2017 MEDIA IMPACT GUIDE
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

NBJC Announces New Executive Director

NBJC in the Media

Political Engagement Highlights

Summit on Black Lives

HBCU-LGBTQ Equality Initiative

2017 E-blasts
The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and same gender loving (LGBTQ/SGL) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, is honored to present our 2017 Media Impact Guide. NBJC brings voice on behalf of Black LGBTQ/SGL people, takes action to eradicate racism and LGBTQ/SGL bias/stigma, and builds networks with stakeholders from the grassroots to the national stage. The content of this book outlines the organization’s efforts to drive this mission nationally and includes all major media releases, e-blasts, published op-eds, and news articles that feature NBJC.
September 13, 2017 01:55 AM

Washington, DC—The leadership of the National Black Justice Coalition announced today that David J. Johns has assumed the role of Executive Director as of September 1, 2017. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) is a civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS. NBJC’s mission is to end racism, homophobia, and LGBTQ bias and stigma.

“Growing up as a little Black boy in Inglewood, California, I did not meet or see people who showed up in the world like me—strong Black men who are equally proud about their Blackness as they are about being same gender loving,” stated David J. Johns. “I want people to see me, to know that I exist—that we, as a community, refuse to hide or check parts of who we are at the door, shrink or otherwise fail to show up in our fullness—knowing who we are and whose we are. I assume this responsibility, in part, because it’s important for me to show up for younger people the way I wish adults had shown up for me—fully, honestly and without apology.”

In 2013, Johns was appointed as the first executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans by President Barack H. Obama and served until the last day of the Obama Administration in January, 2017. The Initiative worked across federal agencies, and with partners and communities nationwide, to produce a more effective continuum of education and workforce development programs for African American students of all ages.

Prior to his White House appointment, Johns was a senior education and workforce development policy advisor to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) under the leadership of U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa). Before working for the Senate HELP Committee, under the leadership of Tom Harkin, Johns served under the leadership of the late U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA). In addition, Johns has been a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Fellow in the office of
Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY). Johns has worked on issues affecting low-income and minority students, neglected youth, early childhood and k-12 education, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) among others. His research as an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow served as a catalyst to identify, disrupt and supplant negative perceptions of black males—both within academia and society.

Johns has been featured as an influential politico and advocate by several publications and outlets, including TheRoot.com, CNN, NBC, BET, EBONY and The Washington Post.

“During my tenure, I plan to focus deeply on the empowerment of the Black family, which includes the families we are born into as well as those we create—while honoring the opportunity to remain a central repository for advocating for and responding to the needs of Black LGBTQ/SGL individuals and communities. Critical to this work is engaging all Black people in transformative dialogues that honor the diversity of Black families and the roles that Black LGBTQ/SGL people continue to play—in both family and community—and advancing policies that ensure civil rights for Black LGBTQ/SGL people,” Johns continued.

Johns succeeds Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks, who led NBJC for eight years. Lettman-Hicks will continue her role as the Chief Executive Officer of NBJC and focus on board development, infrastructure and long-term sustainability.

“I had the pleasure of working directly with David Johns when I was appointed to serve on the Commission of the White House Initiative on Education Excellence for African Americans, where David served as the Executive Director,” Lettman-Hicks said. “David’s mere presence fills a room. His intellectual prowess, compassionate heart, and deeply-rooted knowledge of public policy and the plight of underserved and marginalized communities—especially the African American experience—gives me more than hope for our work and future leadership in Black America. He defines excellence and leaves no challenge unanswered. Johns is exactly the right person to articulate our needs and understand our connectedness to our families.”

Johns added, “As the Executive Director of NBJC, I will lead aggressive campaigns that disrupt and supplant deleterious stereotypes about Black LGBTQ and same gender loving people. These campaigns and related activations will, among other things, highlight more of the diversity that exists within and makes our community strong.
At the foundation of NBJC’s programmatic efforts is to provide critical information to our constituency about the impact of public policy decisions made in Washington. Our goal is to provide political education to an informed and mobilized constituency to speak truth to power that produces positive change for our communities!
Durham activist Mandy Carter encouraged collaborative activism in the era of President Donald Trump during a talk Wednesday.

Carter, co-founder of the National Black Justice Coalition, spoke to a group of students, faculty and community organizers about social change and activism as part of the Gender Wednesday series sponsored by Duke's Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies program.

As many Duke students ponder the future of Trump’s presidency, Carter talked about the importance of taking current setbacks in stride and constantly looking toward the long-term goal. She cited President Barack Obama’s 2013 speech at the Lincoln Memorial on the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s iconic “I Have A Dream” speech as support for her vision.

“Do you think people sitting there 50 years earlier would have said, I guess we’re going to see that?” she said. “Think about that. That’s what you call ‘losing forward.’”

A black lesbian activist, Carter said she takes an intersectional approach toward social change. She noted the historical oppression of women, black Americans and members of the LGBTQ+ community as a call for collaboration among people of different backgrounds.

“So who do you think should be in conversation with each other?” she said. “We don’t always have to agree on everything, but the fundamental principle remains.”

In Carter’s opinion, politics play a strong role at the local level. Civic engagement and change occur at the Durham City Council and begin with conversation, she said.

She emphasized the importance of bridging the Duke and Durham communities, citing the power of social media platforms like Facebook to connect students with organizations and events off campus.

Noting that college campuses are critical centers of social change, Carter commended Duke for deciding to join 16 other universities in a brief opposing President Trump’s executive order on immigration.
“I would like to say thank you to Duke and the other campuses for standing up and speaking out and making a difference in terms of how this change can happen,” she said.

Carter also said she implores Duke students who might be skeptical of activism’s efficacy to “consider the power of one.”

She recommended that Duke students begin by engaging each other in conversation on campus, using cultural resources like the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture and the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity.

First-year Gino Nuzzolillo said he attended Carter’s talk to get ideas about how he can become more politically active on campus and in Durham as a whole. Nuzzolillo noted that he is particularly concerned with Trump’s disrespect for the norms of political processes and his “dangerous rhetoric,” which he believes “mirrors [that] of authoritarian leaders we’ve seen before.”

When asked to respond to critics who argue that recent protests undermine our nation’s ability to move forward, Carter responded that she is not just organizing against Trump or his administration but against policy decisions.

“I had issues with some of President Obama’s policies too,” she said. “A bad policy is a bad policy. You want to make sure you speak up, and a campus is so important for that discourse, that ability to speak up and organize.”

Carter, who proclaimed her “current level of optimism to be a 10,” asked students and community members if they can passively accept the current political climate and challenged them to ask, “are we about justice or are we about just us?”
The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) is a leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment and protection of black LGBT people, including those living with HIV/AIDS.

In a statement released Tuesday, the NBJC announced opposition to the Republicans’ proposed replacement for the Affordable Care Act, called the American Health Care Act (AHCA).

“If passed into law, [AHCA] would not only repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and key provisions that have provided access to healthcare insurance for over 20 million Americans, it would fundamentally undermine the ability of many of the most vulnerable people, including people with pre-existing conditions, to benefit from life-saving medical treatment in our nation,” NBJC said in their statement.

“Because the AHCA and the recent additions to the legislation would negatively impact the health and wellness of millions of Americans, including Black LGBTQ people, and presents and immediate threat to the stability of our nation’s public health system, NBJC will work to see that this current measure fails, and a more effective and humane proposal is passed into law,” the statement continued.

If passed, the AHCA would defund Planned Parenthood, a service offering people of all genders essential health care and services. In some rural communities, Planned Parenthood is the sole provider of HIV and Hepatitis C treatment, the NBJC contends.

The new act would also reduce federal spending on Medicaid by $880 billion between 2017 and 2026, requiring states to make up the difference. Medicaid expansion would also be phased out in 2020.

“The Republican-led plan in the House of Representatives to ‘repeal and replace’ the Affordable Care Act is simply a plan to strip access to health care to low-income people, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations in our nation,” Isaiah Wilson, the NBJC Director of External Affairs said in the statement.

Wilson goes on to state that over 24 million Americans would lose health care coverage if the ACA is replaced. The new act will also increase the average health care premiums by 15 to 20 percent in 2018.
and 2019, Wilson predicted, and premiums would also increase for seniors and low-income individuals.

“As a person living with HIV, this proposed move to phase out Medicaid expansion is deeply troubling and will foster more sickness in our nation,” Wilson said. “Prior to the passage of the ACA, many people living with pre-existing conditions like HIV or cancer, would have been denied health insurance coverage until they became extremely sick or disabled.”

“The AHCA along with the recently introduced budget by the Trump Administration would collectively halt our nation’s ability to continue this progress,” Wilson said. “NBJC and our supporters will work tirelessly to stop this legislation and advocate for more inclusive reforms rooted in sound policy.”
HOME RULE ADVOCACY GROUP ADDS TWO NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ITS ROSTER

by Drew Wilson    February 26, 2016

Home-rule advocates Campaign to Defend Local Solutions announced Monday that it is adding Mayors Against Illegal Guns and the National Black Justice Coalition as official partners.

“The spectrum of voices speaking out for home rule and against heavy-handed state pre-emption continues to grow,” said CDLS campaign manager Michael Alfano. “From protecting equality laws to preventing gun violence, our partner organizations and elected officials know that the government closest to the people governs best, and we’re grateful for their efforts.”

Mayors Against Illegal Guns is a bipartisan group of more than 1,000 current and former mayors that advocates for common-sense gun laws, while the National Black Justice Coalition is the country’s leading black LGBTQ civil rights organization.

CDLS said the new members came on board after CDLS got exposure through a People Magazine web series, and articles in The Nation and The Atlantic’s CityLab. Also last week, 15 local elected officials and CDLS members authored an op-ed on the threat of state pre-emption that was published on FloridaPolitics.com and other outlets.

The Campaign to Defend Local Solutions was launched by Tallahassee Mayor and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Andrew Gillum in January and include in its membership elected officials from 15 states as well as local and national organizations.

CDLS was formed to fight against local government pre-emption laws passed by state legislatures, which it claims are often pushed through by “shadowy special interests and unaccountable lobbyists.”

“They don’t like when we as a community pass laws to ban smoking, protect our environment, raise wages, ensure local hiring, and prevent gun violence. But we stand with you, the people — not corporate bottom lines,” the group says on its website.

http://saintpetersblog.com/home-rule-advocacy-group-adds-two-national-organizations-roster/
NEW YORK — Gay pride marches in New York City, San Francisco and in between this weekend will have plenty of participants — and also protests directed at them from other members of the LGBT community, speaking out against what they see as increasingly corporate celebrations that prioritize the experiences of gay white men and ignore issues facing black and brown LGBT people.

The protests disrupted other pride events earlier this month. In Washington, D.C., the No Justice No Pride group blocked the parade route. In Columbus, Ohio, four people were arrested after a group set out to protest violence against minority LGBT people and the recent acquittal of a police officer in the shooting death of Philando Castile, a black man, during a traffic stop.

“Nobody wants to feel dropped in a community that prides itself on diversity,” said Mike Basillas, one of the organizers of the planned New York City protest action by No Justice No Pride.

In Minneapolis, organizers of Sunday’s Twin Cities Pride Parade initially asked the police department to limit participation following the acquittal of police officer Jeronimo Yanez in the death of Castile. But organizers changed their minds after meeting Thursday with Janee Harteau, the city’s openly gay police chief who called the decision divisive and hurtful to LGBT officers.

On Friday, the organizers apologized and said they had neglected to consider other alternatives. They said the officers are welcome to march after all.

In Philadelphia, where racial relations in the LGBT community are beginning to mend after a year of community protests, the introduction of a rainbow flag — the traditional symbol of LGBT unity and diversity — that added black and brown stripes to represent blacks and Latinos has spilled over into a national debate.

The recent flare-up of racial tensions comes as no surprise to Isaiah Wilson, director of external affairs for the National Black Justice Coalition, one of the few national groups focused specially on black LGBT rights.

He said the broader LGBT-rights movement “has been whitewashed” — dominated to a large extent by white gay men.

“Black queer and trans folks have always been there, but our contributions have been devalued,” Wilson said.
He said major LGBT-rights groups need to be frank in discussing the issue of racism, as well as recruiting and supporting nonwhite leaders.

“Until the mainstream LGBT groups address this, we’re not going to move forward and you’ll continue to see this pressure,” Wilson said. “In my opinion, the pressure is good — it has us talking.”

Shannon Minter, a white attorney who is the legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said LGBT people of color were justified in challenging racist aspects of the LGBT-rights movement.

“The real test will be, can the LGBT movement own up to its historic legacy of racism and evolve to be more accountable and inclusive of people of color?” Minter, a transgender man, wondered. “If not, then it will cease to be a major political movement.”

One reason for the tensions, according to some activists, is a racial divide when it comes to the LGBT-rights movement’s agenda. For years, many national groups focused on legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide — a goal achieved in 2015. For many LGBT people of color, there continue to be more pressing issues, such as economic inequality, policing and incarceration.

“In a lot of places, we’re just trying to survive,” said Wilson.

That divide has led to controversy when attempts have been made to address race, as in Philadelphia. The city drew criticism last summer when activists raised concerns that the Gayborhood — the city’s main gay enclave — discriminated against blacks. Gay blacks complained of dress codes banning Timberlands and sweatpants, of not being served in a timely manner at bars and of being stopped and asked for identification at clubs while white customers walked in unbothered.

In January, Philadelphia officials issued a report confirming longstanding racism in the Gayborhood and pledged to penalize businesses that did not make changes. Earlier this month, the city unveiled a new flag meant to be a more inclusive reflection of gay pride, with a black and brown stripe added to the existing rainbow motif. The flag’s introduction stirred heated commentary from supporters as well as those who felt it was interjecting race unnecessarily.

Pride organizers around the country have taken steps to address the criticisms. In San Francisco, Sunday’s pride event will be led by groups including the Bayard Rustin LGBT Club, SF Black Community Matters, African Human Rights, and Bay Area Queer People of Color. In New York City, the march organizers are putting a contingent of groups more focused on protest than celebration at the head of the event.

The LGBT community does need to confront these issues, said Michelle Meow, an Asian-American woman who is board president of San Francisco Pride, and “the pride celebration is a platform for that dialogue to happen.”

New York City spokesman James Fallarino said if there are any disruptions or protests during the event, “We’re going to make sure we do everything in our power to respect the people who are disrupting or protesting and to respect their message.”

Calvin Tendai Pegus is the Health and Wellness Summer Intern at the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Morehouse College’s Project IMHOTEP. He is also an advocate and health communicator. He encourages those within his community and beyond this National HIV Testing Day to know their status and get tested.

Here, he shares his perspective in an open letter:

“No longer can we sit by idle and continue to feel brokenhearted as our brothers, sisters and other family members are the spoils of war in this battle against HIV/AIDS.

“This year will mark the 35th anniversary of the alarming New York Times article that identified the first known cases of HIV/AIDS [then known as gay-related immune deficiency (GRID)]. I am 35 years old … the same age as the United States HIV/AIDS epidemic. As an adolescent, I remember the days of being babysat at my mother’s friend’s home, eating Kellogg’s cereal with heaps of sugar, enjoying my innocence. On one of those carefree days, I was exploring the mysteries of the closed doors and long hallways when I reached to open a particular room and was quickly told to ‘stay away.’ However, as an inquisitive child, I proceeded to open the door one evening and immediately was paralyzed by fear. Physically, I recognized that the guy laying in the bed was her son and that he had contracted this ‘gay cancer,’ but how? The media outlets and the adults around me explained it as the white gay man’s disease. I later overheard the adults discussing that he had AIDS, and it was not long after that he passed away. The stigma was established.

“The CDC states that in 2014, 44% of estimated new HIV diagnoses in the United States were among African Americans, who comprise only 12% of the U.S. population. In my community, gay and bisexual men account for a majority of new HIV diagnoses among African Americans, especially young men aged 13-24. I can no longer count how many of my friends and loved ones are either living with or no longer a part of my life due to HIV/AIDS. Thirty-five years after the initial outbreak of the HIV/AIDS crisis and the epidemic, it is still raging in Black communities.
“My role as NBJC’s Health and Wellness Summer Intern is to critically understand and analyze the initiatives that are being implemented in order to improve the overall health and wellness of Black LGBTQ/SGL communities. NBJC’s mission is to empower the Black LGBTQ/SGL community, and bridge the gaps between the movements for racial justice and LGBTQ/SGL equality. James Baldwin said it, eloquently, ‘… the intangible dreams of people have a tangible effect on the world,’ which I believe is at the core of advocacy. I will walk away understanding the factors that drive health disparities in my community, the importance of using culturally competent messages, and how to fit HIV testing within those parameters. As a rising leader, it requires that I have a better understanding of the health care utilization, HIV testing, and how I can enhance the distribution of HIV prevention to the most at-risk populations, specifically Black gay and bisexual men, and transgender women.

“My entry into Morehouse School of Medicine’s Master of Public Health program this fall will continue to help me attain knowledge of complex factors that drive health disparities affecting people of color. I plan on being an effective voice on how structural inequalities, and social and minority stressors, have attributed to the health disparities of minorities and marginalized Black LGBTQ/SGL communities. My work will also center on raising awareness around promoting HIV testing and effective treatment in the community.

“I remember reading a quote by W.E.B. Du Bois, who said that living as a Black person in society has ‘a sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.’ My call to action for Black LGBTQ/SGL people is for community solidarity. It is time that we dispel the narratives that we are a ‘hard to reach’ community. We have to be willing to accept responsibility for the welfare of our ‘sistas,’ ‘judys,’ ‘good good girlfriends,’ ‘my bois,’ brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers in mobilizing each other to break the chains of this epidemic.”

WASHINGTON — After years of criticism for not doing enough to ensure the diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ students on its campuses, presidents and leadership officials of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have convened a first-of-its-kind summit to develop strategic ways to turn their campuses into safe spaces for students who identify as LGBTQ.

Dr. Makola Abdullah is president of Virginia State University.

The presidents and executives of 14 HBCUs met recently at the headquarters of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s largest LGBTQ organization. Working with the campaign’s HBCU Project, the participants hope that the summit ultimately will result in the stronger implementation of the mission of HBCUs in their support for both LBGBTQ students and faculty.

“We’ve got to figure out how are we going to make a deeper engagement in changing the culture on the campus?” Dr. Walter Kimbrough, president of Dillard University in New Orleans, said at the meeting.

Kimbrough and other HBCU leaders discussed the changes that already have taken place on their campuses, and what they plan to do in the future.

Howard University will be joining forces with the National Black Justice Coalition, a civil rights organization that serves the LGBT community, on cultural training methods that can be tailored to the Howard community. “We’ll be starting this fall with a full training of all of our faculty and staff and students. That will be institutionalized and on-going, and it will be a part of our HR process,” says Kenneth Holmes, vice president of Student Affairs at Howard University.

In North Carolina, Fayetteville State University has made its bathrooms gender neutral. “We have done that in virtually every building on campus,” says Dr. James Anderson, chancellor of Fayetteville State University.

“We’re committed to creating safe spaces for LGBTQ students,” says Dr. Makola Abdullah, president of Virginia State University. The university’s efforts are similar in that they will also consist of training
opportunities for faculty and staff to help them understand how to make the campus more inclusive.

Developments include cultural training and workshops for faculty, staff and students on working with students; LGBTQ centers; and engaging through conversations, events and activities for LGBTQ students. The leaders also said they were mindful of balancing the preservation of the history of HBCUs while also being progressive to match the present-day needs of minority communities.

Since their founding, HBCUs have led movements toward access to education and opportunities for personal growth for their students, which is even more important now that the rights and protections of transgender students have been rescinded under the Trump administration.

The timely gathering of HBCU leaders shows the importance and dire necessity of policy development so that student rights are protected in spite of recent government drawbacks. Strongly rooted in tradition, HBCUs have taken a significant step toward more diversity on their campuses with this summit.

It provided attendees with the opportunity to engage with experts in higher education, business and government.

Dr. Robert Palmer, an associate professor of educational leadership and policy studies at Howard University, discussed the Campus Climate Survey, which was administered to faculty, staff and students at Howard University in Washington, D.C., as a great step towards inclusivity on campuses.

“Normally when we think about those types of surveys we think about them in the context of a predominately White institution doing those surveys to engage African Americans and other racial and ethnic minority students,” Palmer said. “I think for Howard to do something of that nature, in terms of the Campus Climate Survey, that was important. That was another indicator to make folks, particularly LGBTQ students feel included.”

The institutions represented at the summit were Fayetteville State University, Dillard University, North Carolina A&T, Virginia State University, University of the District of Columbia, Morehouse College, Norfolk State University, Howard University, Delaware State University, Savannah State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Prairie View University, Tennessee State University, and Texas Southern University.
Spelman College’s newly minted LGBTQ scholarship program and lecture series may lay the foundation for greater inclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the country.

At least that is the hope of Beverly Guy-Sheftall, founding director of the Women’s Research and Resource Center at Spelman and the Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women’s Studies.

“HBCUs have been less visible and outspoken about LGBTQ issues, though they [have] had a long history around other social justice issues, especially around race, racial justice, and civil rights,” Guy-Sheftall, who established the new scholarship program, told NBC News. “Since HBCUs are increasingly crafting women’s studies programs in which gender and sexuality are central ... this program will call attention to these new initiatives on HBCU campuses.”

The Dr. Levi Watkins Jr. Scholars Program will award two renewable scholarships for LGBTQ advocates at the all women’s college and will also have a companion lecture series that will explore contemporary issues of race, gender and sexuality.

Dr. Watkins, the late cousin of Professor Guy-Sheftall, was a civil rights activist, heart surgeon and longtime advisory board member of the Women’s Research and Resource Center. The scholarship program that bears his name will begin in 2018.
While recipients of the scholarship do not have to personally identify as LGBTQ, they do have to be committed to LGBTQ advocacy.

“Just occupying the category without an interest in LGBTQ issues would not be sufficient in the process,” Guy-Sheftall said. “We are aware that just because one occupies a marginalized category does not necessarily mean that person is interested in or committed to issues connected to one’s identity category.”

RELATED: 15 RECENTLY RELEASED LGBTQ BOOKS FOR YOUR SUMMER READING LIST

Earl Fowlkes, president and CEO of the Center for Black Equity, an LGBTQ advocacy organization, applauded the new program.

“By acknowledging the presence of LGBT students on campus, Spelman has taken a step toward making their campus a space for all students,” he said. “This is very important and very significant step in dealing with homophobia on our college campuses.”

“It is important that HBCUs catch up with the times and start understanding that their campuses have not been traditional spaces for LGBT students,” Fowlkes added. “Most HBCUs are conservative, and it’s taken them a while for them to understand that LGBT rights are indeed human rights and must be protected on and off campus.”

Leslie Hall, who heads the HBCU Project at the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, agrees. He said the issues faced by LGBTQ students in higher education are both structural and cultural.

“For Spelman College to embrace such an initiative is huge in the HBCU landscape,” Hall said. “It means that Spelman recognizes the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ students as they matriculate through college.”

LGBTQ middle school and high school students are less likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to say they plan to pursue secondary education, according to Rebecca Mui, education manager at the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

“LGBTQ students who face higher incidences of bullying and harassment are less likely to feel supported and connected to their school communities, which has significant implications for their own educational and vocational outcomes,” Mui explained. “This is why it’s so important for colleges and universities to be explicitly welcoming of LGBTQ students, to ensure that they feel that they belong and would be supported.”

Isaiah Wilson, the director of external affairs for the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), said Spelman’s announcement makes him proud to be an HBCU alumnus.

“It is incredible to think that we are now at the point where we can have these conversations that were so stigmatized during my tenure at Morehouse College,” Wilson said. “HBCUs should be leading on issues of race, gender and sexuality. This is a great step forward … This is a huge opportunity for black people to see the diversity of blackness.”

Spelman is not the first HBCU to create a scholarship fund for LGBTQ students. Texas Southern University created one earlier this year, and Howard University created the Lavender Fund in 2015.

“Most certainly, other schools will follow suit,” Hall predicted.
Spelman College is opening admission and enrollment to any student who lives and self-identifies as a woman, making it the second women-only institution among historically black colleges and universities to do so, following Bennett College’s lead.

The policy, which will take effect in the fall semester of 2019, was announced by Spelman president Mary S. Campbell in a letter earlier this month, NBC News reports. “Like same-sex colleges all over the country, Spelman is taking into account evolving definitions of gender identity in a changing world and taking steps to ensure that our policies and plans reflect those changes in a manner that is consistent with our mission and the law,” she wrote.

This policy is not the only trans-friendly gesture Spelman is extending. In her letter, Campbell clarified that any student at the women’s college who transitions to male while enrolled will still be allowed to continue their studies and eligible to graduate.

Although it will take two school years for the policy to be implemented, the Atlanta college’s new policy is already being applauded. “Spelman College is breaking down barriers and setting a powerful example of what inclusivity must look like for students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs),” the National Black Justice Coalition wrote in a statement. “Spelman honors an enduring legacy of sisterhood by educating Black women through a lens that critically examines sexism, patriarchy, transphobia and cis-heterosexism.”

“Students who choose Spelman come to our campus prepared to participate in a women’s college that is academically and intellectually rigorous, and affirms its core mission as the education and development of high-achieving Black women,” Campbell continued in in her letter, noting that Spelman is updating its definition of what a high-achieving black woman is.
DAVID JOHNS NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BLACK JUSTICE COALITION

By thegrio - September 13, 2017

On Wednesday, the National Black Justice Coalition announced that, as of the beginning of the month, David J. Johns has been named the new executive director.

The NBJC is an organization dedicated to helping those that live at the intersection of black and gay, serving the LGBTQ community and those living with HIV/AIDS.

“Growing up as a little Black boy in Inglewood, California, I did not meet or see people who showed up in the world like me — strong Black men who are equally proud about their Blackness as they are about being same gender loving (SGL),” Johns said in a statement concerning his appointment.

—I want people to see me, to know that I exist — that we, as a community, refuse to hide or check parts of who we are at the door, shrink or otherwise fail to show up in our fullness — knowing who we are and whose we are. I assume this responsibility, in part, because it’s important for me to show up for younger people the way I wish adults had shown up for me — fully, honestly and without apology.”

“During my tenure, I plan to focus deeply on the empowerment of the Black family, which includes the families we are born into as well as those we create — while honoring the opportunity to remain a central repository for advocating for and responding to the needs of Black LGBTQ/SGL individuals and communities. Critical to this work is engaging all Black people in transformative dialogues that honor the diversity of Black families and the roles that Black LGBTQ/SGL people continue to play — in both family and community — and advancing policies that ensure civil rights for Black LGBTQ/SGL people,” Johns continued.

Johns was the first executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans by President Barack H. Obama in 2013 and had previously served as a senior education and workforce development policy advisor to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

The story of America is one of hard-fought, continual efforts to move our nation toward becoming “a more perfect union,” and quality public education is a vital part of these efforts. Yet our nation’s most vulnerable students, in far too many areas, continue to be underserved by our education system. These young people are our LGBTQ students, students of color, low-income students, English learners, students with disabilities and students living at the intersection of multiple, historically marginalized identities.

Ensuring these students receive equitable access to an education that helps them realize their full potential should be the mission of every educator, advocate, parent, policymaker and community leader who strives to be a champion of social justice and who seeks to push our country closer to its highest ideals. This work is important and urgent.

Even though, in recent years, we have made progress as a nation in standing up for marginalized populations – consider for example, the extension of marriage rights for same-sex couples and the passage of federal hate crime legislation – there is still much to be done, especially to advance equity for students in our schools.

As a new academic year begins, rollbacks of federal civil rights protections for transgender students, the rescission of policies to ensure access to opportunity for undocumented immigrant students and conversations about refugee bans and border walls are resulting in fear and, potentially, further isolation for many students.

No matter their LGBTQ or immigration status, or their religion or background, all students deserve our love and support so that they may thrive. This matters especially because research shows that the most vulnerable students face significant barriers to success.

Many LGBTQ students, for example, experience harassment at school. Advocacy group GLSEN’s most recent National School Climate Survey reveals that LGBTQ victimization and discrimination in schools can be linked to lower GPAs, decreased self-esteem and high levels of depression for these students. It is harder to learn when a student does not feel safe in class.

Students of color, particularly young black boys and girls, disproportionately experience exclusionary discipline practices – including suspensions and expulsions – that take them out of the learning environment. It’s harder to keep up academically when a student is not present in class.

Students with disabilities make up 12 percent of high school enrollment, but 22 percent of students held back or retained a year in grade. And while English learners make up 5 percent of students in our high schools, they are 11 percent of secondary students who are held back. Studies have shown that a disproportionate number of students who are retained in ninth grade subsequently drop out of school altogether. Indeed, it can be harder to remain on track to graduate when a student is held back from his or her class.

Low-income students and students of color often have less access to rigorous coursework. For
example, more than 80 percent of Asian-American high school students and more than 70 percent of white high school students attend schools where the full range of math and science courses are offered – such as Algebra I and II, geometry, calculus, biology, chemistry, and physics. However, just 57 percent of black students and 67 percent of Latino students have robust access to these courses in their high schools. It is harder to be prepared for college when a student does not even have the opportunity to enroll in the classes that are often prerequisites to college acceptance. Not every student in the demographic groups cited experiences of the challenges described, but it is true that far too many do. And it is critical for all of us who care about the well-being and success of our students to consider the ways in which young people experience the intersections of their identity – being a transgender student of color, for example – and how that experience should inform the supports we provide to them.

Unfortunately, recent actions and policy decisions of the Trump administration do not reflect a clear understanding of or concern for the lived experience of our students, especially young people in the LGBTQ community. Earlier this year, the Departments of Education and Justice revoked guidance issued under the Obama administration that identified best practices for schools regarding the education of LGBTQ students. The guidance also explained that Title IX bars discrimination in public schools based on a student’s gender identity.

These actions were followed by a deeply troubling internal memo that directed investigators with the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights to scale back their inquiries to identify systemic civil rights violations in schools, districts, and states. Cloaked under the guise of promoting a “smaller and more efficient government,” the Trump administration is impeding equal access to educational opportunities that are free of discrimination for LGBTQ students, students of color and other vulnerable young people. These actions potentially leave youth – including LGBTQ students – more vulnerable to attend schools that lack inclusive policies and resources that support their success.

In addition to these troubling developments, the Southern Poverty Law Center’s recent survey of 10,000 K-12 educators reveals that students are returning to school this year amid a climate of continued bullying and harassment stemming, in part, from divisive political rhetoric. For example, 8 out of 10 educators report heightened anxiety on the part of historically marginalized students, including LGBTQ students, African-Americans, Muslims and immigrants. Also worrisome is that four out of 10 educators do not believe their schools have action plans to respond to incidents of hate and bias.

It doesn’t have to be that way. Caring educators, school leaders and staff play a huge role in helping students thrive by proactively creating safe, welcoming school environments. As the GLSEN National School Climate Survey shows, policies that support tolerance and diversity in schools can have a powerful, positive impact and can promote better academic and social-emotional outcomes, especially for LGBTQ youth. GLSEN’s research reveals that LGBTQ students in schools with a Gay-Straight Alliance or a comprehensive anti-bullying policy experience lower levels of anti-LGBTQ victimization.

Educators also can utilize culturally relevant curricula and resources in their classrooms that affirm and celebrate diversity in all the ways that students experience it in their own lives. And parents, communities and advocates can be loud demanders of action by voicing their support for policies and programs that advance equal access to quality educational opportunities for every student.

Collectively, we have a responsibility to ensure our young people are safe, engaged and supported to reach their dreams. As we enter this new school year, and during Ally Week, it is a great time to reaffirm this promise and make this declaration to our students and to our nation.

6TH ANNUAL GENTLEMEN’S BALL CELEBRATED LGBTQIA OF COLOR IN ATLANTA

By Yvette Caslin  |  October 3, 2017 9:38 AM EST

Over the weekend, the Gentlemen’s Foundation hosted their 6th Annual Gentlemen’s Ball powered by UPS at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel. Additionally, the black-tie gala ball and awards ceremony celebrated individuals within the LGBTQIA community who have been committed to social change and enhancement of the quality of life. Guests and honorees for this year’s ball included Tarell McCraney, Moonlight; Tracee McDaniel, founder of Juxtaposed Center for Transformation; Amiyah Scott, FOX’s “Star”; Charles Stephens, writer and creator of “The Counter Narrative Project”; Darlene Hudson, State of Black Gay America Summit and Southern Unity Movement; Julian Walker, BLACKBIRD, BET’s “Being Mary Jane”; Jack Mizrahi; Melissa Scott, VH1’s “Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta”; chief Joel Baker, City of Atlanta Fire and Rescue Department; Sharon Lettman-Hicks, executive director and CEO of National Black Justice Coalition; Coriology; Tyra B; Derek J, “Real Housewives of Atlanta”; Miss Lawrence, FOX’s “Star”; Jussie Smollett, FOX’s “Empire”; Kelly Price; Bevy Smith “Radio Andy” on Sirius XM, and more.

This year’s event was themed “We Are Royalty” and was the signature fundraising event of the Gentlemen’s Ball weekend, which was held Sept. 29 through Oct. 1, 2017. We Are Royalty celebrated people of color identifying as LGBTQIA. The three days of programming were filled with activities for guests and allies to recharge and reimagine their lives. Empowering experiences included a health and wellness fair, workshops on love, relationships and financial planning, along with parties, mixers and socials before and after the ball. On Friday, Sept. 29, ball attendees were invited to two free panel discussions with tastemakers in the business and entertainment industries. Special panelists included Ryan Anderson (“SunTrust Bank”), Vaughn Alvarez (“CR8 Agency”), Gocha Hawkins (WE tv’s “LA Hair”), Melissa Scott (“Traxx Girls”), Lisa Cunningham and others.
Over this past weekend, The Gentlemen’s Foundation hosted their 6th Annual Gentlemen’s Ball (powered by UPS) at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel. The 2017 theme “We Are Royalty” celebrated all people of color identifying as LGBTQIA. Additionally, the black-tie gala ball and awards ceremony celebrated individuals within the LGBTQ community who have been committed to social change and enhancement of the quality of life. This year’s gala showcased the philanthropic work of The Gentlemen’s Foundation as well as honoring A-listers in the LGBT community.

Guests and honorees for this year’s ball was comprised of, for the first time in the Foundation’s history, a host of female leaders. The roster of honorees included Tarell McCraney (“Moonlight”), Tracee McDaniel (founder of “Juxtaposed Center for Transformation”), Amiyah Scott (“STAR” on FOX), Charles Stephens (Writer/Creator of The Counter Narrative Project), Darlene Hudson (“State of Black Gay America Summit and Southern Unity Movement”), Julian Walker (“BLACKBIRD,” “Being Mary Jane” on BET), Jack Mizrahi, Melissa Scott(VH1 “Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta”), Chief Joel Baker (City of Atlanta Fire & Rescue Department), Sharon Lettman-Hicks (Executive Director/CEO National Black Justice Coalition), Coriology, Tyra B, Derek J (“Real Housewives of Atlanta”), Miss Lawrence (Bravo’s “Fashion Queens”), Jussie Smollett(“EMPIRE” on FOX), Kelly Price, Bevy Smith (“Radio Andy” on Sirius XM) and more.

Under the theme, “We Are Royalty,” this year’s fundraising gala and celebration was the signature event of The Gentlemen’s Ball Weekend. The three days of programming were filled with activities for guests to recharge and reimagine their lives. On Friday, September 29, ball attendees were invited to two free panel discussions with tastemakers in the business and entertainment industries. Special panelists included Ryan Anderson (“SunTrust Bank”), Vaughn Alvarez (“CR8 Agency,” Publicist), Gocha Hawkins (WE tv, “LA HAIR”), Melissa Scott (“Traxx Girls”), Lisa Cunningham and more.
On Sunday, October 1, following the ball, The Gentlemen’s Foundation hosted a “Royal Brunch,” that featured a special Q&A with current select Atlanta Mayoral candidates. In attendance were Mayoral candidates: Cathy Woolard, Ceasar Mitchell, Keisha Lance Bottoms, Laban King, Michael Sterling, Peter Aman and John Eaves. All candidates addressed important issues impacting the city of Atlanta and its LGBTQIA citizens.

The Gentlemen’s Foundation was founded by Juan and Gee Smalls, an African American Atlanta based same-gender loving couple who also serve as certified relationship counselors, philanthropists, and life coaches. The foundation is a non-profit organization committing to broader social change and encouraging individual and collective empowerment as well as public service, leadership, philanthropy, and networking.

To learn more about The Gentlemen’s Foundation visit: www.TheGentlemensFoundation.org.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-gentlemens-ball-a-royal-affair_us_59d45852e4b0da85e7f5ece0
There are many reasons to stand in opposition to Proposition 1, Anchorage’s proposed “bathroom bill”: It’s unenforceable. It does nothing to address or improve public safety. It is, as a recent op-ed headline put it, a solution in search of a problem.

However, we have a more personal reason to oppose Prop. 1, which uses the specter of “public safety” to weaponize restroom facilities against a group of people simply because they are different.

Sound familiar?

Some of us are old enough to remember when vague claims about “safety” and “disease” were used to justify separate drinking fountains and restrooms for nonwhite Americans. Others are young enough that the very idea of a segregated swimming pool is absurd in its bald-faced discrimination. Yet here we are, in 2017, hearing the same fallacious arguments made by the same prejudiced people. The difference is that now they’re trying to “protect” themselves, not against people of color but against transgender individuals.

As people of color, we have too often been at the receiving end of policies that take seemingly routine matters — finding a restroom, using public transportation, securing housing, being pulled over in a traffic stop — and use them to systematically oppress people who look like us. Incredibly, we are still fighting battles on this front that were faced by our parents and grandparents. Discrimination today might be less in-your-face than it was in the days of Jim Crow, but it’s no less insidious. And make no mistake, Prop. 1 is an initiative that seeks to discriminate.

The people who imply in 2017 that transgender individuals are lying in wait to assault you and your children in the “wrong” restroom are taking a page from the playbook of those who once argued that public swimming pools must be segregated in order to protect white women from the lustful urges of black men, or that drinking fountains must be separate in order to protect thirsty white people from rampant disease spread by African-Americans. These claims are as bigoted and disingenuous today as they were when they were used to justify racial discrimination.

In reality, transgender people are far more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators. And violence against transgender individuals disproportionately affects people of color. The Human Rights Campaign reports that of the 20 transgender individuals known to have been violently killed so far year this year in the U.S., nearly half were people of color.
According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, sponsored by the National Black Justice Coalition, “transgender people of color experience particularly devastating levels of discrimination.” And it starts at a young age. More than one-fifth of black transgender students participating in the survey reported experiencing discrimination that resulted in their leaving school.

That national trend, sadly, is a reality in Alaska schools as well. In a 2015 Alaska state report from the U.S. Transgender Survey, 85 percent of respondents who were out or perceived as transgender during their time in a K-12 school reported they faced mistreatment including harassment, discrimination or assault. Twenty-four percent of respondents withdrew from school as a result.

For those who are too young to remember — or have tried to forget — 6-year-old Ruby Bridges faced daily death threats when she was the first black child to attend her all-white elementary school in New Orleans. Prop. 1 will embolden those who would treat transgender individuals — including young people — the same way. We didn’t stand for that kind of hatred in 1960, and we mustn’t stand for it today.

Regardless of our own feelings about or understanding of what it means to be transgender, our transgender neighbors, co-workers and friends deserve the same protections guaranteed to everyone in Anchorage. We can call Prop. 1 a “bathroom bill,” but we all know it’s not really about bathrooms, just as it was never really about bathrooms or schools or buses in the Jim Crow era. It’s about singling out people who are different. It’s about making sure they know that they are not as privileged or valued or trusted. It’s about reacting with fear and hate to a changing world. And as people who have too often been on the receiving end of that fear and hate, we will not be party to inflicting it on our fellow Alaskans.

We pledge to fight discrimination in Anchorage. We pledge to vote no on Prop. 1.

Black transgender people in the U.S. face “deeper and broader forms of discrimination” than their white counterparts and the U.S. population overall, according to a recent report from the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), Black Trans Advocacy and the National Black Justice Coalition.

This new breakout report builds upon the findings of the NCTE’s 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS), which was released in December 2016. A similar breakout report was released highlighting the unique experiences of the Latino/a transgender community.

“With this data, we’re able to supplement the information we already had about trans people’s experiences to paint a more complete picture of those experiences,” NCTE Research Director Sandy James told NBC News. “This is critical for advocacy and education, and it can impact polices and laws.”

“It’s important to fill the gaps in research through studies such as the U.S Transgender Survey to compare experiences of trans people to others in the U.S. population,” James added. “When we started to look at the data for this breakout report, there were often disparities between the experiences of black trans people, people in USTS sample overall and white respondents in the USTS sample.”

The report, which uses data from 2015, also highlights the disparities among black trans people, black cisgender (non-transgender) people and the U.S. population overall.

“For example, 20 percent of black USTS respondents were unemployed, which is four times the rate in the U.S. population overall, but also twice the rate of unemployment of black people in the U.S. population, which illustrates the compounding effect of being both black and trans,” James explained.

Other key findings from the breakout report, which focused on the unique experiences of 796 transgender respondents who identified as black or African-American, include:

- 38 percent of black respondents were living in poverty, compared to 24 percent of black people in the U.S. population
- 42 percent of black respondents have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, compared to 30 percent in the USTS sample overall
- 6.7 percent of black respondents were living with HIV, nearly five times the rate in the USTS sample overall and more than 20 times the rate in the U.S. population
- 53 percent of black respondents have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetimes, compared to 47 percent in the USTS sample overall
• 34 percent of respondents who saw a health care provider in the past year reported having at least one negative experience related to being transgender

• 67 percent of black respondents said they would feel somewhat or very uncomfortable asking the police for help, compared to 57 percent of respondents in the USTS sample overall

James said the full 2015 USTS report, which included 27,715 respondents nationwide, has already made an impact.

“Advocates have been able to use it to influence policy, and it’s been cited in legal documents and briefs for court cases,” James explained. “We expect similar outcomes for this newly released report on the experiences of black respondents.”

The biggest obstacle, James said, will be getting the data into the hands of people who have the greatest ability to make change.

Stacey Simmons of the National LGBTQ Task Force Courtesy Of Stacey Simmons

Stacey Long Simmons, director of public policy and government affairs for the National LGBTQ Task Force, said reports such as the USTS and its breakouts influence awareness and education.

“The public is misled into believing high-profile individuals like Laverne Cox or Janet Mock are the new norm for the lives of black trans people,” Simmons added. “But this data reveals that the lived reality for the majority of black trans people in this country is an entirely different story.”

“The general public needs to know that one of the most dangerous things in the world is to be ‘walking while trans,’” Simmons said, adding, “walking while black and trans can be twice as deadly.”

Black trans people, according to Simmons, live under constant threat of some form of discrimination, harassment, or violence.

“Not only by people on the street but by those they encounter over the course of their everyday lives, [and] that comes from medical providers, law enforcement officials, hotel clerks, school personnel, cashiers, taxi cab drivers, store security guards, employment agencies, co-workers and so on.”

“Trans people should not have to face these challenges when trying to access basic essentials such as food, shelter, clothing, transportation or when they’re applying for a job, seeking medical care or customer service from a business establishment,” Simmons added.

James said he is encouraged by how organizations like the National LGBTQ Task Force have been empowered by the data.

“The results and the data confirm a lot of what we’re seeing in our work and in the stories we hear, which informs our advocacy,” James explained. “These results also confirm that our work is going in the right direction, which is beneficial for our continued advocacy. It is also important to acknowledge this community’s resilience. Despite these barriers, people keep going and keep trying to overcome

WE CANNOT REMAIN SILENT

Author: David J. Johns / October 13, 2017 / 10:24 AM PST

When this time in history is looked back upon by future generations, we will be judged by our ability to support a more inclusive society where everyone—regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual identity or expression, religion, disability status or any other socially constructed identifier—is able to feel safe and live free from discrimination and fear of harm.

In America, in 2017, it is sadly still the case that too many people live in fear of being harassed, abused or killed. This unfortunate reality is exceptionally true for transgender people—especially for transgender people of color. Consider for a moment that in this year alone, 21 transgender people have reportedly been killed, and with the exception of two, all of these individuals were transgender people of color. The neglect of transgender people is among the most important human and civil rights issues of our times. As a country committed to liberty and justice for all, not a single one among us can remain silent about or disengaged in the work required to end the constant attacks, literal and figurative, on our transgender family members.

Growing up as a little Black boy in Inglewood, California, I did not meet or see people who showed up in the world like me—a strong Black person who is equally proud of being LGBTQ or same gender loving (SGL). As the Executive Director of the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), a national civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black LGBTQ/SGL people, I now have the honor and responsibility of supporting Black families by centering the lives of Black people who are often neglected—those of us whose lives are too frequently rendered unworthy or invisible.

This erasure happens too frequently for Black transgender and gender nonconforming people who are some of the most marginalized members of the Black community and society, more generally.

It is for these reasons that NBJC partnered with the National Center for Transgender Equality, Black Transmen, Inc., and Black Transwomen, Inc., to release a report highlighting responses of Black transgender people who completed the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS). Within the Report on the Experiences of Black Respondents, we can learn more about the many obstacles that must be overcome by individuals who are both Black and transgender in America.

Consider, for example, that among respondents, 20% reported being unemployed, twice the rate among Black people in the U.S. population (10%) and 38% of Black respondents were living in poverty, compared to 24% of Black people nationally.
When it comes to accessing culturally competent health care services, 34% of the respondents who saw a health care provider in the past year reported having at least one negative experience related to being transgender, including: reduced treatment; verbal harassment; and physical or sexual assault. These experiences further shine a light on the fact that health disparities like HIV continue to disproportionately impact our transgender family—6.7% of the Black respondents were living with HIV, which is nearly five time the rate of all USTS respondents overall.

These findings are alarming and should elicit the support of leaders, both elected and self-appointed. For too long, Black transgender and gender nonconforming people have been willing to give their blood, sweat and tears for the advancement of Black liberation—and we continue to fall dismally short of standing with them as they are attacked by occupants of the White House and members of our community. The liberation of African descendants requires that we support the liberation of Black transgender individuals as none of us can be free until all of us are free.

At NBJC, we are committed to advocating for policies at the intersections of civil rights and LGBTQ rights. The data in the Report on the Experiences of Black Respondents from USTS highlights disparities that must be discussed and remedied. Elected leaders and government officials, at every level, must do their part to address the many issues that uniquely and disproportionately impact the lives of too many Black transgender people.

In addition to ensuring that we hold leaders accountable for doing their job, it is also important that we, as a community, do the work required to change our language and confront the practices that negatively impact the lives of our Black transgender and gender nonconforming family members.

We must do the work required to ensure our Black transgender family members are safe and supported in meaningful and authentic ways—this includes confronting those using offensive language designed to exclude and offend. No longer can we allow transgender people to be bullied, harassed and murdered without speaking up and acting out—in positive and productive ways. We have to correct our own loved ones when they misgender someone or stigmatize transgender people for simply being.

Most importantly, we must build a community where our transgender family are loved without the threat of abuse or violence, and empowered to live out their dreams where poverty and life circumstances are not suffocating.

The continued killings of primarily transgender people of color each year happen mostly at the hands of other people of color. This means that all of our families, communities, organizations, places of worship and any other space of influence must be talking about what we will do to end the violence and build inclusive environments that recognize, affirm and support Black transgender people. This is the work that we will be judged upon.

— David J. Johns is the Executive Director of the National Black Justice Coalition

http://www.losangelesblade.com/2017/10/13/cannot-remain-silent/
AFTER MAN IS CHARGED IN GAY SON’S DEATH, LGBTQ GROUPS FOCUS ON OUTREACH

For advocates of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth, the Nov. 2 shooting death of 14-year-old Giovanni Melton was a call to action. For black LGBTQ advocates specifically, the circumstances surrounding the teen’s death underscore the urgent need to stand up for LGBTQ youth of color and educate those around them.

Police in Henderson, Nevada, where the shooting took place, have charged Giovanni’s father, Wendell Melton, with murder, child abuse and firearms possession.

The teen’s former stepmother, Sonja Jones, told Las Vegas NBC affiliate KSNV that the older Melton killed his son because he could not accept the teen’s sexuality. Melton “hated the fact that his son was gay,” Jones said, and “would rather have a dead son than a gay son.”

Wendell Melton told police that he had “accidentally” shot his son in the chest.

“We continue to witness too many of our children endure bullying and violence as a result of who they are and sometimes whom they love or are attracted to,” David J. Johns, executive director of the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), told NBC News.

“The stigma and shame accompanying LGBTQ identity in the black community is not something we can sweep under the rug because it makes adults uncomfortable or requires us all to do the tough work of learning how to better communicate with and support one another,” Johns added.

Johns said his organization is doubling down on providing parents and other caregivers with the necessary resources to assist them in better supporting their children who identify as LGBTQ.

“A single life lost is one too many, and our children did not ask to be born, which means we owe it to them to ensure they’re safe and protected at home, in school and in the community,” Johns added.

NBJC is not alone in stepping up its outreach efforts. A number of other organizations are prioritizing support and outreach to families and communities struggling to embrace LGBTQ youth of color.

Charles Stephens, executive director of The Counter Narrative Project (CNP), an advocacy group for gay black men, said he was heartbroken and angry upon learning of Melton’s passing and the alleged circumstances surrounding his death.

“There really aren’t words to describe how to feel about this,” he told NBC News. “Despite whatever we think about advances made around LGBT equality, this act reminds us that we are all,
especially young people, vulnerable to violence and even death.”

Stephens led a phone conference with project members, supporters and advisers the week after Melton’s death. The call was intended to be a brainstorm session to determine how the group could provide support and action.

“We want to be of service. Our hope is to just share information with the community and strategize ways to support,” he said. “This also, I think, indicates a state of emergency regarding protecting our young people.”

Janet Duke, founder of Strong Family Alliance, said she choked up when she learned of Melton’s death and said, if true, the charges are an extreme example of what can happen during the fury of parental rejection.

“Parents are often so identified with their children that they can’t accept them being LGBTQ; they feel it is a reflection and shame on them as parents,” she explained. “Emotions often run high when a child comes out, and fights and recriminations can explode. Physical violence is not rare and emotional violence is common.”

Duke said these realities are why she founded Strong Family Alliance, a nonprofit that provides support and resources to parents of LGBTQ kids during their coming out process. When her daughter came out as a lesbian, Duke admits she made several mistakes and had a series of negative reactions, including shock, fear and grief. She said she hopes her organization can help other parents avoid some of the mistakes she made.

Another motivating factor to create the alliance, she said, was research she had come across that had documented in recent years “the huge risks that LGBTQ youth face when they are rejected by their families.”

“LGBTQ youth are eight times more likely to report suicide attempts, six times more likely to report high levels of depression and three times more likely to use illegal drugs” or be homeless, she said.

Duke said she was especially committed to reaching out to the parents of black LGBTQ youth, who may be disproportionately affected because of their intersectional identities.

“There are lives at stake, there are families at stake, and I’m convinced the danger and pain can be reduced and countered,” Duke said.

Duke, Johns and Stephens are all pushing to make sure news of Giovanni’s death and the case against his father are amplified.

“Lawmakers, educators, cultural influencers must know about this horrific act and be challenged to advocate for and create policies that support young people,” Stephens said. “There must continue to be resources made available to protect young LGBTQ people. Teachers and school officials must be better equipped to detect and respond before it’s too late. Schools must have better training around the vulnerability that young LGBTQ people face.

“We also nationally and as a movement need to think about better strategies for how to protect LGBTQ youth of color.”

At a young age, David J. Johns spent an hour traveling to and from school to receive the quality education that his mother—an impassioned social justice advocate—knew would give him access to opportunities for a better life.

It is his mother and other social activists he has never met who helped him understand that people have to be disruptive and stand in the gaps to fight for certain groups of people, said Johns, who is the newly appointed executive director of the National Black Justice Coalition, a civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS.

"I've now come into a better appreciation for the many ways that social activists as well as intellectual organizers have made sacrifices so that I and my peers can live our purpose and try and show up in the long legacy of freedom fighters that have existed before," he says.

Now, the Inglewood, California, native says that his work as a social justice advocate and educator for Black LGBTQ people and the Black community is a "responsibility that I accept willingly."

Johns wants young people to see him as a strong Black man who is equally proud of being Black and same-gender loving, something he did not see when he was younger. Because of this, he says that he refuses to hide parts of who he is or otherwise fail to show up in his fullness.

"I assumed this role because it is my responsibility to show up not just in the work, but to also show up in the world in ways that allow people to make some of these intersectional connections," he says. "Until we embrace the diversity that makes us strong, we're going to continue to struggle with some of the same problems that we face."

Johns will start his directorship at NBJC leading with "aggressive campaigns" that highlight the diversity that exists within the Black community and that curate the stories of the contributions that Black LGBTQ have made in the world. The campaigns will also provide a platform for allies and others to advance the civil rights and equity agenda required to strengthen the Black family, Johns says.

"Language is an especially powerful tool in disrupting bias and stigma, as well as to facilitate healing," Johns
says. For the LGBTQ community, and transgender people in particular, “being thoughtful about how language allows us to celebrate one’s humanity even when we might not understand it in its fullness” goes a long way to unifying the Black community.

Johns’ work at the NBJC will build on his previous role as the first executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans under former President Barack Obama. The title for the initiative underscores the point that the terms “educational excellence” and “African-Americans” are “barely and infrequently strung together,” Johns says.

“I refuse to let anybody shorten them,” he says. “It’s really changing the way that we engage in and think about what’s possible for Black babies,” he adds.

During his tenure, Johns – who also taught kindergarten and third grade – worked with the presidential advisory committee on four key areas: improving early childhood education and quality care, expanding K-12 opportunities for Black students, accelerating post-secondary education opportunities; and setting the record straight to dispel stereotypes and misunderstandings in education trends.

However, his proudest moment at the White House initiative was the creation of the Af-Am Education Summit in partnership with Ebony magazine. Johns’ initiative produced the summit at more than 50 colleges and universities around the country to provide a platform for young people to share what matters most and what support they would like from concerned adults.

“The one rule at the summit was that the only experts who got to sit on the stage in front of the White House were students themselves,” Johns says. “We show up at conferences and we’ll read their letters or play videos of them, but seldom do we ever give them the platform and the microphone to speak and then listen to the things that they say matter most to them.”

In addition to his role as executive director at NBJC, Johns is pursuing a doctoral degree focused on sociology and education policy from Columbia University where he previously received a bachelor’s and master’s degree. The program will allow him to reflect on connecting theory to practice and leveraging policy to affect practices in education in ways that benefit the communities “most often neglected and ignored,” he adds.

Often, he finds that adults are more focused on things that do not necessarily concern younger people, and this can be a barrier to a student’s success or even a boundary to affirming a person’s humanity and gender identity.

“We often ask young people to do a whole lot of work, to go figure stuff out, to look stuff up, to make sense of it, but we as adults have a responsibility to do the same thing, especially when it is related to a barrier to the success of our young people,” Johns says, adding that even if someone is not a credentialed educator, it does not mean that they do not have a responsibility to help students.

His advice: “Take the things that you love about the world, and make them accessible to them.”

In his unique position between policy and practice at NBJC, Johns says that he hopes to leave a lasting impact by leading with love and creating spaces for people to thrive, to feel welcome and to be affirmed in their being.

“That will mean that we will make it so that everybody truly has the opportunity to obtain the American dream, to live free of the worry and stress and stigma that too often colors the experiences of those who have skin that’s been kissed by the sun or have unique expressions of love,” he says.

http://diverseeducation.com/article/105341/
WE HAVE THE POWER TO HELP BRING HIV/AIDS TO AN END

By Isaiah Wilson - December 1, 2017

My Story and Our Story

As a Black gay man living with HIV and born in the late 1980s, after the initial height of the epidemic, I have been blessed to benefit from medical as well as social advances in HIV/AIDS treatment.

I am privileged to have access to treatment, stable housing and the support of a loving network of family and friends. Because of the work I do daily at the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBTQ) and same gender loving (SGL) people, I know my experience is not the reality for many Black people living with HIV/AIDS.

African Americans represent 13 percent of the US population, but our families and communities are disproportionately impacted by the spread, physical toll, and stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Since the emergence of HIV in the early 1980s, African Americans have represented a significant portion of those living with HIV and those who have died from AIDS complications. For too long, stigma compounded with the racial injustices in the health care system have made it difficult for African Americans to access competent health care.

In addition, the stigma and shame surrounding HIV/AIDS has kept too many members of our beloved community from standing in solidarity with individuals living with HIV or seeking the testing, prevention efforts and treatment services that could otherwise save lives.

The current presidential administration is determined to restrict access to quality and affordable health care and pursue public policies that will negatively impact people of color, low-income people, including many people living with HIV/AIDS.

We live in a time when communities must stand up and demonstrate our ability to demand justice for all Black lives no matter who they are, what they have endured in life or how they show up in the world.

So what do we tackle first? One area is the internal stigma and “respectability politics” too common in our communities about those of us who identify as LGBTQ/SGL. We deal with too many health disparities and HIV/AIDS is at the top of the list.

Black LGBTQ/SGL people live at the intersection of multiple identities and represent more than 1 million African Americans according to data from the Williams Institute at UCLA. This data shows us that Black LGBTQ/SGL people live in the same pockets other African Americans generally live in as well – with the majority of our population living in the South where the lifetime risk of acquiring HIV is greatest in the US and access to quality, affordable treatment is most difficult.

The Call To Action

African Americans must engage across the country for policy initiatives and efforts addressing HIV/AIDS, including the Affordable Care Act, the Minority AIDS Initiative and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program. Consider the following, African Americans represented 45 percent of the HIV diagnoses in 2015 in spite of our small population size. When looking deeper at these numbers, young Black gay and bisexual men account for more new infections than any other group.
Black cisgender heterosexual women continue to be affected by HIV more than women of any other race or ethnicity, and the needs of Black transgender women, who are mistakenly conflated with gay and bisexual men, often resulting in their unique needs being ignored and going unaddressed. Both cultural and systemic factors such as poverty, racism and stigma contribute to this dire status for Black America and HIV. As such federal, state and local sources of support for HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and treatment are critical. In the Black community they can be life-saving.

This year NBJC launched the Summit on Black Lives: Black America’s Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic to develop a comprehensive path forward to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Black communities. In February, we convened Black HIV policy experts from across the nation to coordinate a HIV/AIDS response for and from Black America. The initial convening resulted in a comprehensive policy letter that was endorsed by 44 civil rights and health advocacy organizations and sent to our national leaders in Washington in April.

In September, NBJC re-convened the Summit on Black Lives for a second two-day summit entitled Building a Larger Tent: Convening of Black National Stakeholders. This meeting was designed to continue to build and facilitate collaborative discussion and engagement among influential individuals and organizations prime to support efforts aimed at ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Black America.

Even though most of the leaders in this convening did not directly work within the movement to eradicate HIV/AIDS, but they all pledged their dedication to making the issues a core component of the broader movement for civil rights.

As an organization we are now taking the important lessons learned from the Summit on Black Lives and working with partners to expand this transformative work in our communities in the year ahead. This type of direct political education, combined with intense mobilization efforts, are required to prevent any additional Black lives being lost to HIV/AIDS and it’s our goal to assist in fostering a movement that centers the health of the most marginalized in our families.

I dream of the day when the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS is no longer a hindrance for those living with it. This vision is attainable and within our grasp as a people, but requires the collective efforts of all members of our beloved community.

On this day of remembrance and resilience, let’s draw strength from the experiences of Black people who continue to endure and triumph in excellence. Let us come together to ensure individuals living with HIV do not have to walk alone. We owe it to one another to have more meaningful, honest, and sometimes tough conversations about the diversity within our community as well as the impact of HIV/AIDS.

In addition to talking and learning and strengthening community, we must continue to hold elected officials, at every level, accountable for providing the resources required to ensure our holistic health and well-being—especially as it relates to funding efforts to prevent, treat and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in the Black community.

This is a moment where change requires action. Will you join us?

https://thegrio.com/2017/12/01/hiv-aids-day/
FIGHTING TRUMP’S EFFORTS TO CUT ACA ENROLLMENT, GROUPS LAUNCH AFRICAN-AMERICAN OUTREACH

By George M. Johnson - December 1, 2017

It’s no secret that the Trump administration and the GOP Congress led by Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) continue to undermine the success of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) despite their failed attempts to “repeal and replace.” Most recently, efforts have been made to gut funding for subsidies for the individual market through the tax reform bill while the White House and several GOP members of Congress have also worked to suppress new enrollment this year, including by limiting outreach and halving the length of the sign-up season to just six weeks.

However, just as the HIV community demonstrated to defeat the ACA repeal attempts, organizations have banded together to fight these efforts, but using a different tactic: launching a nationwide campaign to ensure that African Americans enroll in the ACA in large numbers.

To this end, Black AIDS Institute (BAI) has partnered with several leading organizations, including National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) and AIDS United, to launch an 18-city “Black Health Matters Initiative and 2017 National Health Care Access Tour” in effort to bring health care and HIV knowledge directly to the community.

Lestian McNeal, program coordinator with Black AIDS Institute, described the tour as “one of the first major actions of our initiative to increase access for black Americans.” He told TheBody.com, “We launched this tour to make sure that as we increase the number of those with access to insurance, black Americans aren’t left out of the conversation.”

The tour, which began in Melbourne, Florida, on November 10 and ends in Los Angeles on December 14, coincides with much of the open-enrollment period for the ACA.

BAI said it launched this initiative due to its recognition of how a collapsing ACA would affect black people who need insurance, with the most vulnerable being those who are HIV positive. Citing information from a new report published by BAI that is a part of the initiative, McNeal said: “[D]espite only representing about 12% of the U.S. population, black Americans represent about 15% of the those uninsured. This number is actually down 9% as a direct result of the Affordable Care Act[.]” According to the report, this translates into half as many uninsured black Americans; furthermore, “prioritization of preventative services has enormously enhanced the ability of black America to combat diseases that disproportionately affect black people, including many cancers, HIV, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.”

The strategy of focusing on access to health care for all people in the black community is also intended to help combat HIV stigma. Isaiah Wilson, director of public policy at National Black Justice Coalition, said: “We can mobilize black people as to why the ACA matters overall, and especially for people with HIV. It is giving people access to measures that are life saving and life changing.”

While it’s too soon to tell whether the initiative will bring in many new enrollees, early reports are showing that overall ACA enrollment is way up so far this season. It remains to be seen whether the overall shorter enrollment period will be a blow to enrollment numbers in the end.

“We want to ensure that black communities are able to utilize the open-enrollment period to access affordable and comprehensive insurance,” said McNeal. “We’ve seen a record number of Americans signing up for health care just this year, and our goal is to make sure that black Americans aren’t left out.

http://www.thebody.com/content/80647/fighting-trumps-efforts-to-cut-aca-enrollment-grou.html
At the foundation of NBJC’s programmatic efforts is to provide critical information to our constituency about the impact of public policy decisions made in Washington. Our goal is to provide political education to an informed and mobilized constituency to speak truth to power that produces positive change for our communities!
Greetings!

Last week the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people, launched the “We Will Not Be TRUMPED!” campaign to bring awareness to the alarming concerns regarding several of President-elect Trump’s nominees that must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate before they can serve in the next administration. Our goal is to inform and move to action our community to make our voices heard in Washington on nominees for cabinet-level positions that could have a devastating impact on our nation’s laws and public policies.

This week, NBJC will continue the “We Will Not Be TRUMPED!” campaign with the public opposition of two more nominees: Betsy DeVos (Secretary of Education Nominee), and U.S. Representative Tom Price (Secretary of Health & Human Services Nominee). Please see the full list of nominees below that NBJC has publicly opposed.
BETSY DEVOS

NOMINEE FOR SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

- Opponent of public education
- Tapped to lead Education Department with NO experience in the classroom or schools
- Supporter of unchecked charter schools and school voucher programs
- Contributed to organizations that support conversion therapy
- Contributed to efforts to block marriage equality

Read NBJC’s full statement opposing Betsy DeVos

Watch the Confirmation Hearing before the Senate HELP Committee HERE.

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REP. TOM PRICE (GA-06)
NOMINEE FOR SECRETARY OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

- Lead sponsor of legislation to repeal Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and taking away health care access to millions
- Backed plan to turn Medicare into a voucher program
- Backed legislation to defund Planned Parenthood
- Supported a constitutional amendment to prohibit marriage equality
- Voted against federal hate crimes law
- Possibly committed ethics violations

Read NBJC’s full statement opposing Rep. Price

The Confirmation Hearing before the Senate HELP Committee Scheduled for today, January 18.
Senator
JEFF SESSIONS
(R-AL)
Nominee for
ATTORNEY GENERAL

- Called the NAACP & ACLU “un-American”
- Applauded the gutting of the Voting Rights Act in 2013 & opposed efforts to update the law
- Supported a constitutional amendment to prohibit marriage equality
- Opposed the Violence Against Women Act
- Defended a ban of all Muslims entering the US
- Challenged the 14th Amendment’s declaration of citizenship to those born in the US

Read NBJC’s full statement opposing Jeff Sessions

Watch Day One of Confirmation Hearing before Senate Judiciary Committee HERE.

Watch Day Two of Confirmation Hearing before Senate Judiciary Committee HERE.

Dr. Ben Carson
Nominee for
SECRETARY OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- ZERO experience in government or working on housing policy
- Called transgender people “abnormal”
- Advocated for states to pass so-called right-to-discriminate legislation
Read NBJC's full statement opposing Dr. Ben Carson

Watch Confirmation Hearing before the Senate Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs Committee HERE.

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TAKE ACTION:
Call your U.S. Senators TODAY!!!
877-959-6082

As Americans we have the opportunity to take action and make our voices heard in opposition to these extreme nominees. If confirmed, these cabinet officials will have the power to implement public policies that could devastate our communities and end the great progress we have made in recent years.

Take a stand TODAY and call your U.S. Senators and make sure they know where you stand on these nominees. We must hold them accountable as we face a new, alarming, incoming administration. Find your US Senator contact information HERE and voice your opinion. The stability and future of our democracy depends on your actions today!

DON'T BE TRUMPED
Make Your Voices Heard To Congress!!!

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National Black Justice Coalition | nbjc.org

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http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1109014349747&ca=466601cd-80af-45e0-84d1-aeba41d78383
The National Black Justice Coalition, the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black LGBTQ people and their families, would like to pause to honor President Barack Obama and his entire Administration for their prolific service to our nation.

Following in the footsteps of Dr. King, President Obama has made the promotion of inclusive policies a hallmark of his presidency by bringing so many unheard and marginalized voices to the forefront in our country during this historic time. Over the last eight years, we have had the privilege to witness the first African American President and First Family live in the White House and lead the most pro-civil rights and welcoming administrations in our nation’s history.

President Obama has done more for LGBTQ rights than all of his predecessors combined. Throughout his tenure, NBJC has been able to bring our diverse community into the White House to meet and hold accountable those leaders in charge of critical federal agencies that implement public policies that directly impact our lives.
MEDIA RELEASE

NBJC STATEMENT ON TRUMP ADMINISTRATION’S DECISION TO RESCIND FEDERAL GUIDANCE TO PROTECT TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

February 22, 2017  07:58 PM

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, released the following statement from Isaiah R. Wilson, Director of External Affairs, in response to the move today by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education to rescind federal guidance from the Obama Administration that protected transgender students in our nation’s schools under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972.

“The decision by the Trump Administration to rescind federal guidance that outlines the responsibilities of schools to protect transgender youth under Title IX is shameful and contrary to American values. The guidance issued last year by the Obama Administration clarified for the first time that Title IX’s prohibition of sex discrimination in our nation’s schools extends to transgender and gender nonconforming youth. With this decision today, our government is telling transgender youth that they are not welcome in their own schools or due an education where they are affirmed and respected. When we rollback protections for transgender students like the right to use the restroom of the gender they identify with, we are further isolating this vulnerable group of young people who already face record levels of depression, suicide and other mental health challenges.

“NBJC strongly rejects the Trump Administration’s position that this is an issue that should be reserved for the states to decide. Just like voting rights or marriage equality, this is a civil rights issue and implores our federal government to stand up and protect the most vulnerable in our society when states lack the political will to do so.

“This action flies in the face of the rich history and precedent of the federal government to ensure that all students receive an education free of discrimination. The Supreme Court will take up a landmark case next month that will ultimately determine whether or not transgender students are covered under Title IX. We must now focus our fight with the courts to keep in check this increasingly anti-equality Administration and preserve the civil rights of all people, including transgender and gender nonconforming youth.”
Greetings!

With the commitment to advocate for the unique challenges and needs of Black LGBTQ and same gender loving people in our nation, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) is honored to present our first e-blast exclusively focused on the critical implications of public policy decisions for our community currently being debated in Washington, DC. The Trump Administration and Congress have been actively moving on implementing alarming policies, releasing a short-sighted and historically inadequate federal budget, developing critical health care legislation that negatively impacts our community, and holding hearings this week in the Senate for a nominee with a troubling judicial record to be the next Associate Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Our voices and active participation in these important developments are more important than ever.

As we honor the contributions of women this month during Women's History Month, the words of one of the most prolific mothers of our justice movement, Audre Lorde, must guide us. She once stated, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." This guiding pearl of wisdom implores us to speak truth to power on all of the policy changes that are being discussed and make our voices heard as our nation partakes in a pivotal debate on our collective future. Our ability to unite, take a stand, and agitate our elected officials to move favorably on the many issues that impact our lives is what will push us forward as an empowered people.

With hopes to inspire you to take a stand and make your voices heard, we are proud to present this action alert e-blast on the important developments in our nation's capital.

With Affirmation and Love,

Team NBJC

#OwnYourPower
#TakeAStand
NBJC Strongly Opposes the American Health Care Act

Washington, DC - The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation's leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, strongly opposes the American Health Care Act (AHCA), which has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by the Republican Leadership. If passed into law, this measure would not only repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and key provisions that have provided access to healthcare insurance for over 20 million Americans, it would fundamentally undermine the ability of many of the most vulnerable people, including people with pre-existing conditions, to benefit from life-saving medical treatment in our nation. Because AHCA and the recent additions to the legislation would negatively impact the health and wellness of millions of Americans, including Black LGBTQ people, and present an immediate threat to the stability of our nation's public health system, NBJC will work to see that this current measure fails, and a more effective and humane proposal rooted in sound policy is introduced and passed into law.

READ FULL MEDIA RELEASE

Supreme Court Nominee Hearings This Week
Yesterday, the Senate Judiciary formally opened hearings on the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to be an Associate Justice on the United States Supreme Court. NBJC has expressed opposition to his nomination as a result of his troubling record as a federal judge, and signed onto an important letter led by Lambda Legal, on why this nominee is a threat to the LGBTQ populace. In addition, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund has produced a report entitled The Civil Rights Record of Judge Neil M. Gorsuch, which outlines a comprehensive review of Judge Gorsuch’s judicial record and implications for our community. Issues of racial justice, LGBTQ equality, and the values our nation stands on are at stake with the Supreme Court. Our voices must be heard on this nomination.

We urge you to call your Senators and express where you stand on this nominee and his record! Dial 1-888-877-2040 to be connected with your Senator’s office.

Today is National HIV Call-In Day
Tell Congress to Oppose the American Health Care Act

Protect HIV Care
Oppose the Repeal!

Make Your Voice Heard!
Call Congress Today
Tollfree: (866) 246-9371

Say it, Tweet it, Share it! #ProtectOurCare #NoRepeal

NBJC is honored to participate in the National HIV Call-In Day to urge Congress to oppose the Republican’s repeal plan (AHCA). This day has been organized to send a message loud and clear to Congress that leaving 24 million people underinsured and gutting funding for the Medicaid program is not acceptable.
It's critical that your Representative, Republicans and Democrats, hear from you right now and know that the AHCA is unacceptable. It will result in new HIV infections and worse health outcomes for people living with HIV. Your Representative needs to know that constituents want more, better and affordable coverage, and that the Republican plan will not achieve any of these goals!

Call your Representative in the House of Representatives TODAY at (866) 246-9371. This number is toll-free and will connect you with your Representative.

AIDSWatch

NBJC is a proud sponsor of AIDSWatch 2017 (March 27-28, 2017), which is the nation's largest annual constituent-based HIV/AIDS advocacy event, bringing together hundreds of people living with HIV and their allies to meet with Members of Congress and to educate policymakers about the important issues at stake for people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. For the third year in a row, NBJC is honored to host a networking session to prepare our community for impactful meetings on Capitol Hill.

Please join us for the Black Advocacy Networking Session on Monday, March 27 at 3:25pm-4:45pm at the Georgetown Marriott in the West End. The objective of the advocacy networking session is to provide Black people and other advocates participating in AIDSWatch--particularly young Black gay, bisexual, same gender loving men, and cisgender and transgender women--an opportunity to have a focused discussion on current public policy issues that impact Black communities. The discussion will provide additional information and context that can be used by participants during congressional office visits, at state and local stakeholder meetings, and future national advocacy efforts.

Please participate in the official AIDSWatch Thunderclap on your social media platforms to show your support HERE!

Click to Subscribe to Our Mailing List

National Black Justice Coalition | nbjc.org

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1109014349747&ca=49bdc4c1-f96b-4a24-a0d0-08a0bce44214
Greetings!

This week, NBJC voiced strong opposition to the American Health Care Act. We have also joined a national cross-movement effort to mobilize our supporters to call their Members of Congress to speak out against the American Health Care Act. This dangerous piece of legislation has the capacity to take away health care insurance to 24 million Americans, which would disproportionately impact many of our loved ones, families and communities. We must use our voices this week and call Congress to say vote NO on this perilous legislation!

Call your Member of Congress in the U.S. House of Representatives TODAY @

(866) 246-9371

This number is toll-free and will connect you with your Representative.
Yesterday, Senate leadership announced that if the bill passes the House, they will move to call the legislation for a floor vote next week. This rapid movement of legislation is unprecedented. Efforts to call our elected officials in Congress to hold them accountable on their upcoming vote(s) matters tremendously over the next few days and weeks.

- The House vote will take place on this Thursday, March 23rd. Twenty-one (21) Republicans need to vote NO to stop the bill. The NO votes right now are 19 and deals are likely being made to secure more votes. **WE NEED 3 MORE NO VOTES.**
- If the Bill passes the House, Senate leadership plans to push the repeal bill through by the end of next week!

**KEEP CALLING!!!** The manager's amendment that the House of Representatives will ultimately vote on this week is devastating for our communities. It will allow states to impose work requirements on almost anyone except for seniors, the disabled, and pregnant women. It will stop states from expanding Medicaid almost immediately.

Here's a new brief from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities that explains how bad these new amendments are:

[Updated House ACA Repeal Bill Deepens Damaging Medicaid Cuts for Low-Income Individuals and Families](#)

We must hold Congress accountable for preparing to take away healthcare coverage from millions of Americans while also dismantling the Medicaid program.

**KEEP SPREADING THE WORD - KEEP CALLING! CALL CONGRESS NOW! #ProtectOurCare #NoRepeal**

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**UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENT**
AIDSWatch 2017: Advocacy Networking Session for Black Communities

WHEN:
Monday, March 27, 2017
3:25PM - 4:45PM

WHERE:
Washington Marriott Georgetown
West End Room
1221 22nd NW
Washington, DC 20037

MODERATED BY:
Ernest Hopkins
Chair, National Black Gay Men’s Advocacy Coalition & Director of Legislative Affairs, San Francisco AIDS Foundation

The objective of the advocacy networking session is to provide Black people and other advocates participating in AIDSWatch—particularly young Black gay, bisexual, same gender loving men, and cisgender and transgender women—an opportunity to have a focused discussion on current public policy issues and its impact on Black communities. The discussion will provide additional information and context that can be used by participants during congressional office visits, at state and local stakeholder meetings, and future national and local advocacy efforts.

Featured Panelists:

Valerie Spencer
Founder, Holistic Empowerment Institute

Isaiah Wilson
Director of External Affairs, NBJC

Sable Nelson
Policy and Advocacy Manager, Sisterlove, Inc.

Kenyon Farrow
US and Global Health Policy Director, Treatment Action Group

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1109014349747&ca=625b0199-5976-4bd1-a1cc-6a81a657b9b1
CONGRESS VOTING TODAY! #KILLTHEBILL
March 24, 2017

DON'T TAKE MY LAB SERVICES #KILLTHEBILL.

KEEP CALLING CONGRESS!

Greetings!

The U.S. House of Representatives is expected to vote on the American Health Care Act TODAY, which NBJC has voiced strong opposition. Last night, the majority's leadership in the House made a bad bill even worse—not only does it raise premiums and deductibles and cut coverage for 24 million Americans, it now lets insurance companies stop offering basic services like maternity care, check-ups for kids, prescription drugs or even hospital and doctor visits. Eliminating these essential health benefits will undoubtedly impact us, our loved ones, families and communities.

It's vital that you use your voice and tell your Member of Congress to vote NO!

Call your Representative in the House TODAY @ (866) 246-9371
This number is toll-free and will connect you with your Member of Congress.
First votes have begun this morning and the last vote will take place likely before 5:00 pm EST. Matt Fuller from Huffington Post has the count at 23 No votes - 22 defeats it. All of the people listed on this vote count should be called as much as possible from people in their jurisdiction.

This bill is terrible for our communities, and it’s getting worse. What moderates may not know is just how bad eliminating essential health benefits are.

- **Covering pre-existing conditions would only be on paper.** Plans will not cover basic services, even prescription drugs, that people need to treat their conditions to stay healthy.

- **Charging women more than men.** No longer requiring plans to cover maternity care would mean that insurance companies would once again be able to penalize women and charge them more.

- **Removing Essential Health Benefits effectively obliterates out-of-pocket caps and reinstates annual and lifetime limits.** Because annual and lifetime limits apply only to essential health benefits, insurers could once again put a cap on how much care one receives but not on how much people owe. Those with employer-sponsored coverage will be at risk too.

THE "ASK": VOTE NO!

We need every member to PUBLICLY oppose the health care repeal bill as soon as possible. We need people to publicly say that they are going to vote no so when the time comes for them to vote, we already have them on record so they will be less likely to flip.

We must hold Congress accountable for preparing to take away healthcare coverage from millions of Americans, eliminating essential health benefits of the ACA, and fundamentally dismantling the Medicaid program.

Use [SaveMyCare.org](http://SaveMyCare.org) to call your Member & receive updates on the vote as well.

KEEP SPREADING THE WORD - KEEP CALLING!
CALL CONGRESS NOW!
WASHINGTON, DC – The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and same gender loving (LGBTQ/SGL) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, strongly opposes the recently introduced health care legislation, entitled the Better Care Reconciliation Act, which was crafted in secret by Republican Leadership without any hearings before the committees with jurisdiction over health care issues. If passed into law, this measure would eliminate life-saving provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) like protections for people with pre-existing conditions. The legislation would further strip affordable, comprehensive coverage from working class and low-income Americans, implement massive cuts to essential services provided under the Medicaid program, and result in tens of millions losing their insurance. All of this while granting tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. With the Senate proposal threatening the stability of the health care system and overall health of the millions of Americans, including Black LGBTQ and same gender loving people, NBJC strongly opposes this bill.

“The so-called ‘Better Care Reconciliation Act’ introduced last week by the Republican leadership in the US Senate is a shameful piece of legislation that will be disastrous for so many Americans who depend on the benefits provided under the ACA,” said Isaiah Wilson, NBJC Director of External Affairs. “We were promised a more humane proposal by Senate Republicans compared to the House-passed health care reform legislation. However, the bill put forward in the Senate continues the tragic attack on the most marginalized in our nation by cruelly ending Medicaid as we know it, leaving our children, elderly and people with disabilities unprotected. All people of good will must speak out immediately and demand that their Senators work across the political aisle in a transparent manner to develop a bill that actually addresses the real problems with our current health care system—not this legislation which is morally bankrupt from the onset.”

Because of the ACA, and specifically the expansion of the Medicaid program to increase health care access by creating new coverage options, Black communities, LGBTQ people, and other underserved populations have seen a significant increase in recent years of access to affordable health care insurance. For example, the uninsured rate of nonelderly African Americans has decreased by more than one-third between 2013 and 2016, from 18.9 percent to 11.7 percent. Additionally, a 2013 study found that nearly 390,000 uninsured LGBTQ/SGL individuals could qualify for Medicaid in states that planned to expand the program, while approximately 1.12 million uninsured LGBT individuals could receive subsidies to help with the cost of coverage in insurance marketplaces across the nation. If the current Senate proposal were signed into law, this uptick in access to health care access would immediately be undermined as the bill would permit states to restructure the Medicaid program using per capita or block grants, which would likely result in cuts to those receiving insurance via Medicaid.

Wilson added: “As a Black gay man living with HIV, I know firsthand that the proposed move to phase out Medicaid expansion and the essential health benefits guaranteed under the ACA is a prescription for more illness in our nation. We have made significant progress in recent years
and though there is an urgent need to address problems with the current system, the answer is not to eliminate vital programs that provide access to health care for millions of Americans. At NBJC, we have been deeply troubled by both the lack of a constructive, public debate in Congress along with the recently introduced budget by the Trump Administration that will undoubtedly hurt the most vulnerable Americans. As the Senate begins this vital debate on the future of the health care system in our country, NBJC will engage its constituency and other allies to push their Senators to commit to passing a better, more equitable health care reform package. The lives of so many in our nation depend on it."

**Senate Proposed Health Care Legislation**

**Key Facts**

- Strips tens of millions of Americans access to health insurance.
- Increases premiums and out-of-pocket costs like deductibles for millions, forcing families, the elderly, and other individuals to pay more for less coverage.
- Caps and cuts Medicaid funding, ending the federal 50-plus year commitment to match state’s Medicaid cost.
- Eliminates Medicaid expansion in 2023, and in the meantime rolls back pivotal protections for those enrolled in the expansion.
- Decimates nationwide protections for the 1 in 2 people with pre-existing conditions in this nation by allowing states to eliminate essential health benefits standards that ensure plans cover the care people need like prescription drug coverage.
- Defunds Planned Parenthood by blocking individuals enrolled in Medicaid from accessing critical health care services at Planned Parenthood health care centers for one year.
- Provides massive tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans and corporations.

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, released the following statement from Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks, Chief Executive Officer, in response to the tweets of President Trump to ban transgender people from serving in the military:

“This morning our nation’s 45th President utilized Twitter to announce his decision to ban transgender people from serving in our nation’s military. This position is beyond disgraceful and spits in the faces of the more than 15,000 transgender people currently serving honorably and those that have previously served in our nation’s armed forces.

“In June of 2016, the Department of Defense lifted a ban against transgender men and women serving in the military. This is still the policy of the United States as it is codified in regulation. This policy has not changed just because this Commander in Chief has tweeted out an ill-informed, discriminatory position on such a vital national security issue.
“As a military spouse of someone who served more than 25 years in uniform, I am sickened by this President’s lack of knowledge, understanding and compassion for those who are different than his privileged and pretentious life experience. He has no regard for the hard work and trauma of those who serve in the military, especially those who have been forced to live in silence like our transgender family in the service. He has no idea of the impact of his words on the countless numbers of young people who will now be deterred from signing up to serve because of this unconscionable move rooted in prejudice.

“Just a short time ago, we were celebrating the Obama Administration and the Congress for working together to repeal the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy that barred lesbian, gay and bisexual people from serving openly. This President is now trying to roll back the great progress we have made as a nation by going after the most vulnerable population of service members in our military. This is an even more despicable action considering the President was able to defer his own service to our country five times during the Vietnam War.

“We will not let this abysmal series of tweets by this President or a push by the Trump Administration to change this policy to stop us from standing up to the malicious forces of bigotry. Our leaders have the responsibility to break down barriers of discrimination, not promote them. As Americans, it is our duty to respect and honor those who volunteer to serve and defend our nation. The National Black Justice Coalition will join the immense chorus of opposition to this move and will not stop until this President starts to act on behalf of all the people by retracting this dangerous and thoughtless statement.”

http://nbjc.org/media-center/releases/nbjc-vehemently-condemns-president-trumps-ban-transgender-service
E-BLAST

NBJC HONORS THE 52ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT
Aug 4, 2017

"Nobody's free until everybody's free!"
-Fannie Lou Hamer

NBJC Honors & Recommits to the Legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in the Pursuit of Justice

On Sunday, August 6, our nation will pause to honor the 52nd Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This paramount legislation moved our nation forward in offering the promise of liberty and freedom to African Americans and other populations in our nation through access to the vote. At the National Black Justice Coalition, we work everyday in the pursuit of justice through the active participation from our community in the political process. We believe in the famous quote of one of the Mothers of the Civil Rights Movement, Fannie Lou Hammer: "Nobody's free until everybody's free!" It is with this radically inclusive call to action that we are honored to present a blog post from Demir Moore, NBJC's Summer 2017 public policy intern, on the unfinished work of justice we still have ahead in the pursuit of freedom for all people.
MARCH ON!
The Unfinished Work of Justice on the
52nd Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act

By Demir G. Moore, Summer 2017 Public Policy Intern, NBJC

The freedom to exercise our speech through the right to vote is the cornerstone of any democracy. This freedom ensures that the people are heard and represented in a nation's critical decisions. In the United States, the right to vote has been awarded to minorities but only after centuries of hard fought and tumultuous battles rooted in racism. These battles have propelled our nation forward in its promise to uphold the hopeful phrase enshrined in the Constitution: "In Order to form a more perfect Union." Despite this promise, in recent years we have witnessed the relentless attacks on access to the ballot box. This stifles the ability of minorities to gain representation. These attacks include, but are not limited to, discriminatory voting laws implemented at the state and local levels that have hindered the ability of many minorities and other less privileged populations from exercising their right to vote.

As we honor and celebrate the 52nd anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) on August 6, we must remember what is still at stake today when many citizens of this nation continue to be stripped of access to exercise their right vote.

Read Full Blog Post From NBJC’s Summer 2017 Public Policy Intern

TAKE ACTION TODAY!!!
Protect Voting Rights & Representation In Our Nation

NBJC has made the promotion of public policy solutions to our community a key feature of our advocacy. To honor the legacy of the VRA, we ask that our supporters make sure their elected officials in Washington are supporting these important pieces of legislation that will promote a more just and equitable nation where all people have a voice.
HR 2978/S 1419 | Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA)

- The VRAA is a response to the four-year-old Supreme Court ruling in Shelby v. Holder; the court struck down two key provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which put 13 states under strict rules not to change their voter laws without federal approval and set a formula for determining which states would be subject to the law.
- The new bill creates a new formula, but puts the 13 states—Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Arkansas, Arizona, California, New York, and Virginia—back under federal authority for any voting changes.
- The legislation would also require states with repeated and persistent violations of voting rights to be subject to federal oversight for 10 years after which they could be removed from the list if they established a clean record. It also would review state laws that require photo IDs to vote and that reduce multilingual voting materials. In addition, the bill will allow federal courts to intervene in the event questionable voting practices were employed.
- The bill was reintroduced in Congress this summer by lead sponsors Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7) and Sen. Patrick Leahy (VT).

HR 3273/S 1570 | LGBT Data Inclusion Act

- The Trump Administration has been increasingly aggressive in recent months to eliminate many of our government surveys that ensure LGBTQ/SGL people are fully counted in our data collection efforts. For example, the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) decided to eliminate questions about gender identity and sexual orientation from a survey on older Americans in March. Fortunately, HHS decided to reinstate the sexual orientation demographic questions; however, the gender identity demographic questions were not reinstated, excluding transgender people in this partial victory.
- In addition, earlier this year, the Census Bureau published the final version of the 2020 Census that lacked questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. The current lack of population-based data on the LGBTQ/SGL community inhibits the creation of sound public policy as well as the delivery of effective programs and services to all who live in this country. Expanding and improving data collection and analysis about LGBTQ/SGL people is essential to better understanding the issues affecting our communities and to improve the health and well-being of all of our families.
- The LGBT Data inclusion Act would require uniformity among all federal agencies to collect data on sexual orientation and gender identity. This bill would apply to federal surveys that currently include demographic data, information about the race or ethnicity, sex, and age of a survey participant through self-reported information or proxy reporting by a head of household, such as the Census.
- The bill was reintroduced in Congress this summer by lead sponsors Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-3) and Sen. Tammy Baldwin (WI).
• The LGBT Data Inclusion Act would require uniformity among all federal agencies to collect data on sexual orientation and gender identity. This bill would apply to federal surveys that currently include demographic data, information about the race or ethnicity, sex, and age of a survey participant through self-reported information or proxy reporting by a head of household, such as the Census.
• The bill was reintroduced in Congress this summer by lead sponsors Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-3) and Sen. Tammy Baldwin (WI).

Make Your Voices Heard
(202) 224-3121

Call your Representative & Senators to make sure they are supporting these important pieces of legislation that ensure our communities’ REPRESENTATION!!!
#RepresentationMatters #ProtectVRA

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National Black Justice Coalition | nbjc.org

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1109014349747&ca=321de168-5150-4acc-858c-e0dc50abea5e
WASHINGTON, DC - The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) released the following statement in response to the repulsive and inexcusable remarks made this week by the 45th President of the United States concerning the acts of violence and terrorism by white supremacists this past weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia:

The horrific acts of domestic terror and hate in Charlottesville over the weekend have left us at the National Black Justice Coalition with a myriad of feelings, including anger, hurt, exhaustion and a sense of hopelessness for our communities. We are not shocked nor surprised by the events of Charlottesville that ultimately left three people dead and more than 30 people injured in the streets. These episodes of homegrown terrorism rooted in white supremacy are nothing new, but a part of a long and polarizing history of violence perpetrated on Black people and other communities of color for centuries now.
However, this particular series of hate violence is different due to the fact the current occupant of the nation’s highest office has willfully and with no remorse placed hate-fueled groups like white nationalists and neo-Nazis on the same moral footing as counter-protesters standing up against hate in Charlottesville. Earlier this week, the nation and the world watched an indignant and small-minded leader once again declare that there was equal blame on “both sides” of the violence that erupted in Charlottesville. He further stated that there were “very fine people” there “innocently protesting” the removal of Confederate statues. This unequivocal support and endorsement of the worst in our nation by this president was affirmed by the Ku Klux Klan leader, David Duke, in the following tweet.

David Duke
@DrDavidDuke
Thank you President Trump for your honesty & courage to tell the truth about #Charlottesville & condemn the leftist terrorists in BLM/Antifa twitter.com/NBCNews/status...
1:45 PM - Aug 15, 2017
3,008 2,977 2,049

Supporting or affirming white nationalists, white supremacists, neo-Nazis and now this president’s authentic position on Charlottesville is downright dangerous and threatens the very essence of who we are as a people. The rise of white supremacist terrorism in recent years comes as a result of generations of covert organizing by these reprehensible extremes in American society. Since the end of the Civil War and the establishment of the Ku Klux Klan during the Reconstruction era, white supremacists have been at work trying to perpetuate terror on Black people and other marginalized communities to stop their ability to thrive. These racist tactics have even manifested in our political system in the modern era with the roll-out of the ‘Southern Strategy’ after World War II and throughout the Civil
Rights Movement. During these tumultuous years, many Southern white democrats left their party as a result of the Democratic Party's support for civil rights for Black people. As such, we continue to see this sentiment reflected in current policy proposals in state legislatures controlled by the Republican Party like the continued attack on voting rights and the all-out assault on peaceful protests. During this year alone, a growing number of states have introduced bills with the goal of limiting the ability to exercise our First Amendment right to organize and protest the government. The most alarming of these types of legislation have been introduced by six states and would actually protect people who drive into protesters. This is dangerous public policy that actually works in concert with the hate we saw this past weekend. As people of good will, we cannot deny this truth or reality for our nation.

Watch the Vice News Episode on YouTube

In the aftermath of the attacks at the very heart of our nation in Charlottesville, we must be resolute with what we are dealing with. White supremacy and the forces that feed this monster in our nation is an immediate sickness that will continue to plague our nation. The people taking up this cause have declared at all costs to kill, destroy and/or separate the people of this nation. The only way to move forward is to call these forces by name and ensure that this long history of terrorism continues to be associated with any movement of hate, including the new-coined term 'alt-right.' Then, our communities and all freedom loving people must demand that our government, elected officials, corporate entities and all mainstream institutions reconcile their policies and actions to eradicate this evil. This means that we must hold accountable those in current leadership and remove those in power that actually share the sentiments of this movement. There is no room for placating coded language and making room for racism in modern America. Until we move in this fashion, unapologetically, we will continue to see more events like Charlottesville.

At NBJC, our mission remains the same. We will continue to educate our communities and advocate for public policies at every level of government that empower and protect our families and communities. We must work in coalition with other diverse constituenices and hold the U.S. Department of Justice accountable to do a thorough review of this and other white supremacist acts of terror in our nation. We must also ensure that our lawmakers in Congress are checking the Trump Administration as both the rhetoric and policies of their leadership is testing the
moral fabric of our nation. For we cannot heal until we admit this issue is rooted in racism, bigotry and hate, and many of our current political debates encompass an undercurrent that inflames this evil.

We cannot heal or achieve justice in our nation without accountability. Do we as a nation have the courage to demand and work, collectively and relentlessly, to see that justice is served? This is the question that we wrestle with now and must not let anyone, including the President of the United States of America, or forces of white supremacy and white nationalism take our eyes off that sacred objective.

Your Family in the Struggle,

Team NBJC

Take Action Against White Supremacy

We know that our community is exhausted, some are helpless and others may even feel like they are unclear about what they can do to mobilize in the aftermath of Charlottesville. We know that none of this is new. We know white supremacy, fascism, colonization and so much more has always worked to oppress Black people. But here’s something you can do that takes less than five minutes, and you can do it from wherever you are--start with signing and sharing these petitions:

Support Color of Change’s Campaigns Today To Take Immediate Action Against White Supremacy

- Take Em ALL Down: Remove Every Confederate Symbol in America
- Tell news media to stop doing PR for white nationalists in Charlottesville
- North Carolina Republicans want to protect drivers who hit protesters
- It’s time to #FireBannon
- Stop corporate funders of hate groups

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1109014349747&ca=430b8c1f-9828-48f9-bd2e-415b86b2386c
MEDIA RELEASE

SURVEY REVEALS TREMENDOUS CHALLENGES AND THREATS OF BEING BLACK AND TRANSGENDER IN AMERICA

September 28, 2017   11:59 AM

Washington, DC – Building upon its groundbreaking 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS)—the largest survey of transgender identity in the nation—the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) has joined with Black Transmen, Inc.; Black Transwomen, Inc.; and the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) to produce a detailed report about experiences of Black USTS respondents. The result is critical insight into the myriad risks, challenges, threats and daily obstacles faced by Black transgender people. While findings from the USTS revealed several crucial challenges to being transgender in the United States, Black respondents reported substantially higher threats, deeper levels of poverty and economic insecurity, negative health outcomes and interactions, and more extreme distress than others surveyed. Many findings are alarming and are cause for immediate public concern. The full survey can be found here.

- 38% of Black respondents were living in poverty, compared to 24% of Black people in the U.S. population.
- 6.7% of Black respondents were living with HIV, nearly five times the rate in the USTS sample overall (1.4%) and more than twenty times the rate in the U.S. population (0.3%). Notably, Black trans women reported an infection rate of 19%.
- 20% of Black respondents were unemployed, twice the rate among Black people in the U.S. population (10%).
- 53% of Black respondents have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetimes (13% within the past year), compared to 47% in the USTS sample overall.
- 34% of respondents who saw a health care provider in the past year reported having at least one negative experience related to being transgender, such as being refused treatment, being verbally harassed, being physically or sexually assaulted.
- 41% of Black respondents experienced serious psychological distress in the month before completing the survey (based on the Kessler 6 Psychological Distress Scale), more than eight times the rate in the U.S. population (5%).

“A key priority of NBJC is supporting an informed and solution-oriented constituency that advocates for federal investments to address critical issues at the intersection of racial justice and LGBTQ equality. This report, which highlights the responses of Black transgender people in the United States is essential to advocating for policies, programs and practices designed to support all members of the Black community, especially those most often neglected and ignored,” said David J. Johns, Executive Director of NBJC. “NBJC is honored to partner with NCTE and BTA, to produce this timely resource. As the data demonstrates, we have a long way to go to achieve full equality and equity for Black trans* people. NBJC is committed to using this resource to ensure our nation’s leaders have the information required to make necessary interventions.”

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), is the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and same-gender loving (LGBTQ/SGL) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, is proud to partner with Out2Enroll, a national initiative to connect the LGBTQ community and allies with the new health insurance coverage options available under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

“Healthcare is a vital aspect to sustaining the overall wellness of any community. Due to marginalization and other ailments disproportionately plaguing the African American and LGBTQ/SGL communities, access to proper healthcare is something no community can go without,” said David Johns, NBJC Executive Director. “Repeated hostile actions aimed at dismantling the Affordable Care Act, and the unique healthcare needs of the LGBTQ, and African American communities make prompt enrollment very necessary. Since the implementation of the ACA in 2013 there has been a substantial decrease in the rate of uninsured to members of the LGBTQ community, to the sum of 35 percent; and in the African American, the rate of uninsured has decreased by nearly 7.2 percent. Last year, 8 out of 10 applicants received a discount on their premiums and most found insurance for $50 to $100 per month. The ACA has made significant progress in reducing the uninsured rate of among the African American community, the LGBTQ community and among the entire American population.”

Specifically, health coverage among African Americans is critical to addressing disparities in improving health outcomes. The death rates for African Americans in our nation is 40 percent higher than that of White Americans. The mortality rate for African Americans surpasses that of Americans overall for heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS. That, combined with systematic racism, implicit biases, and the difficulties that come along with simply being Black in America is why the African American community must also remain vigilant and engaged in combating the repeal of the ACA.

Out2Enroll is dedicated to analyzing the changes to the ACA policy law and is working to increase access to health insurance, healthcare, and building community resources. Unfortunately, this Administration’s divisive actions continue to undermine outreach and enrollment efforts. Most recently by the shortening enrollment period from 90 days to only 45 days, and those who miss this deadline may be locked out of health insurance until 2019. Open Enrollment for 2018 runs from November 1, 2017, to December 15, 2018.

HONORING ALL VETERANS: FOCUS ON BLACK TRANSGERENDER VETERANS & SERVICEMEMBERS

November 11, 2017  02:48 AM

On this Veterans Day, our nation once again pauses to honor those who have served in our military and those currently serving. As the proud son and grandson of former Marines, I am forever inspired by the history and resiliency of Black veterans and servicemembers. For many Black veterans, including my family, the service was a pathway for both professional development and a means to lift their families out of poverty. These American heroes not only served honorably in defense of country, but they confronted and continue to overcome societal ills like racism and bias. This is especially true for Black transgender servicemembers who currently face a hostile Trump Administration that has publicly committed to banning them from openly serving. This in spite of the fact that many U.S. allies already allow open service for transgender people.

At the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and same gender loving (LGBTQ/SGL) people, we wholeheartedly reject this proposed ban on transgender service, which was partially blocked last month by a federal district court. We also are working to advance public policies that can help both the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) become more inclusive and equitable for LGBTQ/SGL servicemembers and veterans. As we reflect on the service of our veteran population, let’s consider the real life impact of this potential transgender military ban and how current policies from the VA make life especially hard for our transgender veterans.

So what do we know about transgender veterans and servicemembers?

- There are an estimated 134,000 transgender veterans (Williams Institute, 2014) and around 5,000-6,000 transgender individuals actively serving (Rand Corporation, 2016). In addition, we know that individuals assigned female at birth are nearly three times more likely to serve than cisgender women, and those assigned male at birth are 1.6 times more likely to serve than cisgender men (Williams Institute, 2014). This limited data does not estimate how many of these transgender servicemembers are African American, but studying the history of Black servicemembers in the military, I am confident current efforts to prevent transgender servicemembers from serving will disproportionately impact Black transgender people.

- In a report released in September by NBJC, the National Center for Transgender Equality, Black Transmen Inc. and Black Transwomen Inc., the Black respondents of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (the largest survey of transgender identified people ever in our nation) showed that 15% of Black respondents have served in the military, including respondents who were currently serving in the military on active duty (1%) and those who were currently on active duty for training in the Reserves or National Guard (1%). More specifically, 13% of these Black respondents were veterans as compared to only 8% in the U.S. population overall.

- This data underscores the fact that a substantial amount of Black transgender people have served and are currently serving in the military. With the Trump Administration actively working to pollute our military with discrimination, the opportunities that military service presents to many Black transgender people to empower themselves and their families is in jeopardy.
What is the so-called transgender military ban and what is the latest on this proposed policy by the Trump Administration?

• This past summer, President Trump declared via Twitter that transgender servicemembers would not be allowed to serve in the military, breaking with a policy of open service that had been implemented under the Obama Administration. This tweet was followed by a White House memo in late August that outlined a new policy that would bar transgender people from serving openly, receive medical treatment like gender corrective surgery and finally stop any transgender individual from being able to join the service. The Administration gave itself until March of 2018 to finalize the policy.

• In late October, a federal judge in the DC District Court blocked part of this policy change stating that it “does not appear to be supported by facts” and “there is absolutely no support for the claim that the ongoing service of transgender people would have any negative effect on the military.” The judge’s preliminary injunction is a huge barrier for the Trump Administration which now must go back to court in order for them to continue to implement the policy change by March. However, because none of the plaintiffs in this particular case are requesting access to transition-related healthcare, the judge’s decision did not lift the bar on healthcare and medical treatment for transgender servicemembers which is a part of the new policy by the Administration.

• Until the courts render a final decision on the injunction of the federal court, the official policy of the U.S. will essentially revert back to the Obama-era policy, which called for open service for transgender servicemembers. However, many transgender servicemembers in need of transition related health care will still have to wait in limbo until the final policy comes to light post a likely Supreme Court decision.

So what does this mean for Black transgender veterans and servicemembers?

• Transgender servicemembers who need transition related healthcare may be barred from receiving that health care until an official policy is established by the Administration and affirmed by the courts as being constitutional. We know from the Rand Corp study that transition health care cost would be negligible on the military budget.

• Transgender veterans who receive medical treatment from the VA still are not able to receive care related to their transition. Currently, the VA provides gender transition counseling, evaluations for hormone therapy and evaluations for gender transition surgeries. However, the VA does not pay or provide any of transition-related medical procedures leaving a huge hole in the ability of our government to provide comprehensive and culturally competent health care for transgender veterans.

• While the transgender military ban is specific to active duty servicemembers and prospective servicemembers, the DoD and VA have much work left ahead to ensure that our LGBTQ/SGL servicemembers and veterans enter inclusive environments. Our military leaders must support the thousands of Black transgender servicemembers who have volunteered to serve our country with their lives each day. Leaders across the veteran community must also ensure that Black transgender veterans are aware and taking advantage of the many benefits they receive from their service including education, housing and disability benefits. In addition, DoD and VA should do all they can to ensure our transgender servicemembers and veterans are able to serve and access benefits for their service free of discrimination.
NBJC has joined the chorus of civil rights organizations advocating for the passage of bipartisan pieces of legislation introduced in both the US House of Representatives and the Senate (HR 4041 and S 1820). These bills would provide for the retention and service of transgender servicemembers, and if passed, could be a more certain and immediate solution to the issue than an eventual court decision.

As we lift up the courageous and selfless service of our American heroes on Veterans Day, we must be mindful that transgender servicemembers, veterans and prospective servicemembers are under attack by the current administration. These veterans and servicemembers come from all backgrounds. However, like many Black veterans, the military has been a source for positive life-changing opportunities that too many transgender people never receive in our world. Instead of targeting a population during a time of war, this administration should be building on the progress we have made since the repeal of the discriminatory policy of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in 2011, which banned gay, lesbian and bisexual servicemembers from openly serving.

For Black America, the potential transgender military ban should be personal as we know that the military has lifted so many of our families and created pathways of mobility. With Black communities disproportionately impacted by unemployment, homelessness, and wage gaps, opening service to transgender people will only be a win for Black America, collectively. When we bar these members of our families and communities from open service, we are hurting ourselves. Any chance for a Black person to have a job, a livable wage, housing, educational opportunities and to give back to their country via service in the military is a victory for our nation and especially for the entire Black community. This is why Black transgender servicemembers and veterans matter on this Veterans Day, and as a civil rights community, we should be doing all we can to stop the implementation of this proposed policy within our military. As a community, Black people and families should be unequivocal that this potential ban on transgender service is the wrong path for our nation. May this be our call to action on this Veterans Day and beyond.

http://nbjc.org/blog/honoring-all-veterans-focus-black-transgender-veterans-servicemembers
In 2017, NBJC launched the Summit on Black Lives series designed to facilitate collaborative dialogue and engagement among Black-led and centered organizations, community leaders, policymakers and individuals to heighten efforts to end the epidemic with urgency.
LAUNCH OF SBL ON NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY
Feb 7, 2017

Summit participants heard from Congresswoman Maxine Waters (CA-43) and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-13), who both have been champions of HIV/AIDS funding and programs to Black communities throughout their extensive careers in Congress. Former Congresswoman Donna Christensen, Delegate from the Virgin Islands (1997-2014), was an active participant at the Summit.

MEDIA RELEASE
SUMMIT ON BLACK LIVES

Yesterday, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, joined communities across the nation and world to recognize National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD). NBHAAD is a national HIV testing and treatment community mobilization initiative targeted at the Black population in the United States and the Diaspora.
TODAY, we declare **NBHAAD365** to emphasize the importance of HIV/AIDS awareness 365 days a year for Black people and Black communities.

In the spirit of NBHAAD, which centers the lived experiences of Black people who are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS in our nation, NBJC is honored to unveil the launch of *Summit on Black Lives: Black America’s Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic*. This important gathering was convened on February 2-4, 2017, by NBJC—in collaboration with the National Black Gay Men’s Advocacy Coalition, SisterLove, the National Black Women’s HIV/AIDS Network, and the Global Network of Black People Working in HIV—and brought together Black HIV/AIDS advocates and professionals from across the country to participate in a historic meeting to strategize and chart a course to develop a Black agenda with a comprehensive path forward to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic that continues to disproportionately impact African Americans. You can learn more about the *Summit on Black Lives* and the ultimate goal to create a comprehensive solution to address and eradicate the HIV/AIDS epidemic among African Americans on the [MEDIA RELEASE](https://www.nbjc.org) on [NBJC.org](https://www.nbjc.org). See photo highlights below from the *Summit on Black Lives*.

**Use #NBHAAD365, and make sure to:**
Members of Team NBJC and the Morten Group at the conclusion of the first convening of the Summit on Black Lives
BLACK HIV/AIDS ADVOCATES CONVENE SUMMIT ON BLACK LIVES IN ADVANCE OF NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY
February 7, 2017

Today marks the 17th annual observance of the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD), a national HIV testing and treatment community mobilization initiative targeted at Black people in the United States and the Diaspora. In advance of NBHAAD, Black HIV/AIDS advocates from across the country traveled to Washington, DC on February 2-4, 2017, to participate in a historic meeting to strategize and chart a course to develop a Black agenda with a comprehensive path forward to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic that continues to disproportionately impact African Americans. Convened by the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)—in collaboration with the National Black Gay Men’s Advocacy Coalition, SisterLove, the National Black Women’s HIV/AIDS Network, and the Global Network of Black People Working in HIV—this meeting served as the first of a series of strategy sessions and convenings for Black leaders to create a comprehensive solution to address and eradicate the HIV/AIDS epidemic among African Americans. The Summit on Black Lives: Black America’s Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic will be a yearlong endeavor to ultimately produce a robust action plan to address the current state of the epidemic and its impact on Black lives.

“As our nation and world faces political and health policy uncertainty with a new Administration and Congress, there is an urgent need for Black leadership to unite and define Black America’s Response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic,” said Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks, Executive Director and CEO of NBJC. “Black families and communities—particularly Black gay, bisexual and same gender loving men, other men who have sex with men, cisgender and transgender women, and our youth—continue to be most impacted by this devastating, yet treatable disease. Our communities cannot afford to wait for others to define the solutions that center our needs as Black people. We are convening this space to plot a path forward to end HIV/AIDS in our communities and lead to collective community empowerment across all demographics within the African American population.”

Data released from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) last week makes the case for the urgency of a Black response. According to the study of the more than 12,200 Black men and women diagnosed with HIV in 2014, nearly 22 percent had progressed to AIDS by the time they were diagnosed. The study further reported that in 2013 among all Black Americans with HIV, only about 54 percent were receiving continuous medical care. Of those getting care, less than half had effectively suppressed the virus demonstrating a continued urgent need to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
“James Baldwin said: ‘The Future is Black’ and certainly future solutions to the HIV/AIDS epidemic at home and abroad will come from strategies and tactics designed to address the specific needs of Black people in research, medical advances, support service access, and pharmaceutical access, especially gay, bisexual, and same gender loving men who continue to be most disproportionately impacted by HIV in the U.S.,” said Ernest Hopkins, Chair of the National Black Gay Men Advocacy Coalition. “President Trump has the opportunity to build on the achievements of prior U.S. presidents, by promoting policies, funding, and initiatives that serve to end HIV disease as an epidemic, prevent new HIV infections, and promote the health and wellness of those living with HIV.”

This first meeting of the Summit on Black Lives brought together a diverse group of Black advocates and professionals working directly in the HIV/AIDS public policy arena to set the initial plans for producing this comprehensive response, outline the long term and short term goals of the Summit on Black Lives, and confirm a series of further action steps. Summit participants heard from Congresswoman Maxine Waters (CA-43) and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-13), who both have been champions of HIV/AIDS funding and programs to Black communities throughout their extensive careers in Congress. Other presenters during the weekend included Symone D. Sanders, Democratic Strategist & CNN Political Commentator; Rachelle Johnson, Vice President of the Podesta Group; and Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, Managing Director of Manatt Health. Summit participants spent their time in Washington strategizing to combat emerging public policy changes at the federal level that are likely to impact important programs and policies like the Affordable Care Act, the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, CDC’s High Impact Prevention, Ryan White Care Act and the Federal Budget.

“As an organization with a mission to reduce the burden of morbidity, mortality and stigma of HIV/AIDS and other health disparities associated with gender, social, and economic inequities among Black women and girls, the National Black Women’s HIV/AIDS Network stands firm with the principles of the Summit on Black Lives as it confirms our commitment as a collective to address the many challenges associated with and exacerbated by the HIV epidemic within the Black community and in particularly among Black women and girls,” said Dr. Ivy Turnbull, Vice Chair of the National Black Women’s HIV/AIDS Network. “Today, we call on our nation’s leaders to commit to a comprehensive federal response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic to support our efforts as we move into a higher level of consciousness, action, and urgency to stem the tide of this disease in our communities across the country, and save the lives of Black people.”

“At this crucial time in our nation’s discourse on the future of several critical aspects of health policy, it was an honor, privilege and imperative for SisterLove to collaboratively convene the Summit on Black Lives,” said Sable Nelson, Esq., Policy and Advocacy Program Manager of SisterLove. “Leaders were able to develop a framework and initial plan to constructively channel our energy and collaboratively coordinate efforts to improve the health and wellness of people of color, especially cis and trans women, both domestically and globally. Many of the policy issues discussed at the Summit on Black Lives are addressed in SisterLove’s 2017 Policy Report: Intersections at the Grassroots.”

The first meeting of the Summit on Black Lives convened Black HIV/AIDS public policy experts from more than 40 organizations working to end HIV/AIDS in our nation and world. In addition to the five convening organizations, leadership from the following Black-centered organizations also contributed to the policy-focused meeting of the Summit on Black Lives: Black AIDS Institute; Black Women’s Health Imperative; National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS; NAESM; Young Black Gay Men’s Leadership Initiative (YBGLI); Center for Black Equity; TruEvolution; Us Helping Us, People into Living; Thrive SS; Community Education Group (CEG); and Holistic Empowerment Institute.
“It is very important for African American leaders to come together and move beyond our individual silos to identify the intersectionality of our collective needs,” said Marsha A Martin, Director/Coordinator, Global Network of Black People working in HIV (GNBPH). “By convening our HIV/AIDS policy leadership, NBJC is helping to curate our movement toward solidarity.”

Future convenings of the Summit on Black Lives in 2017 will include Black leaders and representatives of national and grassroots advocacy efforts that center HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. The convenings will intentionally bring together the broader African American civil rights community, millennials, Black social and civic organizations, and health care advocates focused on Black lives. In the coming weeks, the five convening Black organizations, along with other diverse organizations committed to centering Black people and families in the fight to end HIV/AIDS, will be releasing an official statement that will outline the overall mission, long and short term goals of advocacy efforts, and next steps for action for the Summit on Black Lives.
WASHINGTON, DC – In a comprehensive public policy letter sent to the Trump Administration and Congress, a broad coalition of 44 civil rights and health advocacy organizations urged the federal government to center the lives of African Americans in the nation’s fight to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The letter was born out of the Summit on Black Lives: Black America’s Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic, which is a yearlong endeavor led by the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) to ultimately produce a robust action plan to address and provide solutions to the current state of the epidemic and its impact on Black lives. The organizations that signed-on have endorsed the public policy recommendations, federal funding requests, and next steps outlined in the letter to fortify our nation’s response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic by strengthening federal efforts to empower African American communities. The letter was sent in the midst of the critically important debate our national leaders are engaged in on the future, structure, and funding for the health care system of the United States. The organizations, serving both national and local constituencies, have joined together to endorse a path forward to positively impact the lives of Black people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and those at risk for HIV infection in African American communities, and to continue the nation’s progress on ending the spread of HIV/AIDS in our nation by continuing to invest in quality and affordable health care for all Americans.

Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks, Executive Director and CEO of NBJC, released the following statement regarding the letter and joint effort by the broad coalition of organizations to bring attention to the burden of HIV/AIDS on African Americans:

“Since the dawn of the HIV epidemic in the early 1980s, Black people have consistently been the most impacted demographic in our nation. African Americans represent about 12 percent of the U.S. population, yet our communities continue to be the face of HIV, making up 45 percent of the new HIV cases annually, with Black gay and bisexual men, and transgender women, the hardest hit. Renewed and urgent action is needed by our federal government to address this state of emergency and we actually have the tools to change this dangerous trend. NBJC is honored to be joined by such diverse organizations that recognize this dire need, and we have sent a message to the leadership in Washington, collectively, to center the lives of the most marginalized, which remain African Americans. As our national leaders continue the debate on the federal budget and the future structure of the health care system, it is imperative that the needs of Black people living with HIV/AIDS—and those at risk—are central to this discourse. The essential programs that have been developed over the course of several Administrations in the fight to end HIV/AIDS and the expansion of access to health care for millions of Americans needs to be bolstered—not dismantled. The policy recommendations that are outlined in the letter sent to the Trump Administration and Congress do exactly this, and we are requesting that they be considered with due diligence. The future of our health care system and willingness to end HIV/AIDS in our nation depends on it.”
The letter highlights the demonstrated benefits of federal investments in critical programs like the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and the HOPWA program, and need to build upon the policies carried out by the National HIV/AIDS Strategy. In addition, the letter foreshadows the detrimental reality current legislative proposals in Congress to dismantle access to health care to millions of Americans would have on the most marginalized, uninsured, and underinsured populations in our nation—and specifically how much Black PLWHA stand to lose if passed into law. The organizations signing the letter stand jointly together to protect the advances our nation has made in the fight to end HIV/AIDS and agree that continued outreach and investment in communities of color to address health disparities like HIV must be a top priority for any health care reform.

In addition to leadership in the Trump Administration and the Congressional leadership of both parties, the letter was sent to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus.

The following is the full list of 44 organizations that signed-on to endorse the policy recommendations in the letter:

National Black Justice Coalition; National Black Gay Men’s Advocacy Coalition; National Black Women’s HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.; SisterLove, Inc.; Global Network of Black People Working in HIV; Black AIDS Institute; National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.; AIDS United; NAESM, Inc.; National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund; AIDS Foundation of Chicago; Human Rights Campaign; HIV Medicine Association; Young Black Gay Men’s Leadership Initiative; San Francisco AIDS Foundation; Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS); DC Fights Back!; Prevention Access Campaign; Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) (PHEWA), PC USA; Project Inform; South Carolina HIV/AIDS Council; Positive Women’s Network – USA; The AIDS Institute; ACRIA; Los Angeles LGBT Center; CAEAR Coalition; APLA Health; THRIVE SS Inc.; Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative (SASI); UCHAPS : Urban Coalition of HIV/AIDS Services; NOBCO National; Organization of Black County Officials; Advocates for Youth; National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association; Center for Black Equity; The Fenway Institute; Treatment Action Group; Southern AIDS Coalition; AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families; AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts; National Center for Lesbian Rights; Whitman-Walker Health; Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition; Be PrEPared (Texas Woman’s University); and the African American Health Alliance.
NBJC HOSTS IMPORTANT GATHERING OF BLACK NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO STRATEGIZE AN END TO THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC IN BLACK COMMUNITIES

September 25, 2017

On September 18-19, 2017, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) convened a core group of leaders from across the country near the nation’s capital for a critically important meeting focused on the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS on Black families. African American communities continue to be disproportionately impacted by the disease. Entitled the Convening of Black National Stakeholders, which is part of NBJC’s Summit on Black Lives: Black America’s Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic, the convening brought together influential Black advocates and leaders, media personalities and policymakers to set the foundation for a comprehensive path forward to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Black communities.

David J. Johns, Executive Director of NBJC, released the following statement regarding the Summit on Black Lives convening and the importance of centering Black families in this work:

“African Americans represent about 12 percent of the U.S. population, yet our communities continue to be disproportionately impacted by HIV, making up 45 percent of the new HIV cases annually, with Black gay, bisexual and same gender loving men, and transgender women, carrying most of the burden. Since the emergence of the virus in the early 1980s, our loved ones and families have represented the face of this disease. Today communities have been gripped with a perpetual stigma about HIV that threatens us holistically. As an organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and same gender loving (LGBTQ/SGL) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, NBJC has a responsibility to push this issue to the center of the national agenda for Black America as too many in our own families have been left behind and rendered invisible. Our mission with the Summit on Black Lives series is to educate and mobilize the diverse pockets of leadership in our communities to come together and produce a comprehensive, collective, Black-centered response. This is hard work, but building bridges and being a part of the healing process for Black people to thrive is what we must passionately demand from one another.”

A key goal of the convening was to bring together Black influencers that do not work directly on HIV/AIDS issues but are committed to making this work central to their own efforts to empower Black people. During the summit, leaders heard from special guests vested in this work to center
the most impacted parts of Black families and communities in the fight to end HIV/AIDS including Susan Taylor of CARES Mentoring Movement and ESSENCE magazine, Linda Villarosa of The New York Times Magazine (Contributing Writer, “America’s Hidden HIV Epidemic”), Keith Boykin author of Beyond The Down Low and CNN political commentator and Angela Rye of Impact Strategies and also CNN political commentator. During the summit, NBJC launched a new initiative entitled MUAH: Mothers United Against HIV/AIDS, which will serve as a campaign that organizes Black mothers and mother-figures in advocacy efforts nationally to end HIV/AIDS in Black families. In addition, the work of faith communities was highlighted during an important plenary session which included Bishop Yvette Flunder of City of Refuge UCC (Oakland, CA), Dr. Howard-John Wesley, Pastor of Alfred Street Baptist Church (Alexandria, VA) and Dr. Delman Coates, Senior Pastor of Mt. Ennon Baptist Church (Clinton, MD).

Serving as the honorary co-chairs for the Convening of Black National Stakeholders, Dr. Paulette C. Walker, Immediate Past National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and Thomas L. Battles, Jr., Grand Polemarch of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., released the following statement explaining why they joined the effort:

“This convening is of utmost importance to both of us as there is an urgent need for Black leadership on the national, state and local levels to unite and define Black America’s response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The well-documented statistics that have long shown high rates of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths among the Black populace absolutely require an all-hands-on-deck approach to reach the most impacted parts of our communities. We must promote the life-saving importance of prevention, treatment and care to reduce risks of HIV infection for Black gay and bisexual men, cisgender and transgender women, and heterosexual men and women, as well as among people who inject drugs. In addition, it is imperative that as leaders within our families, communities and nation that we are intentional to promote routine testing for HIV, and to encourage the need to maintain medical care to treat HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases to keep our communities healthy.”

In April, NBJC led a broad coalition of 44 civil rights and health advocacy organizations in sending a comprehensive public policy letter to the Trump Administration and Congress to center the lives of African Americans in the nation’s fight to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Convening of Black National Stakeholders was another step to build power to pressure elected officials and other policymakers to stop efforts to cut or harm programs that play a significant role in moving our nation closer to a day when new HIV infections are rare or non-existent. NBJC will continue to serve community by bringing deeply impacted community partners together focused on the Black populace, and health and wellness issues in Black communities, including the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Summit on Black Lives series and advocacy efforts are designed to facilitate collaborative dialogue and engagement among Black-led and centered organizations, community leaders, policymakers and individuals to heighten efforts to end the epidemic with urgency.

Johns added: “As our national leaders continue to debate the future structure of the health care system with the current Graham-Cassidy ACA repeal effort, it is imperative that the needs of Black people living with HIV/AIDS—and those at-risk—are central to this discourse. The essential programs that have been developed over the course of several Administrations in the fight to end HIV/AIDS and the expansion of access to healthcare for millions of Americans needs to be bolstered—not dismantled. The leaders and organizations that gathered at this summit have committed to educating and mobilizing our communities to collectively shift the culture in our families that stigmatizes HIV/AIDS and demand the tangible life-saving resources to eradicate HIV and the spread of the disease in our communities.”

http://nbjc.org/media-center/releases/nbjc-hosts-important-gathering-black-national-stakeholders-strategize-end-hiva
Since 2010, NBJC has made advocating for and working to empower HBCUs a key mission through our HBCU LGBTQ-Equality Initiative. NBJC’s programmatic and advocacy efforts are rooted in strategies to strengthen the bonds of HBCUs in support of their LGBTQ population, directly confronting the bias and stigma that too often inhabit these historically Black institutions.
Greetings!

Welcome to NBJC’s e-newsletter that tracks our efforts at America’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Since 2010, NBJC has made advocating for and working to empower HBCUs a key mission through our **HBCU LGBTQ-Equality Initiative**. NBJC’s programmatic and advocacy efforts are rooted in strategies to strengthen the bonds of HBCUs in support of their LGBTQ population, directly confronting the bias and stigma that too often inhabit these historically Black institutions.

We are honored to present the third edition of our HBCU e-newsletter for the 2016-2017 academic year to update supporters on our work at these important institutions. In this issue, you will find updates on: NBJC’s *Preparing Our Futures* **Tour** and NBJC’s **LGBTQ-Inclusive Cultural Competency Trainings**. In addition to the work of our Initiative, you will also receive an opportunity to learn about NBJC’s partnership with the **Consortium of Higher Education for LGBT Resource Professionals** and **North Carolina Central University** for their annual Day-long Summer Institute being held on Saturday, June 17, and hosted for the first-time at an HBCU.

We hope that you enjoy this timely newsletter as we wrap up the Spring 2017 semester and share our plans for the year ahead!

In love and solidarity,

*Team NBJC*
The "PrEPing Our Future" Health and Wellness (H&W) Tour was created to initiate culturally competent activities rooted in decreasing the impact of the HIV epidemic and other health disparities for Black LGBTQ communities at HBCUs. NBJC launched the 2017 PrEPing Our Futures Tour in southern states, including: Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Maryland and the District of Columbia. The five tour-stops to date in 2017 include: Prairie View Agricultural & Mechanical University; University of the District of Columbia; North Carolina Central University; University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University.

During this past academic school year, NBJC brought its resources and programmatic efforts to improve the health and wellness of the Black LGBTQ population at HBCUs. NBJC partnered during Pride Weeks and National HIV/AIDS Awareness Days, and with campus student health services and public health departments to take action within HBCU networks. Through this effort, NBJC has been able to integrate targeted PrEP messaging with informative programming, workshops and trainings at HBCUs that cater to the Black LGBTQ population, and enhance efforts on the ground. While on tour, NBJC mobilized a number of HBCU stakeholders on these campuses, including administrators, faculty, student leaders and health service providers. During these comprehensive workshops, NBJC focused on both LGBTQ cultural competency and health and wellness issues impacting Black LGBTQ people.

During the upcoming fall semester, NBJC will launch its National PrEP Ambassadors (PrEPed for Success campaign), which is a peer-education led initiative consisting of trained college students who provide information on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to their peers on-campus and in their local communities. This national peer-education leadership program at HBCUs will empower Black youth and provide them with an opportunity to enhance their public health expertise around subject matters related to safe sexual practices and STI prevention, specifically HIV/AIDS.
PV Spectrum is the LGBTQ student organization at Prairie View Agricultural & Mechanical University and currently the only LGBTQ-specific resource on campus. NBJC kicked off the 2017 "PrEPing Our Futures Tour" in Prairie View, TX on March 6, 2017 with a health and wellness workshop. The workshop provided an in-depth analysis of the unique challenges of Black LGBTQ people, particularly focused on the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and key tools, like PreP, to eliminate new HIV infections. "NBJC kicking off Prairie View A&M University's OUT on the Hill pride week with the Black LGBTQ Health & Wellness workshop was fantastic! Having the National Black Justice Coalition present during our week was received very well and the information provided was much needed. We are excited to have NBJC return to Prairie View A&M University in the near future" said Ms. Evie Myers, Special Advisor to the President for Internal Affairs and International Initiatives, and PV Spectrum Advisor.

The visit also had a focus on improving the capacity of HBCU stakeholder to be more culturally competent of their LGBTQ population on their campus. Trinice McNally, NBJC’s HBCU Program Manager, and Venton Jones, NBJC’s Program Officer for LGBTQ Health and Wellness Initiatives, also met with over 20 PVAMU Stakeholders, including the Vice President for Administration/Chief of Staff, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, and Director of Title IX Compliance. "NBJC made it comfortable for us to express ourselves and informed us of the safe ways to protect ourselves ahead of time. It was meaningful and motivating to know that NBJC makes it their mission to inform college students, especially African American students, of the growing STD rates," said Noah Perkins-Deal, PV Spectrum President.
The University of the District of Columbia’s (UDC) National Women & Girls HIV Awareness Day was held on March 10, 2017. The purpose was to raise awareness of the impact of HIV and AIDS on women and girls. NBJC partnered with UDC’s Campaign 9:30, which is a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded initiative that focuses on awareness related to HIV/AIDS and substance abuse prevention, to present their 5th Annual National Women & Girls HIV Awareness Day Tea. UDC has hosted a tea for the last five years that brings women and girls from the DC together. The theme for 2017 was “The Best Defense is a Good Offense,” and was intended to serve as an opportunity for the UDC campus community to earn how HIV affects women and girls in the United States and how women can protect themselves from HIV/AIDS through PrEP.

Trinice McNally, NBJC’s HBCU Program Manager, served as the Mistress of Ceremony for the awareness day tea, followed by a panel of several local DC organizations like SMYAL, Us Helping Us, Red Pump Project and The Women’s Collective. These individuals were also honored because of their advocacy in their communities.
NBJC partnered with The LGBT Resource Center, Student Health & Counseling Services, Project S.A.F.E & Durham Knows for their first “PrEP’ed for the Next Step” event on March 21, 2017. Over 120 students participated in a scavenger hunt-like game, where they were challenged to win mini games or participate in the Act Against AIDS Photo Campaign. Participants actively learned about HIV/AIDS, PrEP, Prevention/Testing and sexually transmitted infections and had an opportunity to win an iPad. Durham Knows also tested over 50 students for HIV/AIDS during the “PrEP’ed for the Next Step” event and during the tour, NBJC also met with the new Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs, Assistant Vice-Chancellor of Students, and Dean of Students to reintroduce NBJC’s acumen to new Student Affairs leadership and discuss how NCCU can continue to lead in diversity and inclusion in the south. NCCU will be opening an LGBTQ-inclusive housing option in the fall of 2017, and looks forward to ensuring that their climate is nurturing, affirming and inclusive for their LGBTQ population.
Later that evening, NBJC presented at a Welcome Wednesday, a bi-weekly program hosted by the LGBT Resource Center on hot topics and current issues. This dialogue was centered on dismissing myths associated with women and HIV/AIDS and also how PrEP can also be used to prevent HIV/AIDS in both cisgender and transgender women. The “real talk” also discussed stigma and bias in African-American families around sex and how to have conversations about consent, protection and accessing treatment. Jennifer Williams, LGBT Resource Center Coordinator, stated that “NBJC’s help with our event was impactful. It served to further the discussion about PrEP in our community and on our campus”.

FOURTH STOP:
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

NBJC traveled to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) to partner with Uniquely Defined, UMES LGBTQ Student organization, to kick-off their “LGBTQ Pride Week” with a Black LGBTQ Health & Wellness workshop on April 10, 2017 in Princess Anne, Maryland. NBJC provided an in-depth analysis of the unique challenges of Black LGBTQ people, including the state of health and wellness for the Black LGBTQ populace. The workshop educated the UMES community about comprehensive HIV prevention and treatment with a particular focus on young gay and bisexual men and transgender women. “We chose NBJC because they primarily focus on the health & wellness of Black LGBTQ people. We don’t have the access to the resources they provided and the information learned was incredibly impactful,” stated Benjamin Webster, president of Unique Defined. Before the workshop, NBJC had an opportunity to meet with the Somerset County Health Department as they were doing HIV/AIDS rapid testing as a part of the Health & Wellness agenda for Pride Week. NBJC looks forward to cultivating a meaningful relationship on-campus with administrators to support their efforts to become a welcoming, affirming and nurturing campus.
FAMU Spectrum serves as the Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University Gay-Straight Alliance and is advised under the auspice of FAMU’s Student Health Services Department. Tanya Tatum, who serves as the director of Student Health Services, invited NBJC to FAMU to facilitate a Black LGBTQ Health & Wellness Workshop on April 19, 2017. Leon county’s rate for sexual transmitted infections remains among the highest in the state of Florida.

NBJC now has an office in Tallahassee, Florida and looks forward to continuing to assist FAMU Student Health Services and FAMU Spectrum with their LGBTQ Resource Center on campus.
The University of the District of Columbia (UDC) is the only public university in the U.S. capital of Washington, D.C., and is the only urban land-grant historically black university in the country. UDC is no stranger to advocacy for their LGBTQ students and have had TAG (The Alliance Group) active on campus since the mid 2000’s. TAG serves as the official LGBTQ student organization and works with Campaign 9:30 and local community organizations to spread awareness and create safe spaces for LGBTQ students to find community at UDC. In April, NBJC facilitated a two-day cultural competency training for the Office of Student Development & Success, where over 40 administrators were trained.

UDC is committed to ensuring that they are fostering a campus that is welcoming, affirming and inclusive for their LGBTQ population. During the training, the Division of Student Affairs developed institutional goals and defined next steps for UDC in their commitment to LGBTQ equality on both campuses. Jay Morrow, UDC Web Master and TAG advisor, added in reference to the training: “The cultural competency training was very beneficial to breaking down educational barriers for people who realized that they weren’t culturally competent on LGBTQ issues, but after the training their knowledge base increased 10-fold. I also enjoyed that the training was centered from a Black lens.” Chereen Leid, Project Coordinator of Campaign 9:30, added “the cultural competency training that NBJC delivered at our university was incredible. It gave our staff and faculty members a greater insight on the unique needs of a lot of our students, and it gave them a renewed perspective on how they can create a positive, welcoming and inclusive space for all of their students. I highly recommend this training!”
Howard University is a private, research university that is comprised of 13 schools and colleges. Affectionately known as “The Mecca,” it also produces more African-American Ph.D. recipients than any other university in the United States. CASCADE (Coalition of Activist Students Celebrating the Acceptance of Diversity and Equality) is the LGBTQ student organization for LGBTQ students at Howard University and is the oldest LGBTQ student organization at an HBCU.

NBJC was invited to facilitate a series of LGBTQ-Inclusive Cultural Competency training at HU for three days in April. During NBJC’s visit to Howard, the entire President’s Cabinet and Division of Student Affairs were trained. Howard President Dr. Wayne Frederick and Vice President of Student Affairs Kenneth Holmes are both committed to ensuring that Howard University is a culturally competent campus that effectively serves its LGBTQ population. The university also aims to open an LGBTQ Resource Center this year. Gaelle Amazan, who serves as Howard’s Intercultural Affairs Coordinator & CASCADE Advisor, has led the effort to advance LGBTQ equality on the campus and stated: “The partnership between NBJC and Howard University has been instrumental in ensuring that we are demonstrating our commitment to serving our LGBTQ student population.”

SAVE THE DATE:
Day-long Summer Institute

The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals partnered with NBJC in planning and facilitating this year’s Day-long Summer Institute. The institute will focus on supporting queer and trans people of color on college campuses and is intentionally hosting the event at an HBCU for the first time--North Carolina Central University. This professional development opportunity is available for higher education professionals to build networks across the region and country, discuss emerging trends in LGBTQ-centered policies for student services, and share knowledge and struggles in the work of supporting LGBTQ students on college campuses. The institute is appropriate for all experience levels and professional roles.
SAVE
THE DATE
6.17.17

Strategies for Resistance, Resilience, & Hope:
Supporting Queer and Trans People of Color on
College Campuses

2017 Consortium Summer Institute
North Carolina Central University
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Submit a workshop proposal or register for the event:
bit.ly/ConsortiumSummer2017
HBCUs: Why We Do This Work at NBJC!

HBCUs were founded primarily in the South to educate African Americans that were denied an opportunity to learn due to institutionalized segregation and oppression. Throughout their evolution, HBCUs have strengthened their identities in solidifying their commitment to social justice and continue to produce prolific leaders in Black America. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 75 percent of all doctorate degrees awarded to Black people, 75 percent of all Black officers in the U.S. military and 80 percent of Black federal judges got their undergraduate degrees at an HBCU. The legacy and continued importance of HBCUs to our nation and world is undeniable.

More often than ever, HBCUs have been in the news as the Trump Administration publicly courted the leadership of these institutions in February, promising to make them a key priority of the new Administration’s higher education agenda and issuing an executive order to show support from the federal government. However, this executive order was overshadowed by offensive comments of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos calling HBCUs “pioneers” of school choice, neglecting the racist history that birthed these institutions of higher learning and forced African Americans to attend segregated schools. In May, NBJC signed onto an organizational statement of 21 organizations who work to advance human rights for people of color and working class people across the United States in support of rescinding Secretary Devos’ invitation and honorary degree. The Bethune-Cookman Class of 2017 chose to publicly engage in an active protest at their commencement ceremony as a direct outcome of the decision made to abrogate the rescinding of the invitation for Betsy Devos to serve as their commencement speaker. To add insult to injury, President Trump himself made headline news by releasing a signing statement on a package to fund the government through the end of this fiscal year that implied that certain federal funding for HBCUs may be unconstitutional, which was later clarified by the Administration.

With these concerning developments from the Trump Administration, our community must stay alert and move to action in support of HBCUs. With more than 300,000 students, mostly Black and of African descent, and continued financial woes at these historic institutions, the need to advocate and work to empower HBCUs is more important than ever. HBCUs represent the best of Black America and is a significant branch of our African American family tree. NBJC will continue to work to empower HBCUs by collaboratively working with their leadership to improve the overall capacity to provide their students and community—especially the Black LGBTQ populace—with a 21st century education in a secure, welcoming and affirming environment.
NBJC SALUTES SPELMAN COLLEGE’S NEW POLICY TO ADMIT TRANSGENDER WOMEN

September 8, 2017

The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people, released the following statement in support and admiration of Spelman College’s new institutional policy to admit transgender women:

Spelman College is breaking down barriers and setting a powerful example of what inclusivity must look like for students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Spelman honors an enduring legacy of sisterhood by educating Black women through a lens that critically examines sexism, patriarchy, transphobia and cis-heterosexism. This inclusive policy follows Bennett College, the only other HBCU exclusively for women that has implemented groundbreaking policy to admit transgender women.

NBJC is committed to supporting the capacity of HBCUs to provide their students, faculty, staff and the campus and surrounding community—especially members of the LGBTQ community—with a 21st century education in a safe, welcoming and affirming environment. Spelman College’s inclusive institutional admissions policy is a major step in the right direction. By celebrating the diversity of womanhood through policy change, Spelman is leading efforts to provide a holistic education that centers the experiences of all Black women. Spelman has a history of demonstrated leadership as exampled by the launch of its Women’s Research and Resource Center more than 35 years ago. The Women’s Research and Resource Center is the first women’s research center at an HBCU. Spelman College is also the first HBCU to offer a women and gender studies major.

With much progress comes even more responsibility. Inclusive policies are a necessary first step. Beyond inclusive policies, we must work together to ensure change in practice that supports and affirms all Black women. Specifically, all HBCUs must commit to changes in both policy and practice that recognizes the challenges that Black transgender people face. HBCUs must continue to be intentional in serving the most vulnerable members of our community by ensuring that their safety, health and wellness are priorities to their student life experience.

Allowing transgender women to attend Spelman is a critical step forward, but we must do the work required to ensure that Black transgender women have the academic, professional and social support needed to thrive—both in school and in life. NBJC is excited to continue supporting HBCUs in doing this important work in ways that recognize and celebrate both the strength of the diversity within the Black community and honor the experiences of our transgender community.

Spelman College and Bennett College are both demonstrating what it means to truly exemplify inclusion. Transgender women are simply women, which means we must transcend the ideologies, belief and stigma of current times by challenging the oppressive culture and systems of the world we live in.

E-BLASTS

NBJC is able to engage and communicate with its constituency by providing regular e-blasts that update the community on important developments in the national movement to advance the lives of Black LGBTQ/SGL people.
National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD) is observed annually on March 10th to highlight the importance of women and girls taking action to protect themselves and their partners from HIV through prevention, testing and treatment. Sponsored by the Office on Women’s Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this year’s NWGHAAD theme is “The Best Defense is a Good Offense.” As an organization concerned with the health and well being of Black, LGBTQ and same gender loving communities, we want to encourage all of our sisters—transgender, lesbian, bisexual, queer, heterosexual and SGL—to get tested. Our power lies in knowing our status and taking measures to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in all community.

**NEW HIV DIAGNOSES AMONG WOMEN & TEEN GIRLS**

- 15% Hispanic/Latina*
- 19% White
- 61% Black/African American

*Hispanic/Latina can be of any race.
We know that Black women are more likely than any other group of women to be infected with HIV. So it is imperative that we have conversations about prevention and reducing risk among women in our community. Recognizing that many women are unaware of methods to prevent HIV infection beyond practicing safer sex and avoiding high risk behaviors like intravenous drug use, we embarked on a public education campaign to promote the use of Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) among Black women. Since 2015, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) has worked to educate Black cisgender and transgender women about the benefits of PrEP and comprehensive HIV prevention strategies. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, new HIV diagnoses among women declined by 40 percent between 2005 and 2014. We believe that they continue to be on the decline, but there is still more work to do to ensure that we reach a day when there are no new HIV infections in our community.

On this National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, we ask that you join us in taking a stand against HIV/AIDS by getting tested and talking to your sisters about PrEP!

The Best Defense is a Good Offense!

[Video]

Click to Subscribe to Our Mailing List

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1109014349747&ca=31050f3f-945d-495d-adfc-c541a357aa37
Today, April 18, 2017, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) joins with the nation to recognize National Transgender HIV Testing Day—a day to recognize the importance of routine HIV testing, status awareness, and continued focus on HIV prevention and treatment efforts among transgender and gender non-conforming people.

According to the [2015 U.S. Transgender Survey](https://www.thetransgenderindex.org/2015-u-s-transgender-survey), transgender women of color face higher rates of HIV. The report also stated that nearly one in five survey respondents were Black transgender women living with HIV.
In addition to HIV, the Nation remains in a state of emergency as we continue to see a record number of murders among transgender women of color in 2017. Physical violence and HIV remain leading factors that contribute to the premature deaths of many Black transgender women. On this National Transgender HIV Testing Day (NTHTD), NB/JC calls upon Black communities to help raise awareness on NTHTD about the importance of HIV education, testing and treatment by sharing the follow information and resources.

Sample Social Media Content:

Feel free to tailor content to your own voice—just be sure to use the following hashtags where possible so we can find your messages: #DoingIt #TransHIV #NTHTD

Twitter

- Today is National #TransHIV Testing Day. Find #HIV testing centers near you: cdc.gov/DoingIt #DoingIt
- I’m #DoingIt, are you? Join me on #NTHTD & get tested! Find a free #HIV testing center: cdc.gov/DoingIt

Facebook

- Did you know that transgender women are nearly 50 times more likely to be living with HIV compared to all adults of reproductive age? Today is National Transgender HIV Testing Day (#NTHTD). Find a free HIV testing center near you @talkHIV #ActAgainstAIDS. #DoingIt is fast, free, and confidential. cdc.gov/DoingIt
- Today is National Transgender HIV Testing Day, which is designed to recognize the importance of routine HIV testing, status awareness, and continued focus on HIV prevention and treatment efforts among transgender people. Find out more about how often you should get tested for HIV. Are you #DoingIt?

Please tune-in to the Center of Excellence for Transgender Health Facebook Page for the live streaming National Transgender HIV Testing Day kickoff event on Tuesday, April 18 at 3:00pm ET/noon PT.
Now is not the time to remain silent about HIV. While we're being quiet, people are becoming infected. Make HIV testing a part of your routine.

— Chandi Moore, Health Education Associate at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles

I'M #DOINGIT
Testing for HIV

Testing is Fast, Free, and Confidential | cdc.gov/DoingIt

Click to Subscribe to Our Mailing List!  Visit the NBJC Website

STAY CONNECTED WITH NBJC

http://conta.cc/2pNV6aM
Today, June 12, 2017, marks the one year anniversary of the massacre that claimed the lives of 49 individuals of our community. This tragedy took place in the middle of LGBTQ Pride Month on Latinx night at Pulse Nightclub, a popular gathering place for young LGBTQ people of color in Orlando, FL.

On that fateful morning one year ago, we all were rocked with shock and disbelief. Yet, we also witnessed the best of the human spirit when people of all backgrounds responded immediately to honor the lives of the 49 victims and proclaim NO to HATE! Our nation came together in the aftermath to directly support the families of those killed and the survivors left to endure the tragedy. We committed to combatting hatred of all kinds moving forward. This mission must remain in our hearts and deeds as we recognize this solemn day on this one year anniversary.

At the National Black Justice Coalition, our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the families and loved ones of those taken from us and directly impacted by the attack. Our fight for racial justice and LGBTQ equality is inspired by the love that we witnessed in the midst of evil. We are encouraged by this love to continue to speak truth to power as we resist current efforts to rollback vital civil rights protections at the federal, state and local levels of government.

Read Pulse Anniversary Unity Statement

Orlando Pulse Shooting Day of Remembrance Brings Together LGBTQ, Muslim, and Latinx Communities
To pay tribute to the victims of Pulse, NBJC has joined with organizations and individuals from across the country under #HonorThemWithAction. We have signed onto this campaign pledge to raise awareness about the work we are doing to uproot anti-LGBTQ bias and bigotry in our nation. To learn more about this important campaign and/or to sign the pledge yourself, please visit www.honorthemwithaction.org.

Today and ALWAYS, We Remember...

Edward Sotomayor Jr., 34
Stanley Almodovar III, 23
Luis Omar Ocasio-Capo, 20
Juan Ramon Guerrero, 22
Eric Ivan Ortiz-Rivera, 36
Peter O. Gonzalez-Cruz, 22
Luis S. Velma, 22
Kimberly Morris, 37
Eddie Jamoldroy Jiménez, 30
Darryl Roman Burt II, 29
Deandra Deidra Drayton, 32
Alejandro Barrios Martinez, 21
Anthony Luis Laureano Diaz, 25
Jean Carlos Mendez Perez, 35
Franky Jimmy DeJesus Velazquez, 50
Amanda Alvar, 25
Martin Banitez Torres, 33
Luis Daniel Wilson-León, 37
Menendez Marisol Flores, 26
Xavier Emmanuel Serrano Rosado, 35
Gilberto Ramon Silva Menendez, 25
Simon Adrian Carrillo Fernandez, 31
Oscar A. Aracena-Montero, 26
Enrique L. Rios Jr., 25
Juan Pablo Rivera Velazquez, 37
Miguel Angel Honorable, 30
Javier Jorge Reyes, 40
Joel Rayon Paniagua, 32
Jason Benjamin Joseph, 19
Cory James Connell, 21
Luis Daniel Conde, 39
Shane Evan Tomlinson, 33
Juan Chavez Martinez, 25
Jerald Arthur Wright, 31
Loray Valentin Fernandez, 25
Tevin Eugene Crosby, 25
Jonathan Antonio Camuy Vega, 24
Jean C. Nives Rodriguez, 27
Rudolfo Ayala-Ayala, 33
Brenda Lee Marquez McCool, 49
Ymary Rodriguez Sullivan, 24
Christopher Andrew Lennon, 32
Angel L. Candelano-Padro, 28
Frank Hernandez, 27
Paul Tenell Henry, 41
Antonio Devon Brown, 29
Christopher Joseph Santilliez, 24
Axyla Monet Murray, 16
Geraldo A. Ortiz-Jimenez, 25
#WeAreOrlando

National Black Justice Coalition

http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Remembrance-of-the-Pulse-Nightclub-Tragedy.html?soid=1109014349747&aid=0dDMzFN75xc
Greetings!

For over a decade, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and same gender loving (LGBTQ/SGL) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, has made celebrating Black LGBTQ/SGL people and our families the foundation of our advocacy efforts as an organization. As the world recognizes LGBTQ Pride Month, NBJC is humbled and motivated to keep up the work of bringing voice, taking action and building networks that leads to the empowerment for Black LGBTQ/SGL people. For too long, our community has been left behind and erased from many historical narratives. However, we know that Black LGBTQ/SGL people and our families have always been at the center and leading movements for justice in our nation and world. This Pride Month, we celebrate that history and our community’s continued contributions to make this world a more affirming, welcoming and loving place, where all people, no matter their background, can thrive!

In addition to Pride Month, June is the month where we celebrate Juneteenth or the official end to slavery in the United States. On June 19, 1865, more than 250,000 African Americans in Galveston, Texas, rejoiced in jubilation as it was the last day of their enslavement. Over two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed on January 1, 1863, Texas had yet to officially recognize President Lincoln’s executive order. It was not until Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston with 2,000 troops on June 19, 1865, did African Americans learn about their emancipation. This celebration of hope and brighter futures for yet to be born generations of African Americans must never be forgotten. At NBJC, we know that there would be no LGBTQ Pride Month if it was not for the struggle, perseverance and resiliency of our ancestors that provided the foundation for the current struggles for justice in our nation. We are the living manifestation of their hopes and dreams, and our continued passion and push for a more equitable society is the legacy they left for us to build upon.

We are honored to present NBJC’s Pride Month e-blast, which celebrates being Black and LGBTQ/SGL! In this issue, you will find our Pulse One Year Anniversary Tribute; the June 2017 edition of What’s Going on in Washington; information on NBJC’s Pride Partnership with Quest Diagnostics; spotlight on NBJC in the News; Save-The-Date for OUT on the Hill 2017; and our reminder that June 27 is National HIV Testing Day.
To pay tribute to the victims of Pulse, NBJC has joined with organizations and individuals from across the country under #HonorThemWithAction. We have signed onto the campaign pledging to raise awareness about the work being done to uproot anti-LGBTQ bias and bigotry in our communities. To learn more about this important campaign and/or to sign the pledge yourself, please visit www.honorthemwithaction.org.

Read Pulse One Year Anniversary Unity Statement

Orlando Pulse Shooting Day of Remembrance
Brings Together LGBTQ, Muslim, and Latinx Communities

What's Going on in Washington

June 2017 Edition

As we celebrate LGBTQ Pride Month and all it means to live OUT & Proud, it is essential that our community is aware of the many public policy decisions and movements of the federal government that will undoubtedly have major implications on those that live at the intersection of racial justice and LGBTQ/SGL identity. With this in mind, NBJC is honored to present the June 2017 Edition of What's Going on in Washington. This education tool provides brief updates on many of the issues that are being debated and decided upon in our nation’s capital. We hope that you are able to utilize these updates as a way to empower yourself and take action to ensure your elected representatives in Washington know where you stand on issues important to you.
Watch BFF’s Guy Anthony & Dane Young in a Bud Light Pride Campaign as they discuss friendship and brotherhood. Guy Anthony is the president of Black Gifted and Whole and one of NBJC’s 100 Black LGBTQ Leaders to Watch.

Shout out to Bud Light for their continued support of the LGBTQ community! #amongfriends

Watch full video HERE!
1.1 MILLION Americans live with HIV. AN ESTIMATED 16%
don’t know they have the virus.

Who should get tested?

USPSTF recommends
ALL PEOPLE AGES 15 - 65
should get an HIV test at least once.

Learn more

ABOUT HIV RISKS OF HIV HIV TESTING
NBJC is excited to partner with Quest Diagnostics for National HIV Testing Day. Throughout the month, we have been sharing videos that stress the importance of knowing your current HIV status. We will also be taking part in a ‘pledge to get tested’ contest. Click the link, take the pledge, and help NBJC can win with a purpose!!!

CLICK HERE: http://www.pledgehiv.com/

#pledgehiv #questdx

NBJC in the News

Advocacy Group Challenges HBCUs to be LGBTQ Friendly

By Walter Hudson | Diverse Issues in Higher Education

Speaking before a crowded room of historically Black college presidents who had gathered at an HBCU Summit sponsored by the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities in 2014, Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks took to the podium to issue a harsh warning.

“The public eye is on HBCUs,” said Lettman-Hicks, the chief executive officer of the National Black Justice Coalition. “We have to stop otherizing the LGBTQ community.”

Read full article HERE
Confronting racism in LGBT community

By Lou Chibbaro Jr. | The Washington Blade

In interviews this week, the Washington Blade asked four prominent Black LGBT leaders who head local and national LGBT organizations to talk about how they see the current state of race relations within the LGBT community and within LGBT organizations.

Read full article HERE

* SAVE THE DATE * SAVE THE DATE *

RECLAIM. RE-IMAGINE. RESIST. #BlackLiberationNow

OUT on the Hill 2017
September 20-24, 2017 | Washington, DC
NBJC is honored to announce the 8th Annual OUT on the Hill 2017 Black LGBTQ/SGL Leadership Summit (OOTH2017) scheduled for September 20-24, 2017, in Washington, DC. With the theme #BlackLiberationNOW: Reclaim. Re-imagine. Resist., OOTH2017 participants will embark on a journey of transformative dialogue on the meaning of Black liberation in 2017 and mobilize our collective communities to take up this call to action. Applying the West African principle of SANKOFA, OOTH2017 will center the ideal of looking back at our roots in order to move forward as a people. Summit participants will leave inspired to pursue #BlackLiberationNOW!

Open Registration & More Details Coming Soon!

National HIV Testing Day on June 27

Click to Subscribe to Our Mailing List!  Visit the NBJC Website

HIV NATIONAL TESTING DAY!
June 27, 2017

Test Your Way. Do It Today!
June 27th is National HIV Testing Day

My name is Calvin Tendai Pegus, and I am the Health and Wellness Summer Intern at the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Morehouse College's Project IMHOTEP. I am also an advocate and health communicator. I encourage those within my community and beyond this National HIV Testing Day to know their status and get tested. No longer can we sit by idle and continue to feel brokenhearted as our brothers, sisters and other family members are the spoils of war in this battle against HIV/AIDS.

This year will mark the 35th anniversary of the alarming New York Times article that identified the first known cases of HIV/AIDS [then known as gay-related immune deficiency (GRID)]. I am 35 years old...the same age as the United States HIV/AIDS epidemic. As an adolescent, I remember the days of being babysat at my mother’s friend’s home, eating Kellogg’s cereal with heaps of sugar, enjoying my innocence. On one of those carefree days, I was exploring the mysteries of the closed doors and long hallways when I reached to open a particular room and was quickly told to “stay away.” However, as an inquisitive child, I proceeded to open the door one evening and immediately was paralyzed by fear. Physically, I recognized that the guy laying in the bed was her son and that he had contracted this “gay cancer,” but how? The media outlets and the adults around me explained it as the white gay man’s disease. I later overheard the adults discussing that he had AIDS, and it was not long after that he passed away. The stigma was established.

The CDC states that in 2014, 44% of estimated new HIV diagnoses in the United States were among African Americans, who comprise only 12% of the U.S. population. In my community, gay and bisexual men account for a majority of new HIV diagnoses among African Americans, especially young men aged 13-24. I can no longer count how many of my friends and loved ones are either living with or no longer a part of my life due to HIV/AIDS. Thirty-five years after the initial outbreak of the HIV/AIDS crisis and the epidemic, it is still raging in Black communities.
My role as NBJC’s Health and Wellness Summer Intern is to critically understand and analyze the initiatives that are being implemented in order to improve the overall health and wellness of Black LGBTQ/SGL communities. NBJC’s mission is to empower the Black LGBTQ/SGL community, and bridge the gaps between the movements for racial justice and LGBTQ/SGL equality. James Baldwin said it, eloquently, “…the intangible dreams of people have a tangible effect on the world,” which I believe is at the core of advocacy. I will walk away understanding the factors that drive health disparities in my community, the importance of using culturally competent messages, and how to fit HIV testing within those parameters. As a rising leader, it requires that I have a better understanding of the health care utilization, HIV testing, and how I can enhance the distribution of HIV prevention to the most at-risk populations, specifically Black gay and bisexual men, and transgender women.

My entry into Morehouse School of Medicine’s Master of Public Health program this fall will continue to help me attain knowledge of complex factors that drive health disparities affecting people of color. I plan on being an effective voice on how structural inequalities, and social and minority stressors, have attributed to the health disparities of minorities and marginalized Black LGBTQ/SGL communities. My work will also center on raising awareness around promoting HIV testing and effective treatment in the community.

I remember reading a quote by W.E.B. Du Bois, who said that living as a Black person in society has “a sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.” My call to action for Black LGBTQ/SGL people is for community solidarity. It is time that we dispel the narratives that we are a ‘hard to reach’ community. We have to be willing to accept responsibility for the welfare of our ‘sistas,’ ‘judys,’ ‘good good girlfriends,’ ‘my bois,’ brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers in mobilizing each other to break the chains of this epidemic.

http://nbjc.org/media-center/news/hiv-national-testing-day
Today is National Gay Men’s HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NGMHAAD), an annual observance designed to raise awareness about the disproportionate impact of HIV and AIDS on gay and bisexual men in the United States. The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)—America’s leading Black LGBTQ/same gender loving (SGL) civil rights organization focused on federal public policy—joins leaders, activists, advocates, communities and families across our nation to highlight opportunities to disrupt the impact that this pandemic continues to have among Black gay and bisexual men in the United States.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Black gay and bisexual men are more affected by HIV than any other group of Americans. Though the number of new diagnoses declined for African Americans as a whole in recent years, diagnoses among African American gay and bisexual men increased during the same period.

In 2014, gay and bisexual men comprised an estimated 2% of the U.S. population but represented 56% of people living with HIV. In 2015, gay and bisexual men accounted for 67% of all new HIV diagnoses in the U.S. Among all gay and bisexual men who received an HIV diagnosis in the U.S. in 2015, African Americans accounted for the highest number of individuals impacted by HIV (10,315; 39%), followed by whites (7,570; 29%) and Hispanics/Latinos (7,013; 27%).

On this NGMHAAD, NBJC is asking for your leadership to raise awareness about the work that remains to be done to eliminate HIV/AIDS among Black gay and bisexual men. Please share the information below on how to start a conversation about HIV prevention. Find a local HIV testing site and consider creative ways to encourage testing in your family and community.

Here is what you can do:
There is an urgent need for every member of the diverse Black community to stand up and take action to reduce stigma and stop the transmission of HIV/AIDS. The resources required to end the epidemic exist, the question is will you use them?

Will YOU be a part of the solution?

Visit cdc.gov/StartTalking
Text zip code to KNOWIT (566948), or
Enter your zip code here.

October is a time when we celebrate tenacious resilience. During this month, we highlight the lessons learned to not only survive but to thrive. For our community, we also celebrate the tremendous contributions that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people have made to American and global history. Celebrating our history enables us to reflect upon where we have come from while thinking strategically about the path forward. It is especially important to celebrate the contributions of Black LGBTQ and same gender loving (SGL) people as too often our accomplishments are shrouded in erasure or secrecy because of their unique expressions of love. The contributions of luminary leaders like Bayard Rustin, Marsha P. Johnson, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Mario Cooper, Tracee McDaniel and Tarell Alvin McCraney have strengthened our social fabric—pushing our country closer toward the founding principles of equality and justice for all.

Take Bayard Rustin for example. He was a tireless civil rights advocate and chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, which was one of the largest nonviolent protests ever held in the United States. Despite his astounding dedication to furthering the principles of the Civil Rights Movement, and human rights more generally, Rustin was threatened, arrested and fired from important leadership positions, primarily because he was an openly gay man. However, his sacrifice and choice to live in authenticity and truth was not in vain. In 2013, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Rustin the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States, for his lifetime of service and leadership on behalf of human rights.

There would not be a modern LGBTQ Equality Movement without the tireless advocacy and leadership of Marsha P. Johnson. Specifically, it was Johnson and other transgender women and gender nonconforming people of color that led the fight during the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City, which is often credited as the start of the movement for equality for LGBTQ people in our world. Unfortunately, her contributions have often been overshadowed by a white-centered explanation of queer history that often erases the contributions of transgender (and other queer) people of color. However, if it was not for her courage to demand justice through action for LGBTQ people, we would not have made the progress we experience today in the movement for equality.
Audre Lorde referred to herself as “a black feminist lesbian mother poet,” which was her form of resistance to being labeled by any one identity or cause. She was internationally recognized for both her published work and activism, which spoke eloquently about the importance of struggle for liberation for those that society have oppressed or rendered invisible. Her writings have provided generations with a powerful understanding of how differences intersect across race, class, age, gender, sexual orientation and ability. She is the recipient of many special honors, including the Walt Whitman Citation of Merit, which conferred the mantle of New York State Poet for 1991-1993. Her poems, essays and activism continue to inspire the modern movements for justice by seeking to hold true to the value that it’s our moral duty to speak for those “whose voices have been silenced.”

Consider Angela Davis, a revolutionary of unequaled prowess who has devoted her life to combating racism, sexism and intersectional forms of oppression that impacts Black women and transgender individuals in uniquely profound ways. Despite attempts by the United States government to suppress her political influence, Davis has never wavered in her commitment to global social justice. Very few people could do what Davis has done on the level in which she did, yet the celebrations of her contributions pale in comparison to other race warriors because she identifies as a lesbian.

Mario Cooper is a shining example of how one can walk in their truth no matter the obstacles that stand in the way. Cooper is often a forgotten hero in the fight to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which disproportionately impacts both African Americans and LGBTQ people. It was because of his prolific advocacy during the 1990s that leaders in Washington moved on addressing HIV after years of silence fueled by stigma on the issue. As an openly gay Black man living with HIV, he pressured politicians, community and civil rights advocates to take on the issue and can be credited with being one of the major leaders that helped to get the Minority AIDS Initiative passed into law in the late 1990s. His lifelong service must never be forgotten as he was able to achieve so much in a time when many people turned their backs on people living with HIV/AIDS.

Tracee McDaniel is a lifelong human rights activist and advocate for the transgender community. She is the author of Transitions, which speaks to her personal journey of overcoming life’s challenges in pursuit of living her truth, unapologetically. McDaniel spent 20 years in the entertainment industry before focusing her attention to supporting and empowering transgender people in her home of Atlanta, Georgia. McDaniel founded the Juxtaposed Center for Transformation, an anchoring organization of the Trans Housing Atlanta Program, which is described as an advocacy, consulting and social services referral organization for transgender and gender nonconforming people. In 2016, Mayor Kasim Reed appointed McDaniel to serve on the Atlanta Citizen Review Board, where she now lends her voice to build positive community relations between the Atlanta Police Department and the local LGBTQ community. Her activism and life’s work continues to serve as an example to so many people who are often marginalized or ostracized by community and society.

Moonlight became the first film featuring a prominent LGBTQ storyline to receive an Oscar during the 89th Academy Awards for Best Picture earlier this year. Told in three powerful chapters, Moonlight explored the incredibly poignant story of a Black gay man growing up in Miami and expressing both pain and love in this coming of age work of art. The film was inspired by the life of Tarell Alvin McCraney, who also co-wrote the film based on his own play, entitled In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue. McCraney also received his own Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay that same year. He has used his own lived experience to show the world the complexities of being Black and gay in America, while also showing the universal story of human triumph.

The contributions of these dynamic personalities have advanced equity, equality, and enlightenment around the world, but only reveal the tip of the metaphorical iceberg of LGBTQ and American history.
The Black LGBTQ/SGL community in its glorious splendor and grandeur has established and supported flourishing institutions and made extraordinary contributions to civil rights on national and international levels. Doing all of this while battling the twin oppressions of being members of groups that are oppressed because of both race/ethnicity and sexual/gender identity. Both of these categories, “race/ethnicity” and “sexual/gender identity,” are socially constructed—that is they were created to classify and order people during colonial expansion. While creating these terms have real-life implications for people who are often forced to hide or erase parts of themselves, it should never be the case that we ask any person to deny, hide or shrink any part of themselves. A fundamental part of the American Dream is being allowed to show up and be supported (or at least acknowledged and not threatened) as you are. Sadly, for too many members of the Black LGBTQ/SGL community, this is still a dream. Together, we can make this dream a reality by using opportunities like LGBTQ History Month to recognize and celebrate the tremendous contributions made by Black LGBTQ/SGL leaders.

In October, we celebrate the illustrious history and profound contributions to the LGBTQ/SGL community, showing future generations that no matter who you love or how uniquely you present yourself to the world, your contributions will be celebrated. Will you join NBJC in this critically important work? Looking to learn more about the diverse contributions of Black LGBTQ leaders? NBJC invites you to celebrate LGBTQ History Month all year long by learning and sharing information about Black LGBTQ/SGL leaders who have advanced equity and justice for all.

http://nbjc.org/blog/celebrating-black-history-did-you-know-october-lgbtq-history-month
In the Midst of Tragedies, We Stand United!
#Justice4Gemmel #Justice4Giovanni

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black LGBTQ and same gender loving (SGL) people, pauses today to honor the lives of two of our community members who tragically lost their lives in recent months.

**Gemmel Moore**
On July 27, 2017, 26-year-old Gemmel Moore was found dead in Los Angeles, CA in the apartment of 53-year-old Ed Buck (born Edward Bernard Peter Buckmelter), a prominent white gay man and Democratic donor. The LA County Coroner immediately ruled Gemmel’s death an accident caused by an overdose of methamphetamine. However, after pages of Gemmel’s journal were published 19 days after his death, the LA County Sheriff’s Department initiated a homicide investigation. NBJC has issued a [statement of solidarity](#) with Gemmel’s family and friends demanding justice for his death.
Giovanni Melton
On November 2, 2017, 14-year-old Giovanni Melton was shot to death by his father in his apartment in Henderson, NV. Media reports and accounts from family members suggest that Giovanni and his father had a strained relationship due to his father’s inability to accept Giovanni’s sexual identity. At the tender age of 14, Giovanni was forced to start living on his own because his father felt it necessary to appease his new wife, whom he told police did not get along with Giovanni. Giovanni’s father is a repeat offender with prior convictions for domestic battery. He was charged with murder, illegal possession of a gun, and child abuse or neglect.

These tragedies accentuate how fragile life is. Too many of our children endure bullying and violence as a result of who they are, whom they are attracted to or whom they love. We are all aware of the rising number of murders of Black transgender women this year alone, and we continue to see cases of depression and suicide plague our LGBTQ youth. The stigma and shame accompanying LGBTQ/SGL identity in Black America is not something we can turn a blind eye to because it makes us feel uncomfortable. It requires us all to do the tough work of learning how to support and communicate with one another. The unjust deaths of Gemmel and Giovanni remind us that there is still much work to be done.

At NBJC, we are providing resources that will help to educate parents on how to support their families when their children identify as LGBTQ. We are expanding our efforts to advocate for collective community healing and acceptance. We owe it to our youth to ensure that they are safe and protected at home, in school, and in the community. In pursuit of justice for both Gemmel Moore and Giovanni Melton, NBJC is asking our community to unite and take action. You can learn more about their lives and how you can get involved in support of our community below.

In Solidarity,

David J. Johns
NBJC Executive Director

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Read NBC News Article Featuring NBJC Executive Director Entitled

After Man Is Charged in Gay Son’s Death, LGBTQ Groups Focus on Outreach

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Join #Justice4Gemmel Campaign Today

To Do List
How You Can Help

1. STAY CONNECTED To #Justice4Gemmel
   - Website: justice4gemmel.com
   - Facebook: Justice4Gemmel + All of Ed
   - Buck’s Victims
   - Twitter: @Justice4Gemmel
   - Hashtags: #Justice4Gemmel,
   - #GemmelMoore #EdBuck
   - Email: justiceforgemmel@gmail.com

2. SIGN & SHARE THE PETITION
   - Log onto justice4gemmel.com and SIGN the petition calling on Democrats to return Ed Buck’s dirty money. Next, SHARE the petition on social media and via email with your friends, neighbors and co-workers.
3. CONTACT THE L.A. COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPT. & DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE
   • CONTACT the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and District Attorney’s Office and demand that they do a real and full homicide investigation in the death of Gemmel Moore including demanding that felony criminal charges be filed. Tell the Sheriff’s Department and DA that you want the serious allegations made by witnesses and victim’s of Ed Buck taken seriously and investigated.
     Deputy District Attorney Craig Hum
     (213) 257-2250 or chum@da.lacounty.org
     Detective Ralph Hernandez
     (323) 574-1862 or r1heman@lasd.org

4. CONTACT CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIR ERIC BAUMAN
   • CONTACT CA Democratic Party Chairman and Ed Buck associate and tell him that ALL Black Lives Matter and that Democrats have a responsibility to disavow Ed Buck and return his dirty money as they did with Harvey Weinstein.
   • Eric Bauman - ericbaum@me.com

http://ow.ly/mhJe30gCDWO
The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and same gender loving (LGBTQ/SGL) people, joins communities across the nation and world to recognize International Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR). For over a decade, this solemn day has been dedicated to honoring the lives of people of trans experiences, globally, whose lives have been lost due to anti-trans violence. This year alone, there have been 25 deaths reported of individuals who identified as transgender or gender nonconforming—the majority being transgender women of color—and the year is not over.

TDOR was created to honor the life of Rita Hester, a Black woman of trans experience murdered in Boston, MA, on November 28, 1998. Her death inspired the Remembering Our Dead web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. Rita Hester’s murder — like many anti-trans murder cases — has yet to be solved; however, her legacy will never be forgotten. We must continue to demand justice.

On TDOR, advocates and allies must stand together in solidarity to condemn violence based on bias against people of trans experience and work to make the world a more inclusive place where difference is celebrated. As our nation remains piercingly silent on violence that continues to plague the most marginalized members of our community, we must speak truth to power. May we stand together on this day and everyday moving forward to celebrate and affirm the lives of all people of trans experience and people who identify as gender nonconforming.
May we never forget the lives of those lost this year to senseless acts of anti-transgender hate and violence.

These are the names of reported transgender and gender nonconforming people who have been killed this year, thus far.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India Monroe</td>
<td>Newport News, Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jojo Striker</td>
<td>Toledo, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ciara McElveen</td>
<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chay “Juicy” Reed</td>
<td>Miami, Florida</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imer Alvarado</td>
<td>Fresno, California</td>
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<tr>
<td>TeeTee Dangerfield</td>
<td>College Park, Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthony “Bubbles” Torres</td>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephanie Montez</td>
<td>Robstown, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesha Caldwell</td>
<td>Canton, Mississippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiara Richmond</td>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alphonza Watson</td>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mx. Bostick</td>
<td>New York, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kendra Adams</td>
<td>Ithaca, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gwynevere River Song</td>
<td>Waxahachie, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derricka Banner</td>
<td>Charlotte, North Carolina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamie Lee Wounded Arrow</td>
<td>Sioux Falls, South Dakota</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chyna Gibson</td>
<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenne McFadden</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sherrell Faulkner</td>
<td>Charlotte, North Carolina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ebony Morgan</td>
<td>Lynchburg, Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiwi Herring</td>
<td>Saint Louis, Missouri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ally Lee Steinfeld</td>
<td>Licking, Missouri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candace Towns</td>
<td>Macon, Georgia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In recognition of opportunities to stand with and better support the Black transgender community, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) has established a transgender advisory council to strengthen individual and collective efforts to address the unique needs of Black people of trans experience. The primary goals of NBJC’s Black Transgender Advisory Council are to: 1) advise NBJC on ways to best support the efforts of the Black transgender community; 2) inform the public policy agenda implemented by NBJC by ensuring the inclusion of intersectional issues of racial justice, and gender identity and expression; and 3) help strengthen the Black family and community by creating safe space, and providing resources to encourage and facilitate what can sometimes be challenging conversations required to reduce stigma, eliminate bias and increase inclusion. The members of the Black Transgender Advisory Council are leaders of industry, stalwart advocates and activists who have committed themselves to the work of supporting the Black transgender community. The members of NBJC’s Inaugural Black Transgender Advisory Council are:

- Dr. Ayanna Elliott, Chair
- Dr. Van Bailey
- Londyn De Richeleau
- Senior Minister Camarion D. Anderson
- Kylar W. Broadus, Esq.
- Tiq Milan
- Valerie Spencer, MSW
- Toni-Michelle Williams
- Carter Brown
- Grace Dolan-Sandrino
- Nala Toussaint
Building upon the groundbreaking 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS)—the largest survey of transgender identity in the nation—NBJC was honored to collaborate with the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) , Black Transmen, Inc. and Black Transwomen, Inc. to produce a detailed report about experiences of Black USTS respondents. The report provides critical insight into the many threats and daily obstacles faced by Black transgender people. While findings from the USTS revealed several crucial challenges to being transgender in the United States, Black respondents reported substantially higher threats, deeper levels of poverty and economic insecurity, negative health outcomes and interactions, and more extreme distress than others surveyed. Many findings are alarming and are cause for immediate public concern.

In a moving op-ed in the LA Blade , David Johns, NBJC Executive Director, highlights collective ways communities can support people of trans experience. The piece serves as a call to action for allies of transgender people, especially in the African American community, to equip advocates with strategies that focus on empowering and uplifting our transgender family.

http://nbjc.org/blog/we-honor-we-remember-we-will-never-forget
On this 29th Anniversary of World AIDS Day (#WAD2017), the National Black Justice Coalition pauses to honor those that have died from HIV/AIDS, support those that presently live with the disease, and call all people to action to prioritize ending the spread of HIV/AIDS in our world. The universal theme for this year is: “Increasing Impact through Transparency, Accountability and Partnerships.”

As the nation’s leading civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and same gender loving (SGL) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS, this day serves as an urgent call to rededicate our families and communities to the fight to eradicate HIV/AIDS and the disproportionate impact of this disease on Black Americans. NBJC is honored to join this movement to bring awareness and hope to our communities through empowerment. We hope that on this day the seeds are planted for you and your network of family and friends to take up the cause and make ending HIV/AIDS a priority in your lives. In order to stay true to the theme of this year and inspire a collective response, NBJC is honored to present this #WAD2017 e-blast with important information to get you involved with the local, national and global fight to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.
KNOW THE FACTS

• Worldwide, nearly 17 million people are living with HIV and do not know.
• In the U.S., Black people still account for a higher proportion of new HIV diagnoses, those living with HIV and those diagnosed with AIDS, compared to other races/ethnicities.
• Between 2005-2014, the number of HIV diagnoses among Black cisgender women fell 42%, though it is still high compared to other cisgender women of other races/ethnicities.
• From the limited data we have on the transgender population in the US, half of transgender people diagnosed with HIV identified as Black.
• Gay and bisexual men account for a majority of new HIV diagnoses among Black Americans.
• The highest percentage of HIV diagnoses in the South, Northeast, and Midwest is among Black Americans.
• The South lags behind other regions in most HIV prevention and care indicators.

NOTE: Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To honor #WAD2017, Isaiah Wilson, NBJ’s Director of Public Policy, penned a passionate call to action for Black America to take up the fight to end HIV/AIDS in the Black community. As a person living with HIV who is working to expand the movement for justice for all Black people, including Black LGBTQ/SGL people, Isaiah’s words are a timely reminder of the progress we have made and the work still required to end the epidemic.

Read the Full Op-Ed
The End of HIV/AIDS Depends On Us
GET INVOLVED ON #WAD2017

Here are some ways to celebrate World AIDS Day 2017 by taking action to fight against the HIV epidemic:

- Learn more about HIV prevention and testing at cdc.gov/ActAgainstAIDS #WAD2017 #ActAgainstAIDS

- Get tested for HIV every six (6) months. Need help finding somewhere to get tested? Visit www.hivtest.org to find testing services in your local community.

- If you are HIV positive, find a provider you can trust and develop a treatment plan in order to take control of your health. Click here to find a list of providers in your community.

- If you need insurance, now is the time - find your local Ryan White program at https://findhivcare.hrsa.gov/index.html and see if you qualify for additional financial help to #GetCovered #WAD2017

- Start Talking. Stop HIV. is a campaign that seeks to reduce HIV infections among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men by encouraging open discussion between sex partners and friends about a range of HIV prevention strategies. Learn more HERE.

- If you do not have health insurance, Enroll Today! The last day to enroll is Dec. 15th – don’t get stuck in line or miss your chance. Visit HealthCare.gov today to get started and give yourself the peace of mind you need #EnrollByDec15 #GetCovered
NB JC ON THE MOVE

Join NB JC and our partners in Washington, DC on this #WAD2017 at two important community events:

- **Obamacare**
  - Learn, Enroll, Protest Cuts.
  - Sign-up for healthcare at your local event
  - **Demand ACCESS**

  **Fri., Dec. 1, 2017 11 a.m.-4 p.m.**
  - Dorothy L. Height Library
  - 4909 Blossom Road, N.E.
  - Washington, D.C. 20019

  Register [HERE](#)

NB JC has joined the Black AIDS Institute (BAI) and 14 other organizational partners to support a 17-city national tour to educate and mobilize Black Americans to get insured. The National Black Healthcare Access Tour makes a stop in Washington, D.C. on World AIDS Day, December 1. Read the press release [here](#). Contact LestianM@blackaids.org for more info.

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In honor of #WAD2017, join NB JC at the World AIDS Day Artist Showcase. The showcase features local artists who have come together, in solidarity, to show how the epidemic has impacted our communities and the importance of ending the epidemic in our lifetime. NB JC is honored to lend support to the AIDS Healthcare Foundation for this event and will be onsite sharing important information about efforts to end HIV/AIDS in our nation’s capital.

Join us from 6-7pm for a meet and greet cocktail reception followed by the showcase from 7-9pm. Admission is FREE with the donation of a new toy to benefit outreach efforts of Heart to Hand, Inc. or a canned food item to benefit outreach efforts of Damien Ministries.

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http://conta.cc/2zTgWmH