



--"Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now"

BERNIE FOSTER
Founder/Publisher

BOBBIE DORE FOSTER
Executive Editor

JERRY FOSTER
Advertising Manager

CHRISTEN MCCURDY
News Editor

PATRICIA IRVIN
Graphic Designer

ARASHI YOUNG
DONOVAN M. SMITH
Reporters

MONICA J. FOSTER
Seattle Office Coordinator

JULIE KEEFE
SUSAN FRIED
Photographers



The Skanner Newspaper, established in October 1975, is a weekly publication, published each Wednesday by IMM Publications Inc.,

415 N. Killingsworth St.,
P.O. Box 5455, Portland, OR 97228.
Telephone (503) 285-5555.
E-mail: info@theskanner.com
World Wide Web site:
<http://www.theskanner.com>
Fax: (503) 285-2900

The Skanner is a member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association.

All photos submitted become the property of *The Skanner*. We are not responsible for lost or damaged photos either solicited or unsolicited.

© 2015 *The Skanner*. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION PROHIBITED.

To see *The Skanner News* on your smart phone go to theskannermobile.com or scan this QR code with your app.



- Local news
- Opinions
- Jobs, Bids
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Music reviews
- Bulletin board
- RSS feeds

Blacks Need to Join Economic Discussion

One's worldview or social perspective is informed by a matrix of different socioeconomic and political circumstances. A polling of Black America about the current "recovery" of the economy of the United States would produce a dramatically different set of responses from the polling results of White America. That is because the vast economic inequality between Blacks and Whites in the U.S. today appears to be escalating.

According to the latest reports from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the steady overall pace of the recovery of the economy continues to grow and expand. Yet while there was a .7 percent decline in the economy for the first quarter of 2015, the forecast for the remainder of 2015 looks very favorable and profitable, especially for those who are already wealthy.

I have always believed that Black Americans should become much more aware of the economic trends that are affecting the U.S. economy as a whole. Too often we get left out of the national discussion concerning the economy because we do not consistently articulate the overall daily national economic interests of 45 million Black Americans.

While it is important to continue to cite the fact that the current annual Black American spending in the U.S. economy totals more than \$1.2 trillion, how do we real-



NNPA
COLUMNIST

Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

ly leverage that fact to help empower Black American families and communities to get out of poverty? Economic productivity is not just about how much a person or a group spends. Economic productivity is also about how

Black American economists and professionals in the financial services arena should formally issue on a quarterly basis a report on the Black American GDP

much a person or a group produces, invests, and leverages to achieve sustainable financial development and empowerment.

The wealth gap between Black and White Americans continues to grow wider. The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2011 that the median White household had \$111,146 in wealth holdings, compared to only \$7,113 for the median Black household. Four years later, that gap has widened

to the point that it is now being called the "racial wealth gap."

The state of Black America's economy has to be a priority issue that is addressed in every municipality and in every state where Black Americans are concentrated. This also needs to be addressed as well at the federal level not once a year but every day of every month in each of the four quarters that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is determined and debated. The GDP, as defined by the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, is the value of the aggregate production of goods and

inclusive of the economic interests of the Black American community.

We are grateful to the National Urban League for its annual report on the State of Black America that is published each year. Its 2015 report, *State of Black America® – "Save Our Cities: Education, Jobs + Justice,"* that documented the facts that economic inequality between Black and White Americans was rapidly increasing across the nation.

Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League, emphasized, "Black America is in crisis – a jobs crisis, an education crisis and a justice crisis." I agree with Morial and I would add that Black America's crisis today is also an economic crisis.

We should remain vigilant and not let the disparities or the increasing economic inequalities break our spirit. We have been through hard time before today and we will face hard socioeconomic times in the future.

Our ancestors did not let racism, injustice and inequity break their collective and individual determination to make progress even in the face of brutal and institutionalized oppression.

Our struggle and labor for economic equality will continue in America and throughout the world.

Let's keep pushing forward to advance the social and economic progress of Black America.

Justice is Not Blind – Nor is it Colorblind

When racist attitudes, either conscious or subconscious, are combined with the discretionary powers that law enforcement officers have, the result is a differential outcome, with African Americans more likely to be the targets of "blind justice."

Most of our politicians and leaders are exploiting subconscious racism, and pandering to explicit racial fears. Even worse, they are rewarded when they say they are "tough on crime."

Soledad O'Brien documented some of these attitudes in her most recent "Black In America" series. Included was an interview with a young Black man who was stopped more than 100 times as he stood outside his college. Of course, he'd done nothing wrong, but police officers, "doing their duty," felt free to harass him.

In a more telling segment, two young men, one Black and one white, staged the "stealing" of a bike to show how members of the public responded to watching the apparent theft.

The young men were dressed similarly – T-shirts, casual pants, caps. People walked by as the white guy did everything he could to break the lock on the bike, including using a chain cutter. One even offered to help him take "his" bike, even though he acknowledged it was not his.

Within moments of the Black man approaching the bike, white people, one or two of whom called



BENNETT
COLLEGE

Julianne Malveaux

911, surrounded him.

As opposed to the benign response the White guy got, the Black guy was simply assumed to be a criminal.

How does this play out on the streets and with officers of the

Pantaleo could have told Garner to move on, or he would risk arrest. Instead, Pantaleo and his posse of lawless cowboys chose to kill the man. Would a white man be similarly treated, or did unconscious racism play into the callous way Eric Garner was treated?

During the late 1990s, Mayor Rudy Giuliani's "stop and frisk" policies resulted in African American men being stopped more than five times as frequently as Caucasians, even though these frisks led to nothing more than the humiliation of Black men, some simply coming off the subway or walking down the street. Hispanic men were stopped about three

times as often as Caucasians. White men were stopped and frisked less frequently than others. Unconscious racism? Discretion? The law sanctions both.

Stop and frisk incidents increased dramatically with no concomitant increase in crime. However, since New York Mayor Bill Blasio took office, the num-

ber of stop and frisk incidents has dropped by almost three quarters, again with no increase in crime. It appears that whether stop and frisk occurrences are aggressive or gentle; the incidence of crime does not increase.

There are many occurrences where police can make discretionary decisions. First, they can decide whom to stop. Then, when they stop, they don't have to arrest or frisk. A simple conversation that explains the reason for the stop will yield a more favorable outcome than wrestling someone to the ground, knee in his or her back, or handcuffing someone without explaining why.

Police resistance to the use of body cameras suggests these officers know that they are out of order in dealing with the public. Once someone is arrested, the police have the right to charge him or her with a minor crime or let them go. Finally, prosecutors can decline to bring charges.

All of these decisions can be minimized or maximized, based on discretion. Justice is not blind when police officers use discretion to stop one segment of the population to harshly mistreat and let the other population slide. If police officers wonder why there is antipathy and distrust toward them in the African American community, somebody needs to tell them that their use of discretion suggests that justice is hardly blind.

A young Black man was stopped more than 100 times as he stood outside his college. Of course, he'd done nothing wrong, but police officers, 'doing their duty,' felt free to harass him

law? Police officers use their discretion selectively. A Black man (Eric Garner) selling loose cigarettes is manhandled, arrested, and dies when he is choked and cannot breathe. Most have seen the video by now, and wonder why Daniel Pantaleo was not charged with any crime, even though he used an illegal chokehold on Garner.

times as often as Caucasians. White men were stopped and frisked less frequently than others. Unconscious racism? Discretion? The law sanctions both.

Stop and frisk incidents increased dramatically with no concomitant increase in crime. However, since New York Mayor Bill Blasio took office, the num-