A LOOK AT THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON 63 YEARS LATER:

DREAMS AND PROMISES YET TO BE REALIZED

2026 UPDATE

63 YEARS LATER ...

RACIAL GAPS PERSIST

THE DREAMS OF THE 1963 ORGANIZERS, MARCHERS, AND THE PROMISES THAT FOLLOWED REMAIN UNFULFILLED. THE DATA PRESENTED HERE THROWS INTO SHARP RELIEF A COUNTRY WHERE **MILLIONS OF ITS CITIZENS ARE DEVALUED, DISENFRANCHISED, AND DENIED ACCESS** TO THE MOST BASIC FREEDOMS ENJOYED BY OTHERS. IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THIS INFORMATION IGNITES CRITICAL CONVERSATION AND AMPLIFIES THE CLARION CALL FOR ACTION THAT DISMANTLES THE STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS THAT HAVE PERSISTED FOR OVER 400 YEARS IN AMERICA.

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WEALTH

THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP HAS WORSENED

Historic and ongoing **barriers to asset ownership, wealth accumulation, and intergenerational wealth transfer,** alongside **pay disparities** between occupations in which Black and White people are concentrated and **persistently low minimum wages,** contribute to the **stubbornly unshrinking wealth gap.**

Lack of generational wealth contributes to the need for greater borrowing by Black students to pay for higher education. This **higher student loan debt,** combined with **lower earning power which prolongs paying off student debt, further delays purchasing power for known wealth-building** mechanisms like homeownership.

RACIAL WEALTH GAP

WORSE

1963

RACIAL WEALTH GAP: $55,733

in 2023 dollars

- **MEAN WEALTH FOR WHITE FAMILIES: $6,080**
- **MEAN WEALTH FOR BLACK FAMILIES: $315**

NOW

RACIAL GAP IN NET WORTH: $258,600

- **MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD NET WORTH: $204,900**
- **MEDIAN WHITE NET WORTH: $296,200**
- **MEDIAN BLACK NET WORTH: $37,600**

*The median wealth of Black people is 13% of that of White people, and nearly 1 in 4 (23.8%) Black people have a net worth that is zero or negative, which is **2.9 times** the rate of zero or negative wealth among White people.*

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. Wealth and Asset Ownership for Households, by Type of Asset and Selected Characteristics: 2024 and Wealth of Households: 2024.

JOBS AND WAGES

BLACK PEOPLE CONTINUE TO SUFFER HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT & LOWER WAGES DUE TO DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE AND SYSTEMIC FACTORS

- Black people experience **higher unemployment rates AND lower wages** than White people across all educational attainment levels and age cohorts.
- Even as Black people earn college and graduate degrees at significantly higher rates than in 1963, material gaps in employment and in wages remain between White and Black people.
- **On average, Black people are paid approximately 22% less than White people.**
- Due to occupational and wage segregation and wage inequity, **Black people are disproportionately impacted by the suppressed federal minimum wage and outdated federal poverty measure.**
- **Educational proficiency tends to be lower in communities of color due to persistent inequities and underinvestment,** thereby impeding college readiness, degree attainment, and potential wage growth.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

REMAINS DOUBLE

1963	NOW
6.3% FOR ALL WORKERS	**4.3% FOR ALL WORKERS**
5.6% FOR WHITE WORKERS	**3.7% FOR WHITE WORKERS**
12.0% FOR NONWHITE WORKERS	**7.4% FOR BLACK WORKERS**
In 1963, nonwhite unemployment was **double** White unemployment.	The Black worker unemployment rate is **still double** that of White workers.

**For statistical purposes, the Current Population Survey grouped all nonwhite individuals together during this period.*

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1963. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 12-month average of civilian unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted. Time period: June 2025 to May 2026. Table A-2. Employment status of the civilian population by race, sex, and age.

FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE

WORSE

The federal minimum wage remains unchanged since 2009

1963

- **$1.25 AN HOUR**

  ($13.49 in 2026 dollars)

NOW

- **$7.25 AN HOUR**
  - ***$6.40 less*** **than if the 1963 federal minimum wage had been adjusted solely for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI).**
  - ***$14.58 less*** **than what would have been the CPI-adjusted wage if the $2.00/hour sought by marchers had been realized ($2 in August 1963 is the equivalent of $21.83 in 2026 —** ***triple the current federal minimum wage).***

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor. History of Federal Minimum Wage Rates Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 1938-2009.
Converted to 2026 dollars using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator.

INCOME PARITY BY RACE

SOMEWHAT IMPROVED, BUT GAPS PERSIST

1963

MEDIAN INCOME FOR ALL PEOPLE: $6,249

MEDIAN INCOME FOR WHITE PEOPLE: $6,548

MEDIAN INCOME FOR NONWHITE PEOPLE: $3,465

Black income was 53 cents to the dollar of White income.

**For statistical purposes, the Current Population Survey grouped all nonwhite individuals together during this period.*

NOW

MEDIAN INCOME FOR ALL PEOPLE: $83,730

MEDIAN INCOME FOR WHITE PEOPLE: $88,010

MEDIAN INCOME FOR BLACK PEOPLE: $56,020

Black income is 64 cents to the dollar of White income.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1963 and Income in the United States: 2024.

EARNINGS PARITY BY RACE & GENDER

SOMEWHAT IMPROVED, BUT GAPS PERSIST

1963

IN 1968:

WHITE MEN: $6,639 | WHITE WOMEN: $3,864

BLACK MEN: $4,483 | BLACK WOMEN: $2,942

Black men and women were earning significantly less than their White counterparts. For every $1 White men earned, Black men earned $0.68. For every $1 White women earned, Black women earned $0.76.

NOW

ASIAN MEN: $98,280 | ASIAN WOMEN: $76,760

WHITE MEN: $74,018 | WHITE WOMEN: $60,107

BLACK MEN: $54,900 | BLACK WOMEN: $51,660

HISPANIC MEN: $51,740 | HISPANIC WOMEN: $46,380

Black and Hispanic people have the lowest median earnings in the U.S. For every $1 White men earn, Black men earn $0.74, and Hispanic men earn $0.70. For every $1 White women earn, Black women earn $0.86, and Hispanic women earn $0.77.

Sources: Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor. Median annual earnings by sex, race, and Hispanic ethnicity, 1960-2024.

EARNINGS FOR WOMEN BY EDUCATION

ALARMING

RATHER THAN FACILITATING EQUITY, WITH HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, THE GAP IN MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS WIDENS BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE WOMEN.

Jobs requiring less education tend to have more standardized pay structures and are concentrated in industries where wages are generally lower for all workers. As educational attainment increases, pay becomes more closely tied to occupation, industry, advancement opportunities, and access to higher-paying leadership roles—areas where racial inequities can have a larger effect on earnings—leading to wider gaps in earnings between Black and White women as educational attainment increases.

- MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS FOR BLACK WOMEN WITH ADVANCED DEGREES ARE 84% OF THOSE FOR WHITE WOMEN WITH ADVANCED DEGREES.
- BLACK WOMEN WITH ADVANCED DEGREES ($1,461) EARN ABOUT AS MUCH AS WHITE WOMEN WITH BACHELOR'S DEGREES ($1,407).
- GAPS NARROW WITH LOWER LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (BLACK WOMEN'S MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS AS A PERCENTAGE OF WHITE WOMEN'S MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS WITH THE SAME LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT):
    - BACHELOR'S: 89%
    - SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE'S: 89%
    - HIGH SCHOOL: 90%
    - LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL: 94%

Sources: Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor. Women's median weekly earnings by educational attainment, race, and Hispanic ethnicity, 2025 annual averages.

OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION NARROWED, BUT GAP REMAINS

FOR DECADES, OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITY HAS BEEN RESTRICTED. BEFORE THE PASSAGE OF THE EQUAL PAY ACT OF 1963 AND TITLE VII OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, EMPLOYERS COULD OPENLY ENFORCE WORKPLACE SEGREGATION BASED ON RACE AND GENDER. "HELP WANTED" ADVERTISEMENTS IN NEWSPAPERS WERE STRICTLY CLASSIFIED INTO "MALE" AND "FEMALE" SECTIONS. UNION CONTRACTS FREQUENTLY DELINEATED DIFFERENT PAY SCALES EXPLICITLY BY SEX FOR THE EXACT SAME JOB. MANY FIRMS ENFORCED POLICIES THAT AUTOMATICALLY TERMINATED WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT WHEN THEY GOT MARRIED OR PREGNANT, SEVERELY LIMITING WOMEN'S CAREER LONGEVITY AND PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES. THIS IS THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION UPON WHICH OUR CURRENT OCCUPATIONAL LANDSCAPE EXISTS, RESULTING IN GAPS THAT MAY HAVE NARROWED, BUT STILL PERSIST.

BLACK AND HISPANIC WORKERS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER REPRESENTATION IN LOWER-PAID OCCUPATIONS THAN WHITE OR ASIAN WORKERS.

Occupation (Annual Average Earnings)	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Total, 16+ years old ($62,608)	**75.7%**	**12.7%**	**7.5%**	**20.0%**
Management, professional, and related occupations ($91,520)	76.2%	10.2%	10.2%	12.4%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations ($57,252)	85.2%	7.8%	2.3%	35.4%
Sales and office occupations ($52,520)	76.4%	13.4%	6.1%	19.4%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations ($48,048)	72.4%	17.7%	5.5%	26.8%
Service occupations ($41,080)	70.9%	17.8%	6.1%	27.6%

Data Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Table 11. Employed people by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2025. Table 39. Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by detailed occupation and sex, 2025.

POVERTY RATES

APPEARS IMPROVED OVERALL BUT RACIAL GAP PERSISTS

1963

- **ALL PEOPLE: 19.5%**
- NON-BLACK: 15.7%
- **BLACK: 50.6%**

THE POVERTY RATE FOR BLACK PEOPLE WAS **MORE THAN TRIPLE** THE RATE FOR NON-BLACK PEOPLE.

NOW

- **ALL PEOPLE: 10.6%**
- **BLACK: 18.4%**
- **HISPANIC: 15.0%**
- **AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE: 19.3%**
- **ASIAN: 7.5%**
- **WHITE: 9.2%**

THE BLACK POVERTY RATE IS **DOUBLE** THE WHITE POVERTY RATE.

*THE FEDERAL POVERTY RATE IS CALCULATED ANNUALLY USING AN INADEQUATE FEDERAL POVERTY MEASURE THAT DOESN'T FULLY CAPTURE THE TRUE COST OF LIVING, LEAVING MILLIONS WHO ARE STRUGGLING ECONOMICALLY UNCOUNTED AND UNSEEN. USING THE TRUE COST OF ECONOMIC SECURITY, 64% OF BLACK PEOPLE ARE IN ECONOMICALLY INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS, MEANING THEY HAVE INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MEET THEIR ESSENTIAL COSTS AND SAVE 10% FOR EMERGENCIES OR THE FUTURE. COMPARATIVELY, 41% OF WHITE PEOPLE ARE ECONOMICALLY INSECURE.

Data Sources: National Bureau of Economic Research. Poverty and Dependency in the United States, 1939-2023. U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty in the United States: 2024. Urban Institute. Update 2023: Measuring the True Cost of Economic Security.

CHILD POVERTY RATES

APPEARS IMPROVED OVERALL BUT RACIAL GAP PERSISTS

1963

- ALL CHILDREN: 21.9%
- NON-BLACK: 16.3%
- BLACK: 58.5%

THE POVERTY RATE FOR BLACK CHILDREN WAS **3.6 TIMES** THE RATE FOR NON-BLACK CHILDREN.

NOW

- ALL CHILDREN: 14.3%
- BLACK: 25.4%
- HISPANIC: 20.2%
- AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE: 25.7%
- ASIAN: 6.4%
- WHITE: 12.1%

THE POVERTY RATE FOR BLACK CHILDREN IS **DOUBLE** THE RATE FOR WHITE CHILDREN.

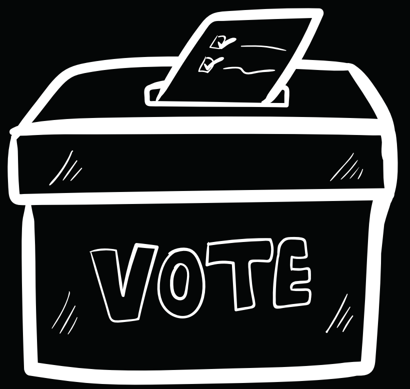
*THE FEDERAL POVERTY RATE IS CALCULATED ANNUALLY USING AN INADEQUATE FEDERAL POVERTY MEASURE THAT DOESN'T FULLY CAPTURE THE TRUE COST OF LIVING, LEAVING MILLIONS WHO ARE STRUGGLING ECONOMICALLY UNCOUNTED AND UNSEEN. USING THE TRUE COST OF ECONOMIC SECURITY, 59% OF CHILDREN ARE ECONOMICALLY INSECURE, MEANING THEY LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MEET THEIR ESSENTIAL COSTS AND SAVE 10% FOR EMERGENCIES OR THE FUTURE.

Data Sources: National Bureau of Economic Research. Poverty and Dependency in the United States, 1939-2023. U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty in the United States: 2024. Urban Institute. Update 2023: Measuring the True Cost of Economic Security.

FREEDOMS

GAINS IN VOTING RIGHTS HAVE BEEN STRIPPED

The Jim Crow era of American history was brutal for Black people in all facets, but nowhere was the brutality of racism more evident than in the state-sanctioned violence and oppression of Black people exercising their rights to participate in democracy.



The machinery of the state in the form of over-policing and incarceration has continued in a variety of pernicious ways, cementing the irrevocable link between racial oppression, disparate treatment by the criminal justice system, and disenfranchisement.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act prohibited the most egregious methods of excluding Black people from voting, bringing a record influx of new Black voters onto the voting rolls and making it among the most successful pieces of federal legislation in the history of the United States.

In the years following the law's passage, the disparity between White and Black registration rates dropped from nearly 30 percentage points in the early 1960s to eight percentage points just a decade later.

Prior to 1969, only an estimated 23 percent of voting-age Black people were registered nationally. By the 2020 presidential election, Black voter participation had reached historic levels, reflecting generations of struggle to secure and protect access to the ballot.

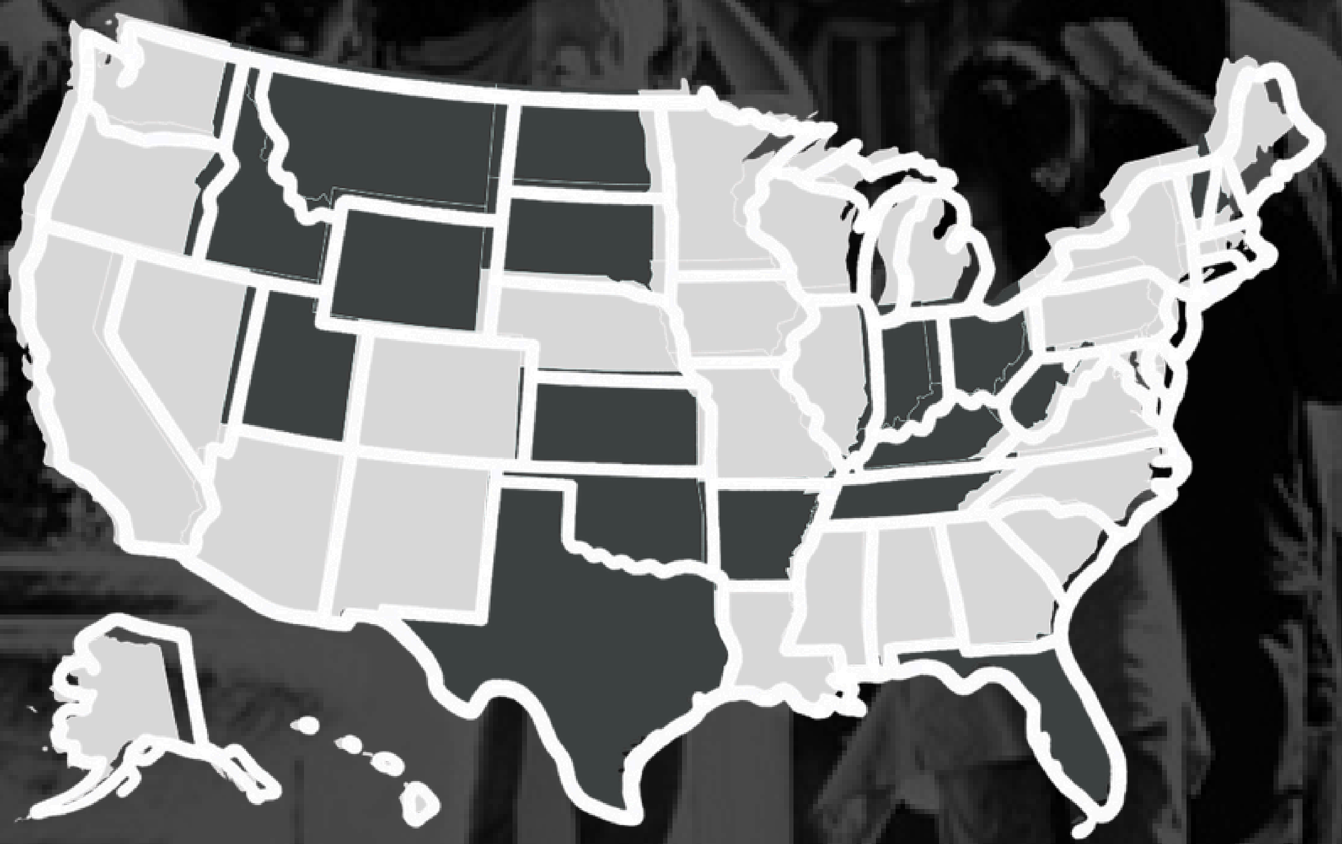
The Supreme Court's gutting of the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013) once again put voting rights squarely at the center of any agenda for justice. Although the Court's 2023 decision in *Allen v. Milligan* temporarily reaffirmed key protections against racial vote dilution, the Court's subsequent decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* (2026) significantly weakened Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, making the creation and maintenance of majority-minority districts far more difficult and limiting one of the law's most important tools for addressing discriminatory electoral maps. Together, *Shelby County* and *Callais* have been widely viewed as substantially eroding the Voting Rights Act's ability to protect voters of color from discriminatory voting practices and racial gerrymandering.

While important protections remain, including prohibitions on literacy tests and other discriminatory voter registration requirements, language-access protections, and protections for voters with disabilities, the broader safeguards that once made the Voting Rights Act such a powerful instrument for racial justice have been significantly diminished.

Across the country, lawmakers continue to advance voting policies that disproportionately burden communities of color, including stricter voter identification requirements, limitations on mail and early voting, voter roll purges, proof-of-citizenship requirements, polling place closures, and redistricting plans that dilute Black political power. These measures, coupled with the weakening of federal voting rights protections and ongoing litigation over voting access and representation, underscore that the struggle for an inclusive democracy remains far from over.

VOTING RIGHTS

ENDANGERED



STATES THAT ENACTED RESTRICTIVE VOTING LAWS IN 2025

2025 WAS THE FIRST TIME IN FIVE YEARS THAT U.S. STATES PASSED MORE LAWS RESTRICTING VOTING THAN PROTECTING IT.

32 RESTRICTIVE LAWS ENACTED IN 17 STATES.

8 INTERFERENCE LAWS ENACTED IN 7 STATES.

30 EXPANSIVE LAWS IN 25 STATES.

Source: Brennan Center for Justice. State Voting Laws Roundup: 2025 in Review.

POLICE BRUTALITY

STAGNANT

1963

- THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT CHALLENGED POLICE BRUTALITY IN BOTH THE URBAN NORTH AND THE JIM CROW SOUTH.
- POLICE DOGS, FIRE HOSES AND OTHER AGGRESSIVE DISPERSION TACTICS USED AGAINST INDIVIDUALS IN PEACEFUL PROTESTS AND SIT-INS WERE THE MOST WIDELY PUBLICIZED EXAMPLES OF POLICE BRUTALITY, BUT IT WAS PERVASIVE VIOLENT POLICING IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR THAT BUILT DISTRUST.

NOW

- BLACK PEOPLE MAKE UP 13.5% OF THE POPULATION BUT 24% OF FATAL POLICE SHOOTINGS.
- WHITE PEOPLE MAKE UP 72.3% OF THE POPULATION BUT 45% OF FATAL POLICE SHOOTINGS.
- **BLACK PEOPLE ARE 2.8 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE KILLED BY POLICE THAN WHITE PEOPLE.**

Source: Mapping Police Violence

SENTENCING

STAGNANT

- OF ALL FEDERALLY SENTENCED INDIVIDUALS IN THE 2025 FISCAL YEAR, 55% WERE HISPANIC, 23% WERE BLACK, AND 18% WERE WHITE, DESPITE BEING 20.5%, 13.5%, AND 72.3% OF THE POPULATION, RESPECTIVELY.
- BLACK MEN RECEIVED SENTENCES **13.4% LONGER**, AND HISPANIC MEN **11.2% LONGER**, THAN WHITE MEN.
- HISPANIC WOMEN RECEIVED SENTENCES **27.8% LONGER** THAN WHITE WOMEN.
- BLACK MEN WERE **23.4% LESS LIKELY,** AND HISPANIC MALES WERE **26.6% LESS LIKELY,** TO RECEIVE A PROBATIONARY SENTENCE COMPARED TO WHITE MEN.
- BLACK WOMEN WERE **11.2% LESS LIKELY** AND HISPANIC WOMEN WERE **29.7% LESS LIKELY** TO RECEIVE A PROBATION SENTENCE THAN WHITE WOMEN.

Source: United States Sentencing Commission. 2025 Annual Report and 2023 Demographic Differences in Federal Sentencing.

INCARCERATION RATES

WORSENED

1963

IN 1964:

- BLACK PEOPLE WERE 33% OF ADMISSIONS TO STATE AND FEDERAL PRISONS, WHILE ONLY BEING 10.8% OF THE POPULATION.
- WHITE PEOPLE WERE 65% OF ADMISSIONS, WHILE BEING 88.2% OF THE POPULATION.
- **BLACK PEOPLE WERE FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN WHITE PEOPLE TO BE INCARCERATED.**

NOW

IMPRISONMENT RATES PER 100,000 ADULT RESIDENTS IN GROUP

- ASIAN: 88 → 1% OF PRISONERS
- WHITE: 231 → 31%
- HISPANIC: 606 → 23%
- AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE: 1,045 → 2%
- BLACK: 1,218 → 33%

BLACK ADULTS ARE INCARCERATED AT A RATE 5.3 TIMES THAT OF WHITE ADULTS.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Race of Prisoners Admitted to State and Federal Institutions, 1926-86 and Prisoners in 2023 - Statistical Tables.

PROBATION AND PAROLE

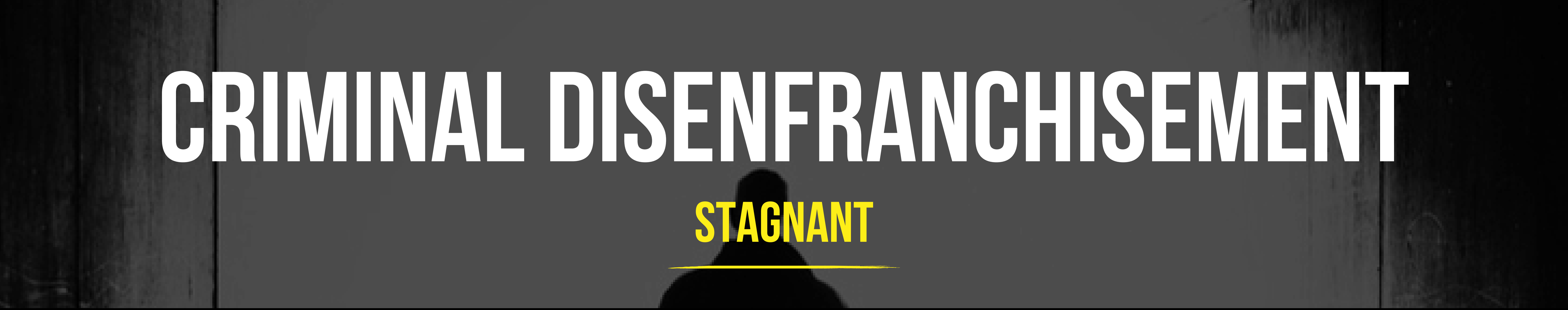
STAGNANT

ABOUT 800,000 BLACK ADULTS ARE UNDER COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

- BLACK INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS LIKELY TO BE GRANTED PAROLE AT THEIR FIRST HEARING THAN WHITE INDIVIDUALS, EVEN WHEN CONTROLLING FOR CRIMINAL HISTORY AND CRIME SEVERITY.
- BLACK INDIVIDUALS FACE MUCH HIGHER RATES OF RE-INCARCERATION FOR TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS (LIKE MISSING APPOINTMENTS) RATHER THAN NEW CRIMES.
- PAROLE BOARDS WERE FOUND TO FAVOR COMMUNICATION STYLES INCLUDING INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY RATHER THAN EXPLANATIONS THAT CONTEXTUALLY INCLUDE SITUATIONAL FACTORS THAT DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACT BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES, LIKE POVERTY.
- DISCRETIONARY RELEASE AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION MODELS ACT AS SYSTEMIC "TRAPDOORS," DISPROPORTIONATELY RETURNING PEOPLE OF COLOR TO PRISON.

ABOUT 1 IN 73 U.S. RESIDENTS IS UNDER COMMUNITY SUPERVISION, OR ABOUT 3.7 MILLION PEOPLE. THE PROBATION POPULATION IS 50% WHITE, 31% BLACK, AND 16% HISPANIC, AND THE PAROLE POPULATION IS 45% WHITE, 34% BLACK, AND 18% HISPANIC. BLACK PEOPLE IN THE GENERAL POPULATION ARE 3 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE ON PROBATION AND 4 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE ON PAROLE THAN WHITE PEOPLE.

Data Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Probation and Parole in the United States, 2024.



CRIMINAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT

STAGNANT

1963

LAWS PROVIDING FOR CRIMINAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT WERE PRESENT IN 48 STATES. ROOTED IN RACIALIZED CAMPAIGNS, DISENFRANCHISEMENT BASED ON CRIMINAL CONVICTION PROVIDED A USEFUL AND POTENTIALLY PERMANENT WAY TO ELIMINATE VOTERS.

NOW

MOST STATES HAVE LAWS DISENFRANCHISING PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS.

- NO DISENFRANCHISEMENT: 3.
- VOTING RIGHTS RESTORED AUTOMATICALLY UPON RELEASE: 23.
- VOTING RIGHTS RESTORED FOR THOSE ON PROBATION OR PAROLE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN INCARCERATED DURING THE LAST 5 YEARS: 1.
- VOTING RIGHTS RESTORED UPON COMPLETION OF SENTENCE (INCLUDING PRISON, PAROLE, AND PROBATION): 14.
- PERMANENT DISENFRANCHISEMENT FOR SOME: 10.

Source: Brennan Center for Justice. Criminal Disenfranchisement Laws Across the United States.

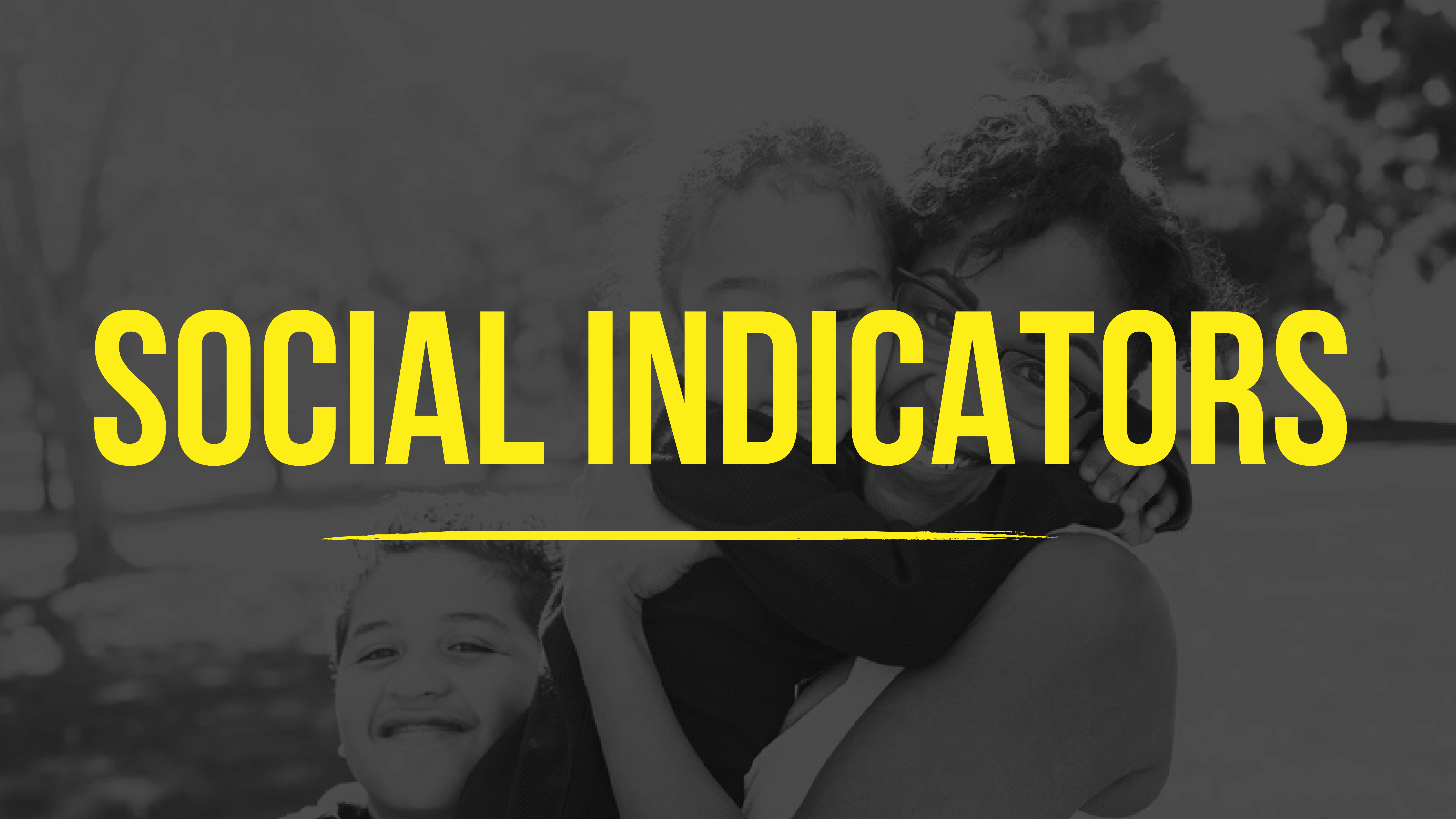
PRISON GERRYMANDERING

STAGNANT

- THE PRACTICE OF COUNTING INCARCERATED PEOPLE AS RESIDENTS OF THE VOTING DISTRICT OF THE PRISON (NOT THE VOTING DISTRICT OF THE PERSON'S HOME) INFLATES THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS IN THE PREDOMINANTLY RURAL, WHITE COMMUNITIES THAT TYPICALLY HOUSE PRISONS AT THE EXPENSE OF URBAN AREAS POPULATED WITH MORE RESIDENTS OF COLOR. THESE WHITE COMMUNITIES, IN TURN, RECEIVE MORE FEDERAL FUNDS AND REPRESENTATION.

- RECENT ANALYSIS FROM THE BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE THAT RAN REDISTRICTING SIMULATIONS ACROSS 11 STATES FOUND THAT COUNTING INCARCERATED PEOPLE IN THEIR HOME DISTRICTS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RESULT IN A CUMULATIVE 14 ADDITIONAL BLACK-MAJORITY DISTRICTS ACROSS 8 OF THE 11 STATES, WITH AN INCREASE OF 6 BLACK-MAJORITY DISTRICTS IN GEORGIA ALONE.

Source: Brennan Center for Justice. Prison Gerrymandering Distorts Representation (2026).


SOCIAL INDICATORS

Among the demands of the 1963 March were calls for equality in education, desegregated and safe housing, and opportunities to thrive in healthy and safe neighborhoods. Tragically, many of the key indicators measuring housing, education, and health conditions today remain as dire as they were in the 1960s.

The story these indicators tell is one of systemic and intentional oppression via the levers of structural discrimination and deprivation in jobs, wages, and freedoms. Here, we see the outyear effects of chronic underfunding, environmental degradation, racism in policing, housing, and community investment on the economic, social, and physical health of Black people and communities.

HOUSING

RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION REMAINS A BARRIER TO OPPORTUNITY

More than 55 years after the Fair Housing Act, residential segregation remains a defining feature of many U.S. communities. Recent research finds that Black-White segregation has declined gradually over the past several decades, but progress has been uneven and many metropolitan areas remain highly segregated, with persistent racial and economic barriers limiting access to neighborhoods of opportunity.

The legacy of redlining, exclusionary zoning, discriminatory lending, and other public and private policies continues to shape patterns of neighborhood opportunity today. Research from leading policy and academic institutions shows that residential segregation remains closely linked to disparities in school quality, health outcomes, employment access, environmental conditions, and wealth accumulation.

Although overt housing discrimination is less common than in the past, structural inequities continue to restrict fair access to high-opportunity neighborhoods and homeownership. As a result, Black households remain less likely than White households to benefit from the wealth-building and intergenerational advantages associated with homeownership and neighborhood investment.

HOME OWNERSHIP

GAPS PERSIST

1963

IN 1960:

- 64% OF **WHITE** HOUSING UNITS WERE OWNER-OCCUPIED.
- 38% OF **BLACK** HOUSING UNITS WERE OWNER-OCCUPIED.
- BLACK PEOPLE WERE **1.7 TIMES LESS LIKELY** TO OWN THEIR HOMES.

NOW

65% OF HOUSING UNITS ARE OWNER-OCCUPIED

- 70% OF WHITE UNITS ARE OWNER-OCCUPIED.
- 45% OF BLACK UNITS ARE OWNER-OCCUPIED.
- 49% OF HISPANIC UNITS ARE OWNER-OCCUPIED.

BLACK AND BROWN PEOPLE ARE **1.6 TIMES AND 1.4 TIMES LESS LIKELY** TO OWN THEIR HOMES.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States: A Historical View, 1790-1978 and American Housing Survey Table Creator, 2023.

RENT BURDEN

SIGNIFICANT GAPS REMAIN

RENT-BURDENED: PAYING 30%+ OF THE HOUSEHOLD'S INCOME TO RENT

SEVERELY RENT-BURDENED: PAYING 50%+ OF THE HOUSEHOLD'S INCOME TO RENT

BLACK PEOPLE ARE 22.4% OF THE RENTING POPULATION, AND 13.5% OF THE U.S. POPULATION.

56% OF BLACK RENTERS ARE RENT-BURDENED.

29% OF BLACK RENTERS ARE SEVERELY RENT-BURDENED.

HISPANIC PEOPLE ARE 21.4% OF THE RENTING POPULATION, AND 20.5% OF THE U.S. POPULATION.

56% OF HISPANIC RENTERS ARE RENT-BURDENED.

30% OF HISPANIC RENTERS ARE SEVERELY RENT-BURDENED.

WHITE PEOPLE ARE 67.0% OF THE RENTING POPULATION, AND 72.3% OF THE U.S. POPULATION.

49% OF WHITE RENTERS ARE RENT-BURDENED.

25% OF WHITE RENTERS ARE SEVERELY RENT-BURDENED.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey Table Creator, 2023.

HOUSING QUALITY

SOME IMPROVEMENTS, BUT GAPS PERSIST

*Severely inadequate housing is a classification that reflects 14 different situations that exhibit major critical physical deficiencies in at least one of five core categories: plumbing, heating, electric, upkeep, or common hallways.

1963

IN 1960:

- 27% OF BLACK PEOPLE LIVED IN HOUSING THAT LACKED SOME OR ALL PLUMBING FACILITIES, COMPARED TO ONLY 10% OF WHITE PEOPLE.
- BLACK PEOPLE WERE **6X MORE LIKELY** THAN WHITE PEOPLE TO LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH MORE THAN 1.51 PEOPLE PER ROOM.

NOW

BLACK PEOPLE IN RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING ARE:

- **1.7X MORE LIKELY** TO HAVE PLUMBING ISSUES LIKE **NO WORKING TOILET IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS.**
- **1.6X MORE LIKELY** TO LIVE IN **SEVERELY INADEQUATE HOUSING.***
- 0.80X AS LIKELY TO LIVE IN A HOME WITH MORE THAN 1.51 PEOPLE PER BEDROOM.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States: A Historical View, 1790-1978 and American Housing Survey Table Creator, 2023.

PROPERTY VALUE

SIGNIFICANT GAPS REMAIN

BLACK HOMEOWNERS

PROPERTY VALUE

- **MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE: $300,000**
- MEDIAN PURCHASE PRICE: $150,000
- **30% HAVE A PROPERTY VALUE BELOW $200K**

MORTGAGE CHARACTERISTICS

- MEDIAN AMOUNT BORROWED OR REFINANCED: $187K
- **MEDIAN INTEREST RATE: 3.9%**
- 74% HAVE AN INTEREST RATE BELOW FIVE PERCENT
- **MEDIAN LOAN AS PERCENT OF VALUE: 50%**
- MEDIAN HOME-EQUITY LINE-OF-CREDIT LIMIT: $57,000

WHITE HOMEOWNERS

PROPERTY VALUE

- **MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE: $350,000**
- MEDIAN PURCHASE PRICE: $170,000
- **22% HAVE A PROPERTY VALUE BELOW $200K**

MORTGAGE CHARACTERISTICS

- MEDIAN AMOUNT BORROWED OR REFINANCED: $198K
- **MEDIAN INTEREST RATE: 3.5%**
- 82% HAVE AN INTEREST RATE BELOW FIVE PERCENT
- **MEDIAN LOAN AS PERCENT OF VALUE: 45%**
- MEDIAN HOME-EQUITY LINE-OF-CREDIT LIMIT: $70,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey Table Creator, 2023.

HOMELESSNESS

GAP REMAINS

BLACK PEOPLE MAKE UP
14 % OF THE
GENERAL POPULATION BUT ABOUT
33 % OF THE
HOMELESS POPULATION

HOMELESSNESS BY RACE TODAY:

NATIVE HAWAIIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDERS ARE **8.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY** TO BE HOMELESS THAN WHITE PEOPLE

BLACK PEOPLE ARE **4.8 TIMES MORE LIKELY** TO BE HOMELESS THAN WHITE PEOPLE

HISPANIC PEOPLE ARE **2.6 TIMES MORE LIKELY** TO BE HOMELESS THAN WHITE PEOPLE

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVES ARE **2.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY** TO BE HOMELESS THAN WHITE PEOPLE

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The 2025 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness. May 2026.

EDUCATION

SCHOOL FINANCING

STAGNANT

IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, **PUBLIC EDUCATION WAS FUNDED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THROUGH PROPERTY TAXES, WHICH PRODUCED LARGE DISPARITIES.** IN THE 1960S, THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN K-12 EDUCATION EXPANDED WITH THE **ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 WHICH PROVIDED FEDERAL FUNDS TO SUPPORT LOW-INCOME STUDENTS AND UNDER-RESOURCED SCHOOLS.** DESPITE THESE EARLIER EFFORTS, FUNDING HAS BEEN PULLED BACK AND STUDENTS OF COLOR CONTINUE TO FACE DISPROPORTIONATE RESOURCE GAPS TODAY.

BLACK AND BROWN STUDENTS ARE IN DISTRICTS WITH **CHRONICALLY BELOW ADEQUATE FUNDING** AT A RATE **DOUBLE TO TRIPLE** THAT OF WHITE AND ASIAN STUDENTS.

BLACK: 56.7%
HISPANIC: 39.2%
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE: 32.3%
ASIAN: 19%
WHITE: 18.3%

Sources: Brown University, Annenberg Institute, EdWorkingPaper No. 26-1425, School Finance in the US (2026) &
School Finance Indicators Database, The Adequacy and Fairness of State School Finance Systems, Eighth Edition (2026)

K-12 MATH & READING PROFICIENCY

ACHIEVEMENT GAP PERSISTS

MATHEMATICS PROFICIENCY

% Proficient	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12
All Students	**31%**	**20%**	**19%**
White	39%	27%	25%
Black	17%	8%	6%
Hispanic	23%	12%	9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	39%	28%	38%
American Indian / Alaskan Native	16%	8%	8%

BLACK 4TH GRADERS ARE **HALF AS LIKELY**, 8TH GRADERS ARE A **THIRD AS LIKELY**, AND 12TH GRADERS ARE A **QUARTER AS LIKELY** TO BE PROFICIENT IN MATHEMATICS THAN THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS.

READING PROFICIENCY

% Proficient	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12
All Students	**23%**	**26%**	**29%**
White	29%	32%	36%
Black	14%	15%	16%
Hispanic	16%	17%	22%
Asian/Pacific Islander	32%	41%	41%
American Indian / Alaskan Native	12%	16%	20%

BLACK STUDENTS IN 4TH, 8TH, AND 12TH GRADES ARE **HALF AS LIKELY** TO BE PROFICIENT IN READING.

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2024 Mathematics Assessment & 2024 Reading Assessment via NAEP Data Explorer.

HIGH SCHOOL ATTAINMENT

IMPROVED

THEN

IN 1960: 41.1% COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL

WHITE MEN: 41.6% | BLACK MEN: 20.0%

WHITE WOMEN: 44.7% | BLACK WOMEN: 23.1%

IN 1970: 55.2% COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL

WHITE MEN: 57.2% | BLACK MEN: 35.4%

WHITE WOMEN: 57.7% | BLACK WOMEN: 36.6%

NOW

WHITE MEN: 95.1%

BLACK MEN: 90.6%

WHITE WOMEN: 95.9%

BLACK WOMEN: 92.0%

THE GAP IN HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES HAS NARROWED SIGNIFICANTLY.

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics. Table 104.10 Rates of high school completion and bachelor's degree attainment among persons age 25 and over, 1910-2023.

COLLEGE ATTAINMENT

GAPS PERSIST

THEN

IN 1960: 7.7% ATTAINED BACHELOR'S DEGREES

WHITE MEN: 10.3% | BLACK MEN: 3.5%

WHITE WOMEN: 6.0% | BLACK WOMEN: 3.6%

IN 1970: 11.0% ATTAINED BACHELOR'S DEGREES

WHITE MEN: 15.0% | BLACK MEN: 6.8%

WHITE WOMEN: 8.6% | BLACK WOMEN: 5.6%

NOW

WHITE MEN: 41.0%

BLACK MEN: 26.2%

WHITE WOMEN: 43.6%

BLACK WOMEN: 31.4%

DESPITE HIGHER GRADUATION RATES, GAPS IN EMPLOYMENT, WAGES, AND DEGREE ATTAINMENT PERSIST. WHITE MEN AND WOMEN ARE 1.6 TIMES AND 1.4 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO ATTAIN BACHELOR'S DEGREES THAN THEIR BLACK COUNTERPARTS.

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics. Table 104.10 Rates of high school completion and bachelor's degree attainment among persons age 25 and over, 1910-2023.

STUDENT DEBT

GAP WIDENED

BLACK COLLEGE GRADUATES
OWE AN AVERAGE OF $25,000 MORE
IN STUDENT LOAN DEBT
THAN WHITE COLLEGE GRADUATES

FOUR YEARS AFTER GRADUATION, **BLACK STUDENTS** OWE AN AVERAGE OF **88.3% MORE** THAN WHITE GRADUATES

BLACK STUDENT BORROWERS ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO **STRUGGLE FINANCIALLY** DUE TO **STUDENT LOAN DEBT MONTHLY PAYMENTS** AND **LOWER WAGES**

GRADUATE SCHOOL LOANS ACCOUNT FOR **34.0% OF THE DEBT GAP** BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS

77.5% OF BLACK MASTER'S DEGREE GRADUATES CARRY STUDENT LOAN DEBT, COMPARED TO 54.9% OF WHITE GRADUATES

WHITE COLLEGE GRADUATES HAVE MORE THAN **SEVEN TIMES** THE WEALTH OF BLACK COLLEGE GRADUATES

Sources: Education Data Initiative. Student Loan Debt by Race. Last Updated June 22, 2026.

FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN CHANGES THREATEN TO DEEPEN RACIAL DISPARITIES IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

Recent federal student loan policy changes are likely to widen existing Black–White disparities in higher education and student debt. Effective July 1, 2026, graduate student loans are capped at $20,500 annually and $100,000 over a lifetime, and the Grad PLUS loan—which previously allowed borrowing up to the full cost of attendance—has been eliminated. Parent PLUS loans are also capped at $20,000 annually and $65,000 over a lifetime for new borrowers, potentially leaving many families unable to cover the full cost of college.

These borrowing limits are expected to disproportionately affect Black students, who rely on student loans at much higher rates than White students. By restricting access to financing for both undergraduate and graduate education, the new caps may create additional barriers to degree completion and advanced credentials, particularly for students from lower-income backgrounds.

> **BLACK UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS RELY ON LOANS TO FUND THEIR EDUCATION AT FIVE TIMES THE RATE OF WHITE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.**

The effects may be especially significant in graduate education, where loan debt is a major driver of the Black–White debt gap. Under the Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) rule, programs such as nursing, social work, and education were initially excluded from the higher professional degree loan cap and subjected to the lower graduate loan limit, although a June 2026 court ruling temporarily expanded their eligibility. Reduced access to graduate and professional education could limit earnings and wealth-building opportunities, reinforcing existing racial disparities in debt and economic mobility.

HEALTH

LIFE EXPECTANCY

IMPROVED, BUT GAPS PERSIST

1963

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH IN YEARS

ALL PEOPLE: 69.9

WHITE: 70.8

NONWHITE: 63.6

THE LIFE EXPECTANCY GAP BETWEEN WHITE AND NONWHITE AMERICANS WAS **MORE THAN 7 YEARS.**

NOW

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH IN YEARS

ALL PEOPLE: 78.4 YEARS

AMERICAN INDIAN ALASKAN NATIVE: 70.1

BLACK: 74.0

WHITE: 78.4

HISPANIC: 81.3

ASIAN: 85.2

BLACK PEOPLE HAVE THE **SECOND SHORTEST LIFE EXPECTANCY** IN THE UNITED STATES.
ON AVERAGE, THEY LIVE 4 YEARS LESS THAN WHITE PEOPLE, 7 YEARS LESS THAN HISPANIC PEOPLE, AND 11 YEARS LESS THAN ASIAN PEOPLE.

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Statistics of the United States 1963. National Center for Health Statistics. United States Life Tables, 2023.

DEATH RATES

RATES LOWERED, GAPS WIDENED

1963

DEATH RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION

TOTAL: 960

WHITE: 950

NONWHITE: 1,010

THE NONWHITE DEATH RATE WAS **6 PERCENT HIGHER** THAN THE WHITE DEATH RATE.

NOW

DEATH RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION

TOTAL: 722.1

BLACK: 869.0

AMERICAN INDIAN ALASKAN NATIVE: 803.8

NATIVE HAWAIIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER: 746.0

WHITE: 724.2

HISPANIC: 500.7

ASIAN: 366.6

THE BLACK DEATH RATE IS **20 PERCENT HIGHER** THAN THE WHITE DEATH RATE.

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Statistics of the United States 1963. National Center for Health Statistics. Mortality in the United States: Provisional data, 2025.

MATERNAL HEALTH

IMPROVED, BUT GAPS PERSIST

1963

MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS

WHITE: 24.0

NONWHITE: 96.9

THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE FOR NONWHITE WOMEN WAS **FOUR** TIMES THE RATE FOR WHITE WOMEN.

NOW

MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS

HISPANIC: 12.1

WHITE: 14.2

ASIAN: 18.1

BLACK: 44.8

THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE FOR BLACK WOMEN IS MORE THAN **TRIPLE** THE RATE FOR WHITE WOMEN.

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Statistics of the United States 1963. | National Center for Health Statistics. Health E-Stat 113: Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2024.

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

GAPS PERSIST

BLACK ADULTS RECEIVE TREATMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS AT

HALF THE RATE

OF WHITE ADULTS

RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT: 22.9%

WHITE: 27.5%
AMERICAN INDIAN ALASKAN NATIVE: 19.1%
HISPANIC: 16.4%
BLACK: 14.7%
ASIAN: 12.5%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER: 9.2%

BLACK ADULTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO RECEIVE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT DUE TO COST BARRIERS, EXPERIENCES OF RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION, STIGMA, AND DIFFICULTY FINDING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PROVIDERS.

Sources: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Table 6.21B Received Mental Health Treatment in Past Year: Among People Aged 18 or Older, Percentages, 2024.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

GAPS PERSIST

BLACK ADULTS ARE
UNINSURED AT NEARLY DOUBLE THE RATE
OF WHITE ADULTS

TOTAL UNINSURED RATE: 8%

ADULTS (19-64): 11%

HISPANIC: 23.0%
BLACK: 12.3%
ASIAN: 6.9%
WHITE: 6.8%

BLACK AND HISPANIC ADULTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE UNINSURED BECAUSE THEY ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY LOWER-WAGE EMPLOYMENT THAT IS LESS LIKELY TO OFFER HEALTH COVERAGE, LOWER INCOMES THAT MAKE COVERAGE HARDER TO AFFORD, AND LONGSTANDING STRUCTURAL INEQUITIES THAT LIMIT ACCESS TO INSURANCE.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2024.

MEDICAID CUTS RESULTING FROM HR1 IMPLEMENTATION THREATEN TO REDUCE HEALTHCARE ACCESS, INCREASE MEDICAL DEBT, & LEAD TO HOSPITAL CLOSURES

In the months after the announcement of HR 1, it was predicted that the new work requirements and burdensome enrollment verification for Medicaid would cause an increase in disenrollment.

As of the most recent data, in March 2026, only 68% of those due for renewal had their coverage renewed, leaving nearly 2 million people due for renewal either disenrolled or awaiting a decision. Southern states such as Louisiana, Georgia, and Texas saw over a 25% disenrollment rate.

The funding cuts implemented by HR 1 disproportionately affect Americans of color, with nearly one third of all Americans of color (including 1 in 2 Native Americans) relying on Medicaid. Since the enactment in July 2025, states have begun to reduce Medicaid funding, particularly in southern states, where Black adults comprise a greater share of the beneficiary pool than the national average.

Not only will this funding reduction increase the burden of medical debt (of which 56% of Black adults hold), but it also threatens to close hospitals. Of the 446 hospitals at risk of closing, 20% are in high-poverty areas. The at-risk hospitals are in areas that are 20% Hispanic and 13% Black, compared to the average 13% Hispanic and 9% Black areas served by the hospitals safe from closure.

FOOD SECURITY

GAPS PERSIST

BLACK HOUSEHOLDS ARE FOOD INSECURE
AT MORE THAN DOUBLE THE RATE
OF WHITE HOUSEHOLDS

FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS: 13.7%

BLACK: 13.8%
HISPANIC: 13.8%
OTHER: 6.9%
WHITE: 6.0%

Food insecure households lack sufficient money or resources to feed all family members adequately.

VERY LOW FOOD SECURITY HOUSEHOLDS: 5.4%

BLACK: 10.5%
HISPANIC: 6.4%
OTHER: 5.0%
WHITE: 4.1%

Households with very low food security occasionally have to skip meals and/or have insufficient food intake.

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. Food Security in the U.S. - Interactive Charts and Highlights, 2024.

HR1 IMPLEMENTATION TO REDUCE FOOD ACCESS THROUGH THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ACCESS PROGRAM (SNAP)

Since the HR1 July 2025 enactment, SNAP participation has reduced by 4 million people (or 10%), a reduction not seen since 1996. Given that the national unemployment rate has remained at around 4% since July 2025 (with Black unemployment rising from 6.2% to 7.4%), it's unlikely that this was due to a lack of need. The new work requirements were expanded to adults up to age 65, as well as parents/caregivers of children ages 14 and up. Exemptions for veterans, the unhoused, and former foster youth were also eliminated.

Beginning in 2027, most states will be responsible for covering between 5 and 15 percent of SNAP benefits, and those that can't afford to do so (or otherwise choose not to) will be forced to decrease or eliminate benefits.

These new requirements and funding cuts have and will continue to disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic Americans, who make up a disproportionate share of the SNAP recipient population and experience food insecurity at rates higher than the national average.

Child nutrition and free school lunch programs are also affected, with the new eligibility requirements barring lawfully present non-citizens, which will affect immigrant children relying on these programs.

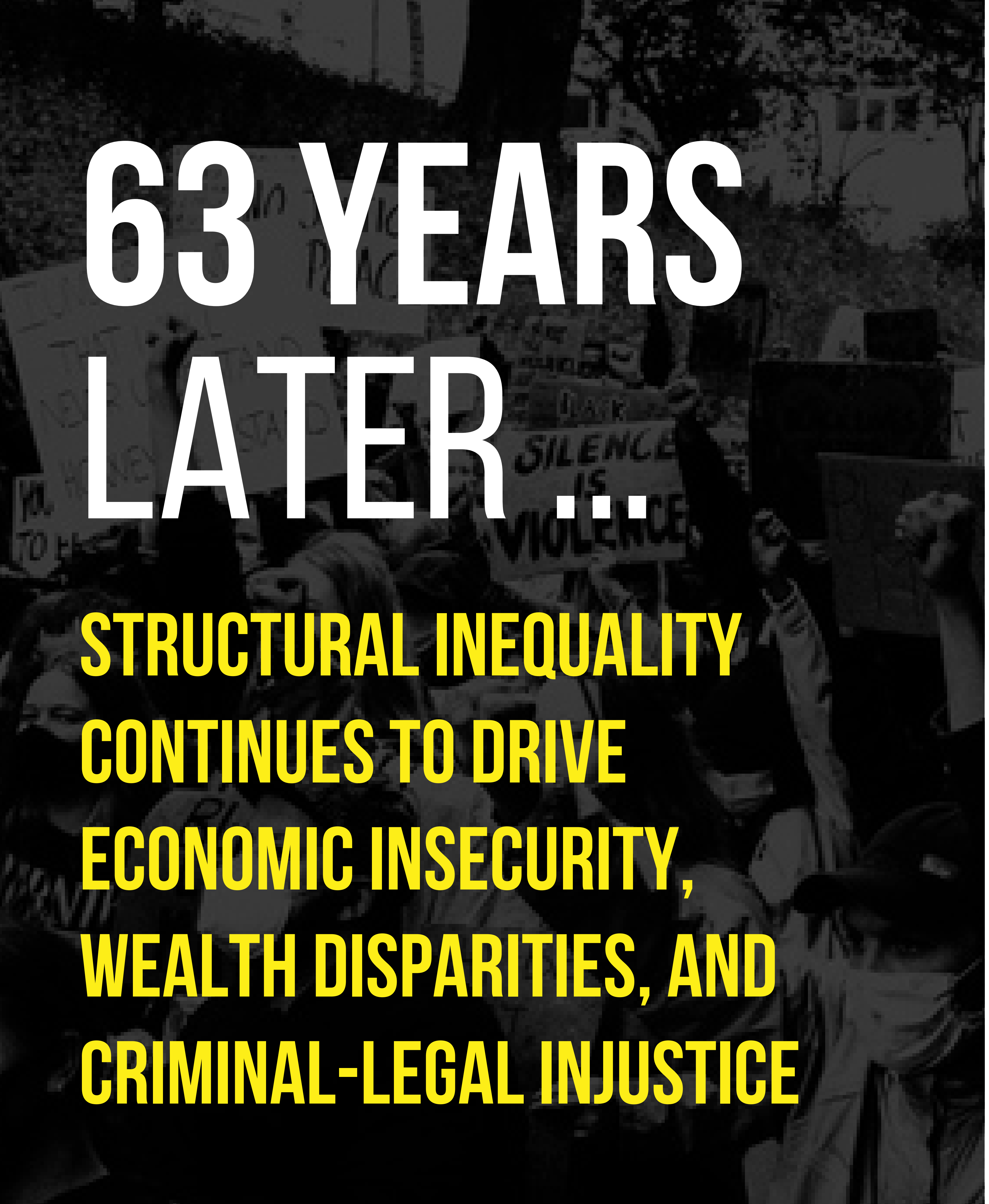
63 YEARS LATER...

SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, BUT STRUCTURAL BARRIERS CONTINUE TO LIMIT EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY FOR BLACK COMMUNITIES

Sixty-three years ago, hundreds of thousands of people gathered in Washington not only to demand civil rights, but to demand jobs, freedom, dignity, and full participation in American life. The March on Washington was a call to transform the systems that denied Black Americans—and many other communities of color—the opportunity to thrive.

There is no question that progress has occurred. Black and White Americans now complete high school at similar rates, a remarkable achievement compared with the landscape of 1963. Yet the promise of equal opportunity remains unrealized because access to quality education, economic security, health, housing, justice, and political power continues to be distributed unequally. Moreover, recent changes in federal laws and policies are rolling back some advancements and worsening existing disparities.

Also, aggregate measures of progress can obscure the deeper reality. Black students are still more likely to attend racially and economically segregated schools, and substantial gaps in college attainment remain. Roughly three in ten Black adults held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with nearly four in ten White adults.



63 YEARS LATER...

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY CONTINUES TO DRIVE ECONOMIC INSECURITY, WEALTH DISPARITIES, AND CRIMINAL-LEGAL INJUSTICE

These educational disparities help shape economic outcomes that echo the concerns raised on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. Black workers continue to face unemployment rates consistently higher than those of White workers, even during periods of overall economic growth. In recent federal labor data, Black unemployment remains about twice the White unemployment rate.

The wealth-building opportunities that define economic mobility remain similarly unequal. The Fair Housing Act opened doors that had long been closed, but the homeownership gap has proven remarkably durable. Today, Black homeownership remains 25 percentage points below White homeownership—one of the clearest indicators that the intergenerational transfer of wealth and opportunity continues to be shaped by race.

The persistence of racial inequality is perhaps nowhere more visible than in the criminal legal system. Although Black Americans represent a far smaller share of the nation's population, they remain disproportionately represented in jails and prisons. Federal justice data continues to show stark racial disparities in incarceration, reflecting patterns of over-policing, surveillance, prosecution, and punishment that have burdened Black communities for generations.

63 YEARS LATER ...

MANY OF THE INEQUITIES THAT INSPIRED THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON HAVE CHANGED IN FORM, BUT NOT IN SUBSTANCE

The consequences extend beyond the courtroom and prison walls. They are reflected in health outcomes and life expectancy. Despite recent improvements following the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Americans continue to have shorter life expectancies than White Americans—evidence that unequal access to health care, safe housing, economic opportunity, and healthy environments continues to shape who lives longer and healthier lives. As of the most recent federal data, life expectancy for Black Americans has remained several years below that of White Americans.

Taken together, these realities reveal a difficult truth: many of the conditions that inspired the March on Washington have changed in form, but not in substance. The barriers are less visible than the signs of segregation that defined 1963, but they remain deeply embedded in the institutions that govern opportunity in America.

The marchers who came to Washington understood that freedom demanded more than the removal of explicit discrimination. It required fair wages, quality schools, safe communities, access to housing, responsive government, and equal justice under the law. Their vision was not simply inclusion within existing systems—it was the creation of systems that worked for everyone.

63 YEARS LATER...

THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US REMAINS THE SAME

More than six decades later, the measure of our progress cannot be the success of a fortunate few. It must be whether Black and Brown communities, as a whole, enjoy the same opportunities, security, health, wealth, and voice as everyone else. By that measure, the work that brought thousands to Washington in 1963 remains unfinished.

The challenge before us is the same one posed by the organizers of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom: not whether change is possible, but whether we are willing to confront the structural inequities that continue to deny too many communities the full promise of American democracy. Only then can we say that the dream of jobs, freedom, and justice has been realized—not for some, but for all.

63 YEARS LATER…

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