ANNUAL REPORT 2025

JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES

Our Mission Statement

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, America's Black think tank, provides compelling and actionable policy solutions to eradicate persistent and evolving barriers to the full freedom of Black people in America. We are the trusted forum for leading experts and scholars to participate in major public policy debates and promote ideas that advance Black communities. We use evidence-based research, analysis, convenings, and strategic communications to support Black communities and a network of allies.

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Letter from the President

Dedrick Asante-Muhammad

2025 was a year of **profound change** for our nation and for the work of the **Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies**.

With the inauguration of a new administration and Congress, the year began with a marked decline in Black representation within executive offices, federal agency leadership, and the congressional majority. At the same time, however, important milestones reminded us that progress is neither linear nor erased. For the first time in history, five Black leaders served simultaneously in the United States Senate — Angela Alsobrooks, Lisa Blunt Rochester, Raphael Warnock, Cory Booker, and Tim Scott. The Congressional Black Caucus also reached a historic high of 62 members, its largest membership since its founding.

At the local level, Black political leadership continued to flourish. In 2025, a record 143 Black mayors led cities across the country. Black leaders now govern many of the nation's largest and most influential urban centers, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, and Atlanta. These mayors are not only shaping the futures of their cities, but also influencing national urban policy and the broader economic direction of the states they anchor.

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This past year marked my first full year as President of the Joint Center, and it was a period of significant growth and momentum for the organization. We expanded our public programming, increased the volume and reach of our written policy analysis, and deepened our engagement with national legislators and their staff. Notably, even amid a broader regression in addressing racial inequality, the Joint Center experienced a meaningful increase in both funding and national visibility—an affirmation of the relevance, credibility, and urgency of our work.

Our impact is powered by a small but mighty staff that continues to punch well above its weight. In 2025, we significantly strengthened our organizational capacity through the launch of a new fellowship and internship program, bringing the energy, talent, and perspectives of more than 20 additional individuals into our work. We were also honored to welcome several distinguished leaders to our Board of Directors in 2025, including **Dr. Devin Fergus**, **Nat Hoopes**, **Kimberly Husley**, **La Shaun King**, **Troy Perry**, **Otis Rolley**, and **Lillian Singh**. Their insight, leadership, and commitment have already made a meaningful difference in advancing the Joint Center's mission. As we move into 2026, we are equally excited to welcome **Alexis Holmes**, **Steve Benjamin**, **Derrick Plummer**, **Alyson Northrup**, and **Joi Sheffield** to our Board. Their diverse expertise and dedication to equity will further strengthen our leadership and deepen our capacity to meet this moment.

As we look ahead, the challenges facing Black communities—and our democracy—remain substantial. But so too does the opportunity. With your continued partnership and support, the Joint Center will remain a trusted voice for rigorous analysis, bold policy ideas, and principled leadership in the pursuit of racial and economic equity.

Thank you for standing with us in this critical work.

Sincerely,

Dedrick Asante-Muhammad

President, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

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Letter from Board Chair

Paul Thornell

The Joint Center's 55th anniversary marked a year where the organization accelerated its transformation; steered our attention externally; showed up and made our voice heard; and continued to try to demonstrate what excellence in Black leadership looks like.

There are obvious and increasing headwinds we face. While those are not insignificant, they are reality and do not appear to be subsiding anytime soon. The Summer of 2020 and its "awakening": this is not. Those days seem more than just five years in the rearview in terms of the political, policy, and philanthropic dynamics in our society.

Nonetheless, the Joint Center continues to find ways to manage through these challenges and play bigger than we are. 2025 was meaningful as it marked our new President's first full year as well as our continued transition with a fully formed senior staff team and a significant number of new board members. With this strong complement of Joint Center leaders, we developed and executed a fantastic set of gatherings to showcase Black talent and lift up voices that help advance our key initiatives in tax and wealth policy, technology policy, workforce policy, and government diversity.

Among the events was the celebration of our founding held during the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, at which we brought together national leaders to mark this occasion. I shared the following points in my remarks that day to link the past with the present:

Our founders and initial supporters may have envisioned what we have today in the Joint Center, but I'm guessing they would have had to squint

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really hard to see it and the decades of success we've had. Some things have not changed since the early days. Content and convening were and remain the core pillars of what we do. Harnessing the power of research-driven engagement about issues that matter to Black communities, we advance timely and targeted policy making that will benefit all Americans.

The array of other convenings, reports, and profiles give a collective sample of platforms where the Joint Center is playing offense and taking action in these difficult and complicated times.

- Our Black Policy Playbook co-produced with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation is emblematic of how we partner with key allies to promote policies to improve the condition of Black Americans.
- A Black History Month policy forum on tax issues and job mobility touted elements of a wealth building agenda and a subsequent report on implications of the 2025 tax reform law.
- The Joint Center's annual analysis of the US Senate Democratic staff diversity demographics noted the glaring need for greater inclusiveness in this legislative chamber (Senate Republicans do not publicly release their staffing numbers).
- Honoring Maryland Governor Wes Moore with our annual Louis E. Martin Great American award and being reminded by him that, "The Joint Center was built for a moment like this because the Joint Center was built in a moment like this."
- New York Times coverage of Joint Center commentary on the removal of Black administration officials fired by the President from their positions and the broader lack of diversity in executive branch roles.

There are many key allies in the philanthropic, advocacy, corporate, civil rights, research, and academic worlds that are essential to the Joint Center's work and that support is so valued. We salute those board members that are departing after years of distinguished service: Kenneth Jones, MacArthur Foundation; Tony Williams, Comcast; Carla Thompson Payton, Kellogg Foundation, and Jean-Phillipe Austin.

We are proud of our strengthened foundation — both in mission and operations — with an empowered staff and engaged board. The year ahead will bring more opportunities to frame out the benefits of investing in strategies that deliver solutions for Black communities. We also stand ready to join with coalition partners in pushing back on rearguard efforts to roll back hard-won progress.

Indeed, looking ahead to the year and opportunities ahead is invigorating because of the clarity of purpose embedded in our mission statement: to "provide(s) compelling and actionable policy solutions to eradicate persistent and evolving barriers to the full freedom of Black people in America."

Thank you for your leadership and joining us on this path.

Sincerely,

Paul N.D. Thornell

Board Chair

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

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Celebrating 55 Years

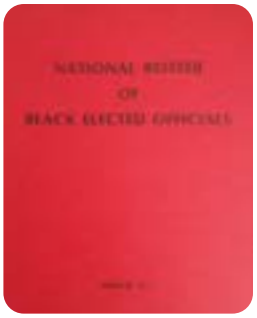
In 2025, the Joint Center celebrated 55 years of policy research, leadership, and advocacy for Black communities. Here are some of the milestones that have defined our journey.

1970

In 1970, political strategist Louis E. Martin as the organization's first Chair of the Board, Howard Law Professor Frank Reeves as the first President, and Psychologist Dr. Kenneth B. Clark launched the Joint Center for Political Studies at Howard University with an $820,000 Ford Foundation grant. Their goal was practical and urgent — turn electoral gains into policy that improved daily life.

Early on, the Joint Center blended policy research, leadership training, and strategic guidance for officials across the country.

1970



We launched our National Roster of Black Elected Officials — the definitive count used by the U.S. Census Bureau and a tool for redistricting and voting-rights enforcement. The growth it tracked—from 1,469 officials in 1970 to 10,000+ today — charts a transformation in American democracy.

1972

We launched FOCUS, a magazine that was consistently ahead of the curve. It covered the digital divide years before it became a federal priority, spotlighted health disparities prior to the health-equity movement, and analyzed climate impacts on communities of color when the field still lacked diversity.

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1973

Eddie N. Williams begins his term as the Joint Center president. With 32 years, he has the longest tenure for this role.

1976

Under Eddie N. Williams, the Joint Center evolved from a joint venture into an independent, nonpartisan think tank, expanding its reach and rigor.

1981

With the support of its board of governors, the organization refined its agenda, choosing to become a full-scale public policy think tank.

1985/6

Our book, Minority Vote Dilution, was extensively cited by the Supreme Court in *Thornburg v. Gingles*, one of the landmark voting rights decisions of the Eighties.

1990

Recognizing that political power alone is incomplete, we expanded the name name of our organization, officially becoming the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

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1993

We opened an office in Johannesburg, South Africa, where we focused on both the political and the economic empowerment of Black South Africans.

2004

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of the Army Hon. Togo D. West, Jr. became our President and CEO, guiding the organization's renewal with cabinet-level experience.

President Jimmy Carter became our first honoree the Joint Center's Louis E. Martin Great American Award.

2006

Margaret Simms was appointed interim President of the Joint Center. In her 20-year tenure across many roles, Dr. Simms brought labor economics expertise, sustained research quality and institutional momentum during key periods.

2007

Ralph B. Everett broadened the Joint Center portfolio to include health, media and technology, and climate.

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2014

Spencer Overton positioned the Joint Center at the forefront of future-of-work research and congressional staff diversity.

2015

The Joint Center turned to documenting underrepresentation among chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors in congressional offices, and offered solutions: data transparency and recruitment pipelines.

2016

We worked with over 45 different organizations to launch the Black Talent Initiative and curate the nation's largest database of Black professionals ready for senior roles in presidential appointments and federal agencies. The BTI network has helped elevate consequential appointments, including Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, Dr. Lisa Cook, Michael Regan, and Shalanda Young.

2017

Our pioneering research documented disproportionate risk of automation: in a survey of 2,400 Americans, 31% of Latino workers and 27% of Black workers were concentrated in just 30 jobs at high risk — evidence to guide inclusive workforce strategies.

2020

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we tracked outsized harms to Black workers and families, informing policy responses.

2023

After five years in a vice president role, Jessica Fulton served as interim president for the organization. As an economist, she brought invaluable expertise on tax policy for Black Americans.

2024

Dedrick Asante-Muhammad became president for the organization bringing deep expertise in the racial wealth divide and economic justice to lead the next chapter.

Joint Center by the Numbers

8.3B Total Media Impressions

1.6K Media Mentions
(24.5 percent increase from 2024)

48 Newsletters

36 Press Releases

33 Meetings

30 Panels + Presentations

26 Op-eds

15 Radio/Podcast Appearances

14 Coalition Meetings

13 Blogs

8 Issue Briefs

7 Events

7 Letters/ Comments

4 TV Appearances

2 Reports

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Our Reach in 2025

The Joint Center's voice reached communities and policymakers across the nation in 2025 — presenting research, convening leaders, and centering Black voices in local, regional, and national conversations.

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Our Research Focus

The Joint Center is currently focused on:

Tax and Wealth Policy

This program is dedicated to improving the socioeconomic status and prosperity of African Americans. With a strong focus on small business, economic development, tax policy, and household economic security, the program aims to create policy solutions that are free from economic barriers.

Government Diversity

This program promotes the importance of Black inclusion among federal government staff. We focus on exposing the lack of racial diversity in key decision-making roles within government and emphasize the need for transparency on racial diversity. Through our Government Diversity work, we conduct credible research, share data, and engage in various meetings, coalitions, and advocacy efforts to increase Black inclusion among top and mid-career "pathway" staff on Capitol Hill.

Technology Policy

This program explores the impact of emerging technologies and developing policy solutions to improve the lives of Black communities. Through research, convenings, and strategic communications, we work with leading experts and scholars to innovate and create new ideas in the tech ecosystem. Our research and analysis provide actionable tech policy solutions to inform decision-making by policymakers.

Workforce Policy

This program centers Black communities in policy debates on the future of work, workforce development, and access to good jobs. Our efforts in this space are dedicated to tracking important trends and ensuring that policy outcomes lead to genuine economic mobility and the creation of good jobs for Black communities. By concentrating on policy research and analysis, we aim to address the most pressing challenges facing Black workers and learners.

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New in 2025

Tax Advisory Committee

To strengthen analysis of how tax policy effects African Americans, we launched our 2025 Tax Advisory Committee, led by Joint Center Senior Researcher Dr. Latoya Parker. This committee played a critical role in informing the Joint Center's tax policy research, helping to shape public discourse around tax policy issues affecting Black communities, and contributing to efforts to close the racial wealth divide.

The members include:

- **Beverly Moran**, professor emerita of law at Vanderbilt University, senior fellow at the Roosevelt Institute, and senior fellow at the Paulus Endowment for Tax Programs at Boston College.
- **Janis Bowdler**, former counselor for racial equity at the U.S. Department of Treasury
- **Jeremie Greer**, co-founder and co-executive director at Liberation in a Generation
- **Brakeyshia Samms**, senior policy analyst and social justice fellow at the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy
- **Portia Allen-Kyle**, interim executive director at Color of Change

New Staff

The Joint Center welcomed the addition of **Sophia Kerby**, Vice President, Government Affairs. With Kerby's leadership, our team has dramatically expanded our Capitol Hill presence this year, establishing direct relationships with 23 congressional offices. Kerby coordinated with the Joint Center research and policy team to provide research to support legislative agendas at both federal and state levels.

The Joint Center welcomed **Cantrell Dumas** as our Senior Researcher for Financial Regulation and Policy. His work focuses on retirement security and intergenerational economic stability among older Black Americans. Previously, Dumas served as Director of Derivatives Policy at Better Markets.

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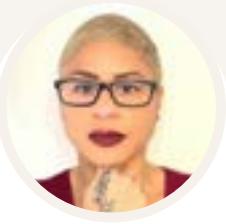
Miseducation of Technology Podcast

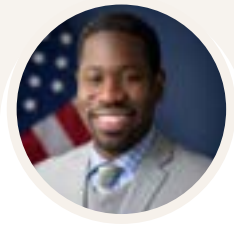
Joint Center Tech Policy Director Danielle A. Davis, Esq., launched her podcast, The Miseducation of Technology, this year. This podcast uncovers how technology reinforces systemic inequities while empowering you to navigate and reshape the digital world. Each episode connects historical injustices to today's digital landscape—from biased hiring algorithms to content suppression. More than critique, this podcast delivers expert insights and real-world strategies to help you reclaim agency in tech.

Jessica Fulton
Senior Fellow

Narda Jones
Associate Fellow



Lettisha Boyd
Associate Fellow



Eric Morrissette
Senior Fellow

We expanded our expertise by creating a fellowship program.
We worked with four fellows in 2025

The Joint Center launched an internship program.
We welcomed ten interns in 2025

Jaidyn Mckinnie, Joya Wheatfall-Melvin, Ja'Darius Littlejohn, Diya Simha, Araceli Chavez, Maddison Brodeur, Tyler Mitchell, Logan De La Torre, C'Kret Lindsey, LeRoi Barrett

Interns LeRoi Barrett, Logan De La Torre, and C'Kret Lindsey presenting their capstone project.

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We welcomed **seven distinguished leaders** to our Board of Directors

Dr. Devin Fergus
Dengler-Dykema Professor of History and Public Affairs at Claremont McKenna College

Nat Hoopes
Vice President of Government Relations and Regulatory Affairs at Upstart

Kimberly Husley
Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer at Stinson LLP

La Shaun King
Assurance Principal at BDO USA, LLP

Otis Rolley
Social Impact Advisor for David Steward at Kingdom Capital

Lillian Singh
Senior Vice President of Family Economic Mobility at Share Our Strength.

Troy Perry
Senior Director of Policy at Omidyar Network

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Coalitions and Advocacy

In 2025, the Joint Center continued its long tradition of speaking out on the issues and policy changes most affecting African Americans, often in coalition with other organizations. We condemned the Trump administration's decision to terminate the entire staff of the Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund. We opposed the attempt to dismiss Federal Reserve Board Governor Dr. Lisa D. Cook and launched a coalition of 12 civic and policy organizations including the NAACP, National Action Network, National Urban League, and more, to reject the dangerous attempt to threaten the independence of the Federal Reserve.

The Joint Center continued to champion the hiring of diverse top staff through five press statements commending members of Congress for hiring top staff of color, releasing an in-depth analysis on the 2025 Senate Democratic Caucus Diversity Numbers, and concluding our hiring campaign which tracked all top staff hires in the 119th Congress.

Chart 1: Top Staff Diversity vs. U.S. Population

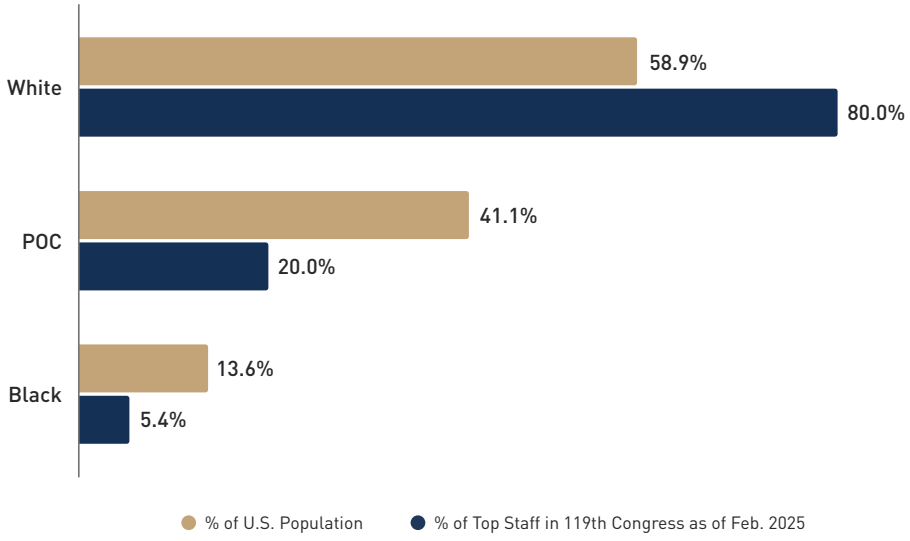

Chart: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Source: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. U.S. Census Bureau. Created with Datawrapper.

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The Joint Center filed comments to the White House in response to its request for information on the development of an AI Action Plan, where we provided policy recommendations designed to integrate workforce resilience, STEM education, entrepreneurship, and AI accountability into the administration's AI Action Plan to ensure Black communities are a part of the economic growth. We also submitted comments on the Universal Service Fund (USF) Working Group, emphasizing the need to modernize the USF to ensure low-income, Black households are meaningfully embedded into the future of universal service. We also applauded the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to uphold the constitutionality of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) administration of the USF, which helps play a vital part in closing the digital divide

We also commended Federal Communications Commission Commissioner Geoffrey Starks amid his official action to step down from his position.

We joined 77 organizations to submit comments opposing a proposed rule that would gut protections for women and workers of color in apprenticeship programs.

We also spoke out on President Donald Trump's executive order to close the Department of Education, a 45-year-old agency with a budget of $268 billion that oversees data collection, school funding, financial aid, and the enforcement of civil rights laws related to education.

In 2025, we joined the National Urban League's Fair Budget Coalition, where we signed onto a letter sent to congressional leaders in support of a fair and inclusive federal budget. We also signed onto an action led by the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund opposing anti-Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) and anti-Critical Race Theory (CRT) riders in FY26 appropriation bills. We joined the National Fair Housing Alliance, signing onto a letter to preserve fair lending regulations.

Publications

Research is central to the Joint Center's mission. In 2025, we released two research reports, 13 blogs, and eight issue briefs spanning all focus areas. Developed in collaboration with staff, partners, advisory boards, and foundations, this work advanced timely, rigorous analysis and informed Black communities across the country. Our research was utilized to inform legislators, advise reporters, convene coalitions and advocacy groups, and advocate for Black communities across the nation. Below is a snapshot of our research publications from the year.

Forward Together: Black Policy Playbook for an Equitable America

This year, a large undertaking was our collaboration with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) for our Forward Together: Black Policy Playbook for an Equitable America. The compendium provided a vital roadmap for addressing key issues affecting Black communities and outlines evidence-based and actionable solutions for lawmakers, advocates, and community leaders.

The policy agenda prioritizes seven key areas for advancing Black communities:

- Voting Rights and Civic Engagement
- Economic Opportunity and Advancement
- Workforce Development
- Education Equity
- Healthcare Access and Affordability
- Criminal Legal System Reform
- Technology and Telecommunications Policies

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Digging Deeper: 2025 Senate Democratic Caucus Diversity Numbers

We released analysis and rankings of the staff offices from the Senate Democratic Caucus' demographic diversity data. Our analysis included 20 graphics detailing the rankings of the top personal and committee offices* with the highest percentage of people of color and shows the personal offices with the highest percentage of Black, Latina/o, Asian American/Pacific Islander, women, and LGBTQ staff.

Racial & Ethnic Representation Among Top Staff in the US House of Representatives

We released "Racial & Ethnic Representation Among Top Staff in the U.S. House of Representatives," which provided a detailed analysis of racial and ethnic disparities among chiefs of staff, legislative directors, communications directors, and full committee staff directors in Washington, D.C.

Centering Black Households in the 2025 Tax Debate

The policy brief, "Centering Black Households in the 2025 Tax Debate," analyzed how the proposed extension of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) would affect Black communities. This brief helped to ensure that the tax code does not unfairly disadvantage Black households or increase economic inequality, policymakers should consider the impact of specific tax proposals, alongside the overall impact on the economy, of implementing particular tax reforms.

The Implications of Section 230 for Black Communities

We published a three-part series of issue briefs exploring how Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act shapes the online experiences of Black communities and why Black voices must be central to any reform efforts. All of the briefs had the same opening title "The Implications of Section 230 for Black Communities" followed by areas of focus: "Black Communities and the Immunity of Platforms Regarding Third-Party Content; "Opportunities and Challenges for Black Communities Due to Content Moderation;" and "The Impact of Section 230 Reforms on Black Communities."

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Shifting the Narrative on Industrial Policy: Opportunities for Genuine Economic Mobility and Good Jobs for Black Communities

The brief, "Shifting the Narrative on Industrial Policy: Opportunities for Genuine Economic Mobility and Good Jobs for Black Communities," examined how recent federal investments in these sectors can be utilized to create quality jobs and long-term economic mobility for Black workers. This project explored eight Black-led and Black-allied organizations' awareness of and engagement with industrial policy and offers messaging principles — stakeholders such as funders, policymakers, and especially Black-led and Black-allied organizations — can use to underscore the importance of these opportunities in an unpredictable policy landscape.

Black Student Parents' Access to Affordable Child Care Support at Community Colleges

We published "Black Student Parents' Access to Affordable Child Care Support at Community Colleges." The brief examined the availability of the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program at community colleges with an enrollment of at least 40 percent Black students and offers legislative proposals for congressional reauthorization and adequate appropriations for this critical child care program.

Five Principles to Support Black Workers and Learners in Pathways to Non-Degree Credentials

We published "Five Principles to Support Black Workers and Learners in Pathways to Non-Degree Credentials." The brief offered guidance on how non-degree credential programs — such as certificates, industry certifications, professional licenses, and apprenticeships — can serve as equitable pathways to economic mobility for Black workers and learners as federal investments are reshaping high-growth industries including advanced manufacturing, energy, and technology.

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State of the People Black Papers

Our team served as the co-lead authors for two Black Papers for the State of the People, including "Building An Economy That Works For Us: The Black Economic Vision," which connects Black communities' strengths and the policy changes that will remove structural barriers to Black economic success and "Tax Policy and Economic Justice," which examined the intersection between tax policy and racial economic justice, focusing on how the tax system impacts diverse communities.

Jobs Day Analysis

We provide continuous monitoring of the employment landscape through our "Jobs Day Analysis". Each month, we analyzed the employment numbers released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to provide specific insights into what these figures mean for Black workers nationwide.

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Joint Center Events

Brunch & Exhibition Honoring 55 Years of the Joint Center

The Joint Center turned 55 this year. In celebration of this major milestone, we celebrated with many of our supporters and partners in our 55th Anniversary Brunch and Exhibition, where we celebrated 55 years of policy, progress, and influence.

During this gathering of community and culture, we reflected on the history of the Joint Center as America's Black think tank, the evolution of public policy institutions, and the future of equitable, evidence-based leadership through our exhibition of photos on display throughout the brunch.

Dedrick Asante-Muhammad (President, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies), Juan Williams (Author & Journalist), Shavon Arline-Bradley (President & CEO, National Council of Negro Women), Jotaka Eaddy (Founder & CEO, Full Circle Strategies; Founder, Win With Black Women , and panel moderator Monica Mitchell (Chief of Staff, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies).

Panelists, **Dedrick Asante-Muhammad** (President, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies), **Shavon Arline-Bradley** (President & CEO, National Council of Negro Women), **Juan Williams** (Author & Journalist), and **Jotaka Eaddy** (Founder & CEO, Full Circle Strategies; Founder, Win With Black Women) shared their unique perspectives on how Black organizations are meeting the current moment for Black communities.

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2025 Louis E. Martin Great American Award Ceremony

This year, the Louis E. Martin Great American Award — the Joint Center's highest honor — was presented to Maryland Governor Wes Moore.

Governor Moore is the 63rd Governor of the state of Maryland, the first Black Governor in the state's 246-year history, and the third African American elected as governor in the history of the United States.

> *The Joint Center was built for a moment like this because the Joint Center was built in a moment like this.*

> *I thank the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, not simply for this honor, but for the decades of service that have defined one of America's great institutions of economic empowerment. I stand on broad shoulders, shaped and shepherded by the Joint Center. Together, we will continue to deliver the kind of progress that those who came before us fought for, and those who come after us deserve.*
>
> ***Wes Moore** — 63rd Governor of the state of Maryland*

The Washington DC-based ceremony also included a policy discussion with distinguished panelists: **Shalanda Young**, (43rd Director of the United States Office of Management and Budget); **Rey Ramsey**, (President and CEO of Nathan Cummings Foundation); and **Dedrick Asante-Muhammad**, (President of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies), as the moderator.

The Louis E. Martin Great American Award recognizes individuals who have made transformational contributions that further the promise of America as a land of hope and opportunity for all.

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The Wealth Agenda: Seizing the Moment for Black Economic Advancement

The Joint Center hosted The Wealth Agenda: Seizing the Moment for Black Economic Advancement.

This convening served as a platform to highlight critical issues and solutions at the intersection of economic mobility, tax reform, and green economy access.

The event included two panel discussions:

Panel 1: ***The Green Opportunity Gap – Expanding Access for Black Economic Mobility***

Panelists:

- **Jason Grumet**, President, American Clean Power Association, and founder of the Bipartisan Policy Center *(moderator)*
- **Danielle Deane-Ryan**, Senior Fellow, The New School Tishman Environment and Design Center, former Senior Advisor, Environmental Protection Agency Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund
- **Paula R. Glover**, President of the Alliance to Save Energy and former President of the American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE)
- **Carla Walker-Miller**, CEO of Walker-Miller Energy Services
- **Natalie Madeira Cofield**, President & CEO of the Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) and former Assistant Administrator at the U.S. Small Business Administration

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Panel 2: ***Reimagining Tax Policy for Black Economic Justice***

Panelists:

- **Dedrick Asante-Muhammad**, President, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies *(moderator)*
- **Sharon Parrott**, President of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- **Portia Allen-Kyle**, Interim Executive Director at Color of Change
- **Chye-Ching Huang**, Executive Director of the NYU Tax Law Center
- **Emanuel Nieves**, Director of Policy and Research Innovation at Liberation in a Generation

Andre Perry, Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Community Uplift at the Brookings Institution, served as the keynote speaker. **Don Graves**, Former Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service Fellow, provided opening remarks at the event.

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The Joint Center at Martha's Vineyard

The Joint Center's Senior Leadership team spent several days at Martha's Vineyard participating in various convenings, including our co-hosted event,"Advancing Economic Power-Building Generational Wealth," with the Association for Enterprise Opportunity.

The Joint Center at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference

During the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, we also hosted the "CBC Small Business Power Luncheon: Building Business Futures" in partnership with AEO and the African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs. Joint Center staff also served as speakers during six sessions including Forward Together: The Black Policy Playbook for Equitable America; AI and the Impact of Technology on US Communities; Shaping Our Future; AI Literacy and Empowering Opportunity; Future of Work: Opportunities and Challenges for Black Workers in the Age of AI; CBCF's Tech Braintrust; and the PCEO Closing Racial Wealth Gap Subcommittee Presentation.

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Non-Degree Credentials Convening

This convening brought together our Non-Degree Credential Advisory Board members and other key stakeholders to discuss the landscape of non-degree credentials and overview principles to center equity in non-degree pathways. Congresswoman Lucy McBath provided opening remarks.

Section 230 Salon Dinner

As Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act remained central to debates on content moderation, misinformation, and platform accountability, we held an intimate salon dinner with key policymakers, civil rights leaders, platform representatives, and philanthropic organizations to discuss our latest research findings and explore actionable solutions.

Journal-isms Roundtable

The Joint Center hosted the Journal-isms Roundtable focused on Jesse Jackson's place in history and discussed the effect of Jackson's campaigns on journalists of color. The discussion hosted several reporters who have covered Jackson's campaigns including A'Lelia Bundles, who covered Jackson's 1984 campaign as a producer for NBC News; Leroy Chapman, editor of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, who shares the same hometown as Jackson, Greenville, S.C.; and Eric Easter, campaign staffer and spokesman for Jackson during his presidential campaigns.

Joint Center Presentations and Panels

Joint Center Presentations and Panels

Joint Center staff engaged in over 25 presentations and conferences held across the country. A few are highlighted below:

During the week of the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, Joint Center Senior Fellow Eric Morrissette moderated "Tariffs, Trade & the Policy Reality for Black-Owned Businesses," a timely discussion on how trade policies and tariffs directly impact Black-owned businesses, with special focus on wine & spirits, retail, and restaurant sectors —and what reforms are needed for equity and market access."

The discussion was part of the "CBC Small Business Power Luncheon: Building Business Futures," which was organized by the Joint Center, AEO, and the African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs. Joint Center President Dedrick Asante-Muhammad provided opening remarks.

Chief of Staff Monica Mitchell and Senior Fellow Jessica Fulton presented on two panels at the Black Policy Conference hosted at the Harvard Kennedy School. Mitchell presented on the panel "Brick by Brick: Building Black Wealth Through Housing," and Fulton presented on the panel "Pathways to Black Wellness and Prosperity."

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Joint Center President Dedrick Asante-Muhammad was a keynote speaker at the Chicago Urban League's State of Black Chicago Summit, where he discussed the state of Black economic and political power in the U.S. Asante-Muhammad also participated in the Hewlett Foundation's Culture, Race, and Equity team grantee convening. This convening focused on understanding New Mexico's history and traditions. The event highlighted former United States Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland.

Joint Center Senior Researcher Dr. LaToya Parker served as a panelist for Columbia University's University Seminars series. The panel was titled "The Fightback: Advocacy and Movement Building to Oppose Harsh Cuts to Public Services and Social Welfare Programs."

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Joint Center Tech Policy Director Danielle Davis, Esq., delivered a Lightning Talk at the State of the Net Conference, titled "Beyond the Algorithm: Safeguarding Children in the Age of Character AI," and served as a panelist for National Council of Negro Women's EdTechQuity Summit on the session "Black Women Innovate: Protecting and Reclaiming Our Digital Futures."

Davis, Esq., also attended the National Black Caucus of State Legislators' (NBCSL) 49th Annual Legislative Conference, where she served as a moderator for the Corporate Roundtable Luncheon Session, titled "Meeting the Moment: Artificial Intelligence and our Workforce."

Joint Center Workforce Policy Director Dr. Kayla Elliott delivered closing remarks at New America's Good Jobs Collaborative's Not Working for Workers: The First 100 Days of the Trump Administration event. The program, which featured Senator Chris Murphy, labor leaders, and policy experts, also served as a debut for the Good Jobs Compass, a new tool to assess how policies support quality jobs and economic security.

Dr. Elliott and Fulton also participated in two panels at the National Skills Coalition's 2025 Skills Summit: "Untapped Potential of Non-Degree Credentials" and "Communicating in Polarized Times: Challenges and Strategies," respectively.

Workforce Senior Policy Analyst Justin Nalley and Policy Analyst Dr. Gabrielle Smith Finnie presented their research at the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education 2025 - Breaking Boundaries: Cultivating Inclusive Leadership Conference. They provided an overview of the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program (CCAMPIS) trends, explored whether the program serves community colleges with high Black student enrollment, and discussed recommendations to improve CCAMPIS and center Black student parents in federal policy.

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Communications

Media and Op-Eds

This year we published numerous opinion essays within the economic, tax, and wealth, government diversity, and tech policy space. These op-eds provided timely analysis and commentary on economic trends, tax proposals, inequalities in legislative representation, artificial intelligence policy changes, and the structures contributing to the racial wealth divide. These essays sought to ensure that policy outcomes benefit Black communities nationwide. We published our essays in numerous publications including the Financial Times, URL Media, the Washington Informer, OtherWords, BlackPressUSA, and more.

We published over 25 in 2025. The full list of opinion essays published this year includes:

1. "Black History Month: Celebrating Progress While Confronting Inequality" (OtherWords)
2. "Trump's War on Federal Workers Threatens Both Current and Future Black Generations" (Washington Informer)
3. "Assessing Trump's Recent Executive Orders And Its Impact on African Americans" (Washington Informer)
4. "The Past Is the Future: Why Black Policy Infrastructure Is the Key to Lasting Change" (URL Media)
5. "African Americans and the Extension of Trump's Tax Cuts" (URL Media)
6. "Bitcoin ATMs reprise a painful history in finance" (Financial Times)
7. "The Green Opportunity Gap: Expanding Black Access for Economic Mobility" (Washington Informer)
8. "Defending Federal Reserve independence and Black leadership in the face of renewed attacks" (URL Media)
9. "We've Been Here Before: What the Reagan Era Can Teach Us About the Trump Years" (Washington Informer)
10. "The 'One Big Beautiful Bill' Will Continue to Redistribute Wealth to the Wealthy" (URL Media)
11. "Black Wealth Infrastructure as a Safety Net" (Afro)
12. "Black student parents can thrive with access to this critical federal program" (URL Media)
13. "A Cruel and Short-Sighted Attack on Community Investment" (Washington Informer)
14. "Investing in entrepreneurship after the government shut down" (URL Media)
15. "The struggle of small businesses amid government shutdowns" (URL Media)
16. "The economy is quivering this Thanksgiving" (URL Media)
17. "The Hollowing Out of America's Only Agency for Minority Business" (Washington Informer)
18. "Behind the 'One Big Beautiful Bill': Wealth for the Few" (Word in Black)
19. "Yes, We Need Jobs. We Need Black Wealth, Too" (Word in Black)
20. "The Civil Rights Generation, The Great Wealth Transfer and Our Need to Address the Racial Wealth Divide" (Generations, American Society on Aging)
21. "The False Neutrality of Trump's 'Woke-Free' AI Plan" (Tech Policy Press)
22. "The Universal Service Fund Is Legal—Now Make It Legitimate" (Tech Policy Press)
23. "It's Not Just Who's Elected — It's Who They Hire" (Washington Informer)
24. "How Industry Sector Partnerships Can Bridge the Racial Workforce Gap" (Washington Informer)
25. "Walmart, Trump, and Affordability" (Joint Center)
26. "Shifting Our Mindset from Scarcity to Liberation: A Call to Action for National Black Business Month" (Joint Center)

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We also showed up in the media, consistently advocating for Black communities in national outlets. In 2025, Joint Center experts were cited in over 1,551 media mentions across national outlets including...

The list of major outlets include Axios, Black Enterprise, CNN, The 19th, AURN Radio, Comcast Newsmakers, Keepin It Real with Rev. Al Sharpton, Newsweek, Tavis Smiley, I Heart Radio, NBC News, Essence, Aljazeera, The Black Pack podcast, CNET, BlackPressUSA, KFF Health, Blavity, TechTank podcast, CBS News, The New York Times, Yahoo News, MSN, FiscalNote, and the Black Gems Dive In podcast.

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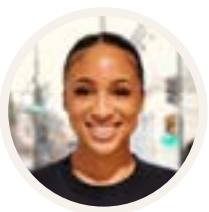

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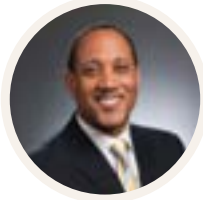

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We thank Kenneth Jones, Tony Williams, Dr. Jean-Philippe Austin, and Carla Thompson Payton for their time and work spent on the Joint Center Board.

*Transitioned off the board in 2025.

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thank you

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