

THE Skanner®

Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now

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Opinion

Black Workers Need Real Paid Family Leave

When Dorcas, a home health aide living in New York, learned of her mother's illness, she used most of her vacation time to fly home and care for her. After a few weeks her leave was exhausted and tragically she could no longer afford to be with her mother in the final days of her illness. In the end, Dorcas was forced to take unpaid leave, and return to Florida, arriving just hours before her mother passed away.

Dorcas counts every penny and the unpaid time resulted in a mountain of unpaid bills and financial challenges that lingered well into the following year. Dorcas weathered that storm. But she says, "it still pains me that I wasn't able to be with my mom during her last days."

Dorcas' story is one of many shared in the Family Values@Work story collection.

Dorcas' story exemplifies a crushing dilemma that many Black women workers face every day when caring for themselves or a family member. Life shouldn't be this way but it is the reality for far too many in the United States.

On July 11, the Senate Finance Committee's Social Security, Pensions and Family



Melanie L. Campbell and Jennifer Tucker

Black Women's Roundtable

Policy Subcommittee held a hearing on paid family leave that featured two very different policy options.

The "real" policy is the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act that creates a national insurance program to fund the time needed

“It still pains me that I wasn't able to be with my mom during her last days

to welcome a new baby, address one's own health issue, or the serious health issue of a family member. It also includes time for certain military families' care giving purposes.

Employees, employers and self-employed workers would fund both the benefits and the administrative costs of the program by contribut-

ing a small amount in each pay period to a self-sustaining fund.

The FAMILY Act builds on programs

in California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island and with the newest programs being implemented in New York, Washington, the District of Columbia, and Massachusetts.

The "fake" paid family leave option, restricts participation to only maternity leave and diverts social security funds to pay for the program. U.S. Senators Joni Ernst (Iowa), Mike Lee (Utah) and Marco Rubio (Florida) plan to introduce legislation covering only the birth or adoption of a child.

This deeply flawed proposal will require people to borrow against their social security accounts, delaying their retirement date or receiving a decreased retirement benefit. For most Black women, social security makes up at least half of their income stream during retirement, according to the 2014 Black Women in the United States report by

the Black Women's Roundtable.

This proposal would result in even smaller social security, death or disability benefits, making the retirement security of older Black women, even more, precarious than it is currently.

Any paid family leave proposal that ignores the caregiving responsibilities that families are facing for older relatives is outdated. According to the AARP Policy Institute, each year, 40 million American adults assist loved ones with tasks of daily living.

Family members are helping with eating and bathing; household chores; and nursing tasks so people can age in place. Surprisingly, of these 40 million family caregivers, about 25 percent are millennials, between the ages of 18-34 years old. One in three employed millennial family caregivers earn less than \$30,000 per year - that includes nearly 30 percent of Black family caregivers.

We urge policymakers to deliver paid family leave programs that fit the times and their constituents' diverse needs. Black workers and their families need and deserve #RealPaidLeave. Our nation deserves nothing less.

Roland Martin: Pleading Our Own Cause

Kudos to Roland Martin, the pioneering journalist who has taken his departure from TV One and turned it into a digital platform. He'll be back with a daily program, but he'll be online instead of traditional media. He has financing from AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and he is also hoping for funding from us, the folks who say they miss the program and say they want unfiltered news. From his website, www.rolandmartin.com, you can join his #BringTheFunk support group and help Roland bring the funk!

Roland has had it with the traditional media, and he is right to point out the lack of commentators and hosts on conventional media—the networks and the "key" cable outlets. Many of those folks have to toe the line, and can't be, but so "controversial." But sometimes one person's controversy is another person's truth. The corporate media squirms when journalists call out our 45th president on his many lies, because some of them are still currying favor with him. And unless light shines on the filth that is occurring in Washington, it will continue. Forty-five said he would "drain the swamp," but he has become one of the world's great alligators, profiting from his presidency both



Julianne Malveaux

NNPA Columnist

through ties to China (even as he imposes tariffs), through his many name-branded hotels, and through all kinds of other shady deals.

Dorothy Leavell, the publisher of the Crusader newspapers in Chicago and Gary,

“We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us

Ind., is the chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA). At the organization's June conference, she convened a panel that focused on fake news and the Black Press. I was privileged to participate with the National Association of Black Journalist (NABJ) President Sarah Glover, pugnacious attorney A. Scott Bolden, and marketing expert Deborah Gray-Young. I think that fake news is not only about the Trump shenanigans and lies, but also about news that is unreported or distorted. For ex-

ample, how come every time a White person shoots up a classroom, movie theatre, or public space, the focus is on their "mental illness," while whenever a Black person commits a crime, of any sort, the focus is on criminality. Why has Rev. Barber's Poor People's Campaign been so underreported, and why was the June 12 shackling of faith leaders outside Supreme Court wholly ignored by the mainstream (and even the sidestream) media? Why has there been so little focus on the economic status of African American people, except when "45" crows about all the improvements he has (not) made on the economy.

Just the other day, I was commiserating with someone about the ways the mainstream media ignores the African American community. The brother I was talking to said, "this is why I miss Roland." So, Roland is coming back roaring, lifting up the oft-quoted 1827 line from Freedom's Journal, the nation's first Black newspaper, "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us." Roland Martin and the NNPA have made the case that if we want our story told, we have to support it.

It is a shame that the Black Press is so poorly embraced. NNPA newspapers need ads, and they also need subscrip-

tions, but while many of us talk a good game, we don't sustain Black-owned media enough to help it thrive. So, they go seeking ads to survive, perhaps compromising integrity while doing so. The Black Press, those who plead our cause, must not feel that they have to buck-dance to the whim of advertisers. Advertising, all too often, is contingent on the support of a specific position, or avoidance of controversy. Thus, in launching his #BringTheFunk group, Roland is challenging African Americans who say that they want real news to support it. That means contributing a little or a lot to grow the digital platform Roland is building.

Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die. In other words, everyone wants real news, and nobody wants to pay for it. One of the ways to support real news is to take out a subscription to an NNPA newspaper, or three. Another way is to help Roland bring his particular brand of reporting and analysis to us through his digital platform. Check his powerful statement out at www.rolandmartin.com. And check out the ways you support fake news by failing to challenge the mainstream media. Do you write letters to the editor? Reach out to producers? Ask hard questions about representation? Silence is consent.