HER DREAM DEFERRED 25

A WEEK ON THE STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN

03/23⟶03/28

The African American Policy Forum is honored to announce the 11th annual Her Dream Deferred, a weeklong series on the status of Black women, girls and femmes. This year, join us as we once again lift up the Status of Black women series, share resources from our AAPF archive, highlight various events related to Black women during the week, as we build into a youth summit uplifting issues facing Black youth.

Learn more at www.aapf.org/hdd

HDD2025 Website will launch on Sunday 3/23

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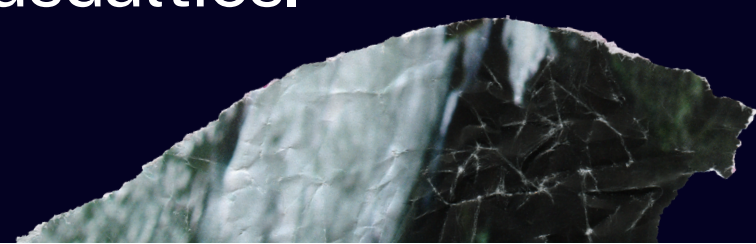


HER DREAM DEFERRED 2025

A CALL TO ACTION FOR BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS

The African American Policy Forum is honored to announce the 11th annual Her Dream Deferred (HDD), a weeklong series on the status of Black women, girls and femmes. This year, HDD's essential call for critical, structural and intersectional interventions to the lived conditions of Black women is more urgent than ever, as Black women, and the policies and laws that have uplifted them most, are being targeted by the government within the context of an empowered conservative movement globally.

We are now experiencing a full-scale assault on the last 60 years of racial and gender progress with a particular impact on Black women. From targeting intersectionality, Black feminism and Black queer studies — the very frameworks we need to understand our current political moment and forge a more democratic future — to the elimination of research into health conditions that disproportionately burden Black women, the so-called assault on "DEI" is just code for erasing Black history, power and voices, with Black women as some of its most prominent casualties.



HDD was conceived in 2015 in response to Black Women's History Week at the end of March, as well as the United Nations' Decade for People of African Descent. This week's worth of activities was born out of a realization that not only were Black women experiencing harm at the intersection of their racial and gender identities, but single-issue activism often left them falling through the cracks of remediation and reform. Since then, HDD has brought necessary attention to issues such as the police killing of Black women, the gendered dimensions of the school-to-prison pipeline and the maternal mortality epidemic facing Black women.

Join us this year as we call attention to the ways Black women are navigating this retrenchment across the metrics of health, employment and politics, amid a growing crisis. We also look forward to highlighting how, despite these challenging conditions, Black women and youth continue to organize for a better future for themselves and their communities. Now more than ever, we need to harness the collective power of the generations of Black women, those before us and those coming up after us, to fight against efforts to defer our dreams for any longer.

Kimberlé Crenshaw
Co-Founder and Executive Director of AAPF



Views from the 92%:
Black Women Reflect on 2024 Election and Road Ahead

Barbara Arnwine - Karen Attiah - Latosha Brown - Melanie Campbell -
Kimberlé Crenshaw - Kirsten West Savali - Fran Phillips-Calhoun

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT *BLACK WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION*

2025 ON THE STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN

01 Despite gaining the right to vote only 60 years ago, Black women are continuing to make strides in political representation. Between May 2016 and May 2020, Black women's representation increased in all offices at a rate of 33 percent, from 2.3 percent to 3.1 percent.

02 Black women continue to be a political powerhouse across all levels of the civic world. On the national level, for instance, Black women are representing 18 states and territories and comprise more than 50% of the women of color in the new Congress. In fact, this is the first Congress with two Black women serving in the Senate concurrently.



03 Despite representing 7.8% of the total US population, only 5.4% of all voting members of Congress are Black women. This gap widens the more we zoom into State-level politics. For instance, no Black women have ever served as governor, and only 5.2% of all state legislators are Black women.

04 Black women remain one of America's most progressive and active voting blocs, with by some estimates, 92% supporting Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential election. Yet despite their crucial role in defending democracy, they continue to feel excluded—only 32% of Black women surveyed believe they are "full and equal citizens" with the same rights and protections afforded to others.

05 This sentiment is only intensified by the widespread misogynoir permeating online spaces. Between August 12-25, 2024, thousands of unique social media posts containing racist and gendered attacks against Kamala Harris circulated across platforms, with a potential reach exceeding 1.6 billion accounts.





Bullseye of the Backlash:
Black Women in Defense of Themselves

Karen Attiah - Jeanell English - Janel George - Katrina Gipson -
Diana Greene - Kirsten West Savali

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT *BLACK WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE*

2025 ON THE STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN

01 Black women face uniquely compounding discrimination in the workplace stemming from their racial and gendered identities. Across various racial, gender, and ethnic groups, Black women are penalized more harshly for failures, while their successes are least likely to be recognized.

02 The career ladder for Black women is often plagued with a broken rung. That is, Black women are one of the least likely groups to receive promotions in comparison to their white counterparts. According to a study by McKinsey, Black women's promotion rates in 2024 reached a four-year low, erasing gains made in 2021 and 2022.



03 Furthermore, Black women are uniquely at risk of workplace sexual harassment. In comparison to white women, Black women are four times more likely to report sexual harassment to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission despite the fact that Black women face greater barriers to reporting.

04 Trump's policies are worsening Black women's economic exclusion. While 61% of Black women view entrepreneurship as a crucial wealth-creation pathway, Trump's tariff policies on imports will disproportionately harm industries where Black women entrepreneurs are concentrated, including beauty, retail, and healthcare.

05 Already, Black women face systemic barriers to career advancement in the Civil Service. For instance, in a study performed on the USDA Forest Service, it was found that while it took white men 4 years to advance a grade, Black women took on average 7 years — the longest of any group — to advance. Trump’s attacks on DEI will only exacerbate this disparity.


IN 10 YEARS, I ENVISION A FUTURE WHERE BLACK WOMEN, GIRLS AND FEMMES....
Are free to live as they choose and feel safe + seen in all spaces.
vy
HER DREAM DEFERRED 2025

IN 10 YEARS, I ENVISION A FUTURE WHERE BLACK WOMEN, GIRLS AND FEMMES....

ARE WHAT PEOPLE ENVISION WHEN THEY HEAR THE WORDS "LEADER" + "CHANGEMAKER"

HER DREAM ~~20~~ 25 DEFERRED



Resisting Erasure:
Black Women Scholars in Defense of Themselves

Kimberlé Crenshaw - Cathy Cohen - Beverly Guy-Sheftall - Evelynn Hammonds

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT *BLACK WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION*

2025 ON THE STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN

01 Black women in higher education are 34% more likely to experience depression due to cumulative racial and gender-based stressors compared to peers without these compounded identities.



02 Project 2025 has led to mass layoffs in DEI roles nationwide; at UT Austin alone, nearly 60 employees, predominantly Black women, were terminated following Texas's anti-DEI Senate Bill 17.



03 Black women represent only 3.7% of tenure-track faculty nationwide, contributing directly to heightened isolation, increased burnout, and vulnerability to discrimination and harassment.

04 Black women graduates carry the highest student loan debt among all demographics, averaging $75,000 per borrower, exacerbating their economic instability and severely restricting wealth-building opportunities.



05 21% of Black women students report experiencing direct discrimination at predominantly white institutions—higher than any other student group—leading to significant psychological distress and barriers to academic success.



When Misogynoir is a Pre–Existing Condition: Black Women's Health Through the Twin Pandemics

Joia Crear-Perry - Kimberlé Crenshaw - Alisha Liggett - Karen Scott - Gail Wyatt

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT *BLACK WOMEN AND HEALTH EQUITY*

2025 ON THE STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN

01 Going into the 2024 election cycle, 54% of Black women said that they had been impacted by racial and gender discrimination in the healthcare system.



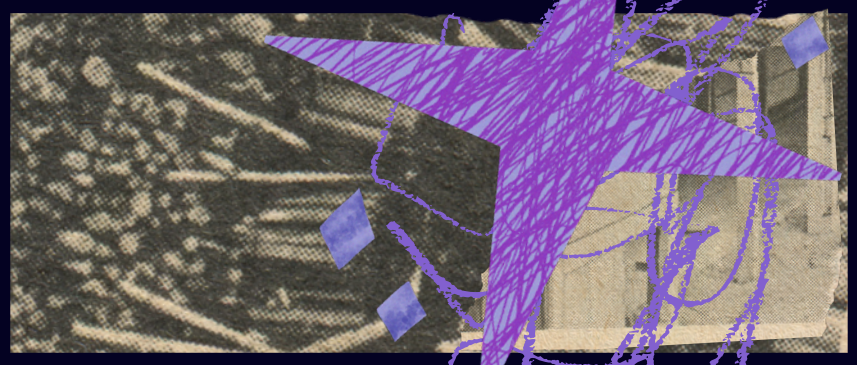
02 The impact of health inequities is especially pronounced for young Black women. According to Pew Research Center, 71% of Black women have experienced “at least one negative interaction with a health care provider.”



03 Racial disparities in maternal health outcomes remain a top concern for Black women. Among Black women aged 18-44, nearly a quarter worry about health and safety during pregnancy and labor because of racial inequities. Moreover, 40% are concerned about the risk of death during pregnancy.

04 Neighborhoods impacted by a history of redlining and disinvestment play a role in high breast cancer rates for Black women. According to Black Women’s Health Study , an aggressive subtype of breast cancer called estrogen receptor-negative (ER–) was found more frequently in Black women who lived in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods.

05 Since the overturning of Roe v. Wade, 60% of Black women live in states with abortion bans and extreme restrictions, negatively impacting access to reproductive care.




AFRICAN AMERICAN POLICY FORUM
N 10 YEARS, I ENVISION A
FUTURE WHERE BLACK WOMEN,
GIRLS AND FEMMES....
are provided & resources & path-
ways towards self-love, support, and
care outside of the imposed constraint
of misogynoir, homophobia, and
transphobia. I envision a world
where we are protected by
those more privileged and by
eachother.
HER
DREAM
DEFERRED

IN 10 YEARS, I ENVISION A FUTURE WHERE BLACK WOMEN, GIRLS AND FEMMES....

are regarded with respect;
are whole, complete and lacking nothing;
are treated with kindness;
are privy to communities of care that foster holistic growth
are loved, are well, are safe
+ given the space to dream without borders!

HER DREAM DEFERRED 2025

I READ BANNED BOOKS



Youth Leadership Summit:
Girls & Women Reading and Leading Through Resistance

Venus Evans-Winters - Kaila Philo - Ibi Zoboi

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT *SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND BLACK GIRLS, FEMMES AND GENDER EXPANSIVE YOUTH*

2025 ON THE STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN

01

In 29 states, Black girls were over 4x more likely to experience out-of-school suspension. Glaringly, the District of Columbia had the highest recorded rate, as Black girls were 20.5x more likely to experience out-of-school suspension than their white counterparts. This reality will only be exacerbated under the Trump administration and Project 2025 policies.

02

Black girls with disabilities received out-of-school suspensions at 1.7x the rate of Black girls without disabilities and 3.6x the rate of White girls with disabilities.

03

A 2016 study found that New York City Schools' alternative disciplinary policies which aimed to reduce suspension only decreased suspension for White and Asian girls, while the suspension rate increased for Black girls.

04

Colorism is a key factor in school discipline. A study found that Black girls with darker skin tone were 2x more likely to be suspended compared to their white counterparts. Darker skinned Black girls were more likely to be perceived as unintelligent, poor, and more aggressive than lighter skinned Black girls.

05

The growing rate of xenophobia in our socio-political landscape does not escape the K-12 education settings. A 2022 study conducted in Florida found that, Black-identifying girls from Caribbean countries experience similar suspension rates compared to their African American counterparts due to both their race and the differences in their ethnic background.

IN 10 YEARS, I ENVISION A FUTURE WHERE BLACK WOMEN, GIRLS AND FEMMES....

HER DREAM DEFERRED 2025