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“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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The Importance of Summer Jobs

Summer jobs for youth are an investment in America's future

“Your first job brings you more than just a steady paycheck – the experience teaches young people life and work skills that serve them long after the job is done. But as our nation continues to recover [from] the deepest recession since the Great Depression, American youth are struggling to get the work experience they need for jobs of the future.” – White House, “We Can’t Wait Initiative” Statement Release, January 2012



Marc H. Morial
National Urban League

ability of teens to jump-start their future careers, as they were once able to, remains in jeopardy. Not only did jobs disappear

Like so many millions of teens before and after me, I had the chance to be exposed to the world of work at an early age. And I earned more than money from the experience

I can still remember my very first job – and the valuable lessons I learned from it that continue to inform my career to this day. I got my first taste of entrepreneurship as one-third of a three-man janitorial company I started with two childhood friends. We mowed lawns, washed cars and cleaned windows. If it needed fixing or cleaning, we were the ones to call.

At the age of 15, I earned my first steady paycheck as a copy boy for a local newspaper. Like so many millions of teens before and after me, I had the chance to be exposed to the world of work at an early age. And I earned more than money from the experience. With work came important lessons about responsibility, effective communication, time management, interpersonal skills and more. Today, as our nation continues to recover from the crippling impact of the Great Recession on our economy and job market, the

during our nation's economic downturn, summer jobs – widely acknowledged as the traditional means of entry into our nation's workforce for teens and young adults – became scarce. Competition from older workers for those entry-level jobs once reserved for teens increased as the labor market weakened, and with states slashing budgets to make ends meet, state and federally-funded summer jobs placement programs were either underfunded or cut.

But teen employment matters for their future and for our nation's. It not only gives young people something productive to do during the summer months, that job in the retail store, library or the local newspaper is money in their pocket and money being spent within the community. Studies have also shown that those who work when they are young are more likely to be employed in the future and will earn higher salaries.

After a high of 27.2 percent teen unemployment in 2010, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment for workers ages 16-19 is now down to 17.9 percent. As is the case with adult workers, teens are beginning to find jobs as the market recovers, but unemployment remains high for young people—disproportionately affecting low-income youth and Blacks and Hispanics.

The national unemployment rate stands at a staggering 30.1 percent for Black teens and 19.2 percent for Hispanic teens. The groups of teens who need the work most in order to help themselves, and very often make a significant contribution to their family's budget, are not finding the jobs.

Our nation's answer to this dilemma has been a fractured portrait of private and public initiatives and success. Cities and states have cobbled together money – when it's in the budget – and have funneled it to local groups or agencies that connect youths to jobs or job training. In 2012, the White House launched

services through the Urban Youth Empowerment Program. While all of these efforts are laudable and have changed many lives and communities for the better, it is not enough. Our nation needs to expand summer job programs and create year-round employment for our young people. We need a commitment that says yes to teens and to their future. Our nation needs a comprehensive jobs solution for young people, because piecemeal solutions will only deliver far-flung pockets of success.

Investing in our young people is an investment in the continued strength of this great nation and its workforce. Young people need the formative workplace skills they can get in those entry-level jobs to move on to greater career success and higher salaries in the future. Our nation, and its local economies, benefit when teens spend their disposable income. Surely there are tax loopholes, corporate or otherwise, that can be closed, bringing additional dollars to the table to invest in our young people. The financial cost of not

Studies have also shown that those who work when they are young are more likely to be employed in the future and will earn higher salaries.

Summer Jobs+ as part of the “We Can't Wait” initiative. The project brought together the federal government and the private sector to create 180,000 employment opportunities for low-income youth.

At the National Urban League, we work with at-risk youth to introduce them into the workforce through a comprehensive set of

investing in teens, not creating opportunities for future success, is what will cost this country, and our future in the fast-paced global economy, the most.

Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League.

Bigotry was the Problem in Charleston

Dylann Roof did not kill people in South Carolina because they were Black. He killed nine people because he is a hateful bigot who despises Black people.

We must not articulate these murders as though being Black is the problem.

Being a bigot is the problem.

Roof is the Bigot.

Roof is the problem.

I am also sick of newscasters



Kathleen Saadat

COCL/
COAB

Optimally, they would say something like, “Most Black people

ple are overwhelmed with grief at the loss of family and friends. Black People are also sad and angry knowing that American white supremacist thinking will continue to foment violence, and that this violence will be denounced by much of America while at the same time they will remain silent about the very American roots of Mr. Roof's beliefs.”

Could newscasters and analysts say this, please?

They could add, “Most Americans will continue to remain silent about the everyday violence of poor schools, substandard housing, the school to prison pipeline, the buying and selling of women and children etc. -- all phenomena that are outgrowths of the same principles Roof used in his murderous thinking.”

That quote would be a really nice addition.

I want to know: for whose benefit is anyone pretending that we don't understand what happened?

What are we looking for as an explanation for this act?

Why are we even looking when we experience the crux of the answer in our daily lives?

When will we recognize that it is not Black and brown people who are threats to America, but the people filled with such hatred that they can justify discrimination, bigotry, racism and murder.

They are truly high-level threats to our national security.

If this young man was trying to act as a catalyst for a race war, what does he know that we are ignoring? Let's stop the B.S.

Kathleen Saadat, COCL/COAB community liaison for police reform

I want to know: for whose benefit is anyone pretending that we don't understand what happened?

saying, “People are trying to understand what happened here.”

and many white people understand what happened here. Black peo-