

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Senior Advisors Stephen Benjamin, Neera Tanden and Tom Perez

**Date:** Friday, December 22, 2023

**Re:** The Biden-Harris Agenda Delivered Meaningful Progress to Black and Latino communities in 2023

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From Day One, President Biden and Vice President Harris moved swiftly to break barriers, create opportunities, and ensure wealth creation for disadvantaged communities. When President Biden took office on January 20, 2021, the Black and Latino unemployment rates were 9.2% and 8.5%, respectively. Under President Biden's leadership, unemployment rates among Black and Latino Americans have been cut nearly in half to near record lows for the longest stretch of time in over 50 years, health care coverage has increased by millions among Black and Latino communities, and monthly premiums have decreased. The President passed legislation to lower prescription drug costs for seniors. And business ownership rates for Black and Latino households are at their highest levels on record.

The President and Vice President launched an unprecedented whole-of-government opportunity and equity agenda, which has uplifted Black and Latino hardworking families across the country. Over the last three years, the Biden-Harris Administration has championed equity and advanced equal opportunity for underserved communities through landmark legislation including the American Rescue Plan, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act, as well as through historic executive actions.

Even though our Administration has fought hard to create meaningful change, President Biden and Vice President Harris understand the work is not done. That's why we will continue to focus on lowering costs further, expanding opportunities, and protecting our freedoms. Meanwhile, extreme Congressional Republicans continue to attack freedoms and oppose key policies that provide support to America's most underserved and underrepresented communities. Instead of putting dollars back into those communities, Congressional Republicans would rather cut taxes for the wealthy and big corporations. For example, the childcare tax credit championed by the Biden-Harris administration in 2021 lowered childhood poverty across the country by 40 percent in one year. However, Republicans in Congress refused to support efforts to make this critical tax credit permanent. Instead, they want to repeal President Biden's legislation that lowers the costs of prescription drugs and utility bills. They are focused on attacking the diversity that is our country's strength, and cutting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, and they want to deny economic opportunity and mobility for Black and Latino communities when it comes to higher education, starting a business and supporting workers. They continue their ill-conceived mission to repeal the Affordable Care Act, notwithstanding the fact that under the Biden administration's leadership, record numbers of people are now enrolled in ACA plans.

**As the year comes to an end, we look back at the Administration's record of working to bring down costs, grow our economy, and fight for freedoms, and we will continue our efforts to finish the job of ensuring access to opportunity:**

#### **Improving Health Outcomes for Black and Latino Communities**

- Took on Big Pharma to finally allow Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices – starting with ten of the costliest, most widely used drugs used to treat blood clots, cancers, arthritis, diabetes and more.
- Capped the cost of insulin at \$35 for seniors, made recommended vaccines free, and requiring drug companies to pay rebates to Medicare if they raise prices faster than inflation.

- Passed legislation to cap out-of-pocket prescription drug costs for seniors at \$2,000 – which will save an estimated 19 million seniors \$400 per year.
- Increased Latino enrollment in the Affordable Care Act coverage by 900,000, or 53%, from 2020 to 2022.
- Increased Black enrollment in the Affordable Care Act coverage by 400,000, or 49%, from 2020 to 2022.
- Allocated \$7.6 billion to nearly 1,400 community health centers, which predominantly serve communities of color.
- Made a historic \$1.5 billion investment to grow and diversify the nation’s health care workforce through programs such as the National Health Service Corps.
- Added Spanish text and chat services to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

### **Growing Economic Opportunity for Black and Latino Families**

- Lowered Black and Latino unemployment rate to near record lows for the longest stretch of time in over 50 years.
- Increased Black employment by 2.6 million and Latino employment by 4.2 million.
- Median inflation-adjusted net worth for Black households rose 60% from pre-pandemic levels and median Hispanic net worth rose 47% from pre-pandemic levels.
- Provided a record-breaking \$163 billion in federal procurement opportunities to small businesses, with a historic \$69.9 billion going to small disadvantaged businesses.
- Supported Black and Latino small businesses by increasing access to capital for small disadvantaged businesses, as SBA- backed loans to Black-owned businesses more than doubled since 2020, and a record breaking \$3 billion in SBA loans went to Latino-owned businesses in FY23.
- Increased Black and Latino business ownership rates to their highest levels since records began in 1989.
- Cracked down on hidden junk fees in airline tickets, banking, investment advice, health insurance, and apartment rentals, saving Americans billions of dollars per year.
- Pushed banks to reduce overdraft and bounced check fees, saving consumers more than \$5 billion a year compared to pre-pandemic. This translates into \$150 in annual savings for the 33 million households that pay these fees each year.
- Increased Black and Latino homeownership rates by 1.3% and 3.5% since 2019, narrowing racial homeownership gaps.
- Protected Black and Latino’s access to housing and homeownership, including efforts to advance equity in the home appraisal process and combat housing discrimination by creating PAVE, the Interagency Task Force on Property Appraisal and Valuation Equity.
- Helped over 22 million households save more than \$500 million per month on internet bills.

### **Investing in America**

- Signed the largest infrastructure bill since the Eisenhower Administration, and announced \$400 billion for 40,000 infrastructure projects across 4,500 communities.
- Began reversing decades of infrastructure disinvestment in communities of color, including with \$4 billion to help advance transportation projects in disadvantaged or underserved communities by reconnecting communities that were previously cut off from economic opportunities.
- Began closing the digital divide for Black and Latino families, with funding and a commitment to connect every person in America to reliable, affordable high-speed internet by 2030.

- Made Puerto Rico’s economic recovery and development a priority by providing funding for new infrastructure and clean energy projects and upgrading their transportation.

### **Tackling the Climate Crisis, Protecting the Environment and Advancing Environmental Justice**

- Signed the largest investment in climate action ever— creating 210,000 new clean energy jobs in the last year alone.
- Made the largest investment in tackling legacy pollution in American history, an issue that disproportionately impacts communities of color.
- Invested a historic \$15 billion to replace lead pipes in every community in America, and financed projects that will replace hundreds of thousands of lead pipes.
- Invested billions of dollars through the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure law to help communities cut pollution, combat extreme heat, and reduce energy bills.
- Opened the Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit Program through the Inflation Reduction Act to expand cost-saving clean energy projects in underserved communities.
- Spurred hundreds of billions of dollars in private sector investment - in wind, solar, electric vehicles, and more - through the Inflation Reduction Act to create good-paying, union jobs and help families save an average of \$500 per year on energy costs.
- Protected more than 26 million acres of lands and waters, including Avi Kwa Ame National Monument in Nevada and Castner Range National Monument in El Paso, and expanded access to nature in urban communities.
- Created new national monuments that tell a more complete American story, such as the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument in Illinois and Mississippi.
- Launched the American Climate Corps to mobilize a new, diverse generation of clean energy, conservation, and resilience workers.

### **Protecting Access to Reproductive and Maternal Health Care**

- Took executive action to protect access to women’s health care, including abortion, and contraception in the wake of the Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.
- Signed Executive Orders and a Presidential Memorandum to ensure women – including millions of Black women and Latinas who live in states that have banned abortion – receive the medical care they need in an emergency, such as a miscarriage; defended access to safe and effective medication abortion; strengthened access to contraception; and strengthened privacy protections for patients and doctors.
- Promoted improved Black maternal health outcomes and extended Medicaid postpartum coverage in 42 states plus D.C. and the U.S. Virgin Islands—a response to Vice President Harris’ call to action; Medicaid covers approximately 65% of births for Black mothers.
- Continue to call on Congress to pass legislation restoring the protections of *Roe v. Wade*.

### **Making America Safer from Gun Violence and Strengthening America’s Commitment to Justice**

- Took on the gun lobby and passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the first significant gun violence legislation in 30 years, which includes enhanced background checks for buyers under 21, expanded mental health programs, and funding for states to implement red flag laws that keeping guns away from dangerous people.
- Created the first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, overseen by Vice President Harris, to implement the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, identify new executive actions, expand support for survivors and impacted communities, and strengthen partnerships with states and localities taking action on gun violence prevention.

- Funded the training and hiring of 14,000 school based mental health professionals, a 35% increase nationwide.
- Announced nearly 40 executive actions to keep guns out of dangerous hands and especially dangerous weapons off our streets.
- Took executive action on police reform when Congressional Republicans would not advance the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.
- Pardoned prior federal and D.C. offenses of simple possession of marijuana and committed to reviewing how marijuana is scheduled.
- Awarded \$200 million in dedicated funding for Community Violence Intervention and Prevention programs in the 2022 and 2023 Fiscal Years.
- Countered hateful attempts to rewrite history including the signing of the Emmett Till Antilynching Act and established Juneteenth as a national holiday.
- Issued an Executive Order that put federal policing on the path to becoming the gold standard of effectiveness and accountability by requiring federal law enforcement agencies to:
  - ban chokeholds
  - restrict no-knock warrants
  - mandate the use of body-worn cameras
  - implement stronger use-of-force policies
  - provide de-escalation training
  - submit use-of-force data to the FBI's Use-of-Force Data Collection
  - restrict the transfer of military equipment to local law enforcement agencies
  - and submit officer misconduct records into a new national database
- The national database went live in December 2023, ensuring that records of serious misconduct by federal law enforcement officers are readily available to agencies considering hiring those officers.

### **Making Higher Education More Affordable**

- Approved over \$132 billion in debt cancellation for 3.6 million Americans through a variety of actions – more than any President in history.
- Launched the most affordable repayment plan ever – the SAVE plan – which will cut undergraduate loan payments in half and prevent student loan balances from growing from runaway interest.
- Helped over 700,000 people access Public Service Loan Forgiveness.
- Invested over \$7 billion in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).
- Championed the largest increase to Pell Grants in the last decade – a combined increase of \$900 to the maximum award over the past two years to benefit low-and middle-income students.
- Invested \$15 billion in Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).
- Reestablished the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics and Black Americans.
- Announced nearly \$100 million in two grant programs to expand research infrastructure at HBCUs and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), including HSIs, and to increase completion and retention rates among underserved students.

### **Confirming Highly Qualified Judges**

- Fulfilled promise to nominate highly qualified judges and ensure the nation's courts reflect the diversity of America.

- Appointed the first Black woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.
- Under the President's leadership, the Senate has confirmed a record-breaking number of Black and Latino judges.