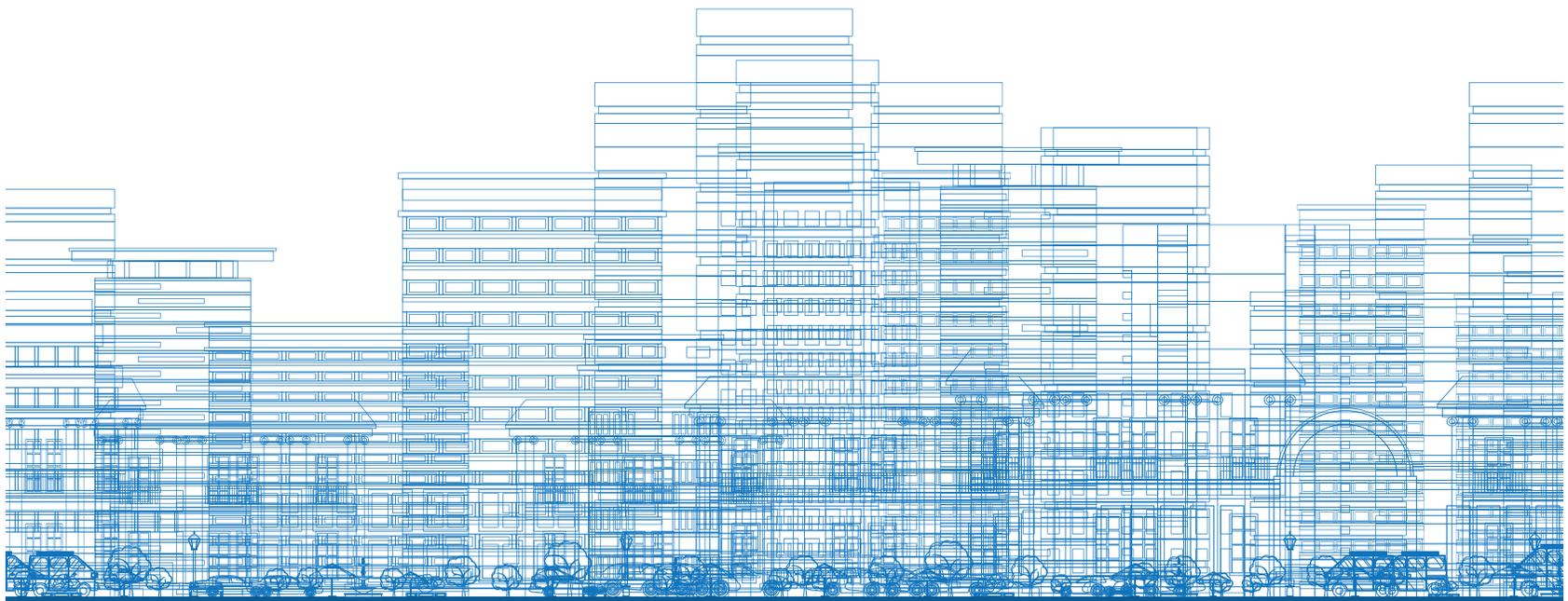


Blueprint

for a Better Deal for Black America



A program of the National Center for Public Policy Research

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PROJECT 21
Black Leadership
Network

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This publication is dedicated to the memory of Amy Moritz Ridenour, the founding CEO of the National Center for Public Policy Research, without whose support Project 21 wouldn't exist.

Executive Summary

It has been over a half-century since the enactment of landmark civil rights legislation targeting the scourge of racial discrimination. Unfortunately, too many black families today suffer from a non-racial scourge – conditions that undermine upward mobility and perpetuate unacceptable levels of poverty, crime and other social ills. The vaunted social safety net has become a web that ensnares black families in a vicious cycle of dependency.

Project 21, a network of black leaders from across the nation, has identified 10 key areas for reform and offers 57 concrete, budget-neutral recommendations to remove barriers blocking blacks from reaching their full potential and ensuring the American dream is attainable for all.

Project 21 Areas of Focus and Key Recommendations:

Promoting K–12 Educational Choice: Establish federal needs-based vouchers funded in part through an IRS 1040 voluntary donation check-off. Improve school security through upgrades in entry doors and by allowing trained school personnel access to guns.

Improving Higher Education: Require schools to meet minimum graduation rate standards for both general and minority student populations to be eligible for federal student financial aid. Establish tuition caps for schools participating in student financial aid programs.

Reducing Black Unemployment: Abolish the Jim Crow-era Davis-Bacon Act; initiate a second wave of welfare reform with work requirements and waive the minimum wage and collection of FICA for younger workers in special low-income areas.

Strengthening Faith-Based Communities: Establish federal Tax Credit Scholarships; repeal the Johnson Amendment; create a tax credit for families paying for nursery-12 fees and tuition and ban abortions performed exclusively on the basis of fetus ethnicity.

Promoting Self-Determination: End fraudulent election practices that dilute black votes. Require proof of citizenship to register; vigorously prosecute those who target minority communities for fraud and prohibit the mailing out of ballots that haven't been requested.

Improving the Relationship Between Police and Black Communities: Get police out of the regulation business; disarm federal agencies and transfer the resources to support police-community outreach programs; increase use of body cameras; provide training to police in identifying people with autism; end gun bans and put police in charge of safety training.

Ending Excessive Regulation: Require “Minority Impact Assessments” for new regulations.

Stopping Wealth Transfer From the Poor to Non-Citizens: Bar illegal aliens from using public services, except in emergencies.

Reducing the Economic Harm of Excise Taxes: Repeal federal, state and local sin and gas taxes, all of which have a disproportionate negative impact on low-income families.

Reforming the Criminal Justice System: Require convictions for assets to be forfeited; prohibit incarceration for fine-only misdemeanors; require fines and forfeitures be transferred to general funds instead of enforcing agency budgets and consider ability to pay in levying fines.

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Promoting K-12 Educational Choice:

Education is considered *the* key to upward mobility, yet many black students remain trapped in failing schools.

And they are significantly more likely to be trapped in such schools than white students.

In Newark, New Jersey, for example, where blacks make up over half the student population, just 6% of black students attend the city's top-scoring schools for math. By contrast, 85% of white students are enrolled in such schools.

In Portland and Seattle, black students are four times more likely to attend a school scoring in the bottom 20% in math than white students.¹

Black students often find themselves stuck in substandard schools due to economic circumstances: Their families can't afford to move to areas with better schools, nor can they afford private school tuition.

As a consequence, black students have fallen behind in academic achievement.

Black high school graduation rates lag behind those of every other population group. Just 76.4% of blacks earned high school diplomas in 2016 compared with 79.3% of Hispanics and 88.3% of whites.²

Graduation rates tell only a small part of the story.

In 2017, only 6% of black high school students taking the ACT (American College Testing) test met all four of the its benchmarks for college readiness. By contrast, 35% of whites and 48% of Asians met all four benchmarks.³

The story was similar with SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test). Just 20% of black students met the College Board's two benchmarks for college readiness. This compares to 59% of whites and 70% of Asians who achieved these benchmarks.⁴

Black students are also significantly less likely to enroll in AP (Advanced Placement) and International Baccalaureate courses, less likely to attend schools that offer them and less likely to receive grades on AP exams that allow them to earn college credit.

Black students made up 14.4% of all AP students (while representing about 16% of the student population) but represented just 4.3% of the students receiving exam scores of 3.0 or better – which is the minimum necessary to earn college credit.⁵

ACT, SAT and AP exam results are all strong indicators of success in college.

Black students deserve a better deal in education: One that adequately prepares them for college and career success.

This can be achieved by giving them educational options.

Educational choice would not only help black students directly, but by creating competition for the public schools, it would also indirectly help students who remain in the public schools.

Of the 31 empirical studies examining the impact of private educational choice on public schools, 29 found that educational choice policies improved the quality of public school education.⁶

Project 21 recommends:

- ✓ **Establishing a federal needs-based educational voucher program.**
- ✓ **Establishing Tax Credit Scholarships (detailed further under “Strengthening Faith-Based Communities”).**
- ✓ **Funding these efforts, in part, by reducing federal funding for schools failing to meet minimum educational standards.**
- ✓ **Funding these efforts, in part, by replacing the “Presidential Campaign Fund” (PCF) check box on IRS Form 1040 with a “Low-Income Educational Opportunity Fund” check box soliciting voluntary contributions.** With participation in the PCF dropping from 28.7% in 1980 to 6% in 2013 and major party candidates opting out of public financing in recent elections, the PCF is a relic of the past.
- ✓ **Improving school security by providing funding from existing resources to equip schools with key card entry doors; requiring security cameras to operate in real time; allowing school personnel (with thorough background checks and extensive training) to keep weapons in secured locations on school property and establishing criminal penalties for school teachers and administrators who seek to resolve law enforcement matters within the school rather than reporting them to authorities.**

Encouraging Employment:

Although the black unemployment rate is historically low, it is still nearly double the white unemployment rate.

All too often, blacks are still denied jobs opportunities – not due to racism committed by individuals – but due to regulations that were created for the explicit purpose of preventing them from competing with white workers.

Blacks have not always experienced higher unemployment rates than whites. During the 1930s, blacks were employed at modestly higher rates. This was due to their willingness to work for

lower wages and work longer hours to build better lives for their families – similar to migrant workers today.

White union workers didn't like losing jobs to blacks, and succeeded in getting the Davis-Bacon Act passed into law in 1931 to do something about it. Davis-Bacon requires contractors to pay "prevailing wages" (union wages) for all construction projects receiving over \$2,000 in federal funding. The law was specifically designed to prevent non-union black workers from competing with white union workers for jobs.

The Davis-Bacon Act is still on the books and continues to serve its original purpose.

Because minority-owned firms are often small and unable to pay union wages, they're often precluded from participating in federal construction projects.

The Davis-Bacon Act also requires contractors to pay the prevailing wage to unskilled workers for ANY job they perform, essentially requiring them to hire skilled workers – who are predominantly white.⁷

In 1933, an early effort by the federal government to tip the scales in favor one racial group over another resulted in President Roosevelt's National Recovery Act. Derided by black leaders at the time as the *Negro Removal Act*, the NRA mandated minimum wages, unionization rights and poured vast amounts of tax dollars into public-works projects – all for whites. These sweeping measures were later unanimously struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

But subsequent actions by Congress and President Franklin D. Roosevelt were more successful.

Just a few years later, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which established the federal minimum wage and required higher rates for work exceeding 40 hours per week – significantly reducing blacks' competitive advantage.⁸

As Project 21 Co-Chairman Horace Cooper noted in "The Untold, Racist Origins of 'Progressive' Labor Laws," "under the FLSA, blacks seeking non-agrarian work who may have been willing to offer lower initial wage rates and work longer hours to get themselves in the door were forced to abide by a nationally regulated workweek and to charge their prospective employers the same minimum-hourly wage as their white counterparts – creating yet two more hurdles for the black breadwinner to overcome..."

Subsequent minimum wage hikes have further hurt black employment, especially among youth. This has had a devastating impact on the black community, as early employment is a key ingredient for long-term employment.

As economist Milton Friedman explained in a 1966 article for *Newsweek*: "I am convinced that the minimum wage law is the most anti-Negro law on our statute books... Before 1956, unemployment among Negro boys was around 8% to 11%, about the same as among white boys. Within two years after the legal minimum was raised from 75 cents to \$1 an hour in 1956,

unemployment among Negro boys shot up to 24% and among white boys to 14%. Both figures have remained roughly the same ever since...”

Friedman noted that – though well-meaning – supporters of the minimum wage confused wage rates with wage income.

“It has always been a mystery to me... why a youngster is better off unemployed at \$1.60 an hour than employed at \$1.25.”⁹

The same can be said for black farmers.

In 1967, as part of the Johnson Administration’s “War on Poverty,” a \$1 per hour minimum wage was established for farm workers. Almost immediately, thousands of black farm workers became unemployed. In the Mississippi Delta alone, 25,000 black farm workers lost their jobs. As the wife of one day-laborer put it, “That dollar an hour ain’t worth nothing... It would have been better if it had been 50 cents a day if you work every day.”¹⁰

Compounding the negative impact of regulations on black employment opportunities have been federal government programs that are often so generous they create disincentives to work.

Blacks deserve a better deal in employment policy.

Project 21 recommends...

- ✓ **Abolishing the Jim Crow-era Davis-Bacon Act.**
- ✓ **Instituting a second wave of welfare reform, starting with adding a work requirement to be eligible for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, or “food stamps”).** This requirement would be similar to the work requirement that was part of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program created in 1996. In the first 10 years of TANF, the welfare case load fell by 56%. At the same time, employment increased. As the Heritage Foundation noted, “During the late 1990s, employment of never-married mothers increased by nearly 50 percent, of single mothers who are high school dropouts by 66%, and of young single mothers... by nearly 100 percent.”¹¹
- ✓ **Allowing employers in special low-income zip codes to hire school age employees 22 years of age and younger without paying FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act – Social Security and Medicare).**
- ✓ **Analyzing new federal regulations to ascertain what affects they have on hiring young, low-skilled workers.** Any regulation that cannot be modified to mitigate job losses by young, low-skilled workers caused by application of the regulation should be imposed only by an affirmative vote of Congress.
- ✓ **Allowing employers in special low-income zip codes to be exempt from the federal minimum wage law or permitted to pay at a discounted 50% minimum wage rate.**

More recommendations to improve black employment in the section, “Rescinding Regulations that Harm Minorities.

Strengthening Faith-Based Communities:

The church has long been the most important institution in the black community.

During slavery, black churches founded by freedmen and freedwomen established schools for black children. They fought slavery and provided shelter to many fleeing slavery. During reconstruction, black churches sent missionaries to teach former slaves how to read and write and helped them establish their own churches. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, black churches led the fight for civil rights. Today, black churches provide stability for black families that often lack it.

Currently, 67 percent of black children are raised in households with just one parent. The stability offered by churches and synagogues is needed now more than ever. In addition to providing for spiritual needs, black churches often provide food and financial assistance, nursery care, education and sponsor youth activities allowing black youth to have fun with their peers in safe environments. Churches also provide positive male role models that many children lack.

While the membership in black churches has held up better than in white churches in recent years, black churches face the same challenge as other churches. Participation is declining, especially among youth.¹²

With government and the popular culture doing everything in their power to diminish the role of churches in our lives, this should come as no surprise.

These important organizations – black churches – deserve a better deal.

The church has consistently been a force for good in the black community and should be strengthened.

Project 21 recommends:

- ✓ **Establishing federal Tax Credit Scholarships which allow individuals and businesses to receive tax credits for donating to non-profits, including churches, that provide tuition assistance for private schools to low-income and at-risk youth. Credits should be offered not only for donations made to support K-12 education, but for nursery schools and daycare centers as well.**¹³
- ✓ **Creating a tax credit for parents and other family members who pay nursery-12 fees and tuition.**
- ✓ **Repealing the Johnson Amendment, which prohibits certain non-profits – including churches – from expressing opinions on candidates for public office.**

- ✓ **Encouraging pastors, ministers and religious leaders to participate in the activities of local schools and serve on advisory boards of federally-funded social service offices throughout the country to review federal policies that limit faith-based leaders from participating in the provisioning of social services.**
- ✓ **Banning abortions performed exclusively on the basis of the ethnicity of a fetus.** Similar to laws adopted by eight states that prohibit gender-selection abortions, such a law would require physicians to ascertain whether a mother wishes to abort her baby *because* of its ethnicity. If she does, the physician would be required to inform the mother it is illegal to have an abortion for this reason and to refuse to perform the procedure. Civil and criminal penalties would be imposed for violations of the law. This is necessitated by campaigns to promote abortions in the black community, first begun by Planned Parenthood’s Margaret Sanger in the late 1930s. In a 1939 letter, Sanger wrote of Planned Parenthood’s Negro Project: “We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members.”¹⁴ Sanger’s defenders today argue that the statement was ambiguous and, put into context, tells a very different story. But context doesn’t help their case. In a 1938 article, Sanger wrote: “In a democratic society where the vote of one is as good as that of another, it is a dangerous procedure to accept a way of life where the *poor* [emphasis added], ignorant, diseased and mentally and socially unfit maintain the stock of the population.”¹⁵ Planned Parenthood continues Sanger’s project to reduce the population of the poor. A 2012 study found that 79% of Planned Parenthood’s surgical abortion facilities were located within walking distance of a black or Hispanic community. Today, 28% of abortions are performed on blacks and 25% on Hispanics – about double the groups’ portion in the overall population.¹⁶ Planned Parenthood’s promotion of black abortions isn’t subtle. In a tweet this past October, it said, “If you’re a Black woman in America, it’s statistically safer to have an abortion than to carry a pregnancy to term...”¹⁷
- ✓ **Banning the sale of fetal body parts entirely.**
- ✓ **Dedicating one day in February (Black History Month) for a national proclamation honoring religious leaders and layman for their role in achieving civil rights for all Americans.**

Restoring the Right of Self-Determination of Black America:

One of the key goals of the Civil Rights Movement was to ensure that every black citizen had a voice in selecting elected officials at the federal, state and local level. That was the intent of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

“Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote,” said then-President Lyndon Johnson upon signing the landmark legislation. “Yet the harsh fact is that in many places in this country, men and women are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes.”¹⁸

From the late 19th century to the present, systematic efforts have been undertaken to prevent black citizens from influencing policymaking in their communities and states where they reside. Lynching, poll taxes, ballot destruction and even race-based political party membership were

techniques designed to prevent black citizens from having a say over the policies they were expected to live by.

Today, black citizens are still being thwarted in exercising their right to determine or decide the policies they will live by – only now it is being done through less direct, more subtle schemes to dilute their vote. When 5%, 10% or 15% of the vote in a community is made up of dead people, former residents or people ineligible to vote, blacks are disenfranchised. Their ability to control or even influence the policies they must live by is undermined.

When illegals and felons vote, when identity thieves cast votes of registered voters or cast them on behalf of people long deceased, the votes of legitimate voters are diluted or diminished in ways similar to those of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Blacks are more likely than any other groups to be victims of voter fraud. The communities where they often reside are more likely to ignore unlawful voting activity and often those engaging in this illicit behavior do so because they believe that they can get away with it. Worse, some leaders in these communities believe voting manipulation is appropriate and acceptable behavior.

In whatever way it happens, it means that law-abiding blacks exercising their right to vote end up having less say over who their elected representatives will be or what policies they will be required to live with.

Take it from those who have been caught engaging in voter fraud.

“The people who are targeted [for voter fraud] live in low-income housing and there is a sense that they are a lot less likely to ask questions,” said Troy, NY Democratic Committeeman Anthony DeFiglio when he pleaded guilty to voting fraud. “What appears as a huge conspiracy to nonpolitical persons is really a normal political tactic.”¹⁹

“I knew that the actual voters had not voted the ballots or signed the envelopes, but that did not concern me. I am not the ballot police,” said another Troy committeeman convicted of vote fraud. “I have been present when ‘ballots were voted correctly’ by party operatives. Voted correctly is a term used for a forged application or ballot.”²⁰

There are more than three million dead people still on the voter rolls across America, according to a 2009 study by Aristotle International Inc., a technology firm specializing in political campaigns. Another 12.9 million remain on voter lists in areas where they no longer live. In total, about 8.9% of all registered voters fall under the category of “deadwood” voters, a term for voters who should not be eligible to vote in a precinct, according to the study.²¹

State-by-state results of Judicial Watch’s Election Integrity Project yielded 462 counties where the registration rate exceeded 100 percent. Furthermore, 3.5 million more people are registered to vote in the U.S. than are alive among America’s adult citizens.²²

As former U.S. Representative Artur Davis acknowledged, voter fraud is rampant in black districts such as his own former congressional district in Alabama.²³

In 2010, Colorado's Secretary of State reported nearly 12,000 people who registered to vote in that state were not citizens and thus ineligible to vote.²⁴

Blacks deserve a better deal in voting. Having secured the right to vote, blacks deserve to have their vote count.

Project 21 recommends...

- ✓ **Requiring proof of citizenship to register to vote.**
- ✓ **Requiring proof of identity to cast ballots.**
- ✓ **Requiring states to purge election rolls on a regular basis to remove people who are deceased or have moved to other jurisdictions.**
- ✓ **Requiring states to purge election rolls of registered voters who have not cast ballots in six years.**
- ✓ **Prohibiting the practice of mailing ballots to those who have not requested them.**
- ✓ **Prosecuting organizations or individuals systematically targeting black communities for voter fraud.**

Replacing Higher Education Policies That Set Blacks Up to Fail With Ones That Help Them Succeed:

The failure of K-12 school systems in preparing black students for college is compounded further by college admissions and support practices that set black students up to fail.

Colleges are admitting many black students who are unprepared for rigorous college environments. They're often accepted with lower SAT and ACT scores, fewer AP course credits and lower (or inflated) high school GPAs than their counterparts at the same school.

At the same time, colleges are failing to provide black students with the individualized support they need to overcome the deficiencies of their K-12 educations to give them their best chance of success.

This failure is reflected in the statistics for six-year graduation rates.

Just 38% of blacks earn their four-year college degrees after six years. By comparison, 62% of whites, 63.2% of Asians and 45.8% of Hispanics receive their degrees within six years.²⁵

Blacks also have a more difficult time affording college – another reason many drop out. A 2014 Gallup survey found that 50% of black graduates had student debt in excess of \$25,000 (compared with 34% of whites).

Many black students who drop out of college end up deep in debt. Dropping out not only diminishes their future employment potential but can also have life-long impact on their sense of self-worth.

Blacks deserve a better deal in higher education. They deserve policies that set them up for success.

Project 21 recommends...

- ✓ **Incentivizing schools to provide black students the support they need by requiring schools to meet minimum graduation rate standards to qualify for federal financial aid programs.** A minimum six-year graduation rate should initially be set at 60% for the general student population, and no less than 15 percentage points lower for minority students. The graduation rate gap between minority students and the rest of the student population should gradually be phased out.
- ✓ **Preventing federal student financial aid programs from fueling tuition inflation.** By one estimate, colleges increase the “sticker price” of tuition by 65 cents for every additional dollar in subsidized financial loans and 55 cents for every additional dollar in Pell grants.²⁶ The inflationary effects of federal student financial aid programs can be limited by limiting the overall amount of student financial aid – both grants and loans – students are allowed to receive and limiting the price colleges may charge for tuition to be eligible for federal financial aid programs. According to the College Board, the average tuition and fees per year at a four-year public university for in-state students was \$9,970 and \$25,620 for out-of-state students in 2017. The average cost of room and board was \$10,800 for public schools and \$12,210 for private schools.²⁷ Capping federal assistance at \$22,000 per year per student and limiting student financial aid eligibility to institutions with published tuition and fees of \$25,000 or less would be reasonable. These institutions would also be required to meet minimum graduation rates in order to qualify.
- ✓ **Providing additional funding to improve infrastructure, renovate and update Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) by reprogramming existing funding for colleges – provided the HBCUs commit to meeting the same minimum graduation standards required of all colleges receiving federal financial aid.**
- ✓ **Ending policies that encourage segregation on college and university campuses.** In keeping with the color-blind principles articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr., schools receiving federal funding should no longer operate separate housing, recreation facilities or student centers on the basis of race.

Improving Public Safety and Community-Police Relations:

Improving neighborhood safety and protecting businesses located in black communities is critically important to improving the quality of life for blacks. But strained relations between law enforcement and black communities has made this difficult.

In Baltimore, for example, homicides soared in the wake of criticism of the Baltimore police department due to the police custody death of Freddie Gray.

In 2017, there were more than 300 murders in the city. Many residents believe the higher homicide rate was due to a police decision to try to ease tensions by reducing patrols.²⁸

There are more than 900,000 sworn police officers nationwide, many of whom put their lives on the line every day. In 2017, 128 officers lost their lives in the line of duty.²⁹

Despite this sacrifice, black community trust in police departments has diminished significantly following a series of black fatalities involving police officers. Some of these fatalities occurred while police were enforcing relatively minor infractions.

New Yorker Eric Garner, for example, died from a chokehold as police were trying to arrest him for illegally selling untaxed cigarettes.³⁰ South Carolinian Walter Scott was shot to death after being pulled over by an officer for a broken tail light.³¹

Black communities deserve a better deal in community safety.

Improving the relationship between police departments and black communities will require reducing the responsibilities of police departments – most of which are overstretched – so that they can focus on more serious crimes and avoid involving themselves in minor infractions.

It will also require more opportunities for police and communities to interact outside of ordinary law-enforcement activities, to build relations and foster greater trust.

Project 21 recommends...

- ✓ **Getting police departments out of the regulation business.** Police should not be used to shut down children’s lemonade stands, enforce outdoor smoking bans, issue parking citations, police people’s sugary beverage consumption, issue citations to restaurants failing to publish calorie counts, arrest waiters offering straws without being asked (as proposed in California) or issue minor traffic citations. These activities not only distract police departments from more important duties but increase the chances that minor infractions can escalate into major altercations.
- ✓ **Disarming federal agencies that do not have a direct role in law enforcement and reprogramming those funds to local police departments to improve community relations.** More than 80 federal agencies currently employ armed agents. Some of these, such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Secret Service are sensible, but others are not. The Department of Education, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, IRS, Tennessee Valley Authority, Department of Agriculture and even the Railroad Retirement Board have armed agents. In 2011, at 6 a.m., Department of Education agents broke down the door of Kenneth Wright – a black resident of Stockton, California – whose estranged wife was under investigation for federal financial aid fraud. One neighbor reported: “They all had guns. They dragged him out in his boxer shorts, threw him to the ground and handcuffed

him.”³² In December 2017, agents with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, IRS and FBI raided Cleveland City Hall after business hours to seize documents related to two construction firms.³³ With no evidence that either Mr. Wright or the Cleveland City Hall were dangerous, it is unclear why officials didn’t simply knock on their doors during regular hours.

- ✓ **Taking aggressive steps to stop SWATting – prank reports of imminent danger, often claiming a home invasion or hostages – that are designed to trick dispatchers into deploying SWAT teams.** A 2017 SWATting incident resulted in the death of Andrew Finch of Wichita, Kansas. The man responsible for the call to police lived almost 1,400 miles away, in Los Angeles, California.³⁴ Penalties for making false reports should be significantly increased, especially for those resulting in serious injury; more resources should be made available for technologies that detect SWATting and greater special training should be provided to dispatchers and responding officers on SWATting. SWATting not only endangers the public but threatens to seriously damage to police and community relations.
- ✓ **Increasing the use of body cameras to increase transparency and build trust in police.**
- ✓ **Lifting restrictions on civilian gun ownership and giving police departments responsibilities responsibility for gun safety training as a means of building bonds between communities and police departments.**
- ✓ **Encouraging churches to promote stronger police-community relations by sponsoring events such as “First Responder Sundays,” with police/fire/rescue-themed sermons and where officers are encouraged to wear their uniforms.**
- ✓ **Providing special training for law enforcement in identifying and responding to people with autism, Alzheimer’s disease and other developmental and mental disabilities.** Because those with disabilities can respond in unpredictable ways, they are at increased risk of being injured in encounters with law enforcement. For example, a North Miami police officer shot at a 23-year-old black autistic man he believed was attempting to fire a gun in 2016. The man was not brandishing a gun, but was instead holding a toy truck. The policeman missed the man but hit his therapist. The incident sparked widespread protest of police treatment of black citizens.³⁵
- ✓ **Establishing a Presidential Media for Exemplary Law Enforcement – with nominations coming from communities and vetted by the White House – to recognize police officers for exceptional acts of kindness, compassion and service who have strengthened the bonds between their departments and the communities they serve.**

Ending Black Household Subsidization of Non-Citizens

The influx of millions of people into our country illegally has strained public services and placed a disproportionate burden on black communities.

In education, black students are more likely to suffer the consequences of expanding class sizes to accommodate immigrants than are white students.

According to a 2017 report by the Center for Immigration Studies, 23% of students in public schools today are from immigrant households. That represents a more than four-fold increase from 1980, when they represented just 7% of the student population.³⁶

White students are less likely to feel the effects of this because they are less likely to attend public schools and because whites who do attend public schools are significantly less likely to attend schools serving immigrant populations.

While just under 50% of students enrolled in public schools are white and 16% are black, 69% of students enrolled in private schools are white and just 9% black.³⁷

Whites who do attend public schools are less likely to attend schools with large numbers of immigrants – legal or illegal. Close to 82% of white students attend schools where the majority of the student body is also white, while 44% of blacks attended schools where the majority of the student body is also black.³⁸

In 83 of the largest 100 cities, black and Hispanic students attended schools with majority non-white student populations.³⁹

Already-beleaguered public schools are increasingly unable to serve their citizen population due to immigrant surges. This has created a cycle of low education and diminished employment opportunity that is leading to greater antipathy toward our country and free enterprise – the touch stone of the American dream for blacks and whites alike.

Black subsidization of immigrants carries over into other programs as well.

Forty-two percent of immigrants use Medicaid programs versus 23% of non-immigrants and 40% use food programs versus 22% of non-immigrants.⁴⁰

The Kaiser Foundation estimates 39% of such immigrants are uninsured, while the Migration Policy Institute, which analyzes U.S. Census data, estimates as many as 71 percent of undocumented adults do not have insurance.⁴¹

Many illegal immigrants also use hospital and health care facilities in cities and localities without bearing the cost of those services, forcing many blacks in the inner city to compete for needed health care. A 2016 *Wall Street Journal* article noted that 25 counties with large undocumented populations provide some non-emergency health care to these immigrants at an estimated cost of more than \$1 billion each year.⁴²

Illegal immigration costs taxpayers about \$113 billion a year at the federal, state and local level. The bulk of the costs – some \$84 billion – are absorbed by state and local governments.⁴³

State and local governments overwhelmingly fund their efforts through property, sales and income taxes. Black citizens pay more than their share for these services yet, in too many communities, the availability of the very programs and assistance their taxes are supposed to pay for are reduced or unavailable due to illegal residents using them.

Blacks deserve a better deal on immigration. They shouldn't be forced to subsidize people who are not in the United States legally.

Project 21 recommends...

- ✓ **Barring illegal aliens from accessing any public services, except emergency services.**
- ✓ **Terminating federal funding of any social service agency that provides non-emergency services to illegal immigrants.**
- ✓ **Prosecuting providers and recipients who allow scarce federally-funded social services to be used by non-citizens unlawfully in the country.**
- ✓ **Ending states' special programs for assisting unlawful immigrants and redirect those funds to needy citizens.**

Rescinding Regulations That Harm Minorities:

Excessive regulation stifles economic growth and has a disproportionate negative impact on small businesses.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that federal regulation alone costs the U.S. economy up to \$1.9 trillion in lost productivity and added expenses. It estimates that the cost of regulation is 20% greater for firms with 50 or fewer employees – the type of business most commonly owned by black entrepreneurs.⁴⁴

Excessive regulation not only drives up consumer prices and diminishes job opportunities but raises consumer prices and sometimes prevent products from coming to market that save lives.

Blacks deserve a better deal in regulation.

Project 21 recommends...

- ✓ **Requiring that “Minority Impact Assessment” be conducted on every new major federal regulation detailing ALL positive and negative effects of the proposed regulation (impact on job growth, home ownership, wages, consumer prices, etc.); contrasting these impact finding with the impact on the population as a whole; listing one or more alternative approaches that can be taken having less negative impact on minority communities and including a clear determination of whether the regulation would have an overall negative impact on minority communities.**
- ✓ **Reigning in activist agencies pursuing political agendas and endangering black lives in the process: 1.) Stop the Food and Drug Administration from regulating smokeless nicotine products, which are beyond its current legislative mandate and which needlessly puts black lives at risk by denying them access to inexpensive tobacco cessation products; 2.) End the National Institute of Environmental Health**

Sciences ongoing efforts to find something wrong with Bisphenol A – a chemical compound used and determined safe for decades – to ensure the poor have access to products that extend the shelf-life of food; 3.) Lower or rescind Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (CAFE), which make cars less affordable and less safe and 4.) Enact reforms similar to those contained in the “CREATES Act” to reduce name-brand pharmaceutical companies from preventing less-costly generic drugs from being brought to market to give the poor greater access to life-saving and life-improving medications.

Repealing Regressive Federal Excise Taxes:

Federal, state and local excise taxes hurt blacks disproportionately because they require the poor to pay a higher portion of their incomes in taxes.

Excise taxes include gasoline taxes. They also include so-called “sin taxes” that are imposed ostensibly to curb consumption of unhealthy products such as alcohol, sugary beverages and tobacco.

But sin taxes are less about promoting public health than about generating government revenue.

For one thing, they aren’t very effective in reducing demand for unhealthy products. The demand for such products tends to be less sensitive to price changes than other products. This is especially true for those who are addicts.

The United Kingdom’s Adam Smith Institute noted: “Sin taxes are blunt instruments which are more likely to deter moderate users than abusers. Although the price elasticity of alcohol is -0.44, for heavy drinkers it is a more inelastic -.028. The same has been found to be true of heavy smokers and excessive eaters: the people who most need to reduce their consumption are the least responsive to price rises.”⁴⁵

For another, revenue generated from sin taxes are typically used to fund general government programs rather than programs to promote the healthy lifestyles that they were theoretically imposed to promote. For example, just 2% of the \$25.3 billion collected by the U.S. government in tobacco taxes in 2011 was used for smoking cessation programs.

The poor pay the heaviest burden of such taxes.

As a percentage of income, the bottom 10% of wage earners spend four times as much in taxes for cigarettes than the top 10%; the bottom 20% of wage earners spend nearly twice as much in alcohol taxes as the top 20%; and the bottom 20% spend seven times as much in fat taxes as the top 20%.

With most sin tax revenue going into general funds and minorities more likely to consume taxed products in general, this represents a significant wealth transfer from the poor to middle class and wealthy Americans.⁴⁶

Blacks deserve a better deal on taxes...

Project 21 recommends...

- ✓ **Repealing the federal gas tax.**
- ✓ **Repealing alcohol taxes.**
- ✓ **Repealing soda taxes.**
- ✓ **Repealing taxes on fatty foods.**
- ✓ **Repealing the taxes on tobacco.**
- ✓ **Repealing the taxes on non-tobacco nicotine products.**

Reforming the Criminal Justice System:

Law enforcement agencies have become too focused on revenue-generating activities.

These activities have not only hurt minorities disproportionately, but strained relationships between police departments and the communities they serve.

Fines, fees and forfeitures are tools that were intended to help officers fight crime. But because they also provide funding for police departments, they tend to be over-used.

Among the most overused of these tools is civil asset forfeiture. Forfeiture allows officers to seize property that they believe *may* have been involved in a crime. This means the owner of the property need not be convicted of a crime – nor even accused of being involved in a crime – for the property to be taken.⁴⁷

One of the most infamous cases of civil asset forfeiture is that of Tina Bennis, whose car was seized when her husband was caught soliciting a prostitute while he was behind the wheel. Unbelievably, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the forfeiture, making Tina Bennis the victim of betrayal twice: once by her husband and once by the justice system.⁴⁸

The poor and minorities are more likely to be victims of civil asset forfeiture than other population groups.

A study by the Nevada Public Policy Institute of civil forfeiture in Las Vegas found that two-thirds of the assets seized by police in 2016 were concentrated in 12 zip codes that had an average poverty rate of 27% – more than double the poverty rate of the remaining 36 zip codes. These zip codes also have an average non-white population of 42%.⁴⁹

A study by Lucy Parsons Labs of civil forfeitures in Cook County, Illinois showed a similar pattern. Low-income South Side and West Side neighborhoods were more likely to have been targets of asset forfeiture.⁵⁰

The poor and minorities are also being incarcerated at a greater rate due to their inability to pay fees and fines imposed to generate revenue.

By one estimate, 20% of those in local jails are incarcerated because they didn't pay a fine or fee. Those with fine-only misdemeanors, such as traffic violations, have been jailed for failing to pay fines.⁵¹

Blacks deserve a better deal in the criminal justice system.

Project 21 recommends....

- ✓ **Requiring a criminal justice conviction to be obtained before assets are permanently forfeited to government.**
- ✓ **Requiring assets to be returned within 30 days unless charges are filed against the owner.**
- ✓ **Requiring the government to establish a connection between the owner of property and an alleged crime before property can be taken.**
- ✓ **Requiring the government to return property immediately upon failing to obtain a conviction.**
- ✓ **Requiring proceeds from forfeited property to go into general funds instead into the seizing agency's budget.**
- ✓ **Requiring proceeds from fines and fees to go into general funds instead of into the fining agency's budget.**
- ✓ **Reducing the number of revenue-generating activities by prohibiting police from pulling over cars solely for minor traffic infractions such a broken tail lights or failing to wear car restraints.**
- ✓ **Prohibiting the incarceration for fine-only misdemeanor offenses for failure to pay fines except as the last resort.**
- ✓ **Requiring that the ability to pay be one of the factors considered in levying fines and fees.**
- ✓ **Prohibiting authorities from using failure to pay to be used as grounds to deny the means for making payments, such as driver's licenses.**

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All web addresses verified as operational as of March 19, 2018.

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PROJECT 21

Black Leadership Network

Project 21 was established in 1992 to increase the diversity of black opinion represented in the mainstream media by promoting black conservative and libertarian leaders.

Project 21 participants have been quoted, interviewed and published in the media over 40,000 times since the program's inception, including in such outlets as the Fox News Channel, CNN, MSNBC, C-SPAN, PBS, BET, TVOne, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, Westwood One and Rush Limbaugh Show.

Project 21 participants are black leaders in business, politics, the clergy, the media and academia and live all over the United States. They share a common desire to make America a better place for blacks, and all Americans, to live and work. Project 21 members do this in a variety of ways in their own communities, and, through Project 21, by writing opinion editorials for newspapers, participating in public policy discussions on radio and television, by participating in policy panels, by giving speeches before student, business and community groups and by advising policymakers at the national, state and local levels.

