creative proposals for improving schools and job prospects for young African Americans. Critical issues include:

- Reforming education policy and economic opportunity for children and youth;
- Promoting asset-building;
- Examining the effects of any and all Social Security reform proposals on retirement security;
- Ensuring that workforce development is aimed at matching skill development to business needs;
- Fostering racial equity in regional development; and
- Increasing access to affordable housing.

JOHNNY FORD, MAYOR OF TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA AND CO-CHAIR OF THE JOINT CENTER’S NATIONAL POLICY ALLIANCE

BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS

An interview with The Honorable Johnny Ford, Mayor of Tuskegee, Alabama and Co-Chair of the Joint Center’s National Policy Alliance



What are the indicators of this?

Well, for one thing, one in every eight black males in their twenties is in prison or jail. More than 60% of the people in prison are now racial and ethnic minorities. As long as children in communities of color are facing these kinds of odds, we are a long way from being able to build hope and channel their energies toward positive outcomes.

Why is this happening? Are there causes and/or aggravating factors that you feel can be addressed?

Yes, though some are more difficult than others to mitigate—for instance, the lack of a father in the home, lack of community support and the lack of positive role models—in fact, the perpetuation of negative stereotypes—in the popular media. But there are also many factors that are a result of public policy—factors that contribute to this cycle and make the problem much harder to deal with over the long term. For example, there is the disproportionate impact of the “war

on drugs,” in which three-fourths of all persons in prison for drug offenses are people of color. Some of our education policies have turned our schools into pipelines for the prisons.

What do you mean? What are these public policy issues and other factors that need to be addressed?

Many of them were pointed out by the Dellums Commission, which was convened by the Joint Center’s Health Policy Institute. I’m talking about things such as zero-tolerance policies in schools that are resulting in excessive expulsions among African American males. I’m talking about judicial policies that allow juveniles to face criminal infractions in adult courts with subsequent detention in adult facilities. On top of this, there is the failure to address dwindling economic and job opportunities for minority youth, which is often a factor in turning them to crime, as well as the lack of adequate mental health and drug treatment programs.

When you spend six times the rate on the penal system versus what we spend on higher education, it becomes clear we have a problem. Only when we shift our priorities from punishment to education are we going to get a handle on this problem. We can do that with the right policy approach. We cannot give up on our youth.

What role do you see the Joint Center playing in all of this?

As an incubator for ideas and policy solutions—and as a catalyst in bringing policymakers together to focus on our most pressing challenges—the Joint Center can help point the way toward real-world solutions with practical applications for ensuring that the current generation of African American youth, and those who follow, are able to realize their full economic and social potential and become productive citizens.



The Honorable Webster J. Guillory, Orange County (CA) Assessor and Co-Chair of the Joint Center’s National Policy Alliance

In addition, my National Policy Alliance co-chair, The Honorable Webster J. Guillory, Orange County (CA) Assessor, and I believe the Joint Center has an important role to play as the convener of the NPA, which is the organization representing

over 10,000 black elected officials and approximately 3.2 million federal, state and local government employees who are dealing with these issues every day in their communities. We think there is tremendous potential for tapping into and developing the knowledge and experience that exists among members of the NPA organizations and channeling that toward real world solutions. The Joint Center can anchor that process.

The Joint Center played an important role in creating a number of key organizations representing black elected and appointed officials. Today, all the organizations representing black public officials are members of the National Policy Alliance, of which the Joint Center serves as convener. These organizations are;

- The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC)
- The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL)
- The National Association of Black County Officials (NABCO)
- The National Conference of Black Mayors (NCBM)
- The National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBCLEO)
- The World Conference of Mayors (WCM)
- The National Black Caucus of School Board Members (NBCSBM)
- The Judicial Council of the National Bar Association
- Blacks In Government (BIG)

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO VIABLE SOLUTIONS



**Partnering for Change by Sterling K. Speirn,
President and CEO, W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

The Dellums Commission report from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies affirmed

and re-awakened many about the status of today's young African Americans, particularly young men. It is alarmingly clear that far too many face dashed dreams and diminishing life prospects. We can no longer take for granted that these young people will surpass or even equal their parents in educational, job and economic achievements. For the first time in American history, it is no longer a given that younger generations will have as promising a chance at realizing the American dream as that afforded their parents' or even their grandparents' generations.

Added to the economic deprivation, inadequate education and poor health trajectories facing so many young people of color is racism. Racism and its consequences are too often the underlying factors that systematically thwart not only the life dreams and chances of young African Americans, but also those of their families, communities and ultimately our nation. As Martin Luther King, Jr. never ceased to remind us, "our destinies—both morally and practically—are inextricably linked."

What will it take to turn around the trends like the disproportionate representation of black males in the juvenile and criminal justice system? What will it take to address the increasing numbers of black females being incarcerated and placed on probation? What will it take to increase the presence of black males on college and university campuses?

The first thing we can do is take the powerful documentation by the Dellums Commission of the undeniable costs of these systemic failures and begin to shift our focus to the costs of success. In state after state, taxpayers and elected officials squirm when their prison budgets surpass and then cannibalize their education budgets, yet they act as if they have no choice. This is surely one of the best examples of taking failure to scale and paying for it dearly. To fulfill the promise our country was founded on we must take a different path and take our profound belief in equal opportunity to scale.

If taking failure to scale is not a sustainable strategy, now is the time to get serious about the costs of success. For example, if we know that at least half of the achievement gap in today's 12th graders was already there when they entered first grade, we need to know what it would cost to have all of our 5-year-olds entering kindergarten ready to be successful in school. If an 8-year old's ability to read and do basic math is a predictor of high school graduation, we should be asking what it will take to have all our children successful by third grade.

There is much to be done to address the challenges that thwart life dreams and chances of young African Americans. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is committed to confronting these challenges, starting with concerted efforts to promote the health, well-being and education of vulnerable children and youth, improving family income and assets, and community assets, and increasing civic and philanthropic engagement. And overarching all these efforts, the foundation has dedicated itself to promoting racial equity and working against the forces of laissez-faire and structural racism that persist in our society so that all children will thrive.

As the Foundation works to assure broad public engagement in policy deliberations and a shared commitment to viable solutions, we look to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies as a champion for bold investments in the success of our next generation, and as a strategic partner with accurate and timely information to inform policymakers and to spur the civic engagement essential in propelling vulnerable children toward success.

WHAT ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN VOTERS THINKING?



**AARP and the Joint Center Seek Answers;
Bill Novelli, CEO, AARP**

Like any large membership and advocacy organization, AARP has a keen interest in what's on

the minds of its members and the public at large. "This is especially true when Presidential and Congressional elections loom," says CEO Bill Novelli, "and this certainly includes the views of our organization's large number of African American members."

"We are committed to providing a voice for millions of Americans concerned about affordable, quality health care and lifetime financial security," says Novelli. "Our two million African American members care deeply about these public policy matters, both for themselves and future generations."

Focusing on these issues of critical importance to people age 50+, AARP has launched a non-partisan national movement, *Divided We Fail*, the goal of which is to make sure that the next President and Congress work together to ensure that all Americans have access to

affordable, quality health care and the opportunity to attain long-term financial security.

"No matter who wins in November, we will have a new president with a mandate to address these issues," Novelli says. "Success will depend on the ability to bring together all Americans, and the aspirations and anxieties of African Americans must be understood by our leaders so that we can move forward united."

In this period leading up to the election, AARP has been working closely with the Joint Center to better understand the views of African American voters. The organizations collaborated on two crucial polls in 2007—one of South Carolina's African American voters, the other of African American voters nationwide on the eve of the first presidential primaries and caucuses. Both surveys assessed the attitudes of likely black voters on candidates and issues.

The polls revealed that even prior to the official start of the nominating process, black voters were highly engaged in the campaigns and focused on the issues. Media reports extensively cited these survey results. Novelli says the findings offered his organization unparalleled insight into the views of African Americans, particularly on AARP's signature issues.

"The Joint Center's nearly 40-year history of trusted research helped us focus attention on African American voters and strengthened our assertion that politicians must address their health and financial security concerns," says Novelli. "Opinion leaders, policymakers and the media recognize the Joint Center's credibility and take its findings seriously."

Novelli acknowledges the numerous benefits that arose out of this collaborative survey research. "Working with the Joint Center has been deeply productive. In the coming years, we expect to strengthen the ties between AARP and the Joint Center. Together, through thoughtful research, analysis and advocacy, we can achieve meaningful progress on the issues of importance to African Americans."

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND INFLUENCE IN OUR DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

TODAY, AS ELECTED OFFICIALS LOOK TO CREATE LASTING IMPROVEMENTS

IN OUR COMMUNITIES, WE NEED A BLACK THINK TANK MORE THAN

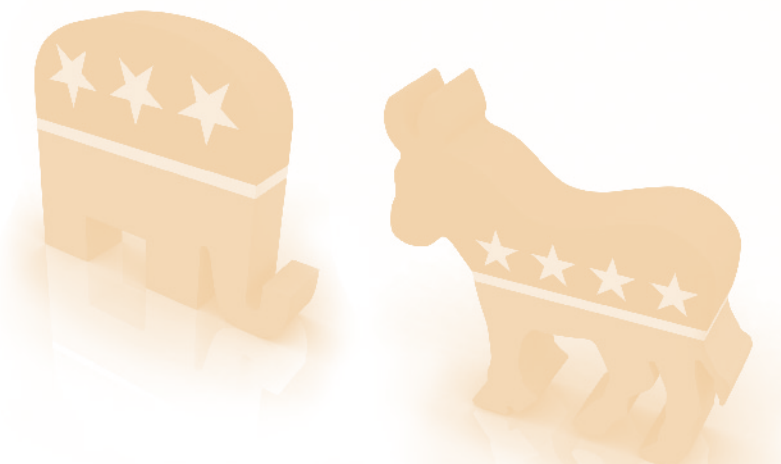
EVER—TO ANCHOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT, TO INVIGORATE IT WITH FRESH

IDEAS AND TO DRIVE THE COALITION BUILDING THAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

IN ORDER FOR US TO GET THINGS DONE. THIS IS THE JOINT CENTER'S

ESSENTIAL PURPOSE TODAY."

THE HONORABLE JAMES E. CLYBURN (D-SC), U.S. HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP



A GATHERING STORM



Engaging African Americans on Climate Change Crisis; Veronica Johnson

Should African Americans be especially concerned about global climate change? Yes, says Veronica

Johnson. Perhaps they should be the most concerned of anyone.

“There is overwhelming consensus among scientists that climate change is real and proceeding faster than expected,” says Veronica Johnson, an on-air meteorologist at NBC affiliate WRC-TV in Washington, DC. Citing data from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. 2004 report, *African Americans and Climate Change: An Unequal Burden*, she adds “and it’s likely to hit our health and our wallets first. African Americans, thus, need to remain focused and engaged on this serious problem.”

Johnson serves on the advisory committee of a Joint Center initiative to educate and involve the African American community regarding risks connected with extreme weather change. Funding of \$500,000

from the Bipartisan Policy Center, led by four former United States Senate Majority Leaders, will expand the Joint Center’s ability to conduct climate change research and public outreach.

Using her platform as a TV meteorologist to educate, inform and raise greater awareness, Johnson believes it is vitally important that the African American community knows about the enormous stakes in both the climate change problem and its potential solutions.

“Adverse consequences of climate change will fall most heavily on those residing in urban areas and coastal flood plains—areas where many poor African Americans live—leaving them at greater risk of suffering during heat waves, flooding, and droughts,” she says. “It’s likely we could see more infectious diseases from insects and rodents as well as respiratory problems due to poor air quality.”

At the other end of the equation, Johnson says that according to the study, policy prescriptions and industry actions against climate change could bring increases in the cost of energy, which would have a

disproportionate financial impact on African Americans. And there are the economic opportunities inherent in the potential for “green jobs” that could be created.

“This is all the more reason for the black community to be at the center of the climate change debate.”

“When no other groups are raising awareness within our community, here you find the Joint Center bringing this issue to the forefront—taking data and research and using it to improve the health, well-being and socioeconomic status of minorities.”

“I see the Joint Center being a ‘watchdog’ for climate change in the African American community—the source for the latest scientific findings and a conduit for getting that information to the disadvantaged. I see it looking to the future and carving out an economical path that will make the ‘green economy’ work to the benefit of minorities everywhere.”

“OUR COUNTRY FULFILLS ITS PROMISE WHEN EVERY CITIZEN HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM. BY FOCUSING ON BUILDING ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN MINORITY COMMUNITIES—AND BY ENCOURAGING US TO WORK TOGETHER FOR SUBSTANTIVE MEASURES TO ACCOMPLISH THAT AIM—THE JOINT CENTER IS A VITAL PART OF THE EFFORT TO MAKE AMERICA A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE.”

THOMAS J. DONOHUE, PRESIDENT AND CEO, U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

THE DIVERSITY CURE

The Sullivan Alliance's Approach to Eliminating Racial Disparities in Health Care

New groundbreaking studies by the Joint Center's Health Policy Institute (HPI) have documented dramatic racial disparities in America's health care system. But where are the remedies?



Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, the former United States Secretary of Health and Human Services

"There are many steps we should be taking to ensure greater fairness and equity in our nation's health care delivery system," says Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, the former United States Secretary of Health and Human Services. "But the most effective thing we can do right now is to diversify the ranks of those who actually deliver health care services to people from coast to coast."

Sullivan feels so strongly about this that he organized a special Commission to study the issue. First and foremost, the Commission recommended that immediate steps be taken to increase diversity in the U.S. health care workforce, as spelled out in a report titled *Missing Persons: Minorities in*

the Health Professions. To act on this recommendation, in 2005, he formed the Sullivan Alliance to Transform America's Health Professions, which is now based at the HPI, drawing upon the Joint Center's expertise in working with the United States Congress, the White House and Executive Branch, and state and local governments. By focusing first on promoting diversity within the ranks of medicine, dentistry, nursing and psychology, the Alliance hopes its efforts will cause a chain reaction within the broader health arena.

"It's one thing to teach diversity—but it's another thing to make it happen in practice. And this is our challenge," says Sullivan. "Our goal is to place many more minority students into the health education pipeline and we aim to do this by working in the states—building alliances with various health, business, community and education groups to get the job done."

Thus far, the Alliance has been successful in organizing statewide alliances in

Virginia, Nebraska and Florida, and is working to replicate these models in other states. In partnership with the American Medical Association, National Medical Association and National Hispanic Medical Association, the Alliance has been instrumental in stimulating the formulation of a special commission on diversity among practicing physicians. In addition to working with the American Dental Education Association and the American Physical Therapy Association, the Alliance has also sponsored a best practices conference highlighting successful diversity efforts among students and faculty in fifty different programs for health professionals.

"I am excited and optimistic that by working with our Joint Center partners and bringing our collective body of knowledge, skills and contacts to bear on this challenge, we will have greater diversity in our health professions—and with that a system that is just and fair, delivering the very best care to all Americans."

"THE JOINT CENTER IS UNIQUE WITHIN THE WASHINGTON, DC POLICY

RESEARCH COMMUNITY. IT TAKES ON THE ISSUES THAT OTHERS IGNORE

OR RELEGATE TO SECOND PLACE, AND IT ORIENTS ITS RESEARCH TO NOT

JUST MEASURING THE EXTENT OF A PROBLEM, BUT TO LEADING THE WAY

TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM ITSELF. FROM RACIAL DISPARITIES IN HEALTH

OUTCOMES, TO THE NEEDS OF A YOUNG GENERATION AT RISK, THE JOINT

CENTER IS NOT AFRAID TO TACKLE THE MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES FACING

OUR SOCIETY."

STEPHEN J. HEMSLEY, PRESIDENT AND CEO, UNITEDHEALTH GROUP



"I am grateful for our involvement in the Joint Center's Place Matters Initiative. *Place Matters'* innovative approach to health and social equity has motivated and guided us in developing the framework for looking at the 'upstream' causes of inequity to communities of color in King County and launching the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative."

The Honorable Ron Sims
King County Executive
Washington State



Dr. Barbara Ferrer,
Executive Director
of Boston's Public
Health Commission

PLACE MATTERS

Casting a Wider Net in Public Health *Place Matters* and the City of Boston Look to Reduce Racial Disparities in Health Outcomes

Several years ago, the Executive Director of Boston's Public Health Commission, Dr. Barbara Ferrer, took a close look at health outcomes in her city and didn't like what she saw.

"Boston is home to a dozen world-renowned teaching hospitals, 26 comprehensive community health centers, exceptional science research and development programs, and more than a dozen prestigious academic centers," she says. "Yet we were finding unacceptable and persistent inequities in health and serious gaps in health care that are based upon race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status."

"We found that for most of the health outcomes that we tracked, black residents in the city experienced higher rates of morbidity and mortality when compared with white residents. This held true starting at birth, when black babies in Boston are

three times more likely than white babies to die within their first year of life, until death, where life expectancy for black residents was significantly shorter when compared to white residents," says Dr. Ferrer.

"We began acting on our belief that the health care system itself is only partly responsible for the health of the population," she adds.

And that notion is at the very heart of *Place Matters*, a national initiative of the Joint Center's Health Policy Institute, which is designed to improve the health of participating communities by addressing social conditions that lead to poor health. The initiative brings community focus and action to research showing that patterns of health, illness, and health disparities can be modified if the social conditions that lead to poor health are changed.

In 2003, under the leadership of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the city's Public Health Commission made Boston one of the first communities in the country to establish a citywide "blueprint" for

addressing racial and ethnic disparities in health, as well as to create a special task force to make recommendations and pursue policy options for addressing this challenge. At the time, Dr. Ferrer served as Deputy Director of the Commission.

The initiative led to Boston's participating and leadership in *Place Matters*, which now has 16 teams across the country, focusing on 21 counties and 3 cities.

According to Dr. Ferrer, the addition of the *Place Matters* initiative has provided a local and national lens through which she and her colleagues in Boston can view their work. "It challenges us to think strategically about our health equity work here in Boston. "Above all, we see this partnership as playing an integral role in connecting Boston and other communities and organizations across the country to a larger national movement for health equity."

The Health Costs of Inequality Joint Center Works to Raise Public Awareness of Health Disparities

Focusing less on prescriptions for pills and more on addressing racial equality might do our health care system a world of good. That's the lesson to be learned from *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?*, a four-hour television documentary with seven episodes airing on PBS stations across the country in 2008. The documentary investigates sources of the nation's health inequities, how health and longevity are closely correlated with class and socio-economic status, and additional health risk burdens imposed by racism. The Joint Center's Health Policy Institute worked with California Newsreel on this project and on accompanying educational and outreach materials



Dr. Adewale Troutman is director of Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness. In Episode One, he takes us on a tour of Louisville's neighborhoods and helps explain the health impacts of class, "race," and neighborhood.



African-American moms deliver pre-term, low-weight babies at twice the rate as white moms. (Episode Two)

that organizers hope will serve to promote local community dialogues and cross-sector alliances aimed at advocacy for reform.

"*Unnatural Causes* illustrates perfectly the complexity of health inequities in the United States. Those of us who are deeply engaged in community-based work and eliminating these inequities must understand and address the full range of social and economic determinants of health. This film is an essential tool."

Sandra R. Gregg, Vice President
Communications and External Relations
Kaiser Permanente

PUBLICATIONS

African Americans and Homeownership: The Subprime Lending Experience, 1995 – 2007

November 2007



“The Joint Center’s illuminating research on the recent subprime lending experience is timely and important. The briefs on African American home

ownership provide statistical analysis with scholarly rigor and detail, in a readable, easily understandable format. Together the briefs provide history and documentation not only of the importance of home equity but also of the riskiness and precariousness of home ownership for African Americans, especially in the face of racial discrimination and subprime lending.”

Jessica Gordon Nembhard, Ph.D., African American Studies Department, University of Maryland, College Park and member of the Ford Foundation “Closing the Racial Wealth Gap” Task Force

Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

December 2007



“I am often asked, ‘What was so different about your situation, why did you decide to change your mindset?’ My answer is, I don’t know—resilience, a sense of

urgency, wanting more out of life than many of my peers from my hometown achieved, or maybe just wanting to prove wrong all of the people you looked at as a young man of color and said, ‘You are just like the rest of them and will amount to nothing.’ What I can say, however, is that I was given the opportunities and expanded on them. With the establishment of more quality child welfare programs that focus on the acquisition of concrete skills for navigating and functioning in today’s society (with an emphasis on educational attainment), many of the young men of color aging within the system will have far more favorable outcomes.”

Christopher St. Vil, a doctoral candidate at Howard University’s School of Social Work and Member, Joint Center’s Task Force on the Reproductive Health and Behavior of Young Men of Color

Race, Stress, and Social Support: Address the Crisis in Black Infant Mortality

September 2007



“Every year tens of thousands of African Americans die prematurely from preventable health problems. The tragedy is that this pattern begins at

birth. This is simply unacceptable in the wealthiest nation on earth. There is much that we need to learn about the causes of health disparities but we know enough to act, and to act decisively. Since the major factors creating disparities in disease are socially determined, they can be socially ameliorated. We can improve living and working conditions and tear down the barriers to good health. We can and must work to give every child the opportunity for health. Without good health our children cannot pursue life, liberty and happiness.”

David R. Williams, Florence & Laura Norman Professor of Public Health and Professor of African and African American Studies and of Sociology, Harvard School of Public Health

Retirement Prospects and Perils: Public Opinion on Social Security and Wealth by Race, 1997 – 2005

April 2007



“This report has added greatly to our understanding of the critical role that Social Security plays in helping older Americans protect themselves from the

vagaries of our economy. We are pleased to be able to cite its findings in our own synthesis work done by those concerned with income security in America.”

Pamela J. Larson, Executive Vice President National Academy of Social Insurance

FOCUS—The Magazine of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies



“FOCUS Magazine provides me with information that I cannot find anywhere else, and this information proves extremely valuable in

addressing issues that we confront each day as public officials.”

*The Honorable Deborah Sims
Cook County, IL Commissioner
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National Association of Black County Officials*

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