1U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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COMMISSION ON THE SOCIAL STATUS OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS

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ACT NOW SUMMIT

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MONDAY, JULY 24, 2023

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The Commission convened via Video-Teleconference at 11:00 a.m. EDT, Walter Earl Fluker, Moderator, presiding.

PRESENT:

FREDERICA S. WILSON, Chair, Florida

LAURENCE ELDER, Commissioner, The Larry Elder Show

JOSEPH E. MARSHALL, JR., Commissioner, Alive & Free Foundation

CALVIN JOHNSON, Commissioner, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

MARSHALL DILLARD, Commissioner, Driller to Driller Foundation

TINALOUISE MARTIN, Commissioner, U.S.

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ALSO PRESENT:

WALTER EARL FLUKER, Moderator

ADONIJAH BAKARI

TRAVIS BRISTOL

DAVID DWIGHT

MICHAEL DeVAUL

SEKOU FRANKLIN

KARISHMA FURTADO

AKHI JOHNSON

ZAKEE MARTIN, Moderator, Staff

MONA SAHAF

JON-THOMAS ROYSTON

CHAD WILLIAMSON

A-G-E-N-D-A

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

11:18 a.m.

CHAIR WILSON: Good morning. You can call me Congresswoman Frederica "Prevention" Wilson, because I know prevention works. I am a former grade school teacher, a school principal, a school board member, a district administrator, and the founder of the 5,000 Role Models of Excellence project, a mentoring program of young boys in the schools, in the public schools of Florida, that is 30 years old. So, I just don't talk the talk, I walk the walk. And through the process of rolling out this project, all of Florida and now in Detroit, Michigan, I have rescued tens of thousands of young boys from the pipeline to prison for the past 30 years, and sent thousands to college with no student loans.

While serving as a senator in the state of Florida, I established a Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys almost 20 years ago. And I came to Congress 13 years ago, I knew I had to work to establish a national coalition. So, I worked both sides of the aisle, with the help of my senator for ten years, and got support to pass the bill.

I've worked with Republicans, I've worked with Democrats, everyone tried to convince them that

we needed a U.S. Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. It passed. It passed right after the murder of George Floyd. And when it was voted on in Congress, it was the day of the viewing of the body of my friend and classmate Congressman John Lewis in the Rotunda. A very emotional day for Congress, an emotional day for me, and an emotional day for the commission.

So it's very personal to me and I considered the U.S. Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys as the most consequential piece of legislation ever passed in Congress since the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

So much history. I want to thank all of you for joining today, especially our commissioners who are always joining with me. Some have traveled far to participate today, some from California, Florida, we have Commissioner Calvin Johnson, Commissioner Marshal Dillard, Commissioner Joseph Marshall, Commissioner Laurence Elder, and Commissioner TinaLouise Martin.

I'm going to ask them to stand so that you can see who they are. Will all of the commissioners please stand? Thank you so much for joining us, and thank you to the rest of our family for being with us

today. It was clear at the time when the commission was established, and still through today, that one of the most dangerous issues facing Black boys in our country is racism itself.

Too often these boys are perceived as criminals by the time they reach the age of five. Excuse me, I'm battling a real bad cold. They're labeled delinquent, not rowdy. They are deemed hardened criminals, not misguided youth, that their existence is often seen as a threat. The tragic reality is that Black males in America are treated as their own class of citizen, and that is why this commission was created.

It was created to address the disparities and social conditions impacting Black males in America with a primary goal of guaranteeing the safety, health, welfare, and productive growth and development of Black men and boys. The Commission is reviewing crucial issues such as police brutality, gun violence, fatherhood, and recruiting and training Black male teachers, Black male professionals, the list goes on and on, educational opportunities.

We aim to interrupt the school to prison pipeline, and eliminate the educational and social gaps that have held up mobility. Throughout this

summit, we will directly confront these issues, hearing from researchers, policymakers, community leaders, and most importantly from the Black men and boys themselves who bear the brunt of these efforts.

So, we are here to listen, we are here to learn, and we are here to formulate effective policies that bring about lasting change. Though the task is daunting, it's going to be difficult, it's not insurmountable. You have to think of the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys as a think tank, a think tank.

So, we are going to dismantle systemic barriers, foster collaboration across political divides, demonstrate courage in the face of adversity, and uphold our commitment to justice and equality. Because together, we possess the power to reshape the narrative in this nation for Black men and boys, and show that they are not defined by the color of their skin, but by their character, their abilities, and their dreams.

So, today's summit will serve as a catalyst for change, summarizing hope and inviting our shared belief in justice, equality, and progress. Let us seize this moment and this opportunity and fully dedicate ourselves to the work that lies ahead. Thank

you to all of you. Let's make this summit a significant milestone in our collective journey toward equality and towards justice. Thank you, and good morning.

MR. ELDER: My name is Larry Elder. I am the vice president. I am running as a Republican, so I probably have some differences with some of people in the room, but I do think that we have something in common, and that is the recognition that the status of Black boys in America is a status of crisis. I consider the number one social program in America to be what I call the epidemic of fatherlessness.

Today nearly 70 percent of Black kids enter the world without a father in the home married to the mother, up from 25 percent back in 1965. 1965, a guy named Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote a report for his boss, he was the Assistant Secretary of Labor, and he said 25 percent entered the world in 1965 without a father in the home married to the mother, and felt that it was going to have all sorts of dire consequences. Well, fast forward the number now, it's 70 percent, as I said, 25 percent of White kids now enter the world without a father in the home married to the mother.

And the stats are clear, Barack Obama once

even cited them. If you're raised without a father, you are five times more likely to be poor, and commit crime. Nine times more likely to drop out of school, and 20 times more likely to end up in jail.

What happened, in my opinion, in 1965, with, I think, the best of intentions, Lyndon Johnson launched what he called the war on poverty. Since then, we have incentivized women to marry the government, and incentivized men to abandon their financial and moral responsibility.

And that is not to denigrate the hard work that single moms, and often grandparents, have done to raise these boys, but it is harder. Even Tupac Shakur once said I know for a fact that, quote, had I had a father in my life, I would have been more confident, I would have been more disciplined, end of quote.

Nearly half of the homicide victims in America are Black, most of those are Black boys. And contrary to what Joe Biden suggested at his speech at Howard University a few weeks ago, they're not being killed by White supremacists. 60 percent of the shootings, of the robberies, and homicides in America are committed by Black people. Unless you're prepared to say Black people are just genetically inclined to commit more crime, and I hope nobody feels that way,

you have to ask yourself what the devil is going on.

And what the devil is going on is these kids do not have a male role model figure in their homes. And it's not just a Black problem, although it's particularly acute in the Black community. I was just in Iowa talking to the police chief of a town called Johnston, mostly White, and I said do you guys have a gang problem?

He said we do, not like Chicago, but we have a gang problem. I said what's the commonality? He said these kids do not have a male role model in their lives. It can be a father, it can be a grandfather, it can be a pastor, it can be a teacher, somebody not there. So, this is the most acute problem I think facing this country.

And one of the reasons I'm running is to put that issue front and center. Even if I am not the nominee, at least I hope that the media, the Democrats, and Republicans will now have to consider this issue, and begin to take steps towards it. On my website, larryelder.com, I've got ideas about what we can do about it, which we'll talk about down the road.

But I want to thank you all for having me, and I cannot think of a commission that's more important than what we're doing right now. God bless.

MS. MARTIN: Good morning. I am Commissioner TinaLouise Martin, and I'm honored to welcome you to the Act Now Summit. A special welcome goes to each person who has committed to joining us on this critical mission. Today I stand before you to reaffirm our pledge to the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys, the CSSBMB. We acknowledge that social progress and racial equity are inseparable.

And it's this understanding that informs our dedication to this cause. CSSBMB's initiatives have demonstrated how we can address systemic issues that disproportionately affect Black men and boys from education policies to economic programs, healthcare, to legal justice, the work of CSSBMB is broad and deep.

Our shared responsibility is to ensure a society where every individual has equal opportunities to thrive regardless of their race or gender. It is in this spirit that I urge you all to lend your voices, your resources, and your commitment. Again, welcome to the Act Now Summit. Let's seize this opportunity for open discussions, transformative ideas, and most importantly, for tangible actions that will uplift the lives of Black men and Boys.

Thank you. I'll now turn it to Dr. Walter Fluker to moderate the rest of the program.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you everyone. There is such a somber look on everybody's face, at least turn to someone and smile, and repeat after me. I am awake. Now tell your neighbor. There's always a great opportunity when we come together with learned colleagues like these, and for those of you who spend so much of your time in action on the ground doing the hard work, and the heavy lifting.

It's always such a great opportunity to come together in what I like to call congregating, conjuring, and conspiring. We gather, congregate, we conjure, we come up with new narratives, which is so important, and we conspire, not about diabolically, but we breathe together in one spirit. And that's what we're going to do today.

And as we set this occasion, let me say one thing, and let us move quickly thereafter. One is one of the dominant myths that entangles us, and prevents us from getting the real work done is the trope of the absent father. We've got to ask other questions today about this narrative. Why is the father absent? Why do we consider young Black men in particular orphans?

These things do not come out of the air, but they are the products of ideology, culture, and material circumstances. And whether or not the absent father is true, the jury is still out on that. The great truth is we must interrogate every assumption that is brought before us, because the hour, as the old folks used to say in the church, is nigh.

And I'm going to encourage you today panelists, to ask hard questions. Don't belabor the issue, especially when our young men are trapped in cultural asylums with jungles that were planted in them. They did not create the asylum, they certainly are not the manufacturers of the implants of jungles. We've got to ask what's going on, who makes the rules, and how do we transform the rules?

That's the work. And I can preach all day, you know I do that for a living, so I'm not going to do that. But I did want to set this occasion, and one of the great things I have to do is really be the conductor. I am the conductor, we're on a train, and when it's time for you to stop, I'm going to tell you, and we're going to let you know in advance.

There's a great move from the academy to the government, I was sharing with my table, the translation is huge. Scholars have so much to share.

Folks in government are just trying to get it and make it work. And I am going to ask you to do your very best to keep it succinct, but powerful, and substantive.

And with that in mind I'd like not only to thank the Honorable Congresswoman -- she asked us to call her preventive congresswoman, I'm going to ask that we remember the work that she's done, the ways in which these commissioners who are present are working with us, especially as we hear from Dr. Adonijah Bakari from Middle Tennessee State University, he is the chair of Africana Studies.

And he will provide us with an historical perspective on Black male societal disparities. Brother Adonijah?

DR. BAKARI: All right, let me see if this PowerPoint is going to work, this is always the question that students have at the first day of class, they're crossing their fingers that it doesn't, I'm crossing my fingers that it does. Good morning. I am a man. This statement has been at the heart of the African American civil rights movement for decades.

It's a declaration that describes the gender of millions of African Americans today, but it's also a proclamation of a people's humanity. As

early as the 1800s African American activists such as Martin Delany recognized that because of his hue, his race, he was something more than a man, he was Black. For Delany his race was a marker of pride, but also as Ibram Kendi laments, a stamp, quote a signifier of the Negro's everlasting inferiority.

Many of the problems facing Black men and boys today are the consequence of three conjoined situations. Gender, race, and poverty. To be male, poor, and African American is to confront on a daily basis a deeply held racism that exists in every social institution wrote Camille Busette, director of the Race Prosperity and Inclusion Initiative. Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy was dubious of the Africans' humanity, and claim to equality in America.

He said quote, this government was not founded by Negroes, nor for Negroes, but by White men for White men. As the inequality of the White and Black races was stamped from the beginning, you can see I'm a southerner, I'm in Tennessee. This stamp of inferiority has assumed many forms, segregation, lynching, and the wholesale destruction of Black communities through riots, and today gentrification.

This stamp informs the criminal justice

system, hiring and firing practices, healthcare funding, social mobility, and mortality rates, but maybe most perniciously, the stamp influences educational ideologies, funding, and the disbursement of resources historically and presently. Historically the stamp made it illegal to teach free, or enslaved Africans to read or write.

After slavery it served to disenfranchise Black education on a local level through Black codes, Jim Crow laws, and nationally through Plessy V. Ferguson, which codified segregation and discrimination through the unequal distribution of funds and resources. You may ask how unequal is unequal? Well, in 1930, Alabama spent 37 dollars on each White child, and 7 dollars on those who were Black.

This injustice manifested in school construction, classroom space, resources, and teachers' pay. One Alabama planter who owned large fields and had many Black sharecroppers working for him summed up education for Black folks this way. Quote, nigger children with an education pick cotton as well as those without one, so why waste the money?

Today, funding disparities are still alive and well. Presently, school districts where the

majority of students enrolled are students of color receive 23 billion dollars less in educational funding than predominantly White school districts, despite serving the same number of students. This not so subtle effort to keep us un, or undereducated affects Black boys most pronouncedly.

Nationally, 42 percent of African American boys have failed an entire grade at least once, and only 18 percent of Black men ages 20 to 21 are enrolled in college. Nationally, African American learners make up 16 percent of the general student population in public schools, yet they are 35 percent of all students who are disciplined and expelled, a rate three times higher than their White peers.

Statistics for the state that I am from, Tennessee, echo the same realities. According to the 2017 2018 Tennessee statewide report card, during the 6th to 9th grade time window, two thirds of African American students are suspended or expelled, a rate 60 percent higher than the average. In the 9th grade, expulsions are the highest, reaching 71 percent for African American students.

High suspension rates, high expulsion rates, and low graduation, and college enrollments are a sign that the educational systems are failing Black

youth. This failure is evident in dropout rates. A study was done by the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education of New York University, which examined dropout rates among Black and Latino males in New York City.

The results were disturbing. In a city whose graduation rates hover around 65 percent, less than 40 percent of Black and Latino students were graduating, and less than 30 percent were graduating with the region's diploma, the certificate used to determine college readiness. However, during the study the researchers also identified 20 New York City high schools with graduation rates for Black and Latino males exceeding 80 percent.

That's right, in the same city there were schools whose graduation rates were below 40 percent, and those that exceeded 80 percent. The researchers were surprised, and began a deep dive looking for the quote secret sauce of educational excellence. They discovered that there were some common practices among high producing schools.

These were good teachers that had high student expectations, trusting relationships between students and teachers, personalized learning environments, focused counseling, determined

mentoring, teachers who were culturally sensitive, teachers that reflected the race of the students, and the presence of men in the classroom. Today Black men make up only two percent of the public school teaching force.

However, research shows that Black men in the classroom matters. Black men spend more time counseling than any other demographic. For Black boys from low income households, exposure to a Black teacher for one year, one year in elementary school with these reduces high school dropout rates by 39 percent. The following are best practices that should inform our policy discussions today.

We must have more funding and resources that will be put in place that encourage Black men to teach. Such programs do exist, but they need more funding and exposure. We must increase Black male mentorship, because mentorship matters. Mentored youth are 55 percent more likely to enroll in college, 46 percent less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs, 27 percent less likely to start drinking.

Finally, I would like to encourage the creation of policy and programs that see education not only as something that transpires in the classroom,

nor mentoring as something that occurs in a formal or structured way. From the statistics I have given in this presentation it's obvious that the sit down be quiet style of learning has failed Black boys.

You might say Bakari, what's the alternative? The alternative is education that stimulates the mind through doing, through exploration, through structured programs where men take boys into the quote unquote bush for manhood training. I call this the second path. The second path is education through experiential learning such as study abroad, wilderness connection, and manhood development classes.

EXP classes are the raves at universities today throughout the country. Students learn science through making wine in France. They learn history by traveling to historical places, they learn English through studying Shakespeare in Oxford. I've taken hundreds of students abroad, and I can tell you they never complain about being bored.

I hear you thinking, well that might work for college students, but it can't work for inner city kids. Wrong. The reason I have a PHD today is because a year or two after I graduated from Tuskegee University I took five inner city kids from Chicago,

all from single mother households, some from the Robert Taylor homes, to Senegal, West Africa, and it showed them a world of larger possibilities.

I can hear you saying well, summer is how do we get these kids? We have two months during the summer that we can encourage kids to meet, to study, to travel, to do something outside of the classroom, manhood development classes spur education and growth. But manhood development doesn't stop with young students, it continues with men. This past summer I took two brothers, we went to Utah, not brothers, but they were brothers to Utah.

And we had a wonderful experience, and some of the things that they learned they told me after they came back. He must be telling me my time is up, all right. Thank you, I'm going to discuss this more as we roll on. Thank you brothers.

DR. FLUKER: That was incredible. I think that's a good pattern to follow.

DR. BAKARI: You going to show everybody pictures of your wife?

DR. FLUKER: Well, you know, I try not to, but I trust you, I like your character. Thank you very much. And again, this afternoon I didn't announce that I made a terrible assumption, but there

will be small working groups where you will have a chance to raise your own questions with the scholars here, and also provide some of your own insight.

We're now prepared for a brief presentation, is it Akhi?

MR. JOHNSON: Akhi.

DR. FLUKER: What a wonderful name, what does that mean?

MR. JOHNSON: My middle name and first name mean Skywalker.

DR. FLUKER: Sky walker, I'm meeting you for the first time. Akhi Johnson from the Vera Institute, he's also director of reshaping prosecution there at the Vera Institute, and Mona, is it Sahaf?

PARTICIPANT: Sahaf.

DR. FLUKER: Sahaf. Is this Mona, are you Mona, or is Mona here?

PARTICIPANT: Mona is in the audience.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you, Mona, I'm going to recognize you, also from the Vera Institute. Now let us hear from our beloved brother Skywalker.

MR. JOHNSON: The PowerPoint's not up yet, so I assume the clock has not started ticking.

DR. FLUKER: It doesn't matter when it starts, it really doesn't.

MS. SAHAF: The wife picture's coming either way.

MR. JOHNSON: All right, I guess we'll start with you.

MS. SAHAF: All right. Well, thanks everyone for having us. So, Mona Sahaf, and Akhi Johnson, I'm just going to start out telling you a little bit about how we came to the work that we do at the Vera Institute.

MR. JOHNSON: It doesn't look like the clicker is -- there we go.

MS. SAHAF: Okay. So, I come from parents from northern India, from really one of the most beautiful places in the world, Kashmir, Himalayan Mountains, it's a valley, but also unfortunately a place that a lot of state sanctioned violence, and civilian violence, and a real lack of accountability over many years, and that's one of the reasons my parents, like so many, immigrated here.

And my community that I grew up in, in upstate New York really valued that we're in this city with courts, and laws, and process, and I ended up becoming a prosecutor myself, hoping to help victims, hoping to help folks who were also charged with crimes, to make sure they get just outcomes. But as a

prosecutor here in D.C., every single day you saw what was happening in courts.

We're only charging, and prosecuting Black folks, victims were not really getting the aid that they needed, and the system was victimizing so many more people. It was not a way to get to safety, and it wasn't what I envisioned. And a couple years ago I was given an opportunity to come over to the Vera Institute of Justice, working with my friend Skywalker here, and he'll tell you a little bit more about the work we do.

MR. JOHNSON: Great to meet everybody. I'm Akhi, apparently now will be known as Skywalker in this setting moving forward. So, as you'll see in this picture, I grew up wearing a lot of blue hot pants, but I also grew up in a family that very much impressed on me love your neighbor as yourself, and there is particularly a parable in the Bible that has always stuck with me.

It's about a shepherd who has a flock of 100 sheep, one of the sheep goes missing, and the shepherd leaves the 99 to go search for this one sheep. And for me that has always meant who was marginalized in our community, who needs that extra love and attention? And that is also why, like Mona,

I became a prosecutor at the U.S. Attorney's Office here in D.C., really seeking to do that, try to be a voice for the marginalized, a voice for the voiceless.

And that ultimately led to me joining the Vera Institute, where now we lead a team that works with reformed prosecutors around the country who seek to limit who enters the criminal legal system, and then build evidence that that's actually a better path to safety. And a core principle of what we do is working with communities most impacted by the system, because we firmly believe those closest to the problem are closest to the solution.

And so, we work with them on developing what these alternatives will look like. Thank you. A big part of what we do is trying to help people focus more on the systemic instead of the individualized. So, I hope everyone is awake, as our MC noted earlier, because we're going to make this a little bit participatory.

We're going to ask you all to play a game with us, it's a little bit tongue in cheek, but we hope it helps to emphasize focusing on the systemic, and then also what we can do about it. So, the game we're going to play is called biological or societal. In a moment we're going to show you disparities, and

then we're going to ask you whether those disparities are the result of some biological reason, or some societal reason.

Is everyone tracking with me? Head nods, all right, I see it. Do you mind going to the next slide? Yeah, perfect. So, what you're seeing on the screen are the average heights of women and men in the United States. So, on the left, average height of a woman is about 5'4, on the right the average height of a man is about 5'9, and this is where I always love to insert that my wife, who adamantly declares that she is not short, is 5'5, and when I found this information, I'm like that's true, you are not short, you're above average.

If we could stay on that slide? So, here's the game. Just show of hands, people who think this disparity is biological. A lot of hands. All right, anyone who thinks this disparity is societal? One person, okay. Really quick, why do you think it's societal?

PARTICIPANT: Diet.

MR. JOHNSON: Diet, right, so I was surprised to, but yes, genetics play a role, but there are disparities in the nutrition that men, or I should say young boys and young girls get in this country

that can contribute to some of the height disparities, so a little bit of both. And the next slide.

MS. SAHAF: All right, here we have the U.S. population on the left, we see it's pretty equitable, and in the middle we have Fortune 500 CEOs, and this is broken down by gender. We see that of the Fortune 500 CEOs, 11 percent are women, and the remainder are men. Same question, is this biological, or societal, this really vast disparity? Okay, societal.

Anyone for biological? No? Okay. And so the graph to the right of that, we have U.S. senators in the U.S., also broken down by gender, and we see that female population of 51 percent is 25 percent of our U.S. senators, 75 percent of our senators are men. How about that, biological or societal? Okay, anyone for biological? No, okay, go to the next slide.

Here we have median household incomes, and you get the game at this point, same kind of question. We have here on the left the White median income around about 78000. Latinx median income in the middle there at around 58000. And the Black median income at about 48000. Biological, societal? So, you guys are getting it. So, these are disparities we see in all these really important structures that flow

into what we're going to be talking about in the criminal system.

MR. JOHNSON: And go to the next slide. So, this one we won't ask you, I think the answer is pretty evident. But this is, what you're seeing on the left, D.C.'s populations roughly even between White and Black, and I will say this slide focuses on White and Black because that's who represents the majority of D.C., this slide is perfect -- sorry, this same slide.

In the middle however you're seeing 2022 D.C. murder suspects, and the vast majority of them are Black. And on the far right you're seeing unsolved murder victims in D.C., and again, the vast majority of them are Black. So, we wanted to use this slide, and hold here for a second, because one, we are in D.C., so this is literally the community that we're sitting in today.

But it also raises a few other points that we like to illustrate for people. So, one, a lot of times there can be an emphasis on are we treating similarly situated people differently, or focusing on individual biases? And yes, that is important, but a lot of times in the criminal legal system that can be like focusing on a leaky faucet when there's a crack

in the foundation.

And so, we really want to get people focused on what are the reasons behind this disparity? Because too often that's where the conversation stops. No one really starts to probe why do we see this disparity? Is it because of our country's history of red lining? Is it because of historic inequity to certain resources? And how do we address them? And this is a great place to start policy conversations.

Because the disparity you're seeing here is not about individualistic choices. Yes, certainly that plays a role in it, but these are much broader trends that we're going to have to address if you want to start touching these kinds of disparities. You can go to the next slide. So, we're very big at Vera on leaving people with concrete solutions.

So, we're going to leave you today with a concrete framework that you could use, really to any policy, to start to make a societal difference, and we're going to give you a couple examples of how it could potentially play out. So, the framework is called racial disparity impact statements. Some of you are probably familiar with this term, it's very similar to a fiscal impact statement, but instead of finances you use race.

And so, any time you're looking at a policy, you first start by seeing what are the disparities, like the data we just showed you, and then weighing the costs and benefits of that policy. So, on the one hand, you have the disparity, which is obviously a huge down side. But then what are the benefits? And don't make assumptions, really probe for the evidence.

How do we know this policy will have benefits? So, one example before we get to some others, there's been a lot of news with affirmative action recently. This could potentially be a moment for colleges to say well, we see great disparities when we rely on something like the LSAT, or the SAT, and using a racial impact statement really requires asking does the LSAT or SAT really give us the best students possible?

And if not, having the courage to explore other options. Stepping away from assumptions, and really digging into evidence. Thank you. If we could go to the next slide? So, one example is with traffic stops. Again, using data in D.C. because that's where we're situated, but we see these trends across the country. So, step one, look at the disparities. So, you'll see in the middle, there are huge disparities

with just all traffic stops.

And there are even more disparities in what we call non-public safety stops, or people might also know as driving while Black, or pretextual traffic stops. And so, the question has been should we continue with these policies in light of all these disparities? There might be really good reasons that you want to conduct traffic stops.

But then it probes other questions like should the police be conducting traffic stops? Is there another way to conduct these kind of stops, or maybe we should get rid of some of the non-public safety stops. We can go to the next slide. And step two is really digging in on the evidence. What evidence do we have that this policy is either beneficial or not.

We can share these stats afterwards, I'm close to seeing a picture, probably of his siblings, or his children at this point, so we'll move onto the next slide. But ultimately it takes courage to make a change as well. And so, we worked with the jurisdiction where Philando Castile was killed, and they had the courage to look at this data, see the disparities for what they were, and say you know what? We're just not going to do these kind of pretextual

stops anymore.

And we just got data from them for about a year of the policy, we saw 66 percent decrease in the amount of times that Black families were getting stopped in this county, and there was no impact on public safety whatsoever. And I'll pass it to Mona to talk a little bit about the federal system.

MS. SAHAF: Thanks. So, we know the audience here is really focused on what's happening federally, and to say we see the same disparities. This slide is just one example, but in gun charges that are brought federally, similarly to the disparities you've seen on these other slides, there's a huge disparity in terms of who is getting charged with these crimes.

And these exist in drug trafficking, immigration cases too. So, what are some things we can do? We know there's some commissioners in this room who have the ears of folks who are sitting in really important positions of power. One thing is for DOJ to be encouraging all of their prosecutors in their 94 offices to be considering alternatives to incarceration, and to charging folks.

And there are many alternatives. What is the evidence, what are the assumptions we're making

that incarceration, or charging folks is making us safer? We have here on the screen a report put out by the Vera Institute where we work, it's called the prison paradox because there is actually very limited information tying incarceration to public safety, and making us safer.

The impact on reducing violent crime, it's not there. So, why are we continuing these policies? Because on the other side, the social cost side, we know that incarceration is devastating people, their families, and their communities. We know the harm, it's intergenerational, and ties back to a history of racism in this country.

So, we need DOJ prosecutors to be examining at their level, why are we charging? And to make more robust options for their folks, their prosecutors to find alternatives to incarceration, and to charging.

MR. JOHNSON: I've just been shown a picture of his daughter, who is --

MS. SAHAF: I haven't seen a picture myself, I haven't seen any picture.

MR. JOHNSON: His granddaughter, who is beautiful, but this is our last slide.

MS. SAHAF: And our last slide is to also

increase transparency. When you look at the Sentencing Commission data, which is a federal bipartisan agency, and you look at DOJ's data, it should be including racial disparities in every report, in every statistic so that folks know if you're a judge or a policy maker, what those disparities are.

And as Akhi noted, using a race equity lens to examine all your policies. What are the impacts of this policy? Thank you so much all.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

DR. FLUKER: Such a great job, great job. Let's give them another round of applause, that was great. Let us prepare now, as we move along again, I did not construct the run of show, I'm just a conductor. Dr. Travis Bristol from the Berkeley School of Education, he is an associate professor there, and he is going to speak to us on national policy on education and effects on Black boys.

Dr. Bristol?

DR. BRISTOL: So, good afternoon. Hopefully my 15 minutes will begin once the PowerPoint comes up, because as a college professor, I can only speak with a PowerPoint. So, in addition to being an associate professor at UC Berkeley, I'm also the chair

of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. And as many of may know, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is our nation's gold standard for teaching certification.

So, we are here in D.C. having a conversation about Black men and boys, and this national conversation has international implications. As a researcher, I have been thinking really diasporically about the experiences of Black people in the Americas. And so, I'll share some research that I've done more recently about educators of color in the U.S.

But I've also been spending some time in Bogota, Colombia, Salvador, Brazil, Montevideo, Uruguay interviewing Black educators, or individuals of African descent, and we're having the same conversations across the Americas. In each of these places, Black children are disproportionately more likely not to complete college.

In each of these countries actually, Black women are dying at higher rates during childbirth, very much like the U.S., and in each of these countries, there is a desire to increase the number of Black educators. And so, while most of my talk, which I'm probably halfway through at this point, will focus

on some of my old work thinking about Black educators in the U.S.

I've begun more recently to think diasporically, and internationally because I've been having the same conversations in Colombia, in Brazil, and in Uruguay. So, in this study, if you want to pick out -- get your camera, you can look at the QR code here, and you can pick up this paper. My colleagues and I look at, and you'll see it several times, we look at ten years of data in New York City.

So, 2007 to 2017, and we look at students and teachers who are in non-charter schools who are in grades four through eight, and then we follow these individuals over time. So, our analysis is focused on within student variation, so we're looking at the same students. And here is our question, we look at ten years of data in New York City, and we ask does student teacher ethnoracial matching impact the likelihood or severity of exclusionary discipline for Asian, Black, and Latinx students in grades four through eight.

So, essentially we're asking if you are matched with a same race teacher, how does that impact the degree to which you are suspended, right? In sort of layman's terms. And our predictor was the

proportion of teachers that were ethnoracially matched, and this is what we found. We found that looking at ten years' worth of data in New York City, we found that Black and Latinx students in four through eight are significantly less likely to be suspended in years that they have higher proportions of ethnoracially matched teachers.

We also found much of the research on teacher diversity has focused on Black and Latinx teachers, this study pushes the research, because we also look actually at Asian American students, Asian American teachers and students are rendered invisible in much of our policy in this country. And in this study we found that Asian students in grades four through eight in New York City, they're also less likely to be suspended in years that they have higher proportions of Asian American teachers.

Some takeaways, student ethnoracial matching affects the likelihood of out of school suspension for Black, Latinx, and perhaps Asian students in grades four through eight in New York City. And diversifying the city's teacher work force is one strategy for reducing ethnoracial disparities in student discipline in city schools.

Some policy implications, expand teacher

ethnoracial diversity efforts. We also believe that, my colleagues and I, that we need to expand and deepen professional learning for all teachers, in particular White teachers. And so, as we are thinking about increasing the number of teachers of color, what we've found is that White teachers in particular were the ones who were disproportionately suspending students.

And so, we need to -- we can't just recruit teachers of color without also supporting White educators, and providing White educators with implicit bias training has shown to be important. One recommendation, the U.S. Department of Education could offer grant programs for districts to identify and share best practices regarding reducing student discipline.

The U.S. Department of Education has lots of grant programs, and the U.S. Department of Education could identify a group of districts who are working to reduce -- who care deeply about reducing suspension, or want to learn some best practices, and the Department could bring these districts together. And ongoing professional learning on how to support teachers to reduce student discipline.

Maybe I'll quickly just walk through this one last study if I have about, maybe two minutes.

This is a qualitative study, so what I shared with you was a quantitative study, I am also a qualitative researcher, so I look at numbers, and I talk to people. In this study we spent some time asking Black men who were teachers, why did you decide to become a teacher?

So, we looked at two years of academic data of 27 Black male teachers in 14 schools in Boston public schools, and we asked them what motivated you to become a classroom teacher? The first finding was that Black men said that when they had an early experience in college, that that motivated them to become a teacher.

So, one participant, James Price, says as far as getting Black males involved in teaching, I really feel that providing opportunities where Black males can actually go in the classroom during the undergrad years, and get that exposure is very important. So, James Price said that he became a teacher because when he was in college, he had an experience working with students, and that motivated him to become a teacher.

The second finding was that Black teachers said that they had a role model, that they had role models, that Black men served as role models, and that

inspired them, they saw a particular type of care. And this one participant, Benjamin Young, says coach Ellington, he kept it real, he would call my house, and make sure I was in bed, he would just be the dad I didn't have, if you will, he taught me to be on time.

And so, two policy recommendations here, maybe creating after school programs to certify teacher initiatives could be one way to recruit Black men to become public school teachers. And high school principals with the consent of Black men could create after school clubs to encourage their students to consider a career in the teaching profession.

I'll leave you with these two last resources. My colleague, Conra Gist, and I co-edited about a thousand page tome, a Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color, this QR code will probably take you to that link. This handbook has research on 11 domains of thinking about the teacher life course, recruitment, retention, policy, human resources. And it's seen as sort of the go to text for those thinking about how to diversify their educator work force.

And this is a much more user friendly piece that sort of summarizes those large chapters in Phi Delta Kappa, that might also be a resource for you as well. So, with that, and I also chair our state's

Educated Diversity Task Force, and here are some policy recommendations that could also be resourced. So, with that, I haven't seen pictures, so I think I'm good, thank you all.

DR. FLUKER: That was excellent. And I'm sure we're going to have some great discussion around the kinds of resources and tools that you're recommending. I saw one or two people in the audience who were kind of nodding, you ought to know that, so be prepared. Thank you very much. Or next presenter is Mr. Calvin Johnson, and he is speaking to us regarding racially exclusive policies in public housing from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

He's also deputy assistant secretary for Research Evaluation and Monitoring. Welcome.

DR. JOHNSON: All right, I will promise you that I will not be seeing pictures. I love pictures. But anyway, so I had to scale back a bit, and so I ask for your forgiveness right up front if I talk fast, we'll have plenty of time to talk afterwards. So, good morning, I think it's still morning. It is afternoon probably, but good afternoon Chairwoman Wilson, Staff Director Morales and Spencer, and fellow commissioners, as well as guests, and those

who are viewing online.

I am Calvin Johnson, I am the deputy assistant secretary for the Office of Research Evaluation and Monitoring at HUD. In the short time, roughly seven to ten minutes that I have allotted to me, I want to talk about exclusionary housing. But specifically given the limited time I have, I want to talk about exclusionary housing for folk with criminal records, and those who are returning from jail or prison.

So, each year between 600000, 650000 individuals return to the community following a period of confinement in state and federal prisons. Another 4.9 million, roughly 5 million return to the community following a period of confinement in jails, local jails. Upon returning to the community, they experience some of the same social, economic, and health conditions that contributed to their incarceration.

So, they go back to the same communities, and they are surrounded by the same conditions that contributed to them going to prison or jail. A significant share of these individuals return to a relatively small number of communities with an ever shrinking supply of quality affordable housing. So,

there is no secret, we know where they're going to, we know what the challenges are in terms of housing for them, so it's not rocket science.

They go to a relatively small number of communities, we already know what the housing stock looks like, and we know what other social and economic conditions look like, it's no secret. Nearly all individuals confined to a period of incarceration in either jail or prison will go home, so it's not like we're sending them away forever, they are going to come home.

And they return to these communities facing fragile housing arrangements. Their housing arrangements were fragile before incarceration, and are even more fragile upon their return to the community. For those who are fortunate enough to have housing arrangements with families, those arrangements are often temporary.

Having worked at a community public safety agency, you come back, you need to get out of jail, prison, you basically identify a family member who will allow you to use their address, and that's a short stint. For those fortunate enough to have housing arrangements with families, we also have the issue of whether or not they're allowed to stay with

them without violating the conditions and terms of their current lease.

Also creating a challenge, not only for now the person coming out of prison, but for the family who was already unstably housed. Moreover, families who actually receive federal assisted rental housing, there are often restrictions from adding individuals who have criminal records to the lease, even if the individual was listed as a tenant on the lease before incarceration.

So, I live in federally assisted housing, get arrested, go to jail, can't come back to the same place that I used to live. Now, those temporary and unstable housing arrangements, and lease restrictions, further exacerbate housing challenges facing these 600000 plus folk, and the 5 million folk who are coming out of jails each year.

I'm going to fast forward a little bit. Now, to be clear, the impact of these correctional, or these corrections practices disproportionately affect low income communities, and communities of color. More specifically the impact is greatest for Black men with Black boys projected to experience the same devastating impact of the criminal justice system over their lifetime.

Going back to 1990 there were lifetime estimates of what the impact of the criminal justice system would be on Black boys. At birth they were already determined to be somewhere around 30 percent likely to be arrested in their lifetime. Currently the lifetime chance of incarceration is 5 percent, 1 in 20 for adult Americans. 29 percent, or 3 in 10 for Black men.

The rate for Black men is twice the actual projected lifetime rate for Hispanics, and six times the lifetime rate for White men. And as mentioned already, these disparities persist over their life course. Now, again, we know where it happens, but I'm not going to name states, but there are 12 states where a prison population -- there are 12 states with a prison population of 50 percent or greater.

Where Black people, Black men, 50 percent of them in those states are actually in jail or prison. There are seven states with the Black to White incarceration disparity of nine to one or greater. Again, not going to call out states, but if we wanted to act now, we can identify 20 places where we can start. So, what does this have to do with exclusionary practices in the housing market and race?

Well, we talk about folk coming out of

prison, we talk about folk coming out of jail. But the reality is that one in three adults in the U.S. has a criminal record. And because of the criminal record, what we find is that folk are challenged in finding housing. So, landlords will refuse to rent to them even when they are financially qualified.

Employers will not hire them, and service providers will not provide them services even when they're eligible to receive those services. So, essentially the disproportionate criminal justice contact of Black men will result in them being more likely to be shut out from housing, employment, and services.

Now, I'm going to fast forward, because I think most of the discussion that we have after the presentations will be rich, but I do want to leave you with a couple quotes. And the one thing I want to say is that there is no empirical evidence that a criminal record has anything to do with performance in tenancy. Doesn't result in housing problems, there is no evidence to say that it will basically make you better, or less of a tenant.

And there's no evidence to say that because you have a criminal record, you're basically going to commit crime once you sign a lease, there's

no evidence out there. Now, it's fair to say that tenant screening raises the bar to entry for all renters. I'm not saying that you can't screen. But it raises the bar for all tenants who are looking.

However, people of color, Black men more specifically, are disproportionately affected by tenant screening practices that include a criminal background check. Disproportionate patterns of arrests among Black males mean that using criminal background checks to screen tenants disadvantages Black male renters.

Even when these screening practices are applied to all potential renters, disproportionate patterns of arrests among Black males mean that using criminal background checks for Black male tenants disadvantage Black male renters. Now, these are the very people who are adversely affected by discriminatory policing and sentencing practices.

Now, two minutes, perfect, great. So, further, even when these practices are applied to everyone, landlords will figure out work arounds, signaling, basically saying yeah, we'll rent to you, but you know we have a criminal background check, right? Preferential treatment, basically treating those with criminal records differently than you treat

folk without.

And so, there are some places, I can name those places, Newark, New Jersey, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Seattle, that are taking pretty -- not even innovative, but I think humane approaches to dealing with this issue. You heard all of them, right? Ban the box prohibiting questions about criminal histories in applications.

Institutionalizing individualized assessment when a criminal record surfaces, and then in some cases I think we're seeing step wise approaches to the use of criminal history information. That is determine whether someone is first eligible, offer them the place, and then basically do the assessment. It makes it really difficult to basically discriminate when a person knows that they're accepted, and then they determine that to be because of a criminal history.

Now, there's plenty of work to be done to remove blanket exclusion of people with criminal records. But again, as I already mentioned, if we want to start now, act now, we can talk about 20 states where we might want to begin that work. Thank you.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you very much. I'm

really so happy that I was provided with a little cue for the next presenters, because I lost my notes. In the course of human events, stuff happens, doesn't it? I'd like to thank all of the presenters up to this point for really following the guidelines of a governed culture.

It's hard to live in existence to exist without accepting your finitude, and I'm aware of that, so I appreciate it. I'm also going to ask our next presenters, is it Karishma Furtado, is that correct?

MS. FURTADO: Karishma Furtado, that's right.

DR. FLUKER: I did it, good. And David Dwight, who will speak to us on Forward through Ferguson. Thank you very much.

MS. FURTADO: Hello, and thank you for inviting us to share with you our experience pursuing racial equity in public safety, and share some of our lessons learned from nine years of systems change advocacy in St. Louis following hashtag Ferguson. My name is Karishma Furtado, I'm a public health researcher studying cross sector systems change to advance racial equity, and health equity, and I'm a founding staff member, alongside David, and former

senior director of Data and Research at Forward Through Ferguson.

DR. DWIGHT: And my name is David Dwight IV. I was a student organizer that organized an action network across colleges in St. Louis following the unrest and civil uprising in Ferguson. Then was a staffer at the Ferguson Commission, and co-founder of Forward Through Ferguson, and for the last four years I was the executive director of the organization.

MS. FURTADO: So, we were asked here to provide policy solutions from the front lines of doing equity oriented public safety work at the local level. You are, after all, policy makers, government officials, and the like who take seriously your charge of righting the multi-generational history of racial disparities across so many domains.

And we are going to give you some of that, but mostly we're not, and that's because our combined nearly 20 years of experience advocating for, and studying systemic change for racial equity has taught us that the process, the how, the approach matters just as much as the policy itself, and maybe even sometimes more.

We call it at Forward Through Ferguson, our equation for equity. Many are keenly and rightly

aware of the murders of George Floyd and Brianna Taylor. Six years before that, St. Louis and the nation were rocked by the killing of Michael Brown Jr., and St. Louis began efforts for police reform and racial equity in earnest.

This lived experience of all those years of advocacy have shown us that it's not just the perfect policy platforms that achieves change, it's also about creating the right culture for that work, growing the capacity of the people who are doing it, the policy makers, the practitioners, the community members, the private sector actors, and adequately resourcing it all wrapped up in what we call the right heart-set for the work. That is how we achieve enduring racial equity.

DR. DWIGHT: And so, when we talk about the Ferguson Commission, we actually often start with a story about a fire, and we have a shortened version of that for you all today. And so, this story is about a fire that happened in the London Underground in 1987. We talk about how past communications and a culture of staying in your own lane created policies and procedures that left ten well-staffed, well-oiled apartments in the Underground holding the bag when that five story station exploded into a fireball.

The fire left 31 dead, and dozens were injured because passenger safety was everyone's job, which in practice meant it was in fact no one's job. Nobody from the leadership of course flicked the match that started the fire, but they also didn't fire proof the station. And when it did catch fire, they weren't adequately prepared to put it out, and so passenger safety had fallen through the cracks.

Now, the leadership of the Underground was filled with a lot of smart people with the best of intentions. But those conditions that we describe in the story, this lack of communication, a lack of corroboration, focusing on your own lane, not seeing the bigger picture, this attitude that you're only responsible for your own problems, and that passenger safety was somebody else's problem, those were those underlying conditions that set the stage for the King's Cross Fire.

And similarly, the leadership of the St. Louis region is filled with a lot of really smart people with the best of intentions. Nobody planned for a police officer to shoot a young Black boy, a Black teenager in Ferguson, or for a massive protest movement to spark from that incident, or for a militarized response to those protests, or for hashtag

Ferguson to become national, and even international shorthand for racial unrest.

And yet, all of those things did happen. And when they did, they revealed decades, really centuries of a culture in St. Louis. The conditions that the Ferguson Commission described in its report were those underlying conditions that set the stage for what we know as Ferguson. And so, the commission process made it really clear that racial equity, being no one's job, meant that it then fell through the cracks.

And so, the commission sought to bridge across those siloed systems to create policy recommendations for equity. And so, the governor appointed the commission to look at root causes, and to make policy recommendations. And in all, over 3000 community members across 70 public meetings contributed over 30000 volunteer hours towards the creation of the Ferguson Commission report.

This was a uniquely community based policy effort. Scholars have studied these commissions that come after racial unrest, what they call riot commissions, and they found that the Ferguson Commission distinguished itself in several ways, including its broadly community based process that put

those most impacted at the center.

MS. FURTADO: That effort, the product of, not as David mentioned, just conventional scholarly and practitioner expertise, but also the testimony and wisdom of those with lived experience yielded insights across these four areas. Justice for all, or police and court reform, youth at the center, looking at education and overall child wellbeing, opportunity to thrive, or calls to action focused on transportation, housing, job access, and financial empowerment.

And really, the thread that passes through them all, racial equity. The commission truly focused on structural solutions for eliminating those persistent racial disparities. And it does so, it centers racial equity, because the status quo of systemic racism hurts all of us profoundly. Most directly, undeniably, it makes the lives of people of color harder, sicker, and ultimately shorter than they should be.

But indirectly, inequity dampens our collective potential. We measure it here in dollars lost to wage disparities. These are, of course though, underestimates. If we were to consider lost wellbeing, wealth, and opportunity in our education, housing, and healthcare systems, the numbers would be

even more astronomical.

This structural cross system and reinforcing nature of inequity is why the commission ultimately issued almost 200 recommendations. And after struggling mightily to boil it down to the three key recommendations, unapologetically settled on naming 47 of them as signature priority calls to action.

47 we think is an ugly, awkward, and fairly random number that represents something beautiful, and acceptance of the complexity, and the magnitude of what we're trying to undo here.

DR. DWIGHT: And so, Forward Through Ferguson was created as a successor organization to the Ferguson Commission. It was anchored in that collaborative, unflinching, and community driven principles that the commission centered, but then was there as a catalyst for the region to move down the path to racial equity. So, of course one person --

MS. FURTADO: I think it might be broken, or it needs a break. Could maybe you advance from the -- pause the clock, pause the clock. I can see the blue spinning wheel, it's thinking, but it's just -- thank you. Do you want to keep talking, and we'll --

DR. DWIGHT: Yeah, I can keep talking.

So, Forward Through Ferguson was really clear that one organization could not solve inequity, but the commission thought it essential to create an accountability organization that would carry forward that work through research, through advocacy and coalition, and also trying to funnel more resources, and support most impacted people being within these systems.

And so, around racial equity, we always think it's helpful to define it, a state where outcomes are no longer predicted by race. When our systems, whether they're health, education, justice work well for all people, and therefore outcomes are both excellent and random. So, not the same as diversity, inclusion, and equality as many of you all know, even though those are important in their own right.

And the commission really reinforced that even for policy makers, we know that we cannot eliminate centuries long racial disparities through only individualistic or programmatic based efforts. Even though those are important for meeting immediate needs, the Ferguson Commission found that we needed to address the structure, the root cause in order to really have that generational impact, and shift these

longstanding disparities.

DR. DWIGHT: Thank you. So, moving to the public safety system, and the work that we've done there, and the change, or lack thereof, that we have seen, our work of course in this space is deeply embedded in Forward Through Ferguson's origin story on that day in August 2014 when Michael Brown encountered Officer Darren Wilson.

The Ferguson Commission, as mentioned, issued 47 signature priority calls to action, 16 of them were related to policing in St. Louis and Missouri. These were calls to action related to officer training, data and accountability systems, and the structure of the public safety system at large. We evaluated Forward Through Ferguson, the progress made to implementing those, and all of the signature priority calls to action.

What you see here are the summary results, the Justice for All, JFA calls to action were the least implemented of all of the calls to action. The people making up our public safety system, we concluded from those surveys, from conversations with dozens of actors on the scene were on the whole not ready for the changes the commission recommended.

The community asked us to dive deeper into

that, into the policing area to understand what really was holding things back. And when we did so in 2019, we found that things were actually a bit grimmer than we thought. I know this is difficult to read, on the Y axis of that table you can see specific calls to action related to the structure and function of the public safety system issued by the Ferguson Commission.

We found that none of them had been fully implemented, and the partial progress that we had documented was often times programmatic, and performative, failing to really meet the spirit of the recommendation. We would argue that this is because the inequitable norms and values that are the water we swim in in our society are especially prominent in the public safety system.

And often, as our research on the 911 system in St. Louis revealed, the resources our traditional systems offer communities, things like armed police, and prisons, don't match our research on what people, communities actually need, what our actual public safety needs are. We found that in St. Louis, as in many other cities, that the primary reason folks call 911 is not for issues of major crime, or violent crime.

But rather crises related to health and wellbeing that don't necessitate an armed police officer showing up and engaging, but that is not what our public safety system is designed to respond to.

DR. DWIGHT: And so, as Karishma was speaking to, that caused a real referendum in the St. Louis region as policy makers, as advocates, as people on the ground were seeing that these years of policing reform weren't actually resulting in better outcomes for Black people. Some of those programs met immediate needs, but weren't changing those generational disparities.

And so, St. Louis advocates started to look upstream, and what are those structural changes that then could have a transformational impact to our public safety system? Some of you may have heard the upstream and downstream narrative, and this just really speaks to when we see those justice system disparities downstream, what's most present for us, often we only go a little forward, and we look at some of those reforms tinkering around police diversity initiatives, training reform.

But we need to go upstream towards redesigning the public safety system, and the values that undergird it. So, now our last two slides for

you all -- I think it's tired again.

MS. FURTADO: So, to recap, some lessons learned about the how of public safety systems change, first, programmatic fixes, things like recidivism programs, police training, they are important, but they are not enough, we would argue. These short term downstream infusions of resources put a Band-Aid on the issue, but they don't fundamentally solve, heal the injury.

Healing, we would say suggests, and as others have also suggested, requires structural changes that address the root causes of inequity, and redesign systems accordingly. This is the only way that we've found to endearingly, and sustainably affect change. Third, systems are made up of people. A mentor of ours likes to say that transformed people transform systems.

This means that those impacted must be at the center of the work to make change, and that those in conventional positions of power and authority must grow in their awareness and understanding of the root causes of inequity and the need for structural transformation. Because when structural reform is imposed upon people in systems who are not ready or equipped for it, that change becomes ineffective, and

performative.

And really at a time for as polarized as we are, we just don't have the momentum to spare for that kind of lost will, and spun wheels.

DR. DWIGHT: And so, lastly what are some of those policy changes that the St. Louis region is starting to shift towards as we're trying to lean into those upstream solutions? So, first it's about incorporating a public health approach within the justice system. What is a justice system that centers care rather than just arrest and incarceration.

Which, as our esteemed colleagues have talked to, have a huge number of impacts on families, on those individuals as they seek wellbeing in their life. A great example of that is the Bullet Related Injury Clinic that Dr. LJ Punch leads in St. Louis. Second, 911 reforms. Karishma led a study at Forward Through Ferguson that looked into transforming 911, because 911 is often the front door to our justice system for so many residents.

But that front door usually leads to police, to prisons, to incarceration. And so, what does it look like to transform 911 to meet people's actual needs? Third, expanding civilian first responders programs. Our Congresswoman Cory Bush in

St. Louis has a proposal for the People's Response Act, which would put more resources towards ensuring that when people call 911, and they have other needs, that that's actually met with people who are equipped for that.

There is the Defund Reinvision Transform Coalition, fifth, transformative justice approaches such as the Freedom community Center in St. Louis, a great model if you want to look that up. And then lastly, of course, policy, infrastructure, public health, employment as you've heard from our other colleagues. And that's all from us, thank you.

DR. FLUKER: Great job people. I'm going to ask everyone to stand real quickly. You know in hell, that's all people do is sit, that's the whole issue. So, I'd like for you to do me a little favor, just close your eyes just for a moment, trust me, this is a safe place, and move away from a chair in case there is one near you, because I'm going to ask you with eyes closed just to turn, as you turn your body, turn to your right, turn slowly.

Especially for those who are over the 60 yard line, just turn slowly. Please move your whole body, I know you aren't aware always that you have a body, but there is a body there. Eyes closed, stop,

and turn again to your left. I really enjoy this, I get an immense amount of pleasure from watching people listen to my voice, it's a great thing. Stop, and turn right again with your eyes closed.

Come on, you can do this, turn, turn, I'm not being mean, I'm not a tyrant. I'm not an authority, but stop, and point north with your eyes closed. If your eyes are open, you've missed the whole point. Point north. It's not in the heavens, point north with your eyes closed, and commit, you must commit. Which way is north?

Now I want you to open your eyes, turn around, and see everybody else. We've got a lot of work to do people if we're going to find north. And for our young Black men in particular, the time is so urgent, the moment is so urgent for us to find a new direction that we'll call north. Why don't we be seated, because we've got one more to go. Breathe deeply, it shall come to pass, we shall have lunch.

It shall happen. Up next, Never Whisper Justice, an organization giving a presentation on Black men in media. I don't know the names, but I do know there is such an organization, and I like your bow, my brother. As-salamu alaykum, I like that bow. Please give us your names.

MR. ROYSTON: Hello everyone, and good afternoon. My name is Jon-Thomas Royston, or JT for short, and I'm the CEO of Never Whisper Justice.

MR. WILLIAMSON: And I'm Chad Williamson, and I listen to everything that Jon-Thomas tells me to do.

MR. ROYSTON: Most of the time.

DR. FLUKER: You have about five to seven minutes, I wasn't able to tell you.

MR. ROYSTON: See how it works.

DR. FLUKER: We have lunch coming.

MR. ROYSTON: you want to just play that, the case study to start off?

MR. WILLIAMSON: You know what, yeah, let's do that.

(Video played.)

MR. WILLIAMSON: So, we believe that media is quite important when it comes to Black boys. And just to give you a quick anecdote, I come to this work as an educator. I taught elementary school, middle school, and high school in Little Rock, and in a third grade classroom in 2017, I remember this very vividly. The challenge to the class was to pick your dream college, future orientation and how critical future orientation is.

And two Black boys at the back of the classroom, I had everybody come up and present, and they had to sit down next to me and give me why they were going to this college. Courtney and Micah, they both wanted to present first. So, Courtney came up, and we sat down up front in front of all the classroom, and I said Courtney, what's your dream school?

And he holds up, I had them all create their logos, University of Alabama, roll tide, right? And I was like well, why do you want to go to the University of Alabama? He's like because they have the best football team, and I'm a football player. And I usually try to ask kids why five times, because that's when you really know why. Why else do you want to go to the University of Alabama?

Well, I'm a running back, and they have really good running back, and remember this is third grade, I'm a running back, and they have really good running backs, and I think I can play for them. I'm like why else do you want to go to the University of Alabama? He's like well my favorite player plays for the University of Alabama, and his name is Derek Henry.

And Courtney was so enamored with Derek

Henry at the time, I think Derek Henry had dyed his hair blonde, and Courtney had his hair dyed blonde. And I was like well, why else do you want to go? He's like why, I just love their colors. Cool. Micah comes up, and holds up his sign, and it says Harvard. Now, I know in this group of people, they know the answer to this equation, why Micah wants to go to Harvard.

Because why does Courtney want to go to University of Alabama? No. If we see it, we can believe it, right? If we see it in somebody that looks like us we believe it to the Nth degree. Why does Micah want to go to Harvard? This group has got to have this answer right on the tip of their tongue. Because he wants to be president of the United States, right?

And when you see a Black president that went to Harvard, you want to go to Harvard as a young Black boy. And so, when we think about these things, and we were introduced, Dr. Bristol is in our film, the knowledge that he gave us today, we should have known that five years ago, because you've been doing this work for a long time. But Sharif El-Mekki out of Mastery Charter School talked to us about the importance of mirrors and windows.

And how critical that is, especially, remember early childhood development, zero to seven --

DR. FLUKER: I gave him a piece, that's it, two minutes and we've got to go.

MR. WILLIAMSON: I'm going to hand it over to JT.

MR. ROYSTON: Now, thank you Chad.

DR. FLUKER: You may have time. He told me that you have time, and he's the boss.

MR. ROYSTON: We're listening, and we're following instructions.

DR. FLUKER: But I would suggest that for the sake of hungry stomachs in the afternoon, try to abbreviate.

MR. ROYSTON: There we go. Well, specifically, so Never Whisper Justice, we are an impact first media company. We specialize in purpose driven campaigns, and long form future documentaries very similar to what you just saw. We believe that, and we know that actually advertising is the financial model behind most information in society. Yet out of the 79 billion dollars that was spent in advertising last year, only 1.1 percent goes towards Black owned media.

MR. WILLIAMSON: 400 million of that was

the NFL.

MR. ROYSTON: That's correct.

MR. WILLIAMSON: So, if you can imagine having 400 million for education, what that would do would be a really interesting thing.

MR. ROYSTON: We have never been in control of our own narrative, period. We have never had premium content around our own narrative that we own. 80 percent of most media budgets go towards media, 20 percent goes towards premium content. When it comes to those economics, most Black owned media companies cannot afford premium content.

Meaning they cannot play with bigger agencies, they really can't even participate financially. Presently over the last three years or so we've had a number of commitments from the likes of P&G, IPG, organizations who know that multicultural media is the future. But with that being said, if we don't invest in ourselves, we're not going to be able to participate economically in that future.

So, that's kind of the two minute piece. But with that in mind, we presently do a number of campaigns that cross a fair amount of different verticals. Whether it's education with Office of Head Start, we've done some campaigns around decreasing

barriers to healthcare with Merck, we've done campaigns around increasing graduation rates with Old Spice, Procter & Gamble.

And what we're really looking for is what are the ways in which we can take corporate economic incentives, and then match them with impact specifically, really connecting the grass roots to the grass tops. And we feel like oftentimes, the conversation of economic financials from the private sector isn't as present as they need to be within this room, and so I think sending that is something that's very important to us.

MR. WILLIAMSON: And I would just, also shifting from deficit to asset, we've heard a lot of information today. I'm curious what Trabian Shorters would have thought of that from an asset framework base. So, how do we shift from deficit frameworks to asset frameworks, especially for Black boys, especially from zero to seven? So, thanks for your time.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you for your energy, for your intelligence, for your passion. If change is going to come, it will not come from those who built the Tower of Babel. It'll come from those who are working to take the stones that the builders rejected,

and making them head of the corner, and I think that's part of what's going on.

As we get ready for lunch, because I know that's coming, that is next, right? I'd like to do two things. One is whether you're a person who has reverence for life, or for the food you eat, or whether you're religious, you don't have to be either one of those. But you do want to pause for a moment and give thanks for something.

And I'd like to give thanks for Mark Spencer. He's not here, he is the person who is in the room but not in the room, but was unable to be with us, but I'm going to ask you before we go and break for lunch to give thanks for something. And I'm going to give you a moment for that in quietness. Settle down. Give thanks. Thank you.

Finally, I'm going to tell you a quick story, and then if Mr. Martin has any specific directions, we're going to ask him to come. But years ago, I'm a retired professor, I'm a professor emeritus for those who need respectability. But I used to fly from Boston to Atlanta, back and forth just -- and I'd have my old car in the garage because I had meetings.

And one time I came back, and I was tired, and there was my car in the garage, I get in, getting

ready to rush to a meeting after arriving from the airport, and the car wouldn't start. Brother Elder, the car would not start. And I stood there, and I wondered what I was going to do. And I looked, and I saw that the back door had been left ajar.

And so, I had some very terrible things I said about my nephew who probably left, anyway, while I'm there doing that, wondering what I will do, maybe call AAA or something, there was a guy who drove up in one of those big old red pickups. You know, it was a pickup truck, down south we have pickup trucks, and they drove into my driveway. I said what are you doing here?

He said well, your wife sent me to cut down the trees in the back. I said dang, I said by the way, you wouldn't have a cable would you? He said no, man, nobody uses cables anymore. And then, you know, my manhood, I heard my manhood clicking, and so I let that go, and was resigned to go in and call AAA. And then the guy looked at me and said what is that in the back, in the corner, in the garage?

I said those are jumper cables. I said would you be kind to help me jumpstart my car? He said yeah, sure. He got his big truck, drove it up close enough to mine, and he put one of those -- what

do they call those things, one of the clamps? There's a negative one, you don't know that because you're too young, one is red, and one is black, they put it together.

But it still wouldn't start, and I was miserable. And he said wait, I got this. He went in his pocket, and he pulled out a pocket knife, again, down south we have pocket knives, it's not a knife, it's a pocket knife. And he took it out, and he just took it until that little sliver of copper was showing, and he wrapped it around the negative pole, and the positive pole, and he put it on my car.

And in a few minutes, this guy was a bricoleur. Who are the French speakers here? What is a bricoleur? He's a handy man, a handy person. Handy people take the materials at hand, the issues, the challenges, the provocations at hand, and they reconfigure them into something that is useful. Brothers and sisters, have your lunch, but come back ready to become bricoleurs.

Let's make something happen. Let's not waste our time with a lot of talk and feelings. This summit is about acting now. See you in a few. Are you ready?

MR. MARTIN: So, thanks everyone for

coming out, and participating in our first half. Our second half is going to be based on policy, so we're going to take a short five to ten minute break, don't go too far. The spirit is for you guys to meet, mingle, talk, see who is in the room, and understand how we are going to work on these policies together.

So, take your time, go get some light fare, get some water, and come back in about five to ten minutes, and we'll be ready to get started. Five, it's in five.

DR. FLUKER: So, there's no lunch?

MR. MARTIN: No, we ran a little bit over, so we're going to keep it moving.

DR. FLUKER: Okay.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 12:56 p.m. and resumed at 1:10 p.m.)

DR. FLUKER: As we get started, I am going to introduce our next speaker before we break into small groups, but I'd like you to write down two or three things if you can. And if you're not a writer downer, do something else, but make sure you remember this. When you're engaged in these kinds of conversations, especially where there are policy deliberations, most of my work has been ethics, ethical leadership, we teach things that we don't

live.

I'm not a very moral person, I don't think, but I do know ethics, and that question, if you were asked about ethics, in the past what I'd do always was policy. So, the first one is, I'm going to call this the question for the rationalists, I'm not going to say who, is it's part of the rules, and pertaining to rules, who makes the rules?

Another way to say it, how do the rules get made? How does the sauce get made, what are the rules? That's the rationalist, but it's the who, Franklin is going to help us with that. The second question is for the realist. That's your science person, people need data, empirical evidence. You are asking questions like what are the measurable outcomes.

Is this policy, initiative, efficient? Folks in government have to know that, that it can be measured, and it's efficient. Because global capitalism is about efficiency, we all know that. The third one is the relationist, which most of you all are. Whatever else you do, you are interested in relations, and human relations. Some of us, I hope, are interested in non-human flourishing as well, relations.

You're communitarians, but I'm just going to tell you, call yourselves relationists so we can keep the alliteration going, right? What makes the unity? We're talking about young Black men, some of us who are older, but mainly these young Black brothers and sisters who are struck. Not their fault. Set up, given the script, an unholy script to live by that they inherited. How do we create the unity of it?

What does a policy initiative speak to for unity? Four, I only got one more, it has to do with something that I like to call the raconteur. That's a French for storyteller, I never pronounce it right because I have Black, deep, southern roots, but it's raconteur, right? Storyteller, what are the stories of which these young men are part of? The histories, and the memories.

Most of them, their memories and histories have been erased. So, how do we arrive on the stage of history without the lines? They became highly improvisational actors, I ain't just thought of this, in public space, they don't have the lines. You've got to think about that when you're asking these questions. The raconteur. The last one is this, the story I just told you about the bricoleur.

I call it the retool just so that it's part of the parlance of public conversation, retooling. What you saw, some of the social media conversations, those folks speaking out of education, housing, criminal justice, they're asking about what are the innovative technologies that allow us to move from here to where we want to go?

I'm thinking that the retoolers have the day. But retoolers without asking the prior questions can be very dangerous, and are seduced into the very same system that set these young men up in the beginning. So, retoolers are at the top of the pyramid, or whatever. But they're only functional, they need the substantive discourse that grows out of conversation.

So, when we move into these spaces at our tables, kind of keep these in mind, and even beyond this conversation. Now, I have the incredible opportunity to introduce Dr. Sekou Franklin, a political science professor at Middle Tennessee State. There's a lot going on at Middle Tennessee, there's a lot going on in Tennessee. Take me back to Tennessee. All right, thank you brother Sekou, won't you come? And we'll monitor you from out here, your time.

DR. FRANKLIN: I'll just be a few minutes

because I know we've got to get to the discussion. I've been asked just to give a brief, very, very brief kind of historical overview of some of the policy initiatives that have been advanced particularly for African Americans, and African American families, men, and boys.

And again, there are dozens of various initiatives, I want to thank the U.S. Commission for inviting me, and I also served on the Advisory Committee in Tennessee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. So, I would just mention the few initiatives, there are dozens that I could point to that speak to this particular issue, and hopefully this can spark some conversation.

First, we've seen, going back for decades, targeted jobs programs that could alleviate the conditions facing the most disadvantaged African American men. And here I'll point to Mary McLeod Bethune, I'll go as far back as the 1930s, in fact she wrote a letter to Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1937 urging him to open the doors of opportunity to youth who are being effectively overlooked by, in that case even during The New Deal administration programs.

In her role as the head of the, they called it then the Negro Division, I'll say the Black

Division of the National Youth Agency, she used her influence to leverage jobs programs to 300000 African American folks, Black folks, Black youth, most of whom were men. Particularly important during this period in time because some of The New Deal programs were authored in a way to really enhance people in the industrial sector.

But if you were particularly in the south, working in the sharecropping industry, farming industry, you were often ignored, often African American, so Mary McLeod Bethune really used her influence to push for a jobs program. And over a period of years we've seen pushes for massive public works programs, for example The New Deal.

We've seen a number of folks author those programs, and push for those programs as a way to address unemployment in African American communities, particularly African American men. More recently, in the last few decades, we've gotten better at this. So, we can perhaps just infuse this with funding. Some of the things that groups have found out in terms of unemployment programs, targeted jobs, and discrimination programs are it's not just enough just to have programs to deal with jobs.

But we need to embed those programs with

wrap around services. Programs that are effective, jobs programs must deal with issues such as some of the work I've done, some of the folks that we've dealt with, 90 percent of the folks don't have driver's licenses, because some of them maybe have been incarcerated. So, feeding those programs with wrap around services that deal with trauma, driver's license.

Folks that have come out of prison for example, the ability to adapt to the kind of jobs, it's quite difficult for them. And also survival strategies, or conflict mitigation programs to deal with conflict from their jobs. So, again, not enough just to have jobs programs, but also to infuse that with wrap around services. A second kind of broader initiative I would refer to historically, the Poor People's Campaign.

And we all know about the Poor People's Campaign, Martin Luther King Jr., Resurrection City, what's not talked about enough is that the Poor People's Campaign developed a very aggressive strategy to comb through eight federal agencies, to shift and reorganize the rules and regulations that could deal with poor folks, disproportionately African American folks, and African American men.

And one of those was to infuse 225 cities with food assistance programs, because they were almost absent of any food assistance, any food stamps, and many of those cities, and many of those areas, and counties, and rural communities consisted of African Americans. Another initiative was to vigorously enforce labor protection, particularly in the south.

And this is important today, because if we were to comb through the rules and regulatory process to reorganize them to address, for example, the conditions facing African American men, we'd still have to deal with southern states, Midwestern states, states like Tennessee, that literally are innovative at preempting federal programs, federal laws, and also really intent on preempting local jurisdictions, and also pushing up against states.

So, dealing with these issues, I should say that the Poor People's Campaign with Martin Luther King, I want to emphasize was particularly influenced by African American men. If you go back to 1966 I believe, in the civil disturbance in Chicago, go back and look at its interaction. A very long, extensive, sweat, blood, and tears interaction with Black gang members in the west side of Chicago, and other places.

In which he essentially had to intervene,

and he had to interact with them in order essentially to calm down the civil disturbance. And King saw the Poor People's Campaign, and particularly these programs that I just mentioned, as quote unquote the last chance, the last chance to saving the soul of America as he stated.

Third, I want to point out the Comprehensive Child Development Act initiative that was pushed forward by Marian Wright Edelman in 1971. It was never adopted, but it was an initiative that was informed by Fannie Lou Hamer, and the Child Development Group in Mississippi. Although seemingly impacting African American women, what it did was it provided stability in the family.

Developing a conference of holistic early childhood programs that dealt with education, hunger, the recreational activities that Dr. Bakari talked about, child care, and after care, and the kind of holistic programs, and infusing that with federal dollars. Again, it got bipartisan support, interestingly enough in 1971, and it passed, but ultimately it was vetoed by Richard Nixon.

And we've never come close to essentially meeting the dream that Marian Wright Edelman and others wanted to talk about. Finally what I'll say is

that there are many initiatives that I could talk about, again, I've only been given just a few minutes. But whatever initiative, I'd strongly consider that it must address the unique and acute conditions, particularly the most disadvantaged African American men and boys.

This kind of acute marginalization. Some examples of some things that are talked about are the impact of what's going on with justice impact youth, the impact of young people who are unhoused, who are homeless, or semi-housed. Sexual minorities, and African Americans will often times end up unhoused. Where people suffering, as we talked about earlier on, with the gentleman working on -- the doctor working on the death penalty, young people are suffering from tremendous trauma, abuse, PTSD from violence.

These are unique conditions that affect poor African American young people, not necessarily just middle class folks, but particularly poor young people who then are more prone to issues such as wage theft, weak labor protection, school drop outs, and other things. In 2021, the National Conference of Black Political Scientists completed a Black rural project in which we studied the Alabama Black belt and the Arkansas delta.

These communities, and other Black rural communities are often overlooked in these discussions. When we think about Blacks, we often think about urban, rural is a code word for White, and that means that oftentimes Black rural communities from the Mississippi delta, the Alabama Black belt, to the Tennessee delta are often overlooked in many of these discussions around federal initiatives.

And justice issues, job training, nutrition, STDs, poor health outcomes in these communities that have no hospitals, and no community clinics disproportionately impact African American men and boys. We have the Appalachian Regional Commission that was created in the Johnson Administration that has distressed communities for the Appalachian region.

We've never had an authoritative Black belt commission to deal with the delta and the Black belt, the Georgia Black belt. So, we need to think about how these Act Now federal programs, or how these Act Now initiatives deal uniquely with the conditions of the Black rural communities. And also that eliminating student debt has been in the news.

It definitely impacts African American men, where we find also from the Tennessee Advisory Commission report the Black men disproportionately

suffer from legal financial obligations, and either have been to prison, if you come out at 40 or 50 years old, you have tens of thousands of dollars of debt, legal financial obligations that you'll be paying off until you're dead.

In Tennessee we have 250 legal financial obligations that are accrued to persons who have served time in jail, and in our commission report for Tennessee, we found that Black men are paying off that debt oftentimes up until they're dead. And that it then affects their social security, that affects their pension, that affects a whole range of factors.

And finally I'll say these initiatives that we're talking about, we have a saying in Black politics, the stuff that we study, that if we can address these issues it would universalize freedom. And what that means is that if we can address these issues for African American men and boys, it will also impact, as stated earlier, what's going on in other communities positively.

So, this idea, what we're doing today, it's a universal struggle. It not just affects African American men, but also affects everyone else. Thank you.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you, Dr. Franklin,

thank you very much. I was in Chicago in 1968, I was too blind to see what Dr. King was doing. I'm perhaps, I was on the other side those days, it's amazing how you don't know, and often ignorance becomes the basis for your arrogance. And I just thought about that, he was there laboring amongst us, and we were wondering what is he doing here?

Thanks be to God that we're still here. By the grace of God we're here people. Forgive me for these little soliloquies that I have. That's because I'm of a certain age, and I have issues, and every now and then I just have these internal dialogues. You'll forgive me, right? It's not clinical, but it is true, I have these. We're going to start gathering -- are we going to do groups of four still?

We're just going to be dispersed kind of like diaspora? Okay, good. But we are attending to these four broad areas, right? And they are housing, criminal justice, education, and health, healthcare. And given the presentation by Dr. Franklin, my small, brief suggestion, what you've heard today is very important. So, these are the sessions of what I like to call looking, listening, and learning from the other.

I know you have expertise, but if you

could listen deeply first as we begin to speak, as others around your table talk about what they heard, we're going to ask you to listen deeply. Then as you listen, also look. The philosopher Wittgenstein says don't think, look at the patterns that emerge in conversations. They do emerge when people are in unity and thinking.

So, looking, listening, and learning. Now we will have a chance for each group to present or speak out, so I should save them some time, right? So, if it's 25 after now, is the end of the world at 2:00 o'clock? So, you don't have much time to get saved, people. We've got 35 minutes, why don't we give you 20 minutes to have these conversations at your table.

Are you all clear on what we are asking you to do? Because I'll say it again, and I'll just waste time. We're all clear? Let's listen to one another, let's come up with some ideas that we can bring back, because we're trying to produce the Black Male Equity Advancement Bill, right? That's the name, that's the nomenclature. Let the games begin.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 1:27 p.m. and resumed at 1:35 p.m.)

DR. FLUKER: We're ready to begin. You

all know about this song? I didn't want to -- I didn't want to mess you up. I thought I'd do that to kind of get your attention. You can sing your own song. But, Pam has the mic. And I thought we would -- -

MS. DUNSTON: Your song didn't go off.

DR. FLUKER: Yeah. I thought we'd begin with those who are closest to you and who are most eager to share what they've heard.

MS. DUNSTON: I'm walking. Say your name for the record.

DR. FLUKER: Please give your name for the record.

DR. DWIGHT: Sure.

DR. FLUKER: And if you don't mind standing so that the picture can get the full of you.

DR. DWIGHT: Yeah. Absolutely. So, David Dwight. So, we talked about a couple of things at our table, both about public safety and then about education.

So, in the public safety space we talked a little bit about civilian first responder programs and how they can be integrated into the 911 system.

And how the ways that we structure the 911 system can be updated so that when dispatchers are

actually funneling various resources to people that are calling, it more often meets their needs then defaulting towards kind of armed police response all the time.

MS. FURTADO: And then continuing that vein of -- sorry, my name is Karishma Furtado. Continuing that vein of structural reform, following it into the education space, we talked about the possibility of funding models for education that acknowledge that the bulk of our funding for education in this country comes in for most schools at the local level.

And reformulating local level funding models to acknowledge the legacy, the present day legacy, of segregation that means that property values in a given district can be vastly different.

So, there are some alternatives out there that pulls property taxes collected at the local level across districts to form a more equitable local level funding base for education by passing some of the inequities that come in at state level funding formulas that we've experienced in Missouri and elsewhere.

DR. FLUKER: Does anyone else who is not at this table have a question of clarification from

them?

(No response.)

MS. DUNSTON: Anybody else?

DR. FLUKER: Related thoughts?

MR. WILLIAMSON: I have a quick question.

DR. FLUKER: Mm-hmm.

MR. WILLIAMSON: I'm curious if you all have --

MS. DUNSTON: Excuse me, sir.

MR. WILLIAMSON: Oh, sorry.

DR. FLUKER: Your name?

MR. WILLIAMSON: My name is Chad Williamson. I'm just curious, like what we're trying to solve some issues here.

I'm just curious if you all got to know each other before you started talking about that?

So, you shared positionality, personality, that kind of thing. Okay, cool, cool.

DR. FLUKER: All right.

MS. DUNSTON: Would you like to share? Don't get that on the camera.

(Laughter.)

MS. DUNSTON: Anybody here? No? Oh, don't be afraid of the camera. Would you like to say something?

MS. SAHAF: We're reporting out, yes?

DR. FLUKER: Yes. Your name and let us know what you've heard.

MS. SAHAF: Sure. Mona Sahaf.

DR. FLUKER: Would you be kind to stand Mona?

MS. SAHAF: Yes, of course.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you.

MS. SAHAF: So, we had a lot of education professionals and people with experience in systems here at our table. So, we focused on education and solved, like, some of the structural barriers around, you know, the prestige and value people are putting on education. How can we get more black men in particular to be teachers?

And seeing that there's a pay issue, there's a proceed issue, and some of the solutions were around making sure it's sustainable for folks, because we can't have black male teachers being asked to do all the things, because they're going to burn out and tell their friends not to do this.

And, kind of the raconteur, we saw that raconteur piece. That a big way to recruit teachers has been through explaining the joy of it and how amazing it is.

And so, how we need more of that word of mouth and storytelling to convince folks and recruit folks in. And the need for advertising, thinking about, you know, the whisper justice and the presentation we got, but that there's a need to advertise these things and uplift these stories so that more folks are going to want to take these jobs.

And, finally, also, maybe the federal government could play some role in trying to connect all the groups that are already doing this work out there. There's a bunch of infrastructure out there, so we don't unjustly build a new thing. We need to highlight what these groups are doing, connect them, resource them.

I'm looking at my table. That was some of it, right?

DR. MARSHALL: So --

DR. FLUKER: Your name, please?

DR. MARSHALL: Oh, I'm Commissioner Marshall. I'm on the Commission, a few commissions here.

So, yeah, the two most important jobs in the world are parent and teacher. Right? I work with young people every day, so. And sometimes the young people say doctor, but I say, yeah, but somebody's got

to teach the doctor to be a doctor.

So, if we can, I think it would be very intentional about increasing the number of black males in teaching. And there's a lot of data on success on that.

You know, in private schools, there are certain -- a lot of data on who's successful with black males. And, you know, he's a principal and I was an educator for years.

So, I think you can craft things that just intensely go in this area. And, of course, you've got to do the pay and that. But I always say that it's a calling. You know, and you can just -- And I think one of the ways to do that is to, and, you media people here, the one reason I -- the one reason I talk, I attract people to being teachers. I talk about the joy it brought to me.

A lot of people don't know it. I do the same thing for fathers. I will talk about the joy it brought to me and what makes a good father.

So, I think we can be very intentional when we go into these areas, to let people -- because they will say, I had no idea that being a teacher was such a great thing.

So, I think we -- you can build that into

this also. Those are my thoughts.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you. That's called building community. That's precisely what I meant about interpersonal relationships.

DR. MARSHALL: It's how you deal with athletes. Athletes is big because everybody's talking about how great it is. Right?

That whole Derrick Henry thing?

DR. FLUKER: Mm-hmm. You know, we don't do enough of the things, with these other things that are non-athletic in addition to interrogating systems. Those are life worlds where we do that work. But we also have to also be mindful of systems that set people up that prevent community. That's a very important piece.

Any word for this table as we go on? Any thoughts? Any questions, clarifying questions?

Then we'll move to the next if not. Somebody does have -- I can't see. I'm blinded by the light, I see.

MR. DILLARD: I will be quick. I know we're fighting for time here. I'm Marshall Dillard, one of the Commissioners here.

And Dr. Marshall here, Commissioner Marshall was saying, being very intentional. You

know, oftentimes when we're working with our black male students, it seems like the programs tend to be after school.

And so, my thought is, if it's after school, it's an afterthought. Because everything that's very important during the school day is taught during regular school hours.

So, if we put -- if we want to be intentional and we put the importance that needs to be placed on educating our black males, it needs to take place during the school day and delivered by certificated people.

Non-certificated people weren't trained to do the type of educational instruction that is needed. So, we need to be intentional and we need to be intentional during the school day.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you.

DR. MARSHALL: Okay, I want to say this, because -- and they asked me, can I do both? I've done both and I answered.

So, the three things that young people always tell me that we do differently that I didn't get at school, right, I get this from third grade to the 12th grade, they say, they don't like us, number one.

They figured that out between kindergarten and fourth grade, they figured out that they don't like us. Right, because they come in in kindergarten like this, by the fourth grade the academic pilot light is out.

Number two, they don't think we can do it. So, they dumb everything down. And all of us is going to see the one kid who is brilliant, who is bored, that doesn't get it.

Because there's a different lens that they see black males, other than athletics. I keep going back to that, because I can even play. And they told me I could play because I was tall and black. All right.

And then the third reason, and this is, I'm saying this because we're in this area where they say they don't teach us anything about ourselves. Well, we've got a problem right now, because they're telling you you can't teach anything about yourself.

So, I don't know how we're going to deal with that, because the first class I taught when I started teaching high school, I was 22 years old, was a black history class. And they told me that was the most important class they ever took.

So, how we're going to deal with that, I

don't know. Because I'm still teaching the truth no matter what the state says.

DR. FLUKER: Okay. Thank you. Let's move it on.

MS. DUNSTON: Anybody here?

DR. FLUKER: Name?

MS. KANE: Hello. My name is Michaela Cain. Some things that we discussed at our table was housing disparities and predatory leasing.

Creating legislation that requires lessors to provide education on their leasing requirements, because a lot of people may not understand exactly what it is that they're signing.

And then they're locked into this lease and they maybe can't get out of it for free without paying more and wasting money and becoming housing insecure.

Another thing, one of the things that we finished off talking about didn't really quite round out, was education and having a program to identify black male leaders throughout their formative years.

So, like throughout elementary and middle and high school. And taking those kids and fostering their growth and creating a pipeline instead from school to prison from school to educator.

That's what we talked about.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNSTON: Anybody here?

DR. FLUKER: Any thoughts, clarification over there? Everybody got that, right? Good.

MS. DUNSTON: Anybody at this table?

DR. FLUKER: You've got to look -- that table is loaded. Oh.

(Laughter.)

MR. WOODLAND: Which means we spent most of our time just trying to figure out who was sitting here.

DR. FLUKER: Mm-hmm.

MR. WOODLAND: Thank you. My name is Malcolm Woodland. I'm from the Office of Congresswoman Frederica Wilson.

We spent most of our time talking about education. And just thinking about how we can uncouple, decouple, or dismantle the school to prison pipeline, and that being a way to improve the education outcomes and to pull young black men out of juvenile justice spaces and criminal justice spaces.

We talked about the importance of them having early exposure to, I think, what we call thrive

industries. Right, that would allow these young people to see other images outside of entertainers, athletes, and, you know, we have just very few pathways for black men.

One is to athletics, the NBA and the NFL have an amazing pathway for black men and boys. Juvenile justice and criminal justice also have an amazing pathway for black men and boys. Right.

We have no pathways to thrive industries. We have no pathways too medical -- to medicine. We have no pathways to PhDs.

So, we're trying to think about how to dismantle the pathway that we have to juvenile justice and to create pathways to these other areas that we've been talking about today is where we started.

DR. FLUKER: Excellent.

(Applause.)

DR. FLUKER: Tables like this should always be broken up.

(Laughter.)

DR. FLUKER: I mean that. It's part of an old trope of dilemma and diaspora that runs through black history and culture.

When you stay at the table and all of you have this incredible wealth, it becomes dilemma,

because you're always riding two horses going in different directions, and it's a strain on the anatomy.

The way you resolve it is diaspora presentation of where you're going. And I just think that's a learning. I think that's worth taking away, because we need your genius. We really do. Thank you.

Any questions for them?

(No response.)

DR. FLUKER: Thank you. Yes.

MR. ELDER: Thank you. I'm Commissioner Larry Elder. We only had a few minutes at this table to get to know each other.

But I met these two amazing young people, Prince, and your sister's name is?

MR. OLUBAKINDE: Mayowa.

MR. ELDER: Mayowa. They are very successful young people who grew up without a father in the home.

My own father never met his biological father. My last name, Elder, is the name of some man who was in his life the longest.

He was an alcoholic who rarely worked. And when he did, he'd bring the money home to my dad's

mom to have her keep it, because he knew he would drink it away.

Come Wednesday, he'd want it. She wouldn't give it to him. He beat the crap out of her. When my dad jumped in, he'd beat the crap out of my father.

My father came home at the age of 13, he's mom's then boyfriend threw him out of the house when he was quarreling with the boyfriend, never to return.

Athens, Georgia, Jim Crow South at the beginning of the Great Depression. My dad picked up trash. Ultimately, he became a Pullman porter. They were the largest private employer of blacks in those days. And he came to this place called California. And it seemed less racist and more friendly.

My dad made a mental note, maybe someday I'll relocate there, because you could walk through the front door of a restaurant and get served. My dad always had crackers and tin cans of tuna with him, because you never knew in the south if you'd be able to get a meal.

Pearl Harbor, my dad joined the Marines. He was stationed on Guam. He became a Staff Sergeant in charge of cooking for the colored soldiers.

War is over, he goes back to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he met and married my mom. Getting a job as a cook, my dad can look at a cake and tell you what's in it. And he went to restaurant, after restaurant, after restaurant, he was told, we don't hire niggers.

My dad went to an unemployment office. The lady said, you went to the wrong door. My dad went down the hall and saw colored only. Went through the same door to the very same lady who sent him out.

She wanted my dad to know what the rules were. So, he came home to my mom and said, this is BS. I'm going to LA where I was before the war and get me a job as a cook.

He comes out to LA, walks around, I'm sorry, you have no references. My dad said, I need references to make ham and eggs?

And he went to an unemployment office, this time just one door. The lady says, I have nothing. My dad says, I'll be sitting there until you have something.

My dad sat in the chair for a day and a half. She calls him up. I have something sir. I don't know whether you're going to want it.

My dad said, of course I'm going to want

it. What is it? She says, it's a job cleaning toilets.

My dad did that at Nabisco Brand bread for over ten years. Took a second full time job cleaning toilets, cooked for a family on the weekend, because he wanted my mom to be a stay at home mom.

And he went to night school to get his GED. And then when he got his GED, he went to night school to learn how to operate a small restaurant.

My dad started a small restaurant at the age of 47, saving his nickels and dimes from cleaning toilets. He retired in his mid-80's. He owned the restaurant, the property next door, plus the house that's still in our family.

Not too shabby for a 13 year old black boy in the Jim Crow South, KKK, this was before Brown versus Board of Education, before the Civil Rights Act of '64.

And my dad always told my brothers and me the following: hard work wins. You get out of life what you put into it. Larry, you cannot control the outcome, but you are 100 percent in control of the effort.

And before you moan or groan about what somebody did or said to you, go to the nearest mirror

and ask yourself, what could I have done to change the outcome?

And finally, my father told my brothers and me this, no matter how good you are, how hard you work, sooner or later bad things are going to happen. How you address those things will tell your mother and me if we raised a man.

I tell you this to say, no matter how we feel about our circumstances, my dad always said, you are morally obligated to pick up your cards and play them to the best of your ability.

It is still about choices. We still live in the greatest country God ever created. Right now, as we speak, there are Haitians who are lining up in Haiti for a lottery --

DR. FLUKER: Okay, thank you, Commissioner.

MR. ELDER: For a lottery to get into this country.

DR. FLUKER: I need to have you --

MR. ELDER: I want to see a picture of your wife.

(Laughter.)

DR. FLUKER: Yeah. I'm --

MR. ELDER: That's why I'm doing this.

DR. FLUKER: Okay. Good.

MR. ELDER: It's all about choices. Thank you very much.

DR. FLUKER: Thank you very much. I do know that our time is here. And thank you all for your presentations and feedback. And I'm sure there's far more to share. We got all of the tables in, right? We didn't get all of the tables in? Was there another table that did not speak?

You've spoken three times -- two times, right?

PARTICIPANT: I'm sorry.

DR. FLUKER: I know it. But I wanted to -- I want to close this. I'm going to do it anyway, and you can talk.

(Laughter.)

DR. FLUKER: I want to say this to the Commissioners, because you probably might not want me back after I tell you this. But one of the biggest challenges for us with young black men and young black people period, is the way in which we are locked in memory.

And we have a narrative. I just heard it from the Commissioner here, because we know stuff. We've lived the life.

But we are locked in our narratives. The young people are not locked in those narratives. In fact, they don't know them. And we are trying to share that with them all the time.

What I encourage all leaders to do, especially established leaders, is yes, remember your story. But you must also retell your story.

That narrative has to be reframed. We can't do that without the help of the young. Because our narratives point to a moment, a place, or a time, and although we may be cognizant of what's going on, we cannot curate the future.

We need, for lack of a better word, new wine. And I'm going to encourage the Commissioners, in my closing remark, to line out and remember, retell and relive your stories.

This is a new moment, a new time, a new rhythm. And the old stories, though they were valuable in their day, may not cut -- there's some word that goes with that. The word fell off the -- yeah, yeah, yeah.

So, my closing -- just a little story. I'm a Howard Thurman Scholar. Some of you all might know that name. I'm the editor of the Howard Thurman paper.

Thurman had a great story. He said, all his family used to tell a story of an old mother duck who for years would come along and teach her young ducklings to swim.

Every year the same way, to the same pond, to teach them to swim. Except for one spring, she brought them down to the old pond, and it was dry.

There was nothing left but baked mud. Still, she persisted on them getting in that pond and learning how to swim.

Finally, Alice Shriner (phonetic), Thurman is using her story, says, but the young ducklings with fresh young instincts could smell the chickweed that was growing up near the newly constructed damn. And they decided to make their way for a new pasture. Perhaps to lose themselves on the way, perhaps to find themselves.

Then Shriner says, oh, mother duck, can't you see, the world has changed, and if you and yours will ever swim again, it must be in other water.

Commissioners, take that as an act of grace. It's not a harsh critique. But there's a new rhythm, and unless we open our eyes, our ears, and listen to the new stuff that is here already, we'll be teaching folks to get on the old pond and learn how to

swim.

Those are my last words. I'm going to get out of here in a minute. God bless you. God bless America. God bless Africa. God bless Venezuela. God bless Ukraine. God bless Democratic Republic of the Congo. And good night.

(Applause.)

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Dr. Fluker. As must of you don't know, my name is Zakee Martin. I'm the special assistant to the Staff Director.

I've been sending you guys emails. Putting this thing together. So, first and foremost, I want to thank my team, Donna Newman, Gerald Fosten, Ransom Washington, Pam Dunston, Mayowa, Prince, everybody that's here. I appreciate your work.

We're working towards something really important here. And we want to use this as an opportunity not just to be an event for us to come together, but for us to push this policy.

So, we're here. We want to use the ears that we have. We're going to be reaching back out to you guys, asking for your recommendations, asking for your work, your research.

You people are dynamic and we appreciate your contributions to our society and our community.

And we want to turn this into something that we can hand over to Congress and have it right in their hands.

So, again, I appreciate you all coming out. I want to thank our Director, Mr. Mark Spencer. He couldn't be with us. He's ill. But he will be back. He's a very important piece of this puzzle. We need him. If you haven't met with him, please talk with him.

And our Staff Director, Mr. Mauro Morales. He's not here with us either. But they are very important pieces.

Our IT, Michele. I forgot Ms. Michele in the back. And I want to thank the Press Club for all that you guys have done for us today.

So, thank you guys and we'll be in contact. This is just the first. This is not it. We're coming back. We want to do this bigger and better next year. And we want you guys to be a part of this for our future. So, thanks, guys.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 2:02 p.m.)