



Sept 2025 Continuing to Speak Truth to Power Vol. 4, Issue 3



# — NATIONAL — BLACK BUSINESS MONTH





**Kwanzaa** provided the seven principles of **Nguzo Saba** to guide African Americans to better wealth and prosperity. The principles are:



**Umoja (Unity)** - To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.



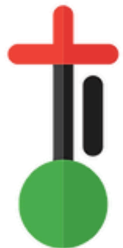
**Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)** - To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.



**Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)** - To build and maintain our community together and make our community's problems our problems and to solve them together.



**Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)** - To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.



**Nia (Purpose)** - To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.



**Kuumba (Creativity)** - To do always as much as we can to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.



**Imani (Faith)** - To believe with all our hearts in our people and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

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## LET THE TRUTH BE TOLD INCORPORATED<sup>TM</sup> IS A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER.

**Let The Truth Be Told** is intended to give African Americans the opportunity to speak “truth to power” through media such as commentary, poems, history, and art, among others, which will be provided by parents, teachers, children, ministers, historians, and other citizens. This platform aims to transform our words into empowered activism.

We are seeking contributors to **Let The Truth Be Told**. If you feel you have something to say or an opinion to offer but don’t believe you write well enough, don’t let that stop you. Please submit what you want to say, and you will be given support which will lead to your voice being heard. **Let The Truth Be Told!**

Submissions are reviewed by the editorial board and may be edited for brevity and clarification. We regret we cannot return any unsolicited articles, photos, or other materials.

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## Part of a Black Agenda: Leveraging Influence Based on African American Spending and Consumer Power

by Dr. Marlene A. Saunders

Seminars, conferences, online articles, and symposia pointing to white supremacy as a major reason for the racial disparities obstructing African Americans' true freedom and full inclusion in America's economic structures should be regarded as an essential resource to understanding the position of African Americans economically, including the business arena. Such resources are important and necessary because they provide evolving, applicable, and enlightening perspectives and direct actions that are indispensable to establishing a strategic Black agenda that addresses the best interests of all African Americans.

For example, Dr. Eric Michael Dyson's presentation at the 2025 August Quarterly in Wilmington, Delaware correctly informed us about the legacy of our enslavement and how "antiblackness is [still] stitched deep in the fabric of American society." In addition, he concisely discredited the basic premises of racist ideology. Through his unique combination of words, he highlighted our remarkable resilience. Specifically, he noted, "They beat us down, we're still here. They raped us, we're still here. They lynched us, we're still here. They castrated us, we're still here..." And, in the fashion of a spiritually grounded African American minister, he eloquently acknowledged, "it is night in America...but while weeping may last through the night...joy comes **with** the morning." In other words, the victories for the barrier-free opportunities we seek are enabled by approaches and action steps we initiate that will surely lead to deserved rewards in all sectors of American life.

The beneficiaries of white privilege are more likely to believe creating Black-owned businesses and attaining assets and wealth prove the applicability of the American Creed for all Americans who choose to embrace its values and principles including individual

initiative as a key to obtaining wealth. Believing that past racial injustices no longer matter (that we need to get over it), the prevailing white perspective supposes that the American Creed works for Black people too.

But according to Brookings, *the truth* is "Past and present discrimination in critical markets—including [housing](#), [banking](#), [taxation](#), [higher education](#), and more—result in lower average wealth for Black families. In fact, policies that privilege whiteness are reflected in higher levels of wealth for the average white family, which can be leveraged across generations to generate greater wealth and advantages" ([Black wealth is increasing, but so is the racial wealth gap | Brookings](#)).

Is it not interesting that no one has provided historically based examples of the ways African Americans over the course of our history in America since 1619 deliberately rejected pathways to building assets and attaining wealth and instead adopted dysfunctional lifestyles that assuredly placed us at the bottom of nearly every indicator of socioeconomic status.

However, there is another scenario. Our "we shall overcome" history as well as socioeconomic statistics point to our acceptance of how to achieve the American Dream which has led to significant economic progress. For example, Black median household income is at its highest level in a generation. Since 2011, Black median household income has grown from about \$41,000 to almost \$53,000 in 2022, a nearly 30 percent increase ([The Best Black Economy in Generations – And Why It Isn't Enough - Joint Center](#)). Median Black wealth or net worth (assets minus debts) has

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America...but while  
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**joy comes with  
the morning.**"

Dr. Eric Michael Dyson





reached a new high. In fact, in 2022, median Black household wealth reached nearly \$45,000, more than double the post Great Recession low of about \$17,000 seen in 2013 ([The Best Black Economy in Generations – And Why It Isn't Enough - Joint Center](#)). And, from 2017 to 2022, the number employer businesses owned by Black entrepreneurs increased by 56.9%, or 70,581 firms (see Figure 1), with an average annual growth rate of 9.7%. As a matter of fact, in one year, from 2021 to 2022, the number of Black-owned employer businesses increased by 20.8%, to a total of 194,585 firms nationally ([Driving prosperity: How Black-owned businesses fueled recent economic growth | Brookings](#)). Our resoluteness for freedom in the marketplace was initiated and empowered by strategies designed to break down barriers like Jim Crow laws in the South and segregation in the North that excluded us from operating businesses in the open market.

Citing Atlanta as an example, Boston (1999) noted that African Americans operated thriving businesses since the beginning of the twentieth century. However, not until 1973, after 126 years, did the city grant a “procurement contract” to a Black-owned firm in the amount of \$13,000. Boston informed us that even though Black entrepreneurs were “disinherited” in reality “Not only were there qualified black entrepreneurs in Atlanta, but the historical record indicates...prior to the passage of laws aimed at driving black contractors out of the local marketplace, blacks were as competitive in some areas as their white counterparts” (p. 63).

The progress noted above does not ignore the current socioeconomic status of African Americans relative to our white counterparts. Indeed, the Urban League’s latest report, *State of Black America 2024: The Civil Rights Act of 1964; 60 Years Later* stating it will take 180 years to achieve racial parity is very sobering ([2024 State of Black America - "The Civil Rights Act of 1964: 60 Years Later" Examines Impact of Landmark Legislation | National Urban League](#)).

## History for Economic Empowerment is Worth Repeating

When placed in the context of establishing a Black agenda, it is important to note that Black entrepreneurs’ resilience in the face of racial exclusion does not totally account for the progress noted above. A precursor and the backbone and for Black-owned businesses post the Civil Rights Movement was direct action and mass movements. Boycotts, for example, were successful due to the virtual unanimous support provided by unified Black masses.

The early boycotts occurred in 1953, followed by Montgomery, Tallahassee, and Birmingham in 1955 and 1956. However, they do not get full credit as the originators of an economic strategy grounded on withholding Black spending to achieve social justice and civil rights. An examination of the most famous boycott in Montgomery reveals that Montgomery Bus Lines lost \$3,000 per day in fares over 359 days (December 5, 1955, to December 22, 1956). This amounted to over \$1 million (\$1,077,000) which is equivalent to purchasing power of \$13 million dollars today. The boycott ended on December 22, 1956, when the Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was unconstitutional. Having achieved success, Black Montgomeries subsequently returned to riding the buses. As a side note, Rosa Parks did not. In 1956, she moved to Michigan where she worked for Congressman John Conyers from 1965 to 1988 when she retired.



However, some African Americans, including my mother, held the view that we should not have gotten back on the bus. She said, “We should have created our own bus company.” I was 11 years old then. I am not sure about the extent to which this position reflected the objectives of the boycott or its aftermath. One objective included ending segregation on buses. This purpose was fulfilled. However, after the boycott, Black citizens were targets for extreme racial violence. For

example, two days after the Supreme Court decision ruling, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s house was the target of a sniper attack. On Christmas Day, white men attacked a young Black girl who was getting off a bus. At that time, neither the Black masses nor those who believed a Black bus company was the next step for economic freedom had the capacity to launch a well-funded, fully functional public transportation enterprise.

## Liberation Economy

In a very enlightening and empowering article titled “Shifting Our Mindset from Scarcity to Liberation: A Call to Action for National Black Business Month, the authors, Monica Mitchell and Marliisa Hudson (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies & English Hudson Consulting) introduced us to the concept “liberation economy.” They explain that “liberation economy is about more than fair pay or equitable representation. It’s about creating the conditions where Black communities can thrive on our own terms — where capital doesn’t just touch our neighborhoods but stays, circulates, and builds power” ([Shifting Our Mindset from Scarcity to Liberation: A Call to Action for National Black Business Month - Joint Center](#)). This means we must be mindful about entering into business ventures with the same investors, providers of goods and services, etc. whose business plans do not correspond to the realities associated with economic development in low asset Black communities and eventually lead to outcomes that worsen the inequities we see today.

In their analysis of Opportunity Zone (OZ) Incentive programs, the Urban Institute learned “The incentive’s structure makes it harder to develop projects with community benefit in places with greatest need. In contrast, OZs are providing the biggest benefits to projects with the highest returns, which are rarely aligned with equitable development ([The Opportunity Zone Incentive Isn’t Living Up to Its Equitable Development Goals. Here Are Four Ways to Improve It | Urban Institute](#)).

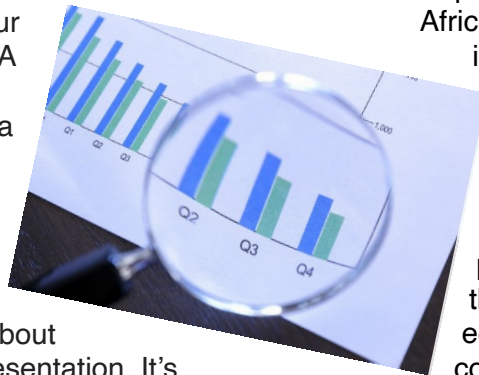
## Applying the Concept of Liberation Economy to Raise the Economic Status of Africans

What if a strategy whose aim is economic empowerment with action steps, embraced by the Black community, that includes boycotting certain selected markets, buying Black (for merchandise, goods and services, etc.) and creating more Black-owned businesses in Black communities included the following actions?

1. Exploit the direct the buying power of African Americans to Black communities in ways that sustain existing Black-owned businesses and create new Black-owned businesses in underinvested communities. These ventures target Black-owned investors, Black-owned investor of providers of goods and services, etc., that are indisputably committed to an economic development plan that is cognizant of previous or existing initiatives that eventually led to results that benefitted investors, while perpetuating the disparities that widened rather than reduced racial gaps in income, assets, wealth, black-owned business and circulation of money inside Black communities.

Consider the realities listed below as a basis for tapping Black spending power to achieve economic freedom:

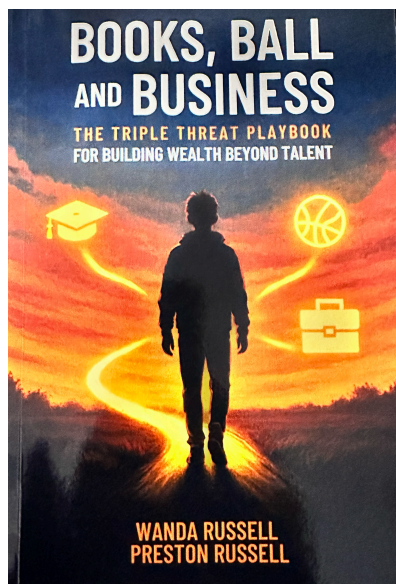
- The Black buying power in the U.S. is estimated to reach \$1.98 trillion by the end of 2025. Moreover, our spending power is projected between \$2.5 trillion to \$3 trillion by 2030. This situation reveals a steady, upward increase that highlights the economic influence of the Black community ([\\$1.98 Trillion Black Buying Power in 2025](#)).
- At 47.8 million strong, African Americans are the second-



largest consumer group, presenting businesses with [a \\$300 billion opportunity stake](#) in this community. Despite being 13.4% of the U.S. population, Black households accounted for just under 10% of the nation's total spending on goods and services in 2019, according to McKinsey ([The \\$300 Billion Black American Consumerism Bag Breeds Big Business Opportunities](#)).

- With luxury items like watches Black people account for \$60 million of the \$385 million in overall spending. As for women's fragrances they represent \$151 million of a \$679 million industry.
  - A 2025 released this August during National Black Business Month, placed Delaware second in the nation for support of Black-owned businesses, just behind Georgia. The study evaluated all 50 states and the District of Columbia on factors such as the percentage of Black-owned businesses, business growth, survival rates, and payroll. Delaware outperformed larger neighbors Pennsylvania and New Jersey, which ranked 25th and 26th, respectively ([Best States for Black-Owned Businesses 2025 | B2B Reviews](#)).
2. Because there is evidence that boycotts still work, withhold our dollars from businesses that do not support the best interests of African Americans. There is evidence boycotts still work. Target lost revenue when a boycott was strategically organized after their decision to discontinue their DEI program. This company lost approximately \$12.4 billion in market value on February 28, 2025, the day the boycott began. Its stock price plummeted significantly. Net sales (after expenses deducted) declined 3% in the first quarter of 2025, compared to 2024, as reported in the company's first quarter earnings report. Other companies wounded by boycotts for the same reason include Bud Light, Coco-Cola, Starbucks, and KFC.

3. Focus on developing generational assets and wealth in your family. In his new book, ***Black Power Score-Card: Measuring the Racial Gap and What We Can Do to Close It***, Andrew Perry (2025) writes, "...when white people graduate..., they can expect an intergenerational wealth transfer. When Black people graduate, they have to give money to the family."



In her new book, ***Books, Ball and Business: The Triple Threat Playbook*** (2025), Wanda Russell and her son, Preston, introduce us to the "triple threat" concept. Specifically, they say, "When you combine Books [to fuel your mind], Ball [to fuel your passion] and Business [to build you future], you are not waiting for opportunities – you're creating them" (p. 9). Continuing, they inform us that, "Wealth isn't just an about money – it's about freedom." It's "The freedom

to help your family, invest in your community, and leave a legacy behind. Finally, they provide important information about the difference between being rich and wealthy. "Rich can be temporary. Wealth is something you build, protect and pass on" (p. 17) ([Amazon.com: Books, Ball, and Business: The Triple Threat Playbook For Building Wealth Beyond Talent: 9781967082469: Russell, Wanda, Russell, Preston: Books](#)).

Ms. Russell and Preston's advice reflect an emancipatory mindset grounded on the liberation economy concept. She started creating a pathway to generational wealth with her son when he was just 8 years old by buying him vending machines as a gift. However, over time he became increasingly responsible for managing the products, profits, the cost of doing business and marketing.



Now Preston owns three restaurants, two in Milton, DE (Zava Café and Lago: Asian Cuisine and Sushi Bar) and Zava Café in Rehoboth Beach, right off the boardwalk.

Ms. Russell encourages readers to contact her for consultation, and/or scheduling seminars at [The Dual Career Enterprises](#)

4. A review of top ranked Black-owned businesses released during Black History Month, 2025, placed Delaware second in the nation for support of Black-owned businesses, just behind Georgia. The study evaluated all 50 states and the District of Columbia on factors such as the percentage of Black-owned businesses, business growth, survival rates, and payroll. Delaware outperformed larger neighbors Pennsylvania and New Jersey, which ranked 25th and 26th, respectively ([Best States for Black-Owned Businesses 2025 | B2B Reviews](#)).



## **Integrating Kwanzaa and Black History Month in Our Daily Lives Year-Round to Actualize Liberated Economy for African Americans**

From December 26<sup>th</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup>, African Americans around the country celebrate Kwanzaa to observe African values and philosophies and to sustain our collective determination to achieve real in all sectors of American society. Organizing Kwanzaa around its seven principles, Nguzo Saba, connects us to our cultural roots. It is our cultural roots that enable us to accept ourselves and others as human beings deserving respect and dignity regardless of one's color.

Celebrated in August throughout the United States, Black Business Month celebrates the contributions of African American business owners and businesses. Founded in 2004 by historian John William Templeton and engineer Frederick E. Jordan, Sr., August was selected because it is the birth month of Frederick Douglass, a prominent abolitionist, author and is considered one of the pioneers of Black business in the United States ([Black Business Month: Celebrating African American Entrepreneurs](#))

What if African Americans integrated the liberated economy concept and Kwanzaa in our daily lives year-round to increase median family income, create and sustain Black-owned businesses and generational wealth in our families? Doing so addresses our self interest in the face of four hundred years plus of anti-Black systems that have kept our backs against the wall. For this reason, Cliffvon Howell was correct when he wrote in the 2023 edition of ***Let The Truth Be Told***, “The [Kwanzaa] principles are just as valid today as they were a half century ago. The challenge today should be for African Americans to find ways to utilize the seven principles beyond the seven days of Kwanzaa and implement a lifestyle that observes these principles year-round” ([Copy of LTTBT\\_Feb2023.pdf](#)). Consequently, African Americans place themselves in a position to strategically create opportunities for enriched economic status in our households and in Black communities.

We know what freedom is, how the rules are changed that restrict our full participation in the open market. So, let's follow the wisdom in Nina Simone's song,

**“Be transformed by the  
renewing of your mind.”**

**HARAMBEE**



## Alonna Berry Wins Special Election to Represent RD 20 in Sussex County

by Dr. Marlene A. Saunders



In a tight special election race to replace Rep. Stell Parker Selby, Alonna Berry beat her opponent by a slim 121 votes on August 5, 2025.

Rep. Berry is the founder of The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence, a service-learning charter school focused on leadership development and educational equity. She served in the Office of Governor John Carney as the Director of Community and Family Services and as Senior Policy Advisor for Health, Equity, and Education—positions in which she helped etch out policies to improve the lives of Delaware families. Presently, Rep. Berry serves as Executive Director of the

Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ), a nonprofit with over a century of advancing equity and justice in Delaware.

Considering the importance of political engagement on the part of African Americans to achieve full access to America's opportunity structure, **Let The Truth Be Told** believed it was important to have a conversation with Delaware's newest African American legislator regarding her decision to run, her point of view about disparities impacting African Americans, and her opinion e regarding the issues, and problems around which a Black agenda should revolve. Considering the frustration African Americans have expressed regarding voting, **Let The Truth Be Told** asked Rep. Berry about the importance of voting.



**Q: Why did you decide to run for office?**

In April when I was pregnant and only focused on what was coming next for me and my family, I would not have said I'm going to run for office in a month. But I firmly believe that when opportunity knocks, you should answer. I also believe you should make informed decisions. Although an abbreviated period, a lot of time [was spent] talking to my family and my husband. If I do this, this, I'm all in; I'm going to need everybody's help. And, as I've said a couple of times on the campaign, my family is one that just says, what do you need? They know; they believe I can. I grew up, knowing that, and having parents who told me you can do anything you want to do as long as you're willing to put in the work, and so.

**Q: Priorities of African Americans over time have been to be in the room and at the table that includes in the room and at the table in legislative hall to address the issues that are important to us, notwithstanding that you represent everyone. Can you share the extent to which being African American and wanting that population represented was a factor in your decision to run?**

Of course, it was. Of course it is. I've said lots of times in my life that I've said lots of times in my life that.

When I walk into a room, I'm a Black woman. There's no, there's no other version of me that people see, right? That is who I am. That's how I present to the world. And so certainly that's a part of every choice I make in my life because that's the world that we live in. I have spent most of my career thus far, and gratefully so, ...with lots of opportunities to have seats at different tables. And every single time I happen to be the only person that looks like me at those tables, and so I know how critical it is to ensure that there is a diverse set of voices at the table...not just mine. I want to make sure that the table looks like the folks I see in the grocery store. I will tell you the multiple tables I've been in, whether that's in boardrooms, whether that's in state offices, etc., the tables don't look like that. And so, I think it's critical for all communities that we have people who are representative of the communities that they live in with a voice at the table. My experience being a person of color in rural southern Delaware is a really important experience and it's where I learned so much from my grandparents and my parents about what it meant to be a person of color, living in a rural community before me. Why having a seat at the table is so important is I don't want those same stories that I've experienced, that my parents experienced, that my grandparents experienced, that my great grandparents experienced to be the stories that my sons' experiences. I can't say that that's been true for me. I when I'm grateful that you know I'm a generation and my parents were in a generation that they could vote. That wasn't true for my grandparent's generation and my great grandparents' generation. So, I don't think that they could have ever even imagined this place, where their granddaughter would be able to run for State office and...hold State office. But I know that every step and decision that they took led to the opportunities afforded to my parents, led to the opportunities afforded to me.

**Q: You founded the Bryan Allan Stevenson School of Excellence. How is it doing in terms of outcomes?**

We're starting year two and as with any education initiative, all the data tells you, it takes five 5 years to really be able to see the impact of it. My theory behind the school is really around creating a place in a space where kids can become community leaders. It's a service-learning based school from the premise that if you put kids in the community, they won't just understand what they want to be in the world, but who they want to be. If you asked me at twelve what I wanted to be when I grew up, I don't know that I would have said the career that I currently have.

**Q: What does the school look like in terms of student body?**

It mirrors pretty much the demographics of Sussex County as a whole. The school is pulling from every school district [including] a large amount of homeschool students. Ww have doubled the special education school population. I am proud that we can provide academic supports to those students.

**Q: People have become discouraged about the political process and voting. Can you talk about the importance of voting?**

I will just start by saying, if this election has any lasting impact, I hope that it tells the story that every vote does matter, because this was a very close race, and literally it did matter that every person who did cast their vote really mattered in the outcome of the election. But voting has to be about accessibility and education. In Delaware we do have accessible voting. Opportunities for folks [to] mail in their vote. You can be an automatic mail-in voter. [The ballot] is sent to your house early. There is early voting. However, this is not available for school board elections or referendums. How does government work? I still think there's a lot of education needed about that. I still meet people. I met people on this on the campaign who have never voted. Look at that in the numbers from the special election to the General Election. It was only 40%, which was a high voter turnout for a special election, but considering that 60% more people voted in the in the Presidential Election is telling the story that awareness is important. important. In Delaware and Sussex County people will go and vote for the President or Vice President but not for any other local leaders. The impact of what happens federally is translated through local leaders and so making sure that you're voting. From a parenting perspective taking your kids with you, making sure that they see and understand the value of what you're doing, telling them about why you're voting for a candidate versus why, you aren't voting for a candidate. And encouraging folks to do their research on candidates as well. Down the ballot, you should know issue by issue what candidates believe in, and... vote on the thing that makes sense to you.

**Q: Have you thought about how you are going to get community input?**

I have certainly thought about it albeit not scheduled yet. I also am working with my team to schedule monthly “meet and greets. I don't know if there's going to be coffees or evening events yet, but we want to rotate between Milton and Lewes and maybe in Harbinson.

**Q: To prepare for the interview I went back to the Cape Gazette and looked at the issues you and Ms. Miller addressed...health care, to You and Ms. Miller addressed [during your debates] taxes, education, consolidation of school districts, minimum wage. Inasmuch as *Let The Truth Be Told* is a publication whose aim includes giving voice to African Americans and sharing with them, you know, issues unique to us “[African Americans], can you share the issues I listed as well as those I did not list that you think are particularly important to the Black community and deserve special attention, mobilization by this group?**

What's interesting about that question is, and again I'm probably going to tie it back to your question about the seat at the table. I think all of those issues uniquely impact this community, but they, the impact of those issues, may be felt differently.

- Healthcare - When I think about healthcare and I've brought this up at the table with our former governor. When we look at numbers around the disparities in our healthcare system and how it disproportionately impacts communities of color in particular, disproportionately impacts Black communities... we can go down multiple different sub-sections of health and talk about how that plays out consistently across the board. The key for me, and the thing that's always been true in my approach to problem, solving is you can't do it separate from history. When I think, when I look at a table that has...numbers that show again disparities for Black people in Delaware, I immediately am back to when my grandmother told me that when she lived in Sussex County, when you went to the hospital, they only treated you in the morgue. So, when we talk about preventive care; we got to make sure people go to doctors and people sign up for primary care... physicians, those things were not options no less than two generations ago. Oh, it's preventive care. We've got to make sure people go to doctors and are signed up for primary care. Those things weren't options no less than two generations ago. I struggle with how we create policy without understanding some of those things. I recognize that that experience is not the experience of everybody in this community. But I know that it is the experience of lots of people that I know in this community. And so, it has to be a part of the puzzle. It's not the full puzzle.

**Q: Let me respond to something you said regarding disparities in healthcare. As you know there is an initiative to start a medical school in Sussex County. What is your response to a medical school, particularly in terms of addressing disparities and health care needs for African Americans?**

I think the medical school idea is one that I've heard for a while. I've also heard from lots of stakeholders, pros, and cons. I tend to be systems thinker. And so, when I think about the value of a medical school on paper, certainly in Sussex County or in Delaware it will likely produce more people, more physicians, who understand the community better because they've done their training here, and likely are willing to stay. Now there are lots of steps and processes and dollars that would have to go into the medical school in Delaware. My thought in general is that I would love to get a group of stakeholders or folks together, to take a step back and look at the whole system. Ultimately, I think we have to start with our kids, our students. We have to be able to make sure that we are expanding the number of medical pathways in our school systems. That we're starting earlier so that kids understand the option. The reason that matters for



our schools is because even if you had a medical school, we might attract people to the medical school because people like Delaware and the Beaches. And it's beautiful. And maybe the cost of living is good price. Point for them. But what I've heard... about the challenges.

Ultimately, maybe we recruit some doctors, and they stay for a little while, but when they start to think about building their families. Housing is an option when they start having kids. They look at our school systems and have concerns about our student outcomes. When they think about roads and infrastructure, there are challenges there they are not excited about. Compounding challenges... I'm not sure if a medical school fixes it other than the fact that maybe because people are here a little bit longer while they're doing their training, they build a stronger connection. But I don't know the data on like.

- **Housing** - The same thing is true with housing when we talk about the number of developments going up, home ownership rates, or low-income housing. And again, owning a home was not a thing that was legal and allowable. I'm proud that my grandparents were some of the first Black landowners in Sussex County. I live on their land because I know that that matters...being able to pass those things down. It's hard to just look at numbers on a page without contextualizing some of the historical pieces that brought us here.
- **Education** - We talk about school consolidation. We talk about the funding formula. We talk about disparities in different demographic groups in our education system. In reality, and history, in order to really make policy that gets at what people like to talk about as root causes, root causes have to be contextualized in experiences that groups and individuals have had.

**Q: After signing a federal commitment letter, the Delaware Department of Education received funding. Are you aware of the terms of the commitment and its impact on teaching Black History as required by HB 198 legislation?**

I do not know the specifics of the commitment letter, but what I do know from my work when HB 198 was passed, it was not tied to funding. So, HB.198 [is] a mandate that says our schools must teach Black history. It's a law. So, it's not tied to funding. It's my understanding that whatever was signed has to do with the allowance of dollars coming into the State. So, HB 198 should not be impacted because it's a state.

Rep. Berry, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to talk with us. All the best to you.



Rep. Berry's email address is [alonna.berry@delawre.gov](mailto:alonna.berry@delawre.gov).



Rep. Berry's committee assignments: Agriculture, Economic, Development, Education, Natural Resources, Transportation, Veterans Affairs.