



Supreme Court Impact of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson



Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson

t was an experience that I wasn't sure I would ever see," said Johnson. "I think that it adds a lot more sense of positiveness in this nation when you have a person you can relate to, that can sit there and be a part of major decisions that affects every life in this nation. It is very important."

CONTENTS

Sections

COVER STORY

6 Ketanji Brown Jackson -History Is Made

INSIDE

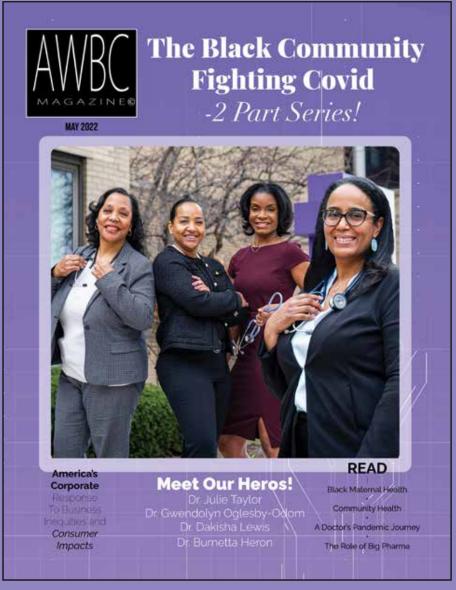
26 "The Dr. Airies Project" by Dr. Aires Davis - PHD

28 Robert Matthews Exelon Interview

32 Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters

44 Women's Health

Coming In May!



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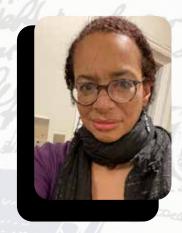
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COMING IN MAY!!



Designing

Diversity... How?

America's Corporate

Response
To Business
Inequities and

Consumer Impacts "You Be

Tudge"

READ

Has Corporate America Really Become Inclusive?

> When Women Build Businesses

"Health In A Handbag"

The Remnants of Communities Past



Representation Matters

By Delmarie Cobb

hile Jackson's elevation to the high court won't change the conservative

tilt of the court, it offers another perspective. It also gives African Americans a person whose intellect and brilliance is similar to the larger than life Thurgood Marshall--the first Black Supreme Court Justice.

In a CNN post, Legal Analyst Joan Biskupic explains:

"Just look at the difference in the ages. Stephen Breyer, who's retiring at age 83, is 32 years older than her. She's going to bring some fresh thoughts, some fresh blood, if not a different ideology than his," said Biskupic.

"She also has this very distinctive experience as a former trial judge and a former federal public defender. So, a different attitude around the justice's private table," she added.

The legal analyst said she's reminded in these instances of something Chief Justice John Roberts has said.

"A fresh justice brings an array of fresh thoughts about how the operations behind the scenes, about cases and that just changes everyone to maybe alter his or her lens a little bit," the analyst said.

Biskupic also referenced comments made by former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor when Thurgood Marshall was appointed as the first Black justice in 1967.

"That his special perspective and his ability to tell stories around the private conference table really got them thinking in different ways. He might not have changed votes, but he at least changed the discussion. So, I think all of those things... will essentially affect and bring us a new Supreme Court," she added.

Today's confirmation vote is an example of how politics should work—"No permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests." While I may not agree with President Joe Biden on everything, I applaud him for keeping his campaign promise to nominate the first Black woman to the Supreme Court.

Thank you,

Delmarie Cobb Ida's Legacy Committee



"Public confidence in the court is crucial"

etanji Brown Jackson told senators that she hopes her nomination "will bring confidence" and "help inspire people to understand that our courts are like them,

that our judges are like them."

"Ddisapproval of the Supreme Court has increased over the years with 44% giving an unfavorable rating," Axios' Stef W. Kight wrote last month, citing a Pew Research Center survey.

The percentage of Americans who view the court favorably fell from 69% in August 2019 to 54% in January. Democrats' approval rating of the court has fallen in recent years, due in part to former President Trump naming three judges to the bench and solidifying a conservative majority.

What she's saying: "Public confidence in the court is crucial. As has been said here earlier, the court doesn't have anything else. That is the key to our legitimacy in our democratic system," Jackson said, following a question from Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) on the matter.

"I am honored to accept the president's nomination in part because I know it means so much to so many people. It means a lot to me. I am here standing on the shoulders of generations of Americans who never had anything close to this kind of opportunity."

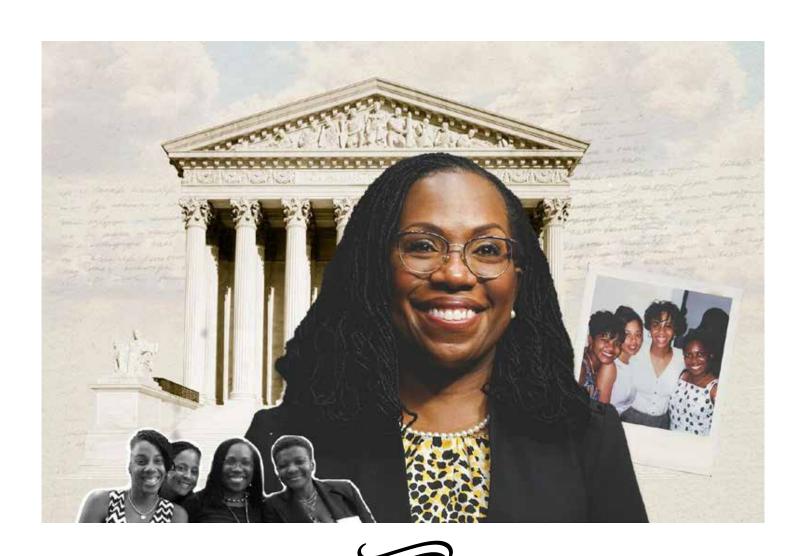
"This nomination, against that backdrop, is significant to a lot of people. And I hope that it will bring confidence. It will help inspire people to understand that our courts are like them, that our judges are like them, doing the work, being a part of our government."

Her Past

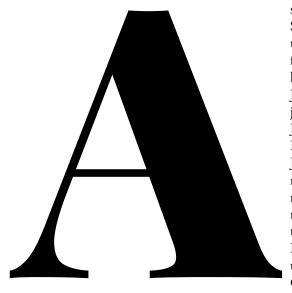


Her Present





More support than oppose Jackson's Supreme Court nomination



s the U.S. Senate is set to begin confirmation hearings for Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, President Joe Biden's nominee to replace the retiring Justice Stephen Breyer on the Supreme Court, 44% of the public

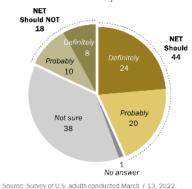
says the Senate should definitely (24%) or probably (20%) confirm Jackson, while just 18% say she should not be confirmed. Nearly four-in-ten (38%) say they are unsure.

Early public reactions to Jackson's nomination are similar to views of past nominees, which have tended to elicit more support than opposition, with relatively large shares not offering an opinion.

While roughly seven-inten U.S. adults (72%) say they have heard about the nomination, just 19% have heard "a lot" and 28% have heard "nothing at all," according to a Pew PEW RESEARCH CENTER Research Center survey

By more than two-to-one, Americans favor Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination to the Supreme Court

% who say the Senate ____ confirm Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination to the Supreme Court



conducted March 7-13 among 10,441 U.S. adults on the Center's American Trends Panel.

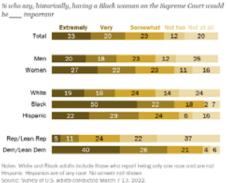
If confirmed, Jackson would be the third Black person and the first Black woman to serve as a Supreme Court justice. About four-in-ten Americans say having a Black woman on the Supreme Court would be extremely (23%) or very historically important (20%), while an additional 23% say this would be somewhat important. About a third say this would be not too (12%) or not at all important historically (20%).

Black adults are significantly more likely than White and Hispanic adults to say having a Black woman on the court would be historically important, with 72% saying it would be extremely or very important, including half who say it would be extremely important.

By comparison, 51% of Hispanic adults and 37% of White adults hold the view that having a Black woman on the Supreme Court would be extremely or very historically important.

likely than men to say the confirmation of a Black woman to the Supreme Court would be historically important. About half of women (48%) say this would be extremely or very important, compared with 38% of men.

Women are also more Black adults, women, Democrats more likely to say having a Black woman on the Supreme Court would be historically important



Partisans hold significantly different

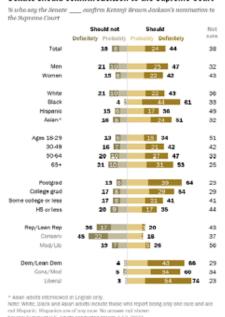
views on whether having a Black woman on the Supreme Court would be historically important.

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Nearly seven-in-ten Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (68%) say it would be extremely (40%) or very historically important (28%) for a Black woman to be on the Supreme Court. By contrast, 15% of Republicans and GOP leaners hold this view. The majority of Republicans say this would be not too (22%) or not at all (37%) historically important. Roughly two-in-ten Democrats (21%) and Republicans (24%) say it would be somewhat historically important.

While there is more support than opposition to Jackson's nomination across racial and ethnic groups, Black adults are particularly likely to say the Senate should confirm Jackson to the Court: 61% say she should definitely or probably be confirmed, with 44% saying she should definitely be confirmed – just 4% say she should not be confirmed. Smaller shares of Asian (51%), White (43%) and Hispanic (36%) adults say the Senate should confirm Jackson.

Partisan and demographic gaps over whether the Senate should confirm Jackson to the Supreme Court



Roughly half of Hispanic adults (49%) say they are not sure whether the Senate should or should not confirm Jackson to the Court – 42% of this group says they have heard nothing at all about the nomination, a larger share than among other racial and ethnic groups.

While the balance of support for Jackson's nomination is similar across age groups, younger adults are more likely to say they are not sure.

As with past Supreme Court nominations, there is a wide partisan gap over whether the Supreme Court should confirm Jackson. Today, two-thirds of Democrats support her confirmation, while just 4% say they do not. About three-in-ten Democrats say they are unsure.

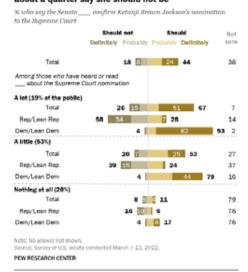
While Republicans are more likely to say the Senate should not confirm Jackson than to say that it should (36% vs. 20%), they are also substantially more likely than Democrats to say they are unsure about whether the Senate should confirm Jackson to the Court (43% vs. 29% of Democrats). Among Republicans who express a view, conservative Republicans are more than twice as likely to oppose rather than support Jackson's confirmation (45% say the Senate should not confirm her, 18% say it should). Moderate and liberal Republicans are more divided: 26% say Jackson should be confirmed, while 19% say she should not be.

Those who have heard a lot about the nomination are far more likely than others to offer an opinion: Overall, 67% of this group says Jackson should be confirmed, while 26% say she should not be, and just 7% of say they are not sure.

About nine-in-ten Democrats (93%) who have heard a lot about the nomination (representing about 21% of all Democrats) say the Senate should confirm her as a justice, including 82% who say they should definitely confirm her.

Among Republicans who have heard a lot about the nomination (about 17% of all

Among those who've heard a lot about Jackson's nomination, two-thirds say she should be confirmed; about a quarter say she should not be



Republicans), 58% say she should not be confirmed by the Senate. About three-inten Republicans who say they have heard a lot about her nomination (28%) say the Senate should probably or definitely confirm Jackson to the role of Supreme Court justice.

Assessments of Jackson's readiness for the role on the high court differ only modestly by gender, race and ethnicity, and across other demographic groups.

While majorities of both Republicans (54%) and Democrats (61%) say she is about as qualified as other candidates, there are still some differences by partisan-

Three-in-ten Democrats say Jackson is more qualified for the Supreme Court than other recent nominees, including 39% of liberal Democrats and 23% of conservative and moderate Democrats.

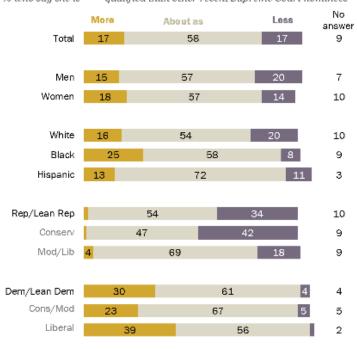
By contrast, a third of Republicans say Jackson is less qualified than other recent candidates - a view held by 42% of conservative Republicans and 18% of moderate and liberal Republicans.

Still, even among those who have heard a lot about the nomination, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say they are not sure whether the Senate should or should not confirm Jackson (14% vs. 2%).

About six-in-ten U.S. adults think Jackson is about as qualified as other recent Supreme Court justice nominees, while 17% say she is more qualified and an identical share say she is less qualified than other recent nominees.

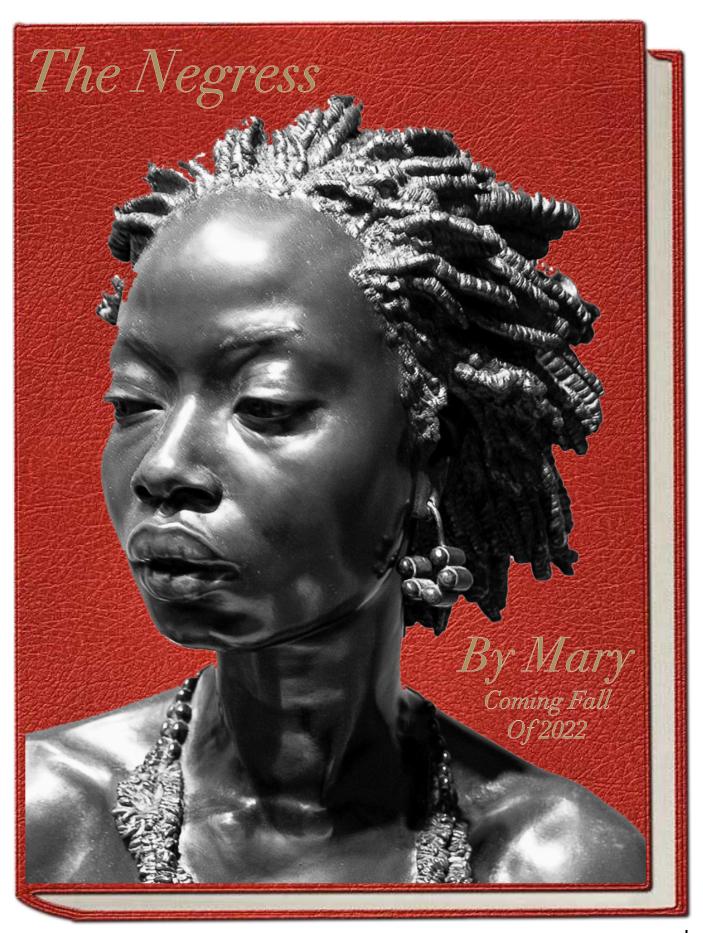
Majorities in both parties view Jackson as about as qualified other recent Supreme Court nominees

Thinking about Ketanji Brown Jackson's professional experience, % who say she is qualified than other recent Supreme Court nominees



Notes: While and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic Hispanics are of any race. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7 13, 2022.

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Americans Broadly Want The Senate To Confirm Ketanji Brown Jackson To The Supreme Court

he confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson are now over.

And they were incredibly ugly.

In advance of the hearings, my colleague Amelia Thomson-DeVeaux wrote that Jackson's identity as a Black woman as well as her professional background as a former public defender meant that it was likely she'd be subjected to more questions regarding her qualifications than another nominee would be. And sure enough, Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee wasted little time grilling Jackson — often in ways that suggested women and people of color are less qualified than their white counterparts, or that their race makes them inherently biased against white people.

There were attacks both inside — and outside — of the hearings that tried to paint Jackson as a supporter of critical race theory, a legal framework for understanding systemic racism that the GOP has co-opted as a catch-all term for anything related to race.

Her judicial record in cases involving child pornography was also heavily scrutinized, even though there is no evidence that she was uncommonly soft in her sentences.

We don't know yet whether the hearings will dramatically alter Americans' support of Jackson, but at this point, many Americans support her confirmation. Per a March 1-18 poll from Gallup, 58 percent of Americans said the Senate should vote to confirm Jackson, versus 30 percent who thought she should not be confirmed and 12 percent who had no opinion. Notably, that's the second-highest level of support that Gallup has recorded for a Supreme Court nominee dating back to Robert Bork's nomination in 1987.1 Only Chief Justice John Roberts scored higher than Jackson, and only slightly higher — 59 percent of Americans said they supported his nomination in 2005. For weeks now, anywhere from a plurality to a majority of Americans have said that they support confirming Jackson. No polls have been conducted entirely after the start of the confirmation hearings — but nine different polls have found plurality support for Jackson's confirmation since Jackson was announced as the nominee2 and five more have found majority support for it.

Many Americans support Ketanji Brown Jackson's confirmation

Share of Americans or registered voters who say they support, oppose or have no opinion on the confirmation of Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court But while Jackson has enjoyed majority support in many polls, there's likely a ceiling to her approval since political polarization has made the process of selecting Supreme Court justices more contentious.

Support for Jackson's nomination among Democrats has been particularly high, sometimes clocking upward 70 percent in the polls we looked at, but Republicans' views have been much more divided. For instance, Morning Consult/Politico found in late February that 25 percent of Republicans thought that the Senate should confirm Jackson, while 30 percent opposed her nomination. But across three subsequent polls in March, support was lower among Republicans and opposition was higher, hovering in the mid-to-high 30s. Polls from The Economist/YouGov, dating from Feb. 26-March 1 and March 19-22, found a similar trend — but with greater levels of opposition among Republicans. In the earlier poll, 45 percent opposed confirming Jackson, but this figure grew to 52 percent in the later poll.

ecent Supreme Court nominees haven't received the same level of support they once did from Congress, either. Of the seven justices confirmed since Stephen Breyer, only Roberts has received more than 69 percent of the Senate voting in favor of confirmation. He is also the only justice among those seven to have earned the backing of a majority of the other party's senators.

Filling Supreme Court Seats Has Become More Contentious

Share of yes votes for Supreme Court nominees, since 1789

Three Republican senators backed Jackson's nomination to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit last year, but as evidenced by the tenor of this week's hearings, there's little chance Jackson garners more — or even the same level of — Republican support this time around.

If confirmed, Jackson would be the first Black female Supreme Court justice, and as such, many Americans think her nomination is historic.

A March 7-13 poll from the Pew Research Center found that 66 percent of Americans thought Jackson's nomination was at least somewhat important. And a March 10-14 poll from Monmouth University found that 53 percent of Americans approved of Biden prioritizing the nomination of a Black woman. But one Associated Press/ NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll from Feb. 18-21, which predates Biden's nomination of Jackson, found lower levels of support for his promise to appoint a Black woman.

Fifty-two percent of Americans said it was at least somewhat important to them that a Black woman become a Supreme Court justice, while 48 percent said it was not very or not at all important to them.

For Black Americans, Jackson's nomination has been especially important. For instance, that Pew survey found that 90 percent of Black adults said having a Black woman on the Supreme Court would be at least somewhat important to them, compared with 66 percent of adults overall. And even though the AP/NORC poll found that a smaller share of Americans thought it was important a Black woman be nominated to the court, 85 percent of Black Americans said in that poll that it was at least somewhat important to them. But as my colleague Alex Samuels wrote earlier this week, this is likely not enough to substantially improve Black voter turnout or Democrats' prospects in the upcoming midterm elections.

With the hearings now over, we now wait for Jackson's confirmation vote. Given that the Senate almost surely won't vote within the next week, there's still plenty of time for public opinion to change around Jackson, especially as clips from the hearings make the rounds on social

Has Become More Contentious

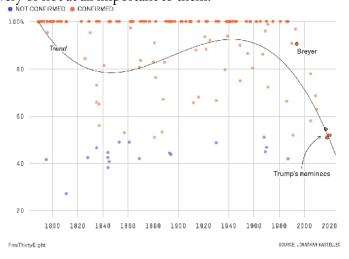
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With the hearings now over, we now wait for Jackson's confirmation vote. Given that the Senate almost surely won't vote within the next week, there's still plenty of time for public opinion to change around Jackson, especially as clips from the hearings make the rounds on social media and television. At this point, though, Jackson still benefits from having the support of many Americans, and opposition to her nomination doesn't seem to exceed typical partisan divides. With a Democratic-controlled Senate, that might be all that's needed for her ascension to the nation's highest court.

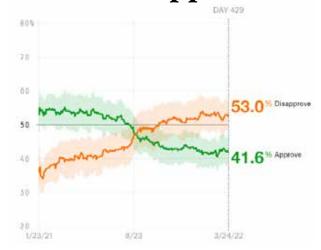
Other **Polling**

- Generation Z is the least religious generation yet, according to recently published data from the December 2021 American National Family Life Survey from the American Enterprise Institute's Survey Center on American Life. Thirty-four percent of Generation Z (those between the ages of 18 and 24) reported being religiously unaffiliated, compared with just 9 percent of those in the Silent Generation (those between the ages of 76 and 93). The survey's authors attribute Gen Z's lack of religious affiliation to less religious participation during their formative years, finding that compared with older generations, Gen Z was less likely to have attended religious services or educational programs, or to have prayed with their family or read religious texts while growing up.
- A greater share of Gen-Z Americans also said they were never religious (15 percent, compared with 10 percent of 25- to 40-year-olds, 6 percent of 41- to 56-year-olds, 3 percent of 57- to 75-year-olds, and zero percent of 76- to 93-year-olds).
- Americans largely plan to tune out the 94th Academy Awards, according to a March 4-7 poll from YouGov. Forty-nine percent said they were not interested at all in watching the Oscars, while just 9 percent said they were very interested.

- That's in line with a March 15-18 poll from Morning Consult/Politico, where 67 percent of Americans said they were probably or definitely not going to watch. Of the best-picture nominees, YouGov found that "Dune" had the highest share of Americans who said they'd watched it — 26 percent — followed by "West Side Story" (25 percent) and "Don't Look Up" (24 percent). And Morning Consult/Politico found that 22 percent had watched some or all of "Don't Look Up," versus 20 percent for "Dune" and 16 percent for "West Side Story." (For more on what Americans think about the movies, you can check out our latest "The United Stats of America" episode here.)
- What schools teach is a hot-button issue in the U.S., and although 71 percent of Americans said in a March 15-20 poll from Grinnell College/Selzer & Company that they trusted schools in their district to ensure library books are appropriate, only 49 percent said they trusted their local district when it came to teaching about racism. (Forty-three percent said they didn't trust their district on teaching racism, compared with the 22 percent who said the same of their district and its library books.) Furthermore, when asked about what children were being taught in public schools, 64 percent said that schools were on the wrong track, while just 24 percent said schools were heading in the right direction.
- In the wake of high gas prices brought on by inflation and sanctions on Russia, a majority of likely voters think the U.S. should now increase domestic production of oil and gas. According to a March 18-21 poll from Echelon Insights, a Republican firm, 69 percent said that the U.S. should increase domestic production in response to banning imports of Russian oil, and 62 percent said that increasing production domestically was the best way to deal with rising gas prices. When asked about specific policies, 42 percent supported approving the Keystone XL pipeline and 41 percent supported expanding oil drilling on federal lands.
- A majority of American men have invested at least something in cryptocurrencies, according to a March 14-20 poll from The Harris Poll

To be sure, 49 percent of men surveyed said they'd invested nothing at all in cryptocurrencies, versus 51 percent who'd invested at least some, but that stands in stark contrast with American women. Nearly three-quarters of women (72 percent) have zero crypto investments, while 28 percent have invested at least some.

Biden Approval

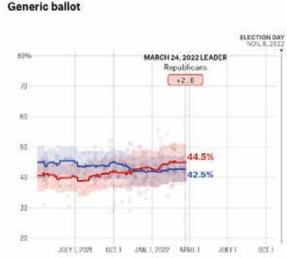


According to Five Thirty Eight's presidential approval tracker, 4 41.6 percent of Americans approve of the job Biden is doing as president, while 53.0 percent disapprove (a net approval rating of -11.4 points). At this time last week, 42.2 percent approved and 52.9 percent disapproved (a net approval rating of -10.7 points). One month ago, Biden had an approval rating of 42.1 percent and a disapproval rating of 52.7 percent, for a net approval rating of -10.6 points.

Generic Ballot

In our average of polls of the generic congressional ballot,5 Republicans currently lead by 2.0 percentage points (44.5 percent to 42.5 percent). A week ago, Republicans led Democrats by 2.2 points (44.8 percent to 42.7 percent). At this time last month, voters preferred Repub-

licans by 2.5 points (45.0)percent to 42.5 percent).



Michelle Obama



"I was so moved to see Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson confirmed this afternoon. Like so many of you, I can't help but feel a sense of pride—a sense of joy—to know that this deserving, accomplished Black woman will help chart our nation's course. So many women of color now have a new role model to look up to as she serves on the highest court of the land. Thank you, Justice Jackson, for giving Black girls and women everywhere—including my daughters—a new dream to dream, a new path to forge, and a future we can all be hopeful for."

Vice President Kamala Harris



"Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson made history today. Judge Jackson is a hero to so many Americans across our country. She will be the first Black woman on the highest court in the land."



The Importance of Ketanji Brown Jackson

State Senator Mattie Hunter, 3rd District Majority Caucus Chair

Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination came between the end of Black History Month and the beginning of Women's History Month, and it continues to be such an important moment for

country. Her confirmation as a Supreme Court Justice made history, as she is the first Black woman to sit on the highest court in the nation.

More than that, she will be the first justice to have served as a public defender. While this is exciting, the representation she brings is long overdue. It's important for someone who has seen the other side of the law, someone who has had to defend the most vulnerable in our population, to be sitting in the Supreme Court.

Further, Justice Jackson is by far the most qualified judge to ever sit on the court. She graduated cum laude from Harvard Law School. On top of being a public defender, she has also worked as a reporter and researcher for TIME magazine, and served as vice chair and commissioner of the U.S. Sentencing Commission. She also sat on Washington DC's federal appellate court.

Black women were once considered the most neglected, disrespected demographic in America, and now, that is finally beginning to change. I am so glad to see Black women rising to greater positions of power, because we've always been qualified but have rarely been given the opportunity.

Diversity and inclusion are important in every set-

ting. She will bring the number of women on the panel of justices to four, another first in American history.

Representation matters, and many aspects of Justice Jackson's identity have not been seen in this light before. From her race, to her work background, even to her name and the way she wears her hair – she is a revolution. For anyone who has been discriminated against because of their locs, their darker skin, or their ethnic name, this is a win.

For every Black woman that has felt unseen, unheard and undervalued, this is a sign that things are changing. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson is a living example of our ancestor's wildest dream. I am so proud of all that she has accomplished thus far. I was excited to attend her first confirmation hearing and I'm confident that she will continue to make us proud and inspire us as she serves on the U.S. Supreme Court.



U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)

Today issued the following statement after meeting with Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, President Biden's nominee to the Supreme Court.

"Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson is one of the most impressive individuals nominated to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States in our nation's history and I was honored to meet with her today. Her extensive background and wealth of experience is why the U.S. Senate voted three times to confirm her to previous appointments, most recently with a bipartisan majority—that I was proud to join—confirming Judge Jackson to

serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

"Throughout her confirmation hearings this week, I was disappointed to watch Republican Senators continuously mischaracterize her record, but was pleased to see Judge Jackson effectively rebut those critiques and answer the questions posed to her in a direct, thoughtful and thorough manner.

"I hope Judge Jackson makes history by becoming the first-ever Black woman to serve on the highest court—and the first Justice with experience serving as a federal public defender—which provides her an important perspective that has been ignored for far too long in

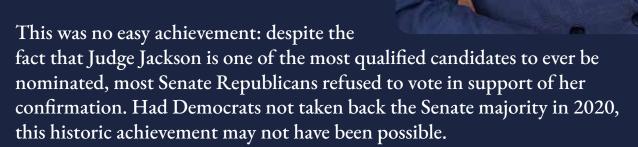
this country. She'll have my vote."





Communications,

Today, history has been made: Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson was just confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court, making her the first Black woman on the highest court of the land.



It goes to show why elections matter, and with so many critical issues like abortion access, LGBTQ rights, and voting rights being decided by the courts, it's a reminder why courts matter too.

While we celebrate this historic appointment to the federal Supreme Court, we have important seats on Illinois' state Supreme Court up for election this year.

There are two swing seats on the state Supreme Court this November, and it's crucial that we elect Democrats in both.

Rep. Robin Kelly Chair, Democratic Party of Illinois



STATEMENT ON SUPREME COURT JUSTICE KETANJI BROWN JACKSON



Congratulations to Supreme Court Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson! As a black woman, I am so very proud of her accomplishments, excellence, integrity and grace. Judge Jackson stands on the shoulders of trailblazers like Fannie Lou Hamer, Toni Morrison, Shirley Chisholm, Kamala Harris and so many others. My hope is that little black girls, black women and all women understand and believe they too can break barriers and realize their dreams. Judge Jackson will make a tremendous impact on the Court. Dr. Martin Luther King noted, "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Judge Jackson's appointment will solidify the pathway towards social justice and transformative change.

- Dr. Gloria J. Gibson, First Black Woman President, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois



Dr. Jacqueline Samuel

She is the First but We Have to Make Sure She is Not the Last

Village Rule #3: "We Otta' Hush"

ustice Ketanji Brown Jackson's parents valued education and demonstrated it by creating space for mentoring and role modeling. When she gave her opening statement, she spoke about her parents being teachers. She mentioned her earliest memory watching her father study with his stack of law books on the kitchen table while she sat at the table with him and her coloring books. Such a simple action of a meaningful moment that was part catalyst of her historical success. When we watched her maintain her composure through the most dehumanizing questions witnessed around the world, I wondered what Black youth were thinking. I could only hope that it was a learning moment in contrast to the slap heard across the world during the Oscars. Both situations were teachable moments but we have to be conscious of public messages that we cannot control. We have to make sure that we continuously deliver positive messages from the Village. It made me think about Hush Harbor. A Hush Harbor is a space deep in the woods where the enslaved would secretly meet to worship in their own ancestral way or plan their escape to freedom during the antebellum period. What if we use this concept of the Hush Harbor with our youth? Some of our youth do not always have role models present. We as the Village must create spaces of guiding moments whenever we are in the presence of youth. Even by quoting Justice Jackson's parents, acknowledging that there are barriers in life but if you work hard and believe in yourself, you can do anything or be anything you want to be. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson might be the first Black female Supreme Court justice but the Village has to make sure she is not our last.



Statement from Judith Browne Dianis, Executive Director of Advancement Project – National Office, a leading civil rights organization:

"We celebrate the appointment of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court of the United States.

"During her hearings, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson showed strength, intellect, and sound judgment through often racist and misogynistic lines of attack – demonstrating clearly for all Americans that she would be a valuable addition to the Supreme Court. Her confirmation represents a significant leap towards a Supreme Court more reflective of the communities most impacted by the judiciary.

"Not only is Jackson the first Black woman to ever be appointed to the Supreme Court, but she is also the first public defender. The highest Court in the land now will have a firsthand perspective of how the law impacts communities of color—via voting rights, police misconduct, abortion access, housing discrimination, or the criminal legal system, among other issues. This will ultimately benefit all Americans.

"And while Justice Jackson enters the Court in a minority, she will be able to unleash the power of dissent – pointing the way to a better future and serving as the conscience of the Court. With Justice Jackson on the Supreme Court, our courts are better positioned to more effectively confront systemic hurdles that stand in the way of true opportunity and equal justice.

"We are grateful to President Biden for honoring his promise to put a Black woman on the Supreme Court and we welcome Justice Jackson's perspective and expertise in shaping the laws of our country for generations to come."







The Dr. Airies Report

Uplifting Women Entrepreneurs

- Women's Health **Equals Community** Health
- Corporate Diversity... The Realities
 - The Value of Online



Contact: www.workforcEQi.com linkedin.com/in/airiesdavis info@workforcEQi.com drairiesdavis@gmail.com @AiriesDavis

Listen SHEro's

Uplifting black women entrepreneurs is not only vital to our economic and community growth but it is the right thing to do. Why? Black women entrepreneurs face double-negative socio demographic biases of being women and minorities. Likewise, there are disparate equity gaps and access barriers related to capital funding, resources, and mentorship. Research trends in an American Express '2019 State of Women-Owned Businesses' report, designated black women entrepreneurs as the fastest growing demographic in the United States, with nearly 2.7 million business ownerships nationwide. The report further expounds, over four million new jobs and billions in revenue would be added if the revenue of minority women-owned firms matched that of white women-owned businesses.

Black women entrepreneurs are underserved and oftentimes create businesses out of necessity-even using personal resources as start-up capital. Higher-level educational attainment, creation of generational wealth/legacy, desire for supplemental income, and continuously overcoming concrete-ceiling barriers in corporate advancement, are a few factors prompting black women to pursue entrepreneurship. Yet, entrepreneurs of color and women face unique challenges to launch, fund, and sustain their businesses.

Here are two methods to support the unique challenges and uplift the voices of black women entrepreneurs: partnership and mentorship.

Partnership — Many women and minority-owned businesses are certified (W/MBE) as business enterprises with 51 percent ownership and operation by a minority group.

Partnering with black women-owned businesses provide non-minority organizations an opportunity to promote their supplier diversity services to a larger pool of public and private sectors programs. These types of organizational partnerships expose black women entrepreneurs to rare access to advanced resources and capital funding. Partnership access can be a pivotal turning point to the sustainability of a minority owned business.

Mentorship — Mentorship is another method to support and uplift black women entrepreneurs. Gaining direction from experienced business owners can support black women entrepreneurs to launch current initiatives and create future business pathway models. Mentors can also serve as catalysts for constructive advice and guidance, shared tools to measure success, and proven techniques to address business development/growth obstacles.

No matter if you are a minority-owned business or supporter, it is clear that uplifting black women entrepreneurs is not only vital to our economic and community growth but it is the right thing to do!

About

Dr. Airies Davis is an author, educator, talent strategist, executive coach, and entrepreneur. She is the founder of WorkforcEQi, specializing in solving complex multicultural workforce challenges to deliver on emotional intelligence initiatives across industries and audiences. Her passion project is the creation of EtiKID Academy providing character and career education etiquette to underserved populations. She is certified as WBE/MBE owned business. As a newly minted author, Dr. Davis proudly twirls her Wonder Woman lasso for the inaugural Mission Matters: World's Leading Entrepreneur's Reveal Their Top Tips To Success, Women in Business Edition. Her book chapter is entitled Emotionally Intelligent Wonder-Women: Behold Our SHEro Leadership Powers at Work. Notably, she is an AWBC Magazine 2021 Egretha honoree and recipient of the Educational Diversity Impact Award. She is featured in a number of national print and online media publications. Dr. Davis's academic journey includes an earned doctorate from the University of Southern California and a Gies MBA from the University of Illinois in Champaign Urbana.





AWBC: How would you define your current role as Diversity and Inclusion Officer?

RM: The most challenging aspect essentially is to outline and define the strategies and develop programs to execute those strategies. Some I directly oversee, such as Workforce Development, as it relates to addressing economic inequities in communities we serve.

AWBC: How have Scholarships to HBCUs translated into careers and workforce development?

RM: A key aspect is origination and destination, in that those who originate from under-resourced communities, have increased opportunities as HBCU students. Black students across the country have disproportionately high student loans. This has an impact.

AWBC: Let's talk about women in the Exelon organization. How is the design of your Diversity and Inclusion initiative addressing women, moving into leadership roles? Has there been increased numbers?

RM: There has definitely been expansion. Our priorities around representation have made us a better company, that is focused on diversity and more creative customer solutions. In Chicago Michelle Blaise is Sr. VP for tech services as lead project management. There is also Melissa Washington Sr. VP Chief Customer Officer, who is ensuring we communicate with customers from an equity position, which includes partnering with communities regarding services provided. Vernice Lewis is the lead diverse business empowerment leader, while Kesha Parker leads workforce development. These women lead in these spaces, and 25% of our organizations is women lead, with 30% women executives.

AWBC: I'm glad you mentioned female vendors. Let's talk numbers. Are these numbers small and are they increasing?

RM: In 2021 Exelon spent 43 million dollars which was a 10% increase from 2020. Also, in 2021 we launched Exelon Foundation to grow black business, based upon the disproportionate impact against them, resulting from the pandemic. We focused on financial strategies, trends, and indicators which address the barriers faced by many female owned companies. It's not only about spending, but also, expanding capacity to allow businesses to do more regarding larger projects.

Also, we strategize in 5 areas.

- 1. Diverse Representation
- 2. Diverse Workplace Employees
- 3. Community Partnerships
- 4. Supplier Diversity and **Empowerment**
- 5. Leadership in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Also last year, we announced the 36 million dollar equity fund, which is game changer.

AWBC: What should we be expecting when I contact you a year from now?

RM: We'll be talking about the impact of the programs you and I discussed today. The world did not change overnight, so there will continue to be challenges. We expect another set of investments and we can expand the impact we have as a company by continually supporting Diversity and Inclusion.

I would like to share a story. I chair a foundation, and we were building a community center. I was impacted by an experience I had a couple years ago, while working on that community project. While I was standing in front of the center I encountered a girl by the name of Jasmine, who had questions. I was standing outside when Jasmine walked by. She asked me, "What's happening here today?" I explained we were building a community center, and the center would provide job resources, daycare, and maybe even a gym. She walked away and then came back, asking me the very same question, and I answered again. To my surprise she came back a third time. Only this time she asked, "Am I welcome here?" I realized what she was really trying to hear in my responses was that she would be welcome.

Later, when I thought about that experience I realized, that as a company, when we walk out and stand in a community, we have to be a voice that says to Jasmine and to communities at large, "Yes you are welcome". We must ensure that our Diversity and Inclusion message is a core value.

Exelon Announces \$36 Million Equity Fund to Support Minority-Owned **Business Growth**

Racial Equity Capital Fund will provide needed capital to help minority-owned businesses create jobs and expand in communities served by Exelon's utilities

Exelon's utilities business, which owns six electric and gas utilities serving more than 10 million customers, announced today it has created a \$36 million fund to support minority-owned businesses in the communities it serves. The launch of the Racial Equity Capital Fund will help minority businesses obtain capital to fuel growth and spur job opportunities in underserved and under-resourced communities often overlooked by investors and traditional funding sources. The capital fund is

expected to invest in numerous businesses throughout Exelon's service areas over the next three years with estimated loan amounts between \$100,000 and \$300,000 and equity investments of nearly \$1 million.

The investment will be funded by Exelon's utilities business, in partnership with the Exelon Foundation, and managed by RockCreek, a diverse-owned global investment firm, which has invested more than \$7.4 billion in diverse firms since its inception. RockCreek will decide which businesses get financing, independent of other parties. The fund will be available as a resource to minority businesses, which have historically been denied bank funding in disproportionate numbers and often lack the initial equity and capital to grow and sustain their small businesses.

"RockCreek is excited to join with Exelon's utilities business to invest the Racial Equity Capital Fund, which will bring much-needed capital to minority businesses to help them grow, create jobs, and strengthen communities in the years and decades to come," said Afsaneh Beschloss, founder and CEO of RockCreek.

"Too often, we see small, minority-owned businesses struggle to obtain financial backing to fuel their ideas and innovations, and that problem has only grown worse during the pandemic,"said Calvin Butler, CEO of Exelon Utilities.

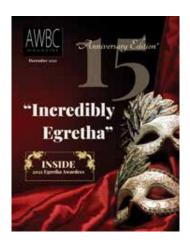
"Yet these same entrepreneurs are often the greatest source of economic opportunity in their communities, especially in underserved and under-resourced areas that struggle to attract major service providers, retailers and other community-sustaining employers. With this fund, we can help minority job creators overcome barriers to their growth and success and ensure that the benefits of our post-pandemic economic recovery are shared more equitably."

The initiative is part of Exelon's ongoing, extensive efforts to promote equity, inclusion and economic opportunity in the diverse communities served by our six utilities, which include Atlantic City Electric, BGE, ComEd, Delmarva Power, PECO and Pepco. In addition to the investment fund, Exelon has:

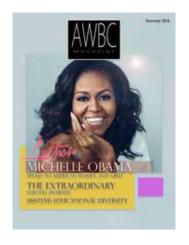
- Spent \$2.7 billion with diversity-certified suppliers in 2020 alone, growing its total spend with diversity-certified suppliers more than 41 percent from 2016-2020. (\$2.4 billion from Exelon Utilities.)
- Launched the Community Empowerment Initiative to issue \$150,000 in grants to Black-owned businesses associated with the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) in Exelon Utilities service areas. The grants will fund the design and implementation of capacity-building programs to grow minority-owned businesses in Exelon's footprint.
- Initiated more than 100 workforce development programs across its six utilities and generation business, including Infrastructure Academies that create pathways into utility careers through training programs offered in partnership with other entities. To date, more than 400 program graduates have been hired internally and externally.
- Established a Racial Equity Task Force designed to eliminate barriers and create opportunities for Exelon employees, vendors, customers and communities.
- Donated more than \$180 million (more than 75 percent of the company's giving) to organizations with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts over the past five years.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion are core values at Exelon," Butler said. "And it's hugely important in the communities we serve - where the change that comes from economic opportunity can't wait another day. The Racial Equity Capital Fund is one more way we're making good on our responsibility to help those communities become stronger and more resilient."











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Diversity wins: How inclusion matters

iversity wins is the third report in a McKinsey series investigating the business case for diversity, following Why diversity matters (2015) and Delivering through diversity (2018). Our latest report shows not only that the business case remains robust but also that the relationship between diversity on executive teams and the likelihood of financial outperformance has strengthened over time. These findings emerge from our largest data set so far, encompassing 15 countries and more than 1,000 large companies. By incorporating a "social listening" analysis of employee sentiment in online reviews, the report also provides new insights into how inclusion matters. It shows that companies should pay much greater attention to inclusion, even when they are relatively diverse.

By following the trajectories of hundreds of companies in our data set since 2014, we find that the overall slow growth in diversity often observed in fact masks a growing polarization among these organizations. While most have made little progress, are stalled or even slipping backward, some are making impressive gains in diversity, particularly in executive teams. We show that these diversity winners are adopting systematic, business-led approaches to inclusion and diversity (I&D). And, with a special focus on inclusion, we highlight the areas where companies should take far bolder action to create a long-lasting inclusive culture and to promote inclusive behavior.

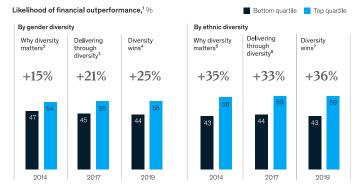
(Our research predates the outbreak of the global pandemic, but we believe these findings remain highly relevant. See the sidebar, "In the COVID-19 crisis, inclusion and diversity matter more than ever," for more on why I&D must remain a priority even as the context shifts, or read "Diversity still matters" for an even deeper dive. You can also explore a related interactive for another lens on the issues.)

A stronger business case for diversity, but slow progress overall

Our latest analysis reaffirms the strong business case for both gender diversity and ethnic and cultural diversity in corporate leadership—and shows that this business case continues to strengthen. The most diverse companies are now more likely than ever to outperform less diverse peers on profitability.

Our 2019 analysis finds that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25 percent more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile—up from 21 percent in 2017 and 15 percent in 2014.

The business case for diversity in executive teams remains strong.



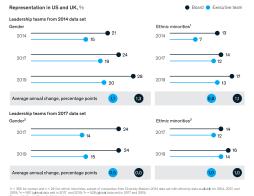
McKinsey & Company

Moreover, we found that the greater the representation, the higher the likelihood of outperformance. Companies with more than 30 percent women executives were more likely to outperform companies where this percentage ranged from 10 to 30, and in turn these companies were more likely to outperform those with even fewer women executives, or none at all. A substantial differential likelihood of outperformance—48 percent—separates the most from the least gender-diverse companies.

In the case of ethnic and cultural diversity, our business-case findings are equally compelling: in 2019, top-quartile companies outperformed those in the fourth one by 36 percent in profitability, slightly up from 33 percent in 2017 and 35 percent in 2014. As we have previously found, the likelihood of outperformance continues to be higher for diversity in ethnicity than for gender.

Yet progress, overall, has been slow. In the companies in our original 2014 data set, based in the United States and the United Kingdom, female representation on executive teams rose from 15 percent in 2014 to 20 percent in 2019. Across our global data set, for which our data starts in 2017, gender diversity moved up just one percentage point—to 15 percent, from 14—in 2019. More than a third of the companies in our data set still have no women at all on their executive teams. This lack of material progress is evident across all industries and in most countries. Similarly, the representation of ethnic-minorities on UK and US executive teams stood at only 13 percent in 2019, up from just 7 percent in 2014. For our global data set, this proportion was 14 percent in 2019, up from 12 percent in 2017 (Exhibit 2).

Gender and ethnic diversity in leadership teams progressed slowly in our 2014 data set and even more slowly in our global 2017 data set.



The widening gap between winners and

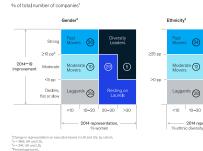
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While overall progress on gender and cultural representation has been slow, this is not consistent across all organizations. Our research clearly shows that there is a widening gap between I&D leaders and companies that have yet to embrace diversity. A third of the companies we analyzed have achieved real gains in top-team diversity over the five-year period. But most have made little or no progress, and some have even gone backward.

This growing polarization between high and low performers is reflected in an increased likelihood of a performance penalty. In 2019, fourth-quartile companies for gender diversity on executive teams were 19 percent more likely than companies in the other three quartiles to underperform on profitability—up from 15 percent in 2017 and 9 percent in 2015. At companies in the fourth quartile for both gender and ethnic diversity, the penalty was even steeper in 2019: they were 27 percent more likely to underperform on profitability than all other companies in our data set.

We sought to understand how companies in our original 2014 data set have been progressing, and in doing so we identified five cohorts.

We found five cohorts based on the progress of companies on executive diversity from 2014 to 2019.



These were based on their starting points and speed of progress on executive team gender representation and, separately, ethnic-minority representation (Exhibit 3). In the first two cohorts, Diversity Leaders and Fast Movers, diverse representation improved strongly over the past five years: for example, gender Fast Movers have almost quadrupled the representation of women on executive teams, to 27 percent, in 2019; for ethnicity, companies in the equivalent cohort have increased their level of diversity from just 1 percent in 2014 to 18 percent in 2019.

At the other end of the spectrum, the already poor diversity performance of the Laggards has declined further. In 2019, an average of 8 percent of executive team members at these companies were female—and they had no ethnic-minority representation at all. The two other cohorts are Moderate Movers, which have on average experienced a slower improvement in diversity, and Resting on Laurels, which started with higher levels of diversity than Laggards did, but have similarly become less diverse since 2014.

We also found that the average likelihood of financial outperformance in these cohorts is consistent with our findings in the quartile analysis above. For example, in 2019, companies in the Resting on Laurels cohort on average had the highest likelihood of outperformance on profitability, at almost 62 percent—likely reflecting their historically high levels of diversity on executive teams. Laggards, on the other hand, are more likely to underperform their national industry median in profitability, at 40 percent.

How inclusion matters

By analyzing surveys and company research, we explored how different approaches to I&D could have shaped the trajectories of the companies in our data set. Our work suggested two critical factors: a systematic business-led approach to I&D, and bold action on inclusion. On the former we have previously advocated for an I&D approach based on a robust business case tailored to the needs of individual companies, evidenced-based targets, and core-business leadership accountability.

To further understand how inclusion matters—and which aspects of it employees regard as significant—we conducted our first analysis of inclusion-related indicators. We conducted this outside-in using "social

listening," focusing on sentiment in employee reviews of their employers posted on USbased online platforms.

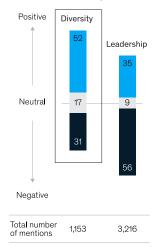
While this approach is indicative, rather than conclusive, it could provide a more candid read on inclusion than internal employee-satisfaction surveys do—and makes it possible to analyze data across dozens of companies rapidly and simultaneously. We focused on three industries with the highest levels of executive-team diversity in our data set: financial services, technology, and healthcare. In these sectors, comments directly pertaining to I&D accounted for around one-third of total comments made, suggesting that this topic is high on employees' minds.

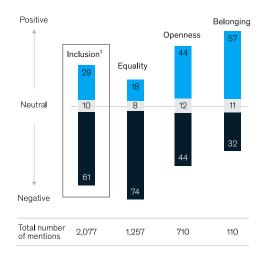
We analyzed comments relating to five indicators. The first two—diverse representation and leadership accountability for I&D—are evidence of a systematic approach to I&D. The other three—equality, openness, and belonging—are core components of inclusion. For several of these indicators, our findings suggest "pain points" in the experience of employees:

- While overall sentiment on diversity was 52 percent positive and 31 percent negative, sentiment on inclusion was markedly worse, at only 29 percent positive and 61 percent negative. This encapsulates the challenge that even the more diverse companies still face in tackling inclusion (Exhibit 4). Hiring diverse talent isn't enough—it's the workplace experience that shapes whether people remain and thrive.
- Opinions about leadership and accountability in I&D accounted for the highest number of mentions and were strongly negative. On average, across industries, 51 percent of the total mentions related to leadership, and 56 percent of those were negative. This finding underscores the increasingly recognized need for companies to improve their I&D engagement with core-business managers.
- For the three indicators of inclusion equality, openness, and belonging—we found particularly high levels of negative sentiment about equality and fairness of opportunity. Negative sentiment about equality ranged from 63 to 80 percent across the industries analyzed. The work environment's openness, which encompasses bias and discrimination, was also a significant concern.

Overall sentiment on diversity was more positive than negative, but sentiment on inclusion was markedly worse.

Sentiment on diversity and inclusion, %





Weighted average of equality, openness, and belonging. Source: Glassdoor and Indeed user-generated reviews

McKinsey & Company

-Negative sentiment across industries ranged from 38 to 56 percent. Belonging elicited overall positive sentiment, but from a relatively small number of mentions.

These findings highlight the importance not just of inclusion overall but also of specific aspects of inclusion. Even relatively diverse companies face significant challenges in creating work environments characterized by inclusive leadership and accountability among managers, equality and fairness of opportunity, and openness and freedom from bias and discrimination.

Winning through inclusion and diversity: Taking bold action

We took a close look at our data set's more diverse companies, which as we have seen are more likely to outperform financially. The common thread for these diversity leaders is a systematic approach and bold steps to strengthen inclusion. Drawing on best practices from these companies, this report highlights five areas of action.

- Ensure the representation of diverse talent. This is still an essential driver of inclusion. Companies should focus on advancing diverse talent into executive, management, technical, and board roles. They should
 - ensure that a robust I&D business case designed for individual companies is well accepted and think seriously about which forms of multivariate diversity to prioritize (for example, going beyond gender and ethnicity). They also need to set the right data-driven targets for the representation of diverse talent.
- Strengthen leadership accountability and capabilities for I&D. Companies should place their core-business leaders and managers at the heart of the I&D effort—beyond the HR function or employee resource-group leaders.

In addition, they should not only strengthen the inclusive-leadership capabilities of their managers and executives but also more emphatically hold all leaders to account for progress on I&D.

- Enable equality of opportunity through fairness and transparency. To advance toward a true meritocracy, it is critical that companies ensure a level playing field in advancement and opportunity. They should deploy analytics tools to show that promotions, pay processes, and the criteria behind them, are transparent and fair; debias these processes; and strive to meet diversity targets in their long-term workforce plans.
- Promote openness and tackle microaggressions. Companies should uphold a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory behavior, such as bullying and harassment, and actively help managers and staff to identify and address microaggressions. They should also establish norms for open, welcoming behavior and ask leaders and employees to assess each other on how they are living up to that standard.
- Foster belonging through unequivocal support for multivariate diversity. Companies should build a culture where all employees feel they can bring their whole selves to work. Managers should communicate and visibly embrace their commitment to multivariate forms of diversity, building a connection to a wide range of people and supporting employee resource groups to foster a sense of community and belonging. Companies should explicitly assess belonging in internal surveys.





Report: Women Need Additional Degree to Attain Equal Pay By Tiffany Pennamon

Although women have surpassed men in educational attainment, they still earn 81 cents for every dollar earned by men, according to a new study from researchers at Georgetown University.

Released on Tuesday, the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce's report — "Women Can't Win: Despite Making Educational Gains and Pursuing High-Wage Majors, Women Still Earn Less than Men" – indicates that women must hold one more degree than men to achieve pay parity. Combining factors leading to pay inequity include gender discrimination and women's historical concentration in lower-paying majors and occupations.

"Women's earnings still lag their exceptional educational progress," said Dr. Anthony P. Carnevale, the lead author of the report and director of the Georgetown Center.

"At the heart of the gender wage gap is discrimination in pay for the same sets of qualifications and experience."

Researchers at the Georgetown Center noted in the report that when comparing women and men with equal education and the same college majors working in the same occupation, women still made only 92 cents for every dollar earned by men.

Dr. Nicole Smith

Further, women need "ideally at least a bachelor's degree" to make family-sustaining wages while a "small share of men" can make it with just a high school diploma, according to the report.



ther findings show that socially and culturally reinforced "sex-segregated" interests that factor into what college majors and occupational choices women make. Women are highly concentrated in the lowest-earning majors - 76 percent of all education majors and 72 percent of psychology majors, for example.

Due to the wage gap, more women than ever are enrolling in college and pursuing higher-paying majors in STEM and business fields. Three million more women are enrolled in postsecondary education than men, the report said.

Women degree earners account for 61 percent of associate's degrees, 57 percent of bachelor's degree, 60 percent of master's degrees and 52 percent of doctoral degrees. This increase in education has narrowed the wage gap from women earning just 57 cents for every man's dollar in 1975 to women now earning 81 cents to a man's dollar today, according to the Georgetown Center.

Nonetheless, researchers said education is a partial step to eliminating pay disparities between men and women because women entering higher-paying majors tend to select the "least lucrative sub-majors."

Of women in STEM, 54 percent concentrate in biological and

life sciences – one of the lowest-paying majors - compared to the 17 percent of women in engineering, one of the highest-paying majors, the report said.

Similarly, only 33 percent of women in the business field major in finance compared to less-lucrative business maiors such as human resources. where 65 percent of majors are women, the report said.

In high-paying occupations, 27 percent of CEOs, 44 percent of lawvers and 43 percent of physicians and surgeons are women. Researchers' comparisons reveal that in these high-paying fields, women are more likely to be market research analysts and marketing specialists (59 percent), paralegals and legal assistants (85 percent) and registered nurses (89 percent).

Dr. Nicole Smith, co-author of the report and chief economist at the Georgetown Center, said in a statement that the "standard apology" given for the wage gap is that women have "less tenure in their jobs due to childcare responsibilities. However, close to 48 percent of women of childbearing age do not have children, and this does not seem to affect their earnings potential in a positive way."

The report also revealed that American women's labor force participation rates fall below those of women in other developed nations.

Some women in other developed countries, the report said, have supportive laws in place for them to take care of children or elderly relatives and they experience smaller gender wage gaps.

"While education has reduced the gender wage gap, the report finds it has not erased

it," the Georgetown Center emphasized. Unless there are "major social and legal changes," researchers warn, women will be "at the mercy of six rules" for achieving equal pay. The report cited those rules as:

Rule 1: Get one degree or more in order to have the same earnings as a man.

Rule 2: Pick majors that pay well, as major choice largely determines earnings.

Rule 3: If you major in liberal arts, get a graduate degree to attain middle-class earnings.

Rule 4: Negotiate your first paycheck well, as it will impact your lifetime earnings.

Rule 5: Be careful with postsecondary vocational certificates because they have limited labor market value for women.

Rule 6: If you don't pursue a B.A., consider getting an industry-based certification.

A regressive student loan system results in costly racial disparities

By Louise Seamster and Alan Aja



ith Senate and House resolutions to cancel up to \$50,000 in federal student debt for borrowers, following a proposal from Sen. Warren (D-Mass.), and broad public support for cancellation, advocates are still pushing hard for cancellation to resolve the currently \$1.75 trillion student debt crisis. But some persistent narratives have attempted to foil the promise of student loan cancellation. One strain of thought alleges cancellation would supposedly be "regressive," that most student loans are held by rich people, and cancellation would most benefit those who need it least.

But this argument ignores who exactly is borrowing, and what constitutes undue burden of student debt. We argue that it's not student loan cancellation that is regressive, but the student loan system itself. Focusing only on "successful" student borrowers—arguing that much debt is held by high earners, or that college graduates "tend to earn more" over a lifetime—only captures half of a system with divergent outcomes. By placing emphasis on student loans' regressive design, we can understand how they disproportionately burden those least able to pay, while also bringing lower rewards.

With coauthor Raphaël Charron-Chénier, Brookings Fellow Louise Seamster has shown that Black households are more likely to hold student debt at most income levels. In another study, a team including Seamster found that the median student debt for Black borrowing households has increased nearly 100% in only six years. Within the burgeoning racial wealth gap literature, some research has shown debt can worsen racial inequality through disparate structures, terms, and/or returns to "Black debt" and "white debt." Black and white borrowers tend to experience debt very differently—specifically because it is structured regressively. Not only do Black borrowers have to borrow more to offset racial differences in wealth, but they have to pursue even more education to get equivalent returns—a problem of increased "credentialization." Prior research indicates Black borrowers' greater difficulty with repayment comes from structural factors: lower salaries, lower returns to education, and lower likelihood of graduation.

Our current system tells Black and Latinx borrowers to leverage debt to offset their own labor market discrimination—credentials for which they must pay more, both upfront and over time. These factors produce a racial debt gap that expands over decades, affecting the life course in ways experienced much less often by non-Latinx whites (see, for example, the crucial research of Fenaba Addo and Jason Houle). Twenty years into repayment, the median Black borrower still owed 95% of the original amount they'd borrowed, while the median white borrower had almost fully repaid their loan. While this shocking statistic illustrates how student debt can widen racial inequality, we take it as a measure of student debt's regressiveness.

Many borrowers in financial distress are likely to end up paying more than better-off borrowers over the lifetime of their loan, not less. Student loans "cost" less to borrowers who are able to repay them faster, through family resources, higher incomes, and private refinancing. Collectively, better-off borrowers can move through this system as it was originally intended. But worse-off borrowers remain trapped in it for decades. In 2009, around 18% of borrowers had been in repayment for over seven years. Ten years later, that was true for half of borrowers. A 2021 data request by Sen. Warren revealed that 4.4 million borrowers have been in repayment for over two decades. This finding also overlaps with the growing number of borrowers over 60, the age group experiencing the largest increase in student loan debt over the last decade.

How have so many people wound up as life-long student borrowers? Millions of borrowers are in too much financial distress to pay their debt at all. But many more borrowers making regular payments struggle to make a dent in their loan balance.

We don't know how many, because we lack information on cash flows on student loans. Without that, it's hard to calculate how many people have static or rising balances despite regular payments.

But many borrowers are caught in what Mark Huelsman of the Higher Education Policy Project aptly describes as a "debt trap." Basically, once borrowers experience rising balances through unpaid interest ("negative amortization"), it is difficult to make it out of their initial position. For example, the Washington Post recently asked its readers what "they would change" about their student loan debt. Almost all contributors mentioned student loan interest as part of their payment struggles. These testimonies illustrate a growing body of evidence of the regressive role of interest. For instance, research by Looney and Yannelis found that by 2012, 57% of borrowers two years into repayment owed more than when they'd begun (as compared to only 9% of borrowers in 1986). And there's evidence that growing balances are racialized as well. Recent research found that by 2018, 62% of borrowers under 35 in majority-minority neighborhoods had increasing balances. Borrowers with growing balances are often stigmatized for not making "progress" in paying down the debt balance, a narrative stressing "individual responsibility" in spite of systemic regressivity.

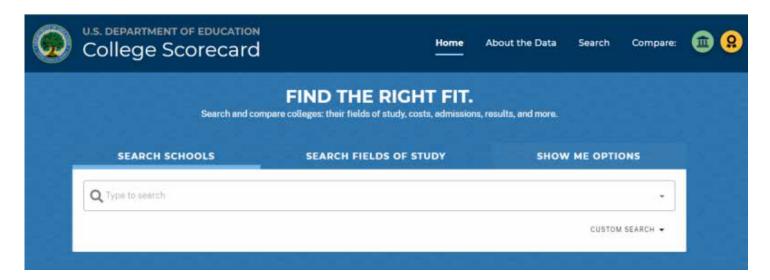
Many student loan "reforms" to date have extended the system's regressivity by extending the loan repayment period. Various income-derived repayment (IDR) programs, which lower payments and extend the repayment period, have offered the promise of eventual loan forgiveness. However, early indicators of the extremely low (statistically zero) number of loans forgiven through IDR, and high attrition at the beginning of the program, raise doubt that IDR forgiveness will ever take place for most, absent major changes.

And yet a 100% persistence and forgiveness rate for IDR enrollees is assumed in models calculating the supposedly more "progressive" aspects of twenty-plus years in IDR, relative to immediate cancellation. The success of the pandemic-era Paycheck Protection Program has shown the federal government can execute loan programs that deliver forgiveness when it wants to. For student debt, only its regressive components seem to be playing out as promised—the components that extend the loan term and increase total interest.

Finally, student loans are much harder to leave behind than other forms of debt. Changes to bankruptcy rules (initiated by then-senator Joe Biden) made student debt nearly impossible to discharge, with punitive, debilitating effects. At present, a quarter of borrowers overall, and half of Black borrowers, default on their student loans within 12 years. But defaulting on student loans does not mean loan forgiveness—it continues the debt obligation, on harsher terms. And even absent voluntary repayment, the government can still extract its due: taken off taxes and social benefits, garnished from wages, through civil suits.

Undoubtedly, student loan cancellation is a matter of racial and economic justice. But when people in positions of privilege, whether Matthew Yglesias or Larry Summers, focus only on wealthy borrowers, they further erase how our regressive student loan system has disproportionately burdened Black, Latinx, and low-income borrowers.

The Biden administration's incrementalist reforms to date have not seriously addressed the system's regressivity. In contrast, debt cancellation can potentially start a cascade of good changes and spur movements reshaping higher education financing. Most importantly, it can help dismantle the increasingly regressive and racialized structure of the student loan system.



Improving Outcomes Data for Online Programs

It's often impossible to tell how graduates of online programs fare, Robert Kelchen writes.

By Robert Kelchen



Even before the coronavirus pandemic, a growing share of students were already taking all of their classes online. In fall 2019, nearly 15 percent of undergraduate students and 33 percent of graduate students were exclusively enrolled in online courses. As students and colleges alike have become more familiar with online education, more students are likely to enroll in fully online programs after the pandemic finally ends than when it began.

Online programs provide access to higher education for students who cannot attend in-person courses due to work, family or geographic challenges. However, prior research has found that students who attend in-person classes tend to perform better in those courses than students enrolled in online classes. One study also concluded that students who attend colleges that are primarily or fully online see at most a minimal return on their investment.

And little is known about the outcomes of a growing group of students: those who enroll at online programs at public and private nonprofit institutions that have traditionally operated classes in person.

purred on by student demands for online offerings, competition from the for-profit sector and the need to generate additional revenue, many traditional colleges have rapidly expanded their online offerings. Some of this has been accomplished with the help of third-party online providers (online program management companies, or OPMs) that provide a range of services to support new online programs, but some of this has also been done by colleges using internal resources.

The long-standing debate about the value of online education combined with recent scrutiny of OPMs from a few prominent Senate Democrats further the interest in knowing more about student debt burdens and postcollege earnings of students attending online programs at traditionally in-person institutions. I have long been interested in program-level outcome data and have written extensively about how to use data from the federal College Scorecard and the Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System for research and accountability purposes. So when a group of leading third-party online providers commissioned me to see if I could say anything about the value of their partners' programs, I was happy to jump into the data to see what was possible. I was provided a list of their programs at partner institutions and went on my way.

The key takeaway of my research is that while the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard has institution-level data on debt and earnings by field of study, it is not possible to separate out the outcomes data of students attending online versus in-person programs. This is a concern at traditional institutions because it appears that colleges frequently start online programs when they already have an in-person option. And these in-person programs are often sizable: among early adopters of OPMs, the in-person programs likely graduate as many or more students than the online versions.

In order to answer the questions that everyone wants to know about the outcomes of students attending online programs at traditional institutions and to better compare the student outcomes of online and on-ground programs, the U.S. Department of Education needs to make several improvements to the data that they collect from colleges. The three most important recommendations are the following:

- Make it clear when a college only offers a certain program online instead of having both online and in-person options. As a part of IPEDS data reporting, colleges are currently asked whether no, some or all programs within each Classification of Instructional Programs code can be completed through distance education (which in 2022 usually means online). This metric has value, but it fails to distinguish programs that have both in-person and online options from programs that can only be completed online. A small tweak to data collection would allow for solely online programs to be identified.
- Report IPEDS data on the number of graduates by program separately for fully online programs and all other programs. There is no way to tell the share of graduates coming from online programs versus in-person or hybrid programs. This makes it difficult to see the prevalence of online delivery models and how traditional institutions have adjusted their strategies. Colleges already have to report completions by CIP code, race and gender, so adding in a measure for whether the program is fully online or not should be straightforward.
- Report College Scorecard debt and earnings data separately for fully online programs and all other programs. Similar to the above point, combining data for online and in-person programs makes it impossible to tell how either delivery model performs. The drawback of reporting outcomes by modality is a smaller sample size, which means that some programs' outcomes would not be reported due to privacy restrictions. But this could be alleviated by combining additional cohorts of students to provide a picture of student outcomes.

Improving the quality of data on student outcomes should be an area of bipartisan agreement, as evidenced by the Obama administration's introduction of the modern College Scorecard and the Trump administration's addition of program-level outcomes data. Providing information on debt and earnings of graduates based on whether they enrolled in online or in-person programs will give students better information about their options, and it will also give policy makers a sense of how to approach new delivery models and partnerships. But for now, it's impossible to answer some key questions on the performance of higher education in spite of substantial public investments in both data infrastructures and financial aid provided to students.





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WOMEN'S HEALTH

Cities Enlist Doulas Reduce Infant Mortality

This city has opened a new front in its effort to give black newborns the same chance of surviving infancy as white babies: training doulas to assist expectant mothers during pregnancy, delivery and afterward.

The doula initiative is the latest salvo in the Baltimore City Health Department's 7-year-old program to combat high infant mortality rates among black newborns. "The impetus for this program is the huge disparity in infant mortality between blacks and whites born in this city," said Stacey Tuck, maternal and child health director at the department.

Baltimore is not alone. New York, Chicago and Tampa have also used doula training programs to improve newborn health. Other cities may follow, according to Dale Kaplan of the Maternity Wise Institute, which conducts doula training in Baltimore. A number of other cities, including Denver, San Antonio and San Francisco, have contacted his organization to inquire about starting their own programs.

The U.S. infant mortality rate among African Americans is more than twice as high as it is for white babies. "Doula" comes from the Greek, meaning "a woman who helps." Although doulas are trained to assist expectant mothers through labor, delivery and beyond, they are not medical providers like midwives. Dona International, which calls itself the largest doula-certifying organization in the world, said doulas help mothers achieve "the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible." And doulas are good for babies, too. Doula-assisted mothers are less likely to deliver babies with low birth weights or with birth complications and more likely to breast-feed their infants, a 2013 study found. Mothers attended by female caregivers during labor are less likely to have cesarean births, require painkillers, or deliver babies in poor health, as indicated by low scores on the Apgar test, another study found.

"Continuous one-to-one emotional support provided by support personnel, such as a doula, is associated with improved outcomes for women in labor," according to the Ameri-

WOIIIEH III IADOF, according to the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which cites other benefits such as shortened labor, less need for pain medication and fewer operative deliveries.

Baltimore doulas are a new part of a program that has already racked up some successes. When the city began B'more for Healthy Babies, in 2009, a white newborn was more than three times as likely to survive infancy as a black baby. By 2014, the gap had narrowed to about two-and-a-half times as likely.

African-American women have a long history with doulas, particularly during the Jim Crow era when hospitals denied access to pregnant black women, forcing many to deliver their children at home, said Andrea Williams-Salaam, a doula trainer in the Baltimore program. But as legal racial barriers vanished and the medical profession strongly promoted hospital deliveries as the safest option, fewer women practiced as doulas. A few continued to work in Baltimore, she said, but when the city decided to start training doulas, it followed the example of New York, which started its doula program in 2010. So far New York has trained 68 doulas who have attended 580 births.

Gabriela Ammann, director of the By My Side Birth Support Doula Program, which seeks to reduce infant mortality in Brooklyn, helped start the program. She had been a part-time doula while teaching infant education classes in the Brooklyn Healthy Start Program. "I noticed when we talked about labor and birth support, participants often said they weren't sure they'd have someone with them," she said. "Sometimes they didn't have someone to support them or that person had to stay home to take care of the other kids." As a result, many of the women had to go through labor and delivery with only the help of strangers, adding to the stress of childbirth, she said.

Ammann started connecting some of those expectant mothers with doulas she knew in the community. She convinced the city to formalize the program and to train new doulas. The program now includes 12 doulas and an annual budget of about \$250,000. It operates in the six ZIP codes in Brooklyn with the highest rates of infant mortality.

Like New York, Baltimore wants its doulas to work as independent contractors, rather than as city employees. In addition to advising women about their pregnancies and baby care, Baltimore's doulas will be trained to connect needy women to housing, transportation, nutrition and employment services.

"The doulas are there to assist, support and empower a woman in whatever way she needs

assistance," Williams-Salaam said. "That could be accompanying the woman to medical visits to help with the terminology used by the caregiver, or helping her obtain proper nutrition, housing or employment."

It was the idea of empowering other women that induced Keyona Hough to become one of the five doula trainees in Baltimore. Too often, poor, African-American women are treated disrespectfully by the institutions they interact with, she said. She wants not only to advocate for her female clients, but also to "teach them how to advocate for themselves." "Like me, a lot of these moms have been subjected to violence and trauma," she said. "That's why I want to help them understand what their rights are so they can move through that system without being re-traumatized."

Training the initial group of Baltimore doulas cost about \$5,000, Tuck said. The money came from savings elsewhere in the program. She hopes to find another source of funding and train many more doulas in the city. For an expectant mother, the cost of hiring a doula varies widely, from as little as \$100 to as much as \$5,000, according to Ammann. There is generally no insurance reimbursement, public or private, for doula services. Unlike New York, Baltimore will not pay the doulas for their work, so any money they make will have to come from clients.

The architects of the Baltimore program said they warned trainees from the start that they would not be able to make a living from their doula work. Many of their patients cannot afford to pay.

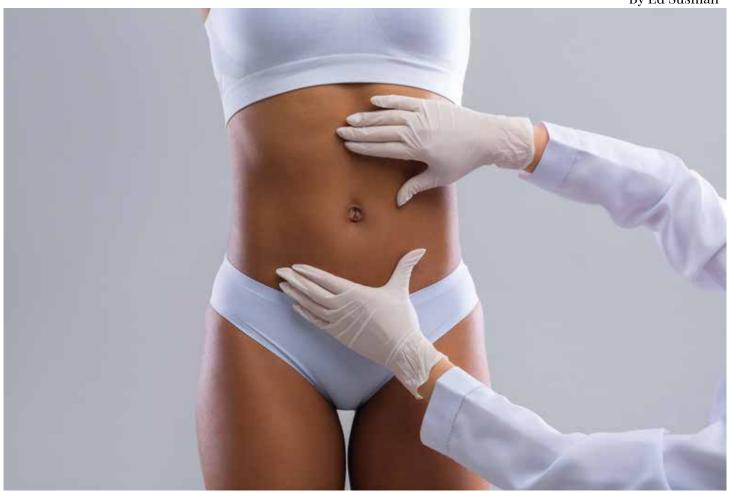
"This is primarily about service and giving back to the community," Tuck said. "The five women who have enrolled as trainees, their motivation is not compensation, that's for sure."

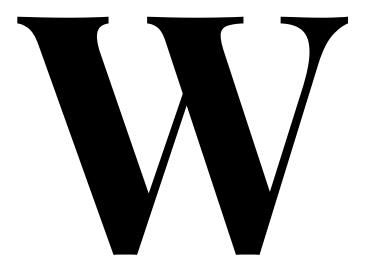
WOMEN'S HEALTH

Black Women Most at Risk for Post-Surgical Lymphedema

Black women seemed to have triple the odds of swelling after axillary lymph node dissection

By Ed Susman





omen of color, and Black women in particular, appeared more likely to develop lymphedema after undergoing axillary lymph node dissection (ALND), a researcher reported here.

In a prospective, breast cancer-related lymphedema (BCRL) study with a median 24 months follow-up, multivariable analysis demonstrated that Black women were 3.5 times more likely to experience arm or leg swelling after ALND versus white women (odds ratio [OR] 3.53, 95% CI 1.93-6.47), according to Andrea Barrio, MD, of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

Hispanic women had a threefold increased risk of lymphedema post-ALND versus white women (OR 3.11, 95% CI 1.16-7.73), she reported at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

However, Barrio and colleagues noted that the number of Hispanic women in the study was small so further research is needed to confirm the findings.

While there is some evidence that Black women are more likely than white women to experience BCRL, Barrio explained that most studies of BCRL do not report the racial or ethnic breakdown of the patient populations. Furthermore, most research on lymphedema has relied on patients' self-reported symptoms or lymphedema diagnosis codes.

Barrio and colleagues performed bilateral arm measurements with a perometer at baseline, after the initial operation, and every 6 months after the surgery for 2 years. If the relative increase in arm volume was at least 10% from baseline, it was considered a lymphedema diagnosis.

They enrolled 304 breast cancer patients who underwent ALND from November 2016 to March 2020; 276 patients had at least one longitudinal measurement after baseline in the analysis. The majority of participants were white (60%), while 20% were Black, 11% were Asian, 6% were Hispanic, and 3% did not report race or ethnicity.

The 12- and 24-month lymphedema rates were 8.8% and 24.7%, respectively, among all women in the study. At the 24-month timepoint, 39.4% of Black women, 27.7% of Hispanic women, 23.4% of Asian women, and 20.5% of white women had been diagnosed with lymphedema.

Other factors independently linked with post-AL-ND lymphedema were:

- Receipt of neoadjuvant chemotherapy vs upfront surgery: OR 2.07 (95% CI 1.14-3.94)
- Older age (per 1-year increase): OR 1.04 (95% CI 1.01 - 1.06

Time from surgery (per every 6-month increase): OR 1.7 (95% CI 1.37-2.13)

There was no difference in lymphedema severity across racial and ethnic groups, with similar relative volume changes observed, according to the authors.

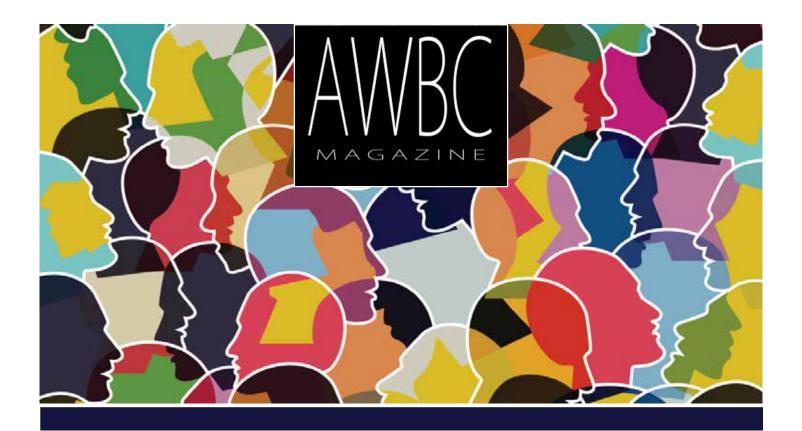
Alphonse Taghian, MD, PhD, of Mass General Cancer Center/Harvard Medical School in Boston, explained to MedPage Today, that previously,

"We noted that Black women seemed to have more lymphedema, but we thought that might have been due to other factors, like more advanced disease requiring more extensive treatment -- like ALND, radiation -- or [because of] higher BMI. These are the well-known risk factors to develop BCRL for any patients independent of race."

Taghian, who was not involved in the study, called it "very well conducted [as it] corrected for those types of variables." The study indicated that "something else is making these women more susceptible to lymphedema. We really have no idea what that is or why." He stated that longer follow-up and data from a larger number of patients at multiple institutions may be needed to find those answers.

Barrio pointed out that inflammation and fibrosis are key in the pathogenesis of lymphedema, and Black women may have an increased propensity toward inflammation and/or increased fibrosis, especially in response to radiation therapy." She added that a better understanding of lymphedema would help for designing risk reduction strategies.

Study limitations included the short follow-up time. Barrio said her group will continue to follow the women to obtain more long-term data, and that they plan to assess the biologic mechanisms behind racial disparities in lymphedema development, including the potential role of crown-like structures of the breast, a known marker of systemic inflammation.



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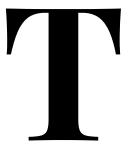
Master of Public Adminstration (MPA)



WOMEN'S HEALTH

The pandemic has highlighted many challenges for mothers, but they aren't necessarily new

By Amanda Barroso And Juliana Menasce Horowitz



he COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges and obstacles for many Americans, but one group has been getting a lot of attention lately: moms. Much of the focus has been

on the effects of school closings and child care responsibilities on mothers' employment and labor force participation rates, with some suggesting the disruptions caused by the pandemic might have long-lasting consequences for gender equality in the workplace. In response, many prominent public figures have signed on to the Marshall Plan for Moms, which calls on Congress to recognize mothers' unpaid labor at home through monthly stimulus checks alongside paid family leave, affordable child care and pay equity programs.

In a summer 2019 sur-

vey, employed moms

than employed dads

(39%) to say being a

working parent made

it harder for them to

Working moms were

also more likely than

dads to say there had

been times where they

needed to reduce their

44%) and felt like they

couldn't give 100% at

work (51% vs. 43%)

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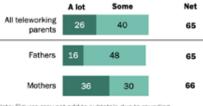
In addition, working moms were more likely than working dads to say they faced certain challenges at work because they were balancing work and family responsibilities.

Pew Research Center surveys have highlighted some of the unique challenges facing moms during the pandemic. For example, a survey

last October found that, who were working from home all or most of the time, mothers were more likely than fathers to say they had a lot of child care responsibilities while working (36% vs. 16%). Working mothers with children younger than 12 at home were also more likely than fathers (57% vs. 47%) to say it had been for them to handle child PEW RESEARCH CENTER care responsibilities

among employed parents Last fall, teleworking moms were about twice as likely as dads to say they had a lot of child care duties while working

Among employed parents with children under 18 at home who were working from home all or most of the time, % saying they had child care responsibilities when working from home



at least somewhat difficult Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020

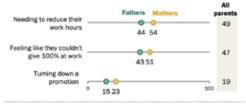
during the coronavirus outbreak.

But these dynamics aren't new. Before the pandemic began in March 2020, women were already more likely than their spouses or partners to say they carried more of the load when it comes to both parenting and household responsibilities.

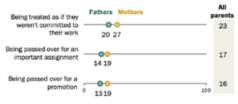
Work and Family

In 2019, working moms were more likely than working dads to say they needed to reduce their work hours or felt like they couldn't give 100% at work

% of employed parents with children younger than 18 saying they had personally experienced each of the following because they were balancing work and parenting responsibilities



% of employed parents with children younger than 18 saying they had nally experienced each of the following at work becan



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 25 July 8, 2019.

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Roughly a quarter (27%) of working moms said they were treated as if they weren't committed to their work, compared with 20% of dads. Around one-in-five working moms (19%) said they'd been passed over for an important assignment or a promotion because they have children, compared with smaller shares of dads.

Similar patterns and gender differences were evident in October 2020, when working parents were asked if they had had these experiences since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak.

Division of Labor

The challenges of the pandemic have raised to the surface questions about the division of household chores and responsibilities among couples, particularly as many schools and day care centers remain closed. But even before the pandemic, about six-in-ten women in opposite-sex relationships (59%) said they did more than their spouse or partner when it came to handling these responsibilities, while just 9% said their spouse or partner did more. Roughly a third (32%) said they shared household chores and responsibilities about equally with their spouse or partner.

In 2019, majorities of women said they did more when it came to chores and managing children's schedules

% of adults who are married or living with a partner saying that, when it comes to each of the following ...

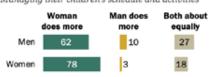
Household chores and responsibilities



Managing household finances



Managing their children's schedule and activities*



^{*} Based on those with children younger than 18 in the household. Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Analysis based on those who are married to or living with a partner of the opposite sex

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In the same survey, roughly eight-in-ten moms (78%) said they did more than their spouse or partner when it came to managing their children's schedules and activities - and 62% of fathers agreed that their spouse or partner did more in this regard.

Again, these patterns emerged when married and cohabiting adults in opposite-sex relationships were asked the same questions in October 2020, several months into the pandemic.

Caregiving

Caregiving comes in many forms, whether it's taking care of a new child or a sick family member. In a 2016 Pew Research Center survey, 65% of women who had taken time off from work to care for a family member with a serious health condition in the two years prior to the survey said they had provided more of the care than anyone else

in their About two-thirds of women who took family. family leave said in 2016 they were the Among primary caregiver for ill family member men who % of family-leave takers saying had taken ■ They provided more care than anyone else in their family Someone else in their family provided more care family They and others in their family provided about the same leave, by comparison, 44% said they had provided more care than anyone else.

Perceptions around caregiving also

differed between men and women. In the same survey, 45% of Americans said that when a family member has a serious health condition, caregiving responsibilities fall mainly on women. Women (59%) were far more likely than men (29%) to say this; 69% of men said these responsibilities fall on both men and women equally.

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years, White and Black adults include those who report being

or Nev. 17 Dec. 14, 2016

Perceptions differed not only in terms of who does the caregiving, but who does it better. When it comes to caring for a family member with a serious health condition, a majority of adults (59%) said men and women would do about an equally good

job, but a substantial share (40%) said women would generally do a better job than men. Women were more likely than men to say women would do a better job (45% vs. 34%). Just 1% of U.S. adults said men would do a better job than women.

When it comes to parenting, a larger share of Americans said that, aside from breastfeeding, mothers would do a better job caring for a new baby than said both mothers and fathers would do about an equally good job (53% vs. 45%). The view that mothers would do a better job than fathers caring for a new baby was more common among men than women (56% vs. 50%).

Societal Expectations

In 2020, a majority of Americans said the country hadn't gone far enough in giving women equal rights with men, and among that group, some 66% said different societal expectations for men and women were an obstacle.

How do these societal expectations differ? On a basic level, Americans see different pressures for men and women. In a 2017 survey, most U.S. adults said women face a lot of pressure to be an involved parent (77%) and to be physically attractive (71%), while smaller shares said men face a lot of pressure in each of these areas (49% and 27%, respectively). In turn, Americans were far more likely to say men experience a lot of pressure to support their family financially (76% vs. 40% who said women face a lot of pressure in this area) and to be successful in their job or career (68% vs. 44% who said this about women).

These pressures are reflected in the expectations generally ascribed to men and women and where they are expected to thrive. In 2016, some 53% of adults said American society places more value on the contributions men make at work, while 41% said society values the contributions men make at work and at home about equally and just 5% said society values men's contributions at home more. When asked about what society values more when it comes to women, 15% pointed to the contributions they make at work, while 56% said society values women's contributions at work and at home about equally and 28% pointed to the contributions women make at home.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 25-July 8, 2019. "Marriage and Cohabitation in the U.S."

GOP Targets Tenure to Curb Classroom Discussions of Race, Gender



hen he blew the whistle on a university dean suspected of financial malfeasance, college professor Jeff Blodgett had to weather a fierce attack from the dean's allies. "If I didn't have tenure," he recalled, "they would have done their best to get rid of me."

Blodgett, who has taught at four universities and is now a marketing professor at the University of Houston-Victoria, survived that ordeal in the University of Illinois system more than a decade ago. Now in his 31st year in higher education, he is president of the Texas Conference of the American Association of University Professors, working with professors across the nation to preserve the institution of tenure itself.

The American Association of University Professors defines tenure as an "indefinite appointment" for college and university professors that can be terminated only for cause or under extraordinary circumstances, such as budget cuts or the discontinuation of a program.

The nationwide faculty group initiated the modern-day concept of tenure in 1940, along with what is now the American Association of Colleges and Universities, to preserve academic freedom by protecting faculty teaching and research from political, corporate and religious pressure.

Over the past 82 years, it has protected faculty members throughout campus turbulence, including efforts to purge alleged communists during the McCarthy era of the 1950s and fire faculty members who supported desegregation and racial equality during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and

But now tenure is facing threats to its survival, at least in some parts of the country, as Republican politicians in Texas and other states push to restrict or eliminate it. In many instances, the anti-tenure campaign fuses contempt for what Republican detractors often see as a privileged class of elitists in America's colleges and universities with continuing efforts to restrict the teaching of race and sexual orientation in the classroom.

Last month, Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, the No. 2 political leader in Texas and the presiding officer in the Republican-led Senate, stirred alarm in national academic circles when he called for the elimination of tenure at public universities in the Lone Star State. His goal, he said, was to stop the teaching of critical race theory, an academic framework the GOP has adopted as a catch-all term for lessons that view U.S. history and society through a racial lens.

Republican elected officials also have challenged tenure in Iowa, South Carolina, Wisconsin and other states in recent years.

On March 5, the American Association of University Professors, known as AAUP, censured the Georgia university system's governing board—whose members are appointed by the governor—for a new policy that removed faculty input from the process of firing tenured professors. A spokesperson for the board said the university system remains committed to academic freedom and due process, but the AAUP said the change "eviscerates tenure."

"Because the attacks are at the state level, it makes it difficult to fight, with so many battles," said Irene Mulvey, the national president of AAUP. "And these faculty are ready and willing to fight back because they can see the profession is on the line. The quality of education is on the line here, so I don't think the faculty are ever going to give up."

Academic Protection

Tenure can take years to acquire, and professors usually must prove their mettle by publishing rigorous research and demonstrating their value to the institution. Once achieved, tenured professors are protected from being fired for expressing controversial views in their classes, research or writing.

Their tenured status is subject to periodic "post-tenure" review—often every six or seven years—and they still can be dismissed because of financial wrongdoing or sexual harassment. But tenured professors who are accused of misconduct should have a right to "due process" hearings involving an elected faculty committee, according to AAUP standards. Patrick, who is seeking reelection to a third four-year term, issued his call to abolish tenure at a news conference last month, after the University of Texas-Austin Faculty Council voted 41-5 to pass a resolution affirming the faculty's freedom to teach about race, gender and critical race theory. Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott last year signed legislation restricting how K-12 public schools teach students about race and racism.

"I will not stand by and let looney Marxist UT professors poison the minds of young students with Critical Race Theory," Patrick tweeted. "We banned it in publicly funded K-12, and we will ban it in publicly funded higher ed." Patrick's initiative applies to future tenure but, in a Feb. 18 statement, he said he will address already-tenured professors by shortening the period for comprehensive tenure reviews from every six years to annually. Patrick also would make teaching of critical race theory—a decades-old academic concept—a valid reason for firing a tenured professor.

Some critics interpreted Patrick's statements as a political gesture designed to stoke his conservative base in the runup to the March 1 Republican primary, which he won by beating five challengers with 75% of the vote. But Patrick's power and his tenacity in pursuing pet conservative causes such as critical race theory suggest that tenure could be a prominent issue during next year's legislative session.

Eliminating tenure at all public universities will be "one of my priorities," Patrick declared after last month's news conference. The next legislative session won't begin until January, but at least some of Patrick's political foes already take the threat seriously. "Of course, it has a chance to pass," said Gilberto Hinojosa, who chairs the Texas Democratic Party. Hinojosa described the Republican leader's initiative as a "crazy" move that will "dramatically hurt" higher education in Texas.

Abbott told a radio interviewer several days after Patrick's call to abolish tenure that he will need to see further details before making a commitment. "That's something that will have to be looked at," he said.

Senate Higher Education Chair Brandon Creighton, who would spearhead Patrick's initiative in the upper chamber and who sponsored a bill in 2021 that would have shortened the time between tenure reviews, said university tenure "is definitely seen by many across the state as a pretext for advancing a very liberal and somewhat reckless agenda."

"It's a very healthy discussion to review some of the archaic provisions related to tenure to see if there's an alternative that would be better-better for the university, better for the students' learning experience and better for the future of the state going forward," the Houston-area lawmaker said in a telephone interview.

Higher education groups assert that the elimination of tenure would stifle many Texas professors at the cutting edge of academia and research and prompt many of them to leave the state. Although university faculties tend to lean to the left along the political spectrum, Blodgett, of the University of Houston-Victoria, said they are far more politically diverse than critics portray them.

"They try to paint all academics as left-wing, liberal wackos," he said. "But that's not the case. Faculty come from across the entire political spectrum."

In a survey several years ago by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, 48% of faculty described themselves as liberal, 28% as middle-ofthe-road and 12% as conservative.

'Someone Looking Over My Shoulder'

Regardless of their political leanings, professors and their defenders warn that states that eliminate tenure risk eroding the quality of higher education and chasing away business opportunities.

In South Carolina, those concerns helped prompt lawmakers to postpone action on Republican state Rep. Bill Taylor's proposal to eliminate tenure. Instead, they ordered an independent economic study of its potential effect. Taylor said he plans to resubmit the measure at the start of the next session in December.

"It's basically on hold this session," said Taylor, adding that he agreed to "slow the bill down" after it raised a "great amount of ruckus among universities and professors."Shawn Smolen-Morton, an associate professor of English who specializes in film studies at Francis Marion University in Florence, South Carolina, helped lead the opposition to Taylor's bill.

He said tenure is what allows him to fearlessly delve into socially controversial topics. "I don't have to worry about someone looking over my shoulder," said Smolen-Morton, president of South Carolina's AAUP. "I don't have to worry about being censured. I don't have to worry about being gagged. I just need to be professional and do my research and keep the students conversing within the bounds of academic discourse."

Mulvey, the national AAUP president, said professors with tenure are free, for example, to research climate change without worrying about pushback from university trustees who are oil company executives, or to criticize ballooning athletic budgets without fear of retribution from deep-pocketed athletic boosters. Without that protection, she said, faculty members would "self-censor" and "may think twice about what you'll study."

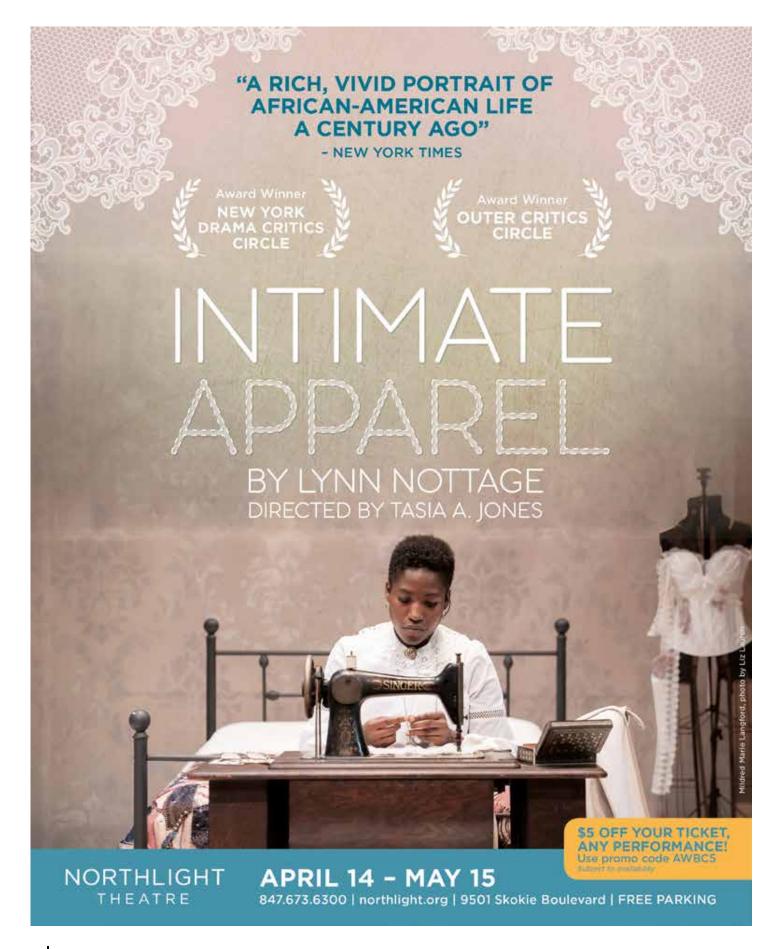
Jim Klein, professor of history at Del Mar College, a two-year community college in Corpus Christi, Texas, and president of the Texas Association of College Teachers, said tenured faculty members also have an obligation to report campus malfeasance or unethical behavior, a watchdog role they'd be reluctant to play without tenure protections. "We're really under a pretty strong obligation to report that," he said, "because there are a lot of people here ... who don't have that same protection."

The number of tenured professors already is declining amid the steady curtailment of academic budgets. An increasing number of university teaching jobs are being filled by adjunct professors or part-time faculty as budget-strapped schools look for ways to save money.

The National Center for Education Statistics, citing only full-time faculty at institutions with a tenure system, says 45% were tenured in 2019-20, a drop from 56% in 1993-94. The percentage of institutions permitting tenure has also shrunk during that period, from 62% percent to 57%, according to the center, which is part of the education department's Institute of Education Sciences. "The real threat to tenure has been ... that over the last 30 or 40 years, an increasing number of appointments are made off the tenure track," said Henry Reichman, professor emeritus of history at California State University-East Bay, who has written two books on academic freedom.

Mulvey, a mathematics professor who was elected AAUP president in 2020, said that after watching Patrick's news conference, she knew she had to mobilize the group's chapters nationwide. It's not the worst attack we've seen against higher education, but absolutely this is the worst attack we've seen against tenure," she said.

"The real losers," she said, "will be the students of Texas, denied a meaningful and truthful education."



NORTHLIGHT THEATRE

Intimate Apparel

by Lynn Nottage directed by Tasia A. Jones featuring Rashada Dawan, Yao Dogbe, Felicia P. Fields, Sean Fortunato, Mildred Marie Langford, Al'Jaleel McGhee and Rebecca Spence

April 14 - May 15, 2022

Northlight Theatre, under the direction of Artistic Director BJ Jones and Executive Director Timothy J. Evans, continues its 2021–2022 season with the Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage, directed by Tasia A. Jones. Intimate Apparel runs April 14 - May 15, 2022 at Northlight Theatre, 9501 Skokie Blvd in Skokie. The press opening is Friday, April 22, 2022 at 8pm.

The recipient of New York Drama Critics' Circle and Outer Critics Circle awards for Best Play!

In 1905, a black seamstress named Esther sews her way out of poverty stitch by delicate stitch, creating fine lingerie for her Manhattan clientele while longing for a husband and a future. She finds common ground with a Jewish fabric merchant, a relationship they both know cannot grow. So when correspondence with a lonesome Caribbean man leads to a marriage proposal, she accepts. But as her new marriage quickly leads to regret, Esther turns back to her sewing machine to rebuild her life and refashion her future.

The production was originally scheduled for spring 2020 and was canceled due to the pandemic shutdown on the day of its first public performance.

The returning cast includes Rashada Dawan (Mayme), Yao Dogbe (George, though May 1), Sean Fortunato (Mr. Marks), Mildred Marie Langford (Esther), and Rebecca Spence (Mrs. Van Buren). New to the cast is Felicia P. Fields (Mrs. Dickson) and Al'Jaleel McGhee (George, beginning May 3).

The creative team includes Scott Penner (Scenic Design), Raquel Adorno (Costume Design), Claire Chrzan (Lighting Design), and Jeffrey Levin (Sound Design). The production stage manager is Katie Klemme.

Northlight's production of Intimate Apparel is supported in part by Freddi Greenberg and Dan Pinkert, Julie and Josh Chernoff, Kevin Mott, Edward Jones, The Pauls Foundation, and Koi. The 2021-2022 Season is supported by BMO Harris and ComEd, An Exelon Company.

Massimo Dutti



The AWBC Online Education Guide

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Reserve Early!

Comcast's Pandemic Response Wins SXSW's People's Choice Award

Comcast's Lift Zones initiative, which provides WiFi-enabled distance learning spaces at over 1,000 community centers nationwide, was among more than 60 SXSW Innovation Award finalists spanning 13 categories including "Innovation in Connecting People."

As the largest Internet service provider in the U.S., Comcast was built on a foundation of supporting the communities in which we live, work, and serve. The company's Lift Zones effort is a natural extension of those relationships. In 2020, as COVID-19 measures forced students into distance learning, we launched Lift Zones to provide free, robust WiFi access inside community centers across the country. As a result, tens of thousands of students who needed an Internet connection had a place to go to get online. Working with non-profit partners and city leaders, who kept select community centers open as essential services during the pandemic, we rapidly installed more than 1,000 Lift Zones before the end of 2021. There are plans to install 250 more Lift Zones this year.

The Lift Zones program not only helped illustrate Comcast's network resiliency and front-line response to keep Americans connected through the crisis—the company saw a 40% surge in network traffic over the last two years—but also showcased our ability to act swiftly with our community partners to introduce a new connectivity solution for vulnerable communities.

Lift Zones are also part of Comcast's ten-year, \$1 billion commitment to advance digital equity through Project UP, a comprehensive initiative that encompasses the programs and community partnerships designed to connect people to the Internet and advance economic mobility.

We are immensely proud of the Lift Zones initiative, and the work so many of our employees have done to support community-based organizations through the last two, very difficult years. We're beyond grateful to all of our community partners who've joined us on this journey and we want to share this honor with each of them as well. We also want to thank SXSW and all the attendees who voted for Lift Zones from Comcast as the People's Choice winner in the 2022 SXSW Innovation Awards.



"As a company and a society, it is imperative that we work together with community leaders to help people connect to the transformative power of the Internet both at home and on the go."

-Broderick Johnson Executive Vice President, Public Policy and Executive Vice President Digital Equity, Comcast Corporation

Lift Zones are an out-of-home complement to Internet Essentials, which is the nation's largest and most successful private-sector low-income broadband adoption program. Since launching in 2011, Internet Essentials has connected a cumulative total of more than 10 million people to the Internet at home, most for the very first time.

Recently, Comcast announced its participation in the federal government's Affordable Connectivity Program. The ACP provides eligible low-income households a credit up to \$30 a month toward the cost of Internet service (\$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands). Customers who qualify can apply ACP credits to any tier of Xfinity Internet as well as Internet Essentials.



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