



A VISION FOR BLACK LIVES: **POLICY DEMANDS FOR BLACK POWER, FREEDOM, & JUSTICE**

A Federal and State Jobs Program that Specifically Targets the Most Economically Marginalized Black People - Such As Those Who Are Queer, Trans, Femmes, Cash Poor, Working Class, Formerly Incarcerated, and Differently Abled - Funds a Living Wage, and Encourages Support For Local Workers Centers, Unions, and Black Owned Cooperative Businesses

What is the problem?

- For nearly 70 years, Black people have had two times the unemployment rate of white people in the U.S — even when the economy is strong. During tough economic times, Black unemployment is in the double digits, with some cities and states reaching into the mid 20's. As part of a comprehensive reparations package, we need to develop and pass a policy that would create millions of federally funded jobs that specifically target Black workers. Since the private sector has proven it is unable to employ Black workers at the scale needed, we must demand the federal government step in and fulfill this role.
- Economic violence is the result of private state and federal divestment in Black communities in three specific categories: housing, education and employment. As employment in Black communities declines, violence increases. So we can't discuss employment without addressing the latent impact of unemployment on Black bodies.
- Through globalization and outsourcing, many of the traditional labor opportunities that once provided subsistence for Black laborers have diminished, leaving thousands of Black people unemployed.
- The unemployment gap between Black and white people appears to have emerged in the 1940s, as unionization and protections for workers began to expand.
- The widest gaps, when Black unemployment was as much as 2.77 times that of white unemployment, came in the late 1980s, as the manufacturing sectors that employed disproportionate shares of Black people shriveled.
- In the U.S. Black people are the last to be hired in a good economy, and when there's a downturn, they're the first to be released.

What does this solution do?

- Support economic empowerment in low-income Black communities, by introducing and implementing cooperative institutions throughout urban and rural Black communities.
- Focus on past and present legislation that supports community economic development to generate employment in Black communities.



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- Encourage sustained collaboration between government, private sector and community organizations and contain community based accountability monitoring, forcing them to be responsive to low-income Black communities.

Federal Action:

- We should develop and pass a \$2 to \$4 trillion policy that would both create government jobs for Black workers, and subsidize businesses to hire Black workers. The main targets of this effort would be the Congress, President, and Chairman of the Federal Reserve. This would have to be both a legislative campaign to move members of Congress, and direct public pressure campaign to get the President and Federal Chairman to act.
- Pass legislation that moves formerly incarcerated people into a protected class and makes it illegal for public or private employers to discriminate against workers with a criminal background.
- Remove barriers to employment by passing Ban the Box legislation on a federal level for both public and private employers.

State Action:

- States could pass legislation giving tax credits to businesses for hiring Black workers.

Local Action:

- Similar to the state, there would be no complementary local policy for this proposal. Local groups should focus on getting their congressional representatives and senators to support the federal policy.

How does this solution address the specific needs of some of the most marginalized Black people?

- There would be special provisions in the jobs program that would have strict benchmarks for hiring Black trans people, queer people, women, formerly incarcerated people, differently abled people, and other target populations that have extremely high disproportionate rates of unemployment.

Model Legislation

- There is currently no model policy for this proposal, although the stimulus bill President Obama passed in 2009 had provisions in it that could be used as a model. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), and Economic Policy Institute would be the two organizations most capable of helping to develop such a policy.



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Organizations Currently Working on Policy:

- The Center for Community Change (CCC is working on similar policy, but not one targeting Black workers, or to the scale that is needed)
- The Workers Center for Racial Justice

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