



**JOINT  
CENTER**  
— FOR —  
POLITICAL  
AND ECONOMIC  
STUDIES



JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES | 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



# *A new era in politics and self-governance.*

*A more perfect union is within our grasp.*

*Research—Analysis—Policy Development*







THE JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES IS ONE OF THE NATION'S LEADING RESEARCH AND PUBLIC POLICY ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE ONLY ONE THAT FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON THE CONCERNS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS AND OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR. IT SEEKS TO IMPROVE THEIR SOCIOECONOMIC AND HEALTH STATUS THROUGH ITS CONTRIBUTIONS OF HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH AND INFORMED ANALYSIS TO CRITICAL PUBLIC POLICY DEBATES. ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS LEADERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, LOOK TO THE JOINT CENTER FOR ITS UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ON EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY AND BUILDING A BETTER AND MORE JUST SOCIETY.

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## THE HONORABLE JOYCE LONDON ALEXANDER FORD CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS



For nearly four decades, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies has fostered a legacy of commitment to increasing civic participation among African Americans, generating cutting-edge research, driving policy innovations and informing the debate on issues of concern to people of color and the nation as well.

Our heritage spans the arc of history between the early days of voting rights and a recent event that so many never thought we would see in our respective

lifetimes: the election of an African American President.

While some may look at what happened in 2008 as a culmination of the Joint Center's longstanding efforts, this event actually heralded a new era of

transformation and challenge, and represents yet another beginning for this venerable organization.

With America's demographics evolving more rapidly than any other country, the task of addressing persistent inequalities in health care, education, employment, housing, crime and other areas becomes even more critical to the fulfillment of our nation's historic promise of equal justice under the law. In light of the aforementioned, the Joint Center is determined to continue moving forward with renewed vigor and determination to deliver on our historic mission of inspiring our country to live up to its promise of equal opportunity and justice for all.

Under the banner of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and its 40-year legacy of expanding hope and opportunity, the Center's Board urges us to collectively summon our resources, our ideas and our aspirations to build a better America for all.

RALPH B. EVERETT  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



For an organization that has long focused on nurturing civic and political involvement, the past year has been one of both accomplishment and renewal.

To be sure, the election of Senator Barack Obama as our 44th President was an astonishing event that sent a message of almost incalculable impact and value to people of all races. It also served as a reminder that the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, now approaching its 40th

anniversary, has always been about transformation—aiming high and challenging America to be that “more perfect union,” while staying focused on the everyday issues that are also at the source of our mission and purpose.

Our task has taken on new importance in this era of enormous challenge and economic uncertainty. Opportunity and positive outcomes in many areas—from education, employment and the environment to health care and housing—are still lagging in too many of our communities. There is work to be done.

That is why, every day, we work to strengthen and equip this organization to translate our mission and our vision into practical improvements in the communities we serve, and to make change happen in ways that people can feel.

It is why we continue to build on the capabilities of the Joint Center’s Health Policy Institute, where groundbreaking work is being done to address health inequalities that continue to afflict communities of color. It is why we have created the Media and Technology Institute, and given it the task of exploring pathways to greater equity, education and opportunity for people of color in both the traditional media and in the new digital world.

It is why our new Commission to Engage African Americans on Climate Change is working diligently to inform communities of the disproportionate impacts of climate change and to ensure that people of color have a voice and are able to share their perspectives and ideas as part of the mitigation efforts. And it is why we are targeting economic security as a key element of a new Civic Engagement and Governance Institute, to be launched in 2009, which will elevate and enhance the Joint Center’s historic role in promoting civic and political participation as a pathway to greater equality and social progress.

Through it all, we approach our work with the understanding that these times call for broader and more intense citizen engagement, a deeper understanding of how economic and social issues affect communities of color, and a focus on what policy course to chart for the new century.

Yes, our aims have been ambitious. But they are grounded in our faith in America’s greatness as a country where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

We welcome you to join us on this quest.

Beginning its work in 1970, a time when there were less than 1,500 black elected officials nationwide, the non-partisan Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies sought to provide technical assistance to emerging black leaders on how to get elected to office and, once elected, how to provide quality representation to constituents. Founded by Dr. Kenneth Clark, a social psychologist, and Louis Martin, the legendary newspaper editor and adviser to three U.S. Presidents, the Joint Center's training programs and networking activities facilitated the steady rise of African American representation at all levels of government.

Throughout the 1970s, the Joint Center worked to create a space for African American political leaders at all levels to come together to jointly develop policy options. Out of these activities came the formation of the Congressional Black Caucus and similar organizations representing black elected officials at other levels of government, among which the Joint Center now plays a coordinating role in policy discussions and activities.

In the years that followed, the Joint Center branched out into research and policy development, steadily building its reputation as a resource for knowledge, information and ideas on the issues of concern to African Americans and other people of color.

As communities have become increasingly challenged by racial disparities across health, economic and social concerns, the Joint Center has reframed its efforts by establishing centers of excellence focusing on health policy and on media and technology, with a civic engagement and governance institute to be launched in 2009 and an education policy and opportunity institute now in the early planning stages. These core institutes will be at the forefront of the Joint Center's efforts to provide cutting-edge research, scholarly analysis and policy development activities to advance equality and opportunity for all Americans in the 21st century.

## THE JOINT CENTER TODAY



With the number of black elected officials now at more than 10,000, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies continues to provide political and civic leaders with a solid foundation of research and analysis, technical assistance, policy ideas and networking opportunities—while seeking to expand political participation and civic participation in the African American community. Widely known as the premier source of information on the black electorate and political leadership, the Joint Center contributes to a wider understanding of civic and political engagement in making America a better place for all citizens.





### INITIATE RESEARCH

The Joint Center is a catalyst for research on topics of concern to African Americans and other people of color. Our approach includes identifying emerging issues and developing research parameters, as well as collaborating with well-known scholars in conducting rigorous investigations and studies.

### CONDUCT OBJECTIVE AND SCHOLARLY ANALYSIS

Through data collection and statistical analysis of information gathered from a variety of sources, we facilitate extensive analysis of issues through the lens of the African American community.

### GUIDE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Joint Center ensures the views of African Americans and other people of color are considered in the public policy development process. We do this by providing elected and appointed officials direct access to our body of work, as well as to subject matter experts associated with the Joint Center.

### BUILD COALITIONS TO GENERATE POLICY SOLUTIONS

Recognizing that complex issues require the interest, understanding and commitment of our wider society, the Joint Center establishes a space where disparate interests can find common ground and move forward toward policy solutions.

### PROMOTE CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

The Joint Center continues to promote civic and political engagement—and support black leadership—as the primary route to greater equality and opportunity for people of color. With our extensive polling of African American voters, we are the nation's key source of information on the black electorate and the elected and appointed officials who represent them at all levels of government.

### RAISE VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS

We publicize our research findings in relevant policy circles and among targeted audiences through our publications and our foundation partners, and with the general public through traditional and new media. The Joint Center's magazine, FOCUS, provides up-to-date analysis and opinions to a diverse audience that includes all of the nation's black elected officials.

## A FORCE FOR CHANGE

The Joint Center played an important role in creating a number of key organizations that represent black elected and appointed officials at the local, state and national levels. Today, it serves as the convener of the National Policy Alliance (NPA), which coordinates regular policy discussions and activities among these groups.

By strategically aligning these groups, the NPA brings to bear their collective influence as a force for change in our society.

### NATIONAL POLICY ALLIANCE

**BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT**

**CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS**

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK COUNTY OFFICIALS**

**NATIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**NATIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

**NATIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS**

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK MAYORS**

**WORLD CONFERENCE OF MAYORS**

*“As the convener of the National Policy Alliance, the organization that brings together membership organizations representing more than 10,000 black elected officials from the local, state and federal levels, the Joint Center plays a valuable role in developing and disseminating research on the most important policy issues of our time. Time and again, this organization has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that African American voices and perspectives are part of our national policymaking process.”*

State Senator Rodney Ellis (D-TX)

## FOCUS MAGAZINE

Since 1972, FOCUS magazine has provided coverage of national issues to an audience of elected officials, private sector leaders and nonprofit stakeholders. Nearly 16,000 readers, half of whom are black elected officials, value the magazine for its analytical, yet straightforward features on politics, as well as a broad range of economic and social policy concerns affecting African Americans and the nation at large.



## THE NATIONAL POLICY ALLIANCE: A VOICE OF AMERICA'S BLACK ELECTORATE

The National Policy Alliance met for its two-day Biennial Summit in Washington, DC in January 2008, where participants discussed subprime lending, education, childhood obesity, criminal justice, HIV/AIDS and economic development. In addition to networking and brainstorming on policy issues, the NPA delegates heard from surrogate speakers for the two leading candidates for the Democratic and Republican presidential nominations and had the opportunity to ask a variety of questions on issues ranging from health care to international policy and environmental justice.



## NPA PARTICIPATES IN REGIONAL EQUITY SUMMIT

In March 2008, the NPA met in New Orleans as part of the National Summit on Equitable Development, Social Justice and Smart Growth hosted by the national research and action institute PolicyLink. Members of NPA organizations participated in the Summit and held their own panel discussion highlighting regional equity issues and discussing policy alternatives aimed at connecting low-income/low-wealth communities to resources and opportunity.



*“If knowledge is power, then the Joint Center is empowering all of us.”*

Senator Barack Obama (D-IL)  
Annual Dinner of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies  
April, 2005

## THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGE: A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR TROUBLED TIMES

The current financial crisis, the worst to hit the country since the 1930s, has suddenly brought a range of economic concerns to the top of the national agenda—particularly in the areas of housing, poverty, employment and retirement security. As national, state and local leaders grapple with the complexity of the crisis and craft strategies for resolving it, the Joint Center has refined its research priorities to help ensure that the concerns of African Americans and other people of color are at the forefront of critical policy debates. To support the policymaking process and to encourage understanding and dialogue, the Joint Center has produced a body of work in a number of key economic areas, and we continue to work to address emerging concerns with an eye toward expanding equality and opportunity.

**1 Housing and Finance:** Understanding the recent subprime mortgage meltdown and resulting banking crisis, and particularly its impact on racial and ethnic homeowners and their communities. Evaluating proposals for strengthening oversight of financial markets and predatory lending practices. Assessing the status and effectiveness of various federal and state housing policies, including vouchers and public housing rehabilitation programs.

*At a time of growing distress in the housing market, the Joint Center produced a series of publications highlighting trends in homeownership rates and raising concern about a disproportionate decline in such rates among blacks. We continue to monitor how the recent market failures in subprime lending have affected these rates. The Joint Center has also made recommendations for enhancing the operation of the subprime market to better meet the needs of African Americans and other disproportionately low-income populations.*

**2 Tax Policy and Social Security:** Assessing the benefits and drawbacks of various tax and Social Security reform proposals. Evaluating the impact of recent tax cuts on communities of color. Comparing tax incentives with regular government programs with regard to promoting social goals. Determining the value of economic stimulus programs undertaken via the tax code.

*Social Security is the backbone of financial security for most African American seniors and provides significant financial support to survivors and to the disabled. Thus, changes to the system are likely to affect black families more than other groups. The Joint Center provides an overview of current and past research on Social Security, polling of African Americans on this issue, data on Social Security and African Americans and links to recent news and events.*

**3 Economic Mobility:** Looking at trends in economic mobility across racial and generational lines. Evaluating how factors such as education, discrimination, health, family status, wealth and income volatility drive both upward and downward mobility.

*Successful efforts to encourage low-income families to build wealth may be a critical factor in narrowing the persistent racial and ethnic gaps when it comes to wealth. With support from the Ford Foundation, the Joint Center launched an effort to identify the policies and programs that have been the most effective in fostering asset-building in low-income communities of color in a number of states, and to expand knowledge and awareness of them.*

**4 Wages, Income and Workforce Development:** Analyzing data related to racial and ethnic workers and state/federal minimum wage levels and how they are affected by increases. Studying trends in income inequality and measures aimed at narrowing wage gaps. Assessing unionization and its historic impact on wages and working conditions among African Americans.

*The Joint Center has produced an extensive body of work on employment, training and other labor force issues, including publications on job creation, training needs for black workers in the 21st century, soft skills and cultural competency in the workforce. Research in the area of minority business development has included tracking the expansion and growth of minority firms and the factors affecting their growth and sustainability.*

**5 Poverty:** Assessing poverty rates and trends among racial and ethnic groups. Determining how the economic downturn affects impoverished people and their communities. Evaluating the effect of marriage, family stability and other demographics on reducing poverty.

*People of color in the United States are less likely than white Americans to invest or save for retirement, therefore raising concerns about retirement security in minority communities as members of the Baby Boom generation begin to retire in large numbers. To raise awareness of this issue and to help inform a national policy discussion on the respective roles of employers and government in encouraging individuals to save for retirement, the Joint Center has partnered with Ariel Investments—with support from the Rockefeller Foundation—to study 401(k) participation by race among employees of America's top corporations.*

*“The Joint Center is a valued ally in our work with communities around the country to foster the economic success of families. In particular, the Joint Center’s toolkits on soft skills and the workforce development needs of community-based health facilities have helped numerous practitioners address pressing needs for economic development. The Joint Center’s research products target the everyday issues faced by people on the ground.”*

Annie E. Casey Foundation



## LOOKING AT HOW THE MEDIA INDUSTRY AND EMERGING COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AFFECT AFRICAN AMERICANS AND OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR



Launched in 2008, the Joint Center Media and Technology Institute is a hub for research on

how minority Americans use media, how existing communications policies affect them and how emerging interactive forms of media can expand opportunity for them and their communities.

The rapid and ongoing emergence of new communications technologies presents enormous challenges for African Americans, as well as intriguing new opportunities for their economic, social and political advancement. Among the Institute's initial areas of focus are improving broadband access and online activities among people of color, examining how new media technologies can improve education and health care and exploring ways that emerging technologies can improve civic engagement and political participation.

In November of 2008, the Joint Center hosted a launch event for the Media and Technology Institute at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Among the presenters were William E. Kennard, Esq., former Federal Communications Commission Chairman, Retha Hill of the New Media Innovation Lab at Arizona State University and Larry Irving, the former head of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and now Senior Research Associate at the Media and Technology Institute

Michael K. Powell, Esq., Former Federal Communications Commission Chairman, serves as the Chair of the Joint Center Media and Technology Institute National Advisory Committee.

The Joint Center Media and Technology Institute looks to close gaps and create new opportunities for access to the digital world for both young and old and explore what measures can be taken to enable the media and technology worlds to become an avenue of advancement for people of color.



*“I am tremendously pleased that the Joint Center has established the Media and Technology Institute. I am also happy the Center is reaching out on these issues that are so important to our future. A new day is dawning in this country of ours, and I look forward to the Joint Center being in the vanguard of the hard work that needs to be done to bring all our citizens media they can be proud of and that reflect the great diversity of America. The Joint Center has been a leading voice on so many issues for so many decades, and the Media and Technology Institute is a timely, valuable, and I think necessary addition to that proud heritage.”*

Michael J. Copps, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

## SPURRING ECONOMIC RECOVERY WITH DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

With the goal of generating policy recommendations on how advanced communications technologies can be used to drive progress across a range of issues, the Joint Center partnered with the group Digital Pathway to U.S. Economic Recovery and Prosperity in hosting a session of the Emerging Issues Policy Forum (EIPF) in October in Coral Gables, FL. The event drew a broad cross-section of industry executives, government leaders and consumer representatives to engage in discussions on the potential for broadband and other digital technologies can help reverse the economic downturn and improve the quality of life for all Americans, with a special focus on communities of color.

## JOINT CENTER CONVENES BROADBAND FORUM TO HIGHLIGHT ADOPTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AMONG PEOPLE OF COLOR

Heralding the upcoming launch of its new Media and Technology Institute, the Joint Center held a special Broadband Forum in April 2008 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Keynoting the event was Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), who told the audience “it is truly astounding how actively minority groups are using the new communications technologies, especially wireless data services.” Among the presenters were John Horrigan of the Pew Internet Project, who presented results of his latest research survey focusing on wireless usage rates among key demographics, as well as adoption rates for other online applications. Joy Howell of the Alliance for Public Technology discussed the results of a national contest run by her group, entitled How Broadband Changed My Life, which gathered hundreds of video submissions from traditionally underserved segments of society. And Larry Irving, the former head of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and now Senior Fellow at the Joint Center Media and Technology Institute, focused his remarks on the “digital divide,” the strides made in recent years to close it, and work that remains to be done.

## IGNITING A FAIR HEALTH MOVEMENT



Racial disparities in health status are identified by measures including infant mortality, obesity, chronic

diseases such as diabetes, and rates of poverty and unemployment. Social science research has shown that these gaps can be narrowed if the social conditions that lead to poor health are identified, discussed and changed.

The Joint Center's Health Policy Institute (HPI) was launched in 2002 to convene health policy debates by advancing the participation of neglected voices in the country's ongoing debate over its health care future. HPI's research and analysis helps generate new policy recommendations and prescriptions while raising awareness of important equity and social justice concerns – particularly in the area of the economic, social, behavioral and environmental determinants of health outcomes. With a focus on areas such as infant mortality, risk factors among children and youth, the health of the aged and the prevention and effective treatment of illness, HPI exposes and explores the racial disparities that are present in our health care system while seeking to drive the development of effective, policy-based solutions and to optimize access to quality health care.

## WHAT ARE SOME SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH?

**EDUCATION (QUALITY, AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS)**

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION AND AVAILABILITY**

**TRANSPORTATION**

**ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**LAND USE POLICIES**

**HOUSING STOCK**

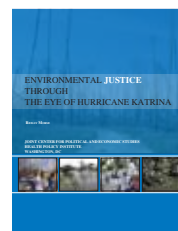
**GENERATIONAL WEALTH**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY**

## SULLIVAN ALLIANCE

Under the leadership of Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services and President Emeritus of Morehouse College, the Sullivan Alliance to Transform America's Health Professions was established to increase diversity in the health professions in order to help reduce racial and ethnic health disparities. Drawing on the experience and expertise of leading health, business, community, education and legal experts, the Sullivan Alliance is actively working to raise awareness of the importance and value of achieving racial and ethnic diversity in the health professions, to disseminate information about “best practices” and resources that enhance diversity; and to stimulate academic programs in the four health professions of medicine, dentistry, nursing and psychology to create new—or more effectively implement existing—diversity initiatives.

Through its national presence, the Alliance is supporting a number of state-level efforts to develop partnerships between minority-serving institutions, health professions education institutions and two- and four-year colleges. Sullivan Alliance partnerships have been expanded in 2008 to several states, including Florida, Nebraska, North Carolina and Virginia, with several other state alliances planned.



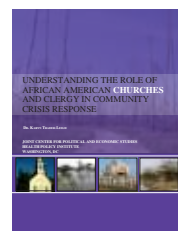
### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE THROUGH THE EYE OF KATRINA BY REILLY MORSE, ESQ.

The Joint Center commissioned a series of reports that examine the fundamental issues that led to different outcomes for Hurricane Katrina survivors which were tied to their race and ethnicity. Author Reilly Morse outlines a number of actions in the 1990s that strengthened the environmental justice movement and, in turn, pinpoints subsequent court rulings and executive branch actions between 2002 and 2007 that dealt it significant setbacks.



### IN THE WAKE OF KATRINA: THE CONTINUING SAGA OF HOUSING AND REBUILDING IN NEW ORLEANS BY JAMES H. CARR, H. BETH MARCUS, SHEHNAZ NIKI JAGPAL AND NANDINEE KUTTY

A thorough examination of the many factors that have delayed or continue to serve as persistent barriers to rebuilding housing stock in New Orleans. The co-authors highlight racial disparities and the social determinants of displacement, inadequate housing and poor health, both pre- and post-Katrina.



### UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES AND CLERGY IN COMMUNITY CRISIS RESPONSE

BY DR. KARYN TRADER-LEIGH

This study documents the failure of government and nonprofit agencies to engage African American clergy and churches as a key resource in responding to the urgent needs of people of color in Katrina's aftermath. The publication outlines a comprehensive set of remedies aimed at ensuring African American ministers and churches are key participants in any and all disaster preparedness planning, recovery and reconstruction efforts in the future.

## HPI'S PLACE MATTERS INCREASES EFFORTS TO ADDRESS SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

A growing body of research clearly supports the notion that the health care system is only partly responsible for the health of populations, and that there are many related social determinants that affect patterns of health, illness and disparities in health outcomes.

This is at the very heart of PLACE MATTERS, a national initiative of the Joint Center's Health Policy Institute and one that is designed to improve the health of participating communities by addressing the social conditions that lead to poor health. This initiative, which consists of 16 locally-based teams covering 21 counties and three major U.S. cities, brings community focus and action to efforts addressing the social determinants of health that are affecting local residents. The PLACE MATTERS teams work to assemble local partnerships to identify the complex underlying causes of health disparities, build leadership capacities to address and eliminate them and inform efforts to establish data-driven strategies and data-based outcomes to measure progress, and establish a national learning community of practice to accelerate applications of successful strategies.

In 2008, HPI convened three Design Labs to build the capacity of local health officials, community leaders and elected officials to identify and share the most effective disparities-reduction strategies for their areas. PLACE MATTERS teams began intensively working to engage a range of sectors within local communities, such as business, labor, faith, civic and other community groups, to improve coordination and create the conditions in which people can be healthy.

## PLACE MATTERS TEAMS AT WORK

As youth violence spirals out of control in **New Orleans**, the PLACE MATTERS team has begun organizing community-based organizations to bring together local leaders who can implement neighborhood level violence prevention strategies. In May 2009, the team will hold the first neighborhood level town hall meeting in a central city community park. The leadership of the PLACE MATTERS Team is critical to bring social determinants of health lens to this violence prevention strategy.

In **Albuquerque, New Mexico**, the PLACE MATTERS team is developing a Health Equity Index tool to guide land use and to inform a health policy advocacy movement—critical because a significant portion of the Latino community lives in neighborhoods with high exposure to air pollution and other contaminants from industry. The PM team experienced its first significant success in 2008 when a local cement plant adjacent to residential housing withdrew its county permit application after resistance from community residents.

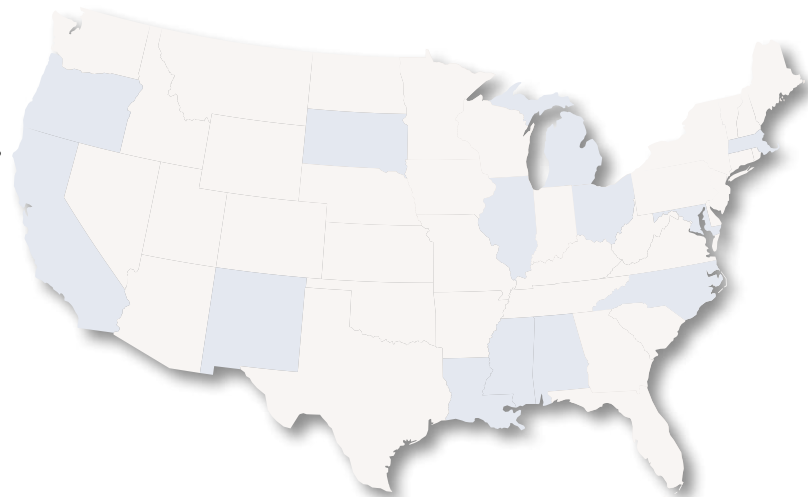
Among its many activities, the **Mid-Mississippi Delta** PLACE MATTERS team is working to expand the federal Safe Routes to School program to incorporate land planners/urban designers and behavioral scientists to explore linkages between lack of physical activity and disciplinary problems experienced in schools. The goal is to increase academic outcomes for children and improve their opportunities for success as they grow older.





## PLACE MATTERS LOCAL TEAMS

Alameda County, CA	Jefferson County, AL	Prince George's County, MD
Baltimore, MD	Marlboro County, SC	San Joaquin Valley Counties
Bernalillo County, NM	Martin Luther King, Jr. County, WA	(Fresno, Kern, Kings, Merced,
Boston, MA	Mid-Mississippi Delta Counties	Madera & Tulare), CA
Cook County, IL	(Coahoma, Washington	Sharkey-Issaquena Counties
Cuyahoga County, OH	& Sunflower), MS	(South Delta), MS
	Orleans Parish, LA	Washington, DC
		Wayne County, MI



## JOINT CENTER LAUNCHES COMMISSION TO ENGAGE BLACK COMMUNITIES IN A NEW DIALOGUE


**COMMISSION TO ENGAGE  
AFRICAN AMERICANS ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE**

Hurricanes Katrina and Gustav highlighted the vulnerability of the African American community to the types of extreme weather that scientists believe will be exacerbated by global climate change. This vulnerability stems not only from weather events themselves, but also from a lack of economic, health and institutional resources to avoid and mitigate global warming's worst effects. Moreover, by affecting the price and availability of energy supplies, global warming mitigation policies could also have a disproportionate impact on African Americans, who on average spend a greater share of their household income on energy.

All of this adds up to an urgent need to increase African Americans' understanding of climate change and its potential impact on their communities, and to ensure they have a seat at the table when climate change solutions and energy policy initiatives are discussed.

In response, the Joint Center in 2008 created the Commission to Engage African Americans on Climate Change, comprised of leading experts representing government, health, industry, civil rights, academia, labor, consumer protection and environmental interests. Chaired by Joint Center President and CEO Ralph B. Everett and Texas State Senator Rodney Ellis, the Commission works

with African Americans and other communities of color to understand the potential impacts of climate change on their communities, and ultimately work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure that energy policies are fair to all Americans. Despite being a new voice within the climate change debate, the Commission has already undertaken high profile work, reaching out to both policymakers and African American communities at large. In addition, the Joint Center's 2008 poll on climate change and global warming – which showed that more than three quarters of Americans think global warming is a problem – put us at the forefront of research into the attitudes of African Americans toward climate change and various proposed solutions.

Meanwhile, in an effort to raise awareness within the academic and legislative communities of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on African Americans, the Joint Center and the Commission participated in the summer of 2008 meeting of the American Meteorological Society and the University Center for Atmospheric Research, as well as in the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, at which key lawmakers met with the Commission's experts in atmospheric science, meteorology, public health, legislative policy and economics to examine which proposed climate change policies would most benefit African American communities.

*“We commit to fostering the full engagement of the African American community in the ongoing domestic policy debate about climate change.”*

Excerpt from Joint Statement of the Clinton Global Initiative and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies



## JOINT CENTER AND CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE COLLABORATE TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

The Clinton Global Initiative, founded in 2005 by former President Bill Clinton, partners with organizations who make specific, measurable commitments to issues such as addressing climate change. In September of 2008, the Joint Center's Commission was honored at the Clinton Global Initiative's Annual Meeting.

*“The Joint Center is a valued partner in our efforts to generate pragmatic and politically viable solutions to America’s toughest policy challenges - in this case, reversing global climate change. With its network of relationships in the research and legislative arenas, the Joint Center is bringing new voices and important perspectives to the table where policy decisions will be made. Together we are working towards climate change mitigation that will be broadly supported and sustainable.”*

Jason S. Grumet, Founder and President of the Bipartisan Policy Center

## BUILDING INFLUENCE AND EXPANDING EQUALITY THROUGH POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

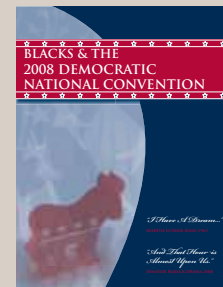
The Joint Center, which was founded for the purpose of helping African Americans move into positions of influence at all levels of government, continues to serve a critical role as a monitoring and coordinating organization for black elected and appointed officials. In addition to supporting these leaders through

information dissemination and policy development activities, the Joint Center closely tracks the preferences of African American voters through opinion polls in an effort to enhance understanding and appreciation of voter attitudes in the African American community.

### NATIONAL OPINION POLLS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

Since 1984, the Joint Center has conducted national opinion polls aimed primarily at determining the political attitudes of African Americans, as well as surveys examining black philanthropy, attitudes toward other countries, the black family, welfare reform and devolution, health policy, regulatory reform and the declining propensity to serve in the military. In prelude to the 2008 presidential election, the Joint Center conducted a national survey of black voters' attitudes about national candidates and issues as well as a statewide poll of South Carolina voters during the primary season.

After Labor Day, the Joint Center fielded a national survey of African Americans with the results released two weeks prior to Election Day. The Joint Center's survey accurately forecast record African American turnout and support for President Obama, results that were corroborated on Election Day.



BLACKS  
THE 2008  
DEMOCRATIC  
NATIONAL  
CONVENTION



BLACKS AND  
THE 2008  
REPUBLICAN  
NATIONAL  
CONVENTION

These sought-after reports are produced by the Joint Center every four years as a service to the Democratic and Republican Convention delegates, political analysts and reporters. Each one contains data on African Americans' party participation, voting patterns and voter preferences on issues. The reports were among the most widely quoted and cited publications produced by the Joint Center in 2008.



## ROSTER OF BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Joint Center has been gathering detailed statistics on black elected officials (BEOs) since 1970. The data concentrates on public officials elected at all levels of office in every state, including the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. Although certain other institutions collect sub-sets of BEO data, the Joint Center gathers data on officials at every level of government with a full range of variables. This data can be aggregated over the 30-year period for which the Joint Center has collected this type of information.

*“No organization has a better understanding of black politics, both in terms of its historical context and where it is headed, and the breadth of African American political leadership in Washington and in communities across the country. The Joint Center’s ongoing and thoughtful analysis regarding African American voter participation and attitudes is essential to enhancing wider knowledge of how our political system works, as well as inspiring innovations to make it work better for all.”*

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## A POST-ELECTION ROUNDTABLE

On November 5, 2008, nearly 100 people, including representatives of national and local organizations, government officials and members of the community, gathered at the Joint Center to discuss and analyze the election results, with panelists offering their views on the shifts in the political map that the Obama victory represented, as well as the challenges facing President Obama and members of the 111th Congress. Panelists included Mayor William D. Euille of Alexandria, VA; Hazel Trice Edney, Editor-in-Chief, National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service and Blackpressusa.com; Mazi Mutafa, co-founder and Executive Director of World Beats and Life; Deborah Simmons,



Editorial Page Editor of *The Washington Times*; Denise Rolark Barnes, Publisher of *The Washington Informer*; Dr. Ronald Walters, Director of the African American Leadership Center, University of Maryland and Dr. David Bositis, Senior Political Analyst at the Joint Center. The event was televised on C-SPAN.





## The Miami Herald

Bardo-Colon, Nicole. "Infant mortality among blacks targeted; A town hall meeting Wednesday in Miami is aimed at finding solutions to the disparity between black and infant deaths and white infant deaths." *The Miami Herald* 16 July 2008.

"So researchers and experts are looking at other possible factors. A study released in 2007 from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' Health Policy Institute linked racism and the stress it puts on the mother to black infant mortality.

The study found that regardless of socio-economic background, black women were more likely to have premature and low birth-weight babies. The effect of racism on their lives was a contributing factor, the study found."

## The Washington Post

Saslow, Eli and Barnes, Robert. "GOP Convention Has Fewest Black Delegates in 40 Years." *The Washington Post* 03 September 2008.

"Only 36 of the 2380 delegates seated on the convention floor are black, the lowest number since the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies began tracking diversity at political conventions 40 years ago. ....The Joint Center reported that the number of black Republican delegates declined for a record 167 in 2004 to this year's 36. According to the think tank, 24 state delegations [have] no black members."

## WALL STREET JOURNAL

Kaufman, Jonathan. "Republicans Falter in Outreach to Blacks, Hispanics." *The Wall Street Journal* 05 September 2008.

"Of the more than 2,300 Republican delegates who gathered this week, just 36—or 1.5%—were black, the lowest portion in 40 years, according to a study by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington think tank that focuses on black issues."



El Nasser, Haya. "For 2010 Census the counting gets tougher; Security issues, hurricanes, immigrants' fears complicate first survey in post 9/11 era." *USA Today* 08 October 2008.

"Roderick Harrison, former head of the Census' Racial Statistics Branch, hopes it works. During test runs, 'field workers were having difficulty transmitting information,' says Harrison, a demographer at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. 'Those types of problems at this point are scary.'"

## The New York Times

Toner, Robin. "Separated by a Quarter-Century of Change, but Linked by Race." *The New York Times* 25 January 2008.

"Contrary to stereotypes, 'Obama's base most certainly hasn't been the black vote,' said David A. Bositis, a senior political analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a research group that focuses on policy issues of concern to African-Americans. 'For most of the past year, that was considered more a part of Hillary's base than Obama's base.'"

## TIME

Gray, Stephen. "Is Obama Doing Enough to Get Out the Black Vote?". *Time Magazine* 15 October 2008.

"Yet the nation's estimated 26.4 million voting-age blacks are crucial to Obama's success. Black voter turnout in the Democratic primaries soared some 115% above 2004 levels, according to an analysis by the Washington-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, which examines black issues. A record 70% of eligible black voters are expected to participate in the 2008 presidential election, a 20% increase from 2004. But the true test lies in battleground states like Ohio, Florida and Virginia, where blacks comprise a significant portion of the electorate. In Florida, for instance, blacks' share of the electorate is expected to rise to 15% from 12% in 2004, when only 44.9% of the state's black voters participated in the presidential election."

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