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CLAIMING SEATS AT THE TABLE: BLACK WOMEN'S ELECTORAL STRENGTH IN AN ERA OF FRACTURED POLITICS

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Welcome and Presentation:

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Co-Chair
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THE HONORABLE MARSHA S. PRICE
Member
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Closing Remarks:

GLYNDA C. CARR
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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PERRY: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Morning.

MR. PERRY: It's always a pleasure to see such wonderful faces. I'm Andre Perry, David M. Rubenstein fellow in the Metropolitan Policy Program here at Brookings, of course, and it's my pleasure to introduce to you claiming a seat at the table what does black women's electoral strength look like in an era of fractured politics cohosted with our partners, Higher Heights. The only organization dedicated solely to harnessing black women's political power and leadership potential to overcome barriers to political participation and increase black women's participation in civic processes.

In regards to participation, I'm going to encourage you to use the hashtag BlackWomenLead in your social media posts and hopefully it's plenty of them. I'm going to start by just talk -- giving you a little perspective of my household in the '70s. If you were like me, growing up in the '70s, there are portraits of MLK, JFK, and Jesus hung on a lot of folks' walls. (Laughter) That was the trinity. Today, the trinity of Oprah, Beyoncé, and Michelle Obama could almost replace them. The successes of movies, Girl Trip and Hidden Figures and the economic and cultural power of the Essence Music Festival are testaments to the economic power and cultural strength of black women. And did you know percentage of black women enrolled in college between 2009 and 2012 exceeded Asian-white and -- women and white men. The -- you can give that -- give you -- give yourselves a round of applause. (Applause) Go to college. (Laughter)

The might of Serena Williams, the political leadership of the women behind the Women's March, the public intellectualism of Melissa Harris-Perry, Janet Mock, Brittney Cooper equal or exceed their counterparts. Without question, black women are standard there to transcend race and class. Black women have been leading

in spite of political systems and court referees that inhibit them. Black women are reclaiming spaces with their perspectives, creativity, political savvy, sexual power and economic influence.

However, they are solely mis -- underrepresented as candidates nationwide. As you can see on the dark blue bar represents the share of the voting age population and the light blue represents the share of candidates this -- in the 2016 election cycle. You can clearly see the overrepresentation of white men in that slide.

Want to talk about my research a little bit and why we're here. Again, black women are already leading. These are the places -- and if you can look at the dark blue areas, those are the percent black. So, the darker the area, those are the places where state legislators and Congress folks are. They're spread throughout the land, but they're concentrated in majority black spaces and this is one of the critical findings of the research report that we're releasing today.

Now, my research focuses on assets and the devaluation of assets. So, often when we think of black places, we think of negative things. We think of crime, we think of turmoil, we think of problems. And we hoist those same perceptions on black people and particularly black women. I don't know how many times in discussions on education we blame black women for undereducated children, we blame black teachers for the system, we blame black women marriage practices on poverty. We're constantly blaming black people and we're constantly devaluing the assets that they bring to the table.

In an upcoming report that -- that's going to be released within a month or so, we're going to show that housing prices, even after controlling for variables like crime and education and the type of home, the higher the percentage of black folk in a place, the lower the price of the home. There -- we're looking at equivalent homes, yet it

-- that the concentration of blackness devalues them. Why I'm bringing this up in a conversation about black women: again, we -- going back, we already have leaders. We should have more. Black women have proven themselves time and time again. It's time that we invested in them.

Sixty-two percent of black female incumbents hold seats in majority black districts. One of the overwhelming findings is that the concentration of blackness increases their chances of getting elected, no question. Seventy-seven percent are -- black female incumbents hold seats in majority-minority districts or minority-white districts. So, the unit of analysis is starting to move from majority-black to the percent people of color and its impact on the -- on elections.

There are 500 seats available in majority-black constituencies currently. That should be -- probably should be occupied -- and you can give that -- give -- (applause) and this is about framing. You know, we constantly say, "Where are the black women? Where are the black men?" (laughter) But there are spaces that are ripe for the taking, given the characteristics that typically elect black women. One-third of seats in majority-black constituencies are contested by black women. Only a third of those places are contested.

One of the findings in the report that hopefully you will read is that black women have a pretty good batting average when it comes to running and winning. But it's getting folks in the race that matters and that's where sexism and structural racism hits. We're seeing the glass ceiling not only in white -- majority-white places, but in majority-black places. Men, black men in particular, are crowding those spaces. And so, we should see -- and if we saw an increase in that third running contesting seats, we'll probably see a significant uptick in the number of women running for office.

This is one of the maps you'll see. If you look at the areas with those

lines going through the states, those are places where there are people of color, yet no black women representation. You know, taking out Senator Harris from California because she represents the state. But -- and we only have one black woman in the Senate, obviously. But you can see areas such as Georgia, Alabama; places in Maryland that are not touched by black women and they are there.

This is the kind of mapping that we are interested, Higher Heights and Brookings. Why does this exist? Because if we can get to those devaluation processes, which is essentially examining how racism works, we can then disrupt those systems in order to elect more black women in those spaces. You can give that a round of applause, too. (Applause)

Another major finding and it goes without saying because a lot of folks are putting out this data now and it's obvious, but we have to reiterate it. But black women are running in places and expanding the conception of where they can run, so, it's not surprising that people are winning in places like San Francisco; Charlotte; places in Massachusetts. These places that were once seen sort of not our space are places that are very viable. My colleague Bill Frey talks a lot about millennials and it has a lot to do with the upcoming generation of folks who are willing to cross racial lines in terms of voting. It also has a lot to do with folks getting woke, in my opinion. (Laughter) And that's where I put my Perry hat on to give you some opinions.

You know, there is some impact of what we're seeing across the country in terms of movement, that the BlackLivesMatter hashtag is seeping into the consciousness of folks, that folks are looking beyond sort of the traditional notion of who is worthy and they're casting their investment in terms of vote in the black women. I love Doug Jones. I think he's a viable candidate. Doug Jones could have very well been a black woman.

You know, in Mississippi, in Louisiana, in Georgia, obviously, these are not stretches by any means and we -- in the report, we show the top -- the highest states with the concentration of black folk and those places that are viable options for folks. Clearly, black spaces still are places where you can train, develop, grow, but you can then leave those places for statewide and national elections. We did not in our data -- and we should have included Hawaii because they are a majority -- a minority-white space. And obviously, you have Barack Obama there. But there were very few African-Americans in the overall dataset there.

So, with that said, I want to bring up a dear friend of mine, Errin Whack, a reporter for the AP who has just covered -- who covers this topic and actually did a phenomenal story over the weekend on this very topic of black women elected officials. And she's going to lead a robust discussion on some of the numbers that we presented today. Errin? (Applause)

MS. WHACK: (off mic)

MR. PERRY: Okay. (Laughter) Oh.

MS. WHACK: Oh, no. I'm going to go ahead and (inaudible).

MR. PERRY: And we're going to also bring up the panel and you're going to introduce the panel. Thank you.

MS. WHACK: Thank you so, much. Well, good morning, everyone. As Andre said, my name is Errin Haines Whack and I am the Associated Press' national writer on race and ethnicity. I have been focused for most of this year on the primary election season where we have seen the topic that we are now discussing and that is black women as candidates, as voters, and as organizers, really just dominating this election season and showing no signs of stopping headed into November.

So, I am just going to take a moment to introduce my fellow -- the

panelists that I'm going to be having a conversation with. Immediately to my left here is the Honorable Catherine Pugh, who is Mayor of the City of Baltimore. (Applause) Seated next to her is the Honorable Marcia Price, Member of the Virginia House of Delegates. (Applause) And we also have Tasha Cole, who is Co-Chair of Running Start. (Applause)

So, ladies, I'm going to open up this conversation. It was probably about nine months ago that the country learned what the rest of us have long known, right? What we have been living, frankly, and that is that, you know, black women are really the center -- the backbone of democratic politics and the party's most loyal and really consistent voting bloc, right? But that wasn't just true last December. You know, black women were frankly part of, you know, what we like to call the Resistance, you know, in 2016, showing up at the polls to overwhelmingly, you know, vote for Hillary Clinton. You know, black women were there in 2008, in 2012, when over 90 percent of us, you know, voted for Barack Obama.

You know, voting really for us has been a form of the resistance, you know, for a really long time and I think that that's something that the rest of the country has woken up to in the moment that we now find ourselves in. And that's an energy and enthusiasm that I think that we've seen is not going anywhere. Headed into November, you know, we talk about the fractured politics of our time. Black women are galvanized and energized by a lot of what we're seeing in our political climate, whether that's the NFL protest or what's happening with Serena Williams, frankly; the renewed efforts, you know, and voter suppression are really having an effect. You know, and so, you know, black women will tell you, you know, "If you want something done and done right, you know, (laughter) we're the ones that are going to do it."

So, I want to hear from you about how you're making that happen. And I think I want to start with you, Mayor Pugh, and also Delegate Price, because you're both

examples of how black women can really create a pathway to running for office and making an impact at all levels. Can you talk about your approach to running for higher office? What made you get into the fight? Like Andre said, you know, we don't have enough black women running. Make the case for, you know, what voters get when they get a black woman who stands up to run for office.

DELEGATE PRICE: Oh, sure. So, I actually grew up with some really good examples for black women leading. The seat that I hold, my immediate two predecessors were both black women. I will also say they were also members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. (Laughter) So, for three representatives in a row -- just stating, just stating historical facts. (Laughter) But no. And shout-out to the Deltas. You all were there. Let's take it all the way back to women suffering --

SPEAKER: Mayor Pugh's got that covered.

DELEGATE PRICE: Okay. (Laughter) But no, really, I had these amazing examples of women, my state senator, when I decided to run is a black woman. And my grandmother and my mother, you know, while not elected officials, were holding down elected officials in our family. So, I grew up knowing that I could, but I also grew up not wanting to, because I saw the loss of a public -- I mean, a personal life, I saw the sheer exhaustion, I saw just what it takes to be an effective black leader, so, I was running away from all of that. I had fun at Spelman College, I was here at Howard, and I was in all kinds of other things, but I took that home.

And when my predecessor announced that she was retiring, I was actually working on the campaign side. And so, I showed up to a meeting and I was there to offer my services for a campaign manager for whoever was going to step up and run. And I was so, excited because I had just been to trainings and I went through CBCF bootcamp. Like, I'm ready. And when I got there, it was a room full of men, black men,

and they turned to me and they said, "That's not why you're here." (Laughter)

And they had convened the meeting to talk me into running because the thing that I was up against was myself and it's like, "But I'm not prepared enough, I'm not prepared enough." And then they showed me videos of, like, some of the speeches from other delegates and they're like, "You're overprepared for this. (Laughs) Like, can you please get out of your own way?" So, while that may be not everyone's instance and not every black woman needs to have a roomful of black men tell them that they should run in order to run. That was my, I guess, entrance into politics.

MAYOR PUGH: So, I think Baltimore is an example of a smart city, (laughter) because I follow two women mayors, so, we're their real example of a smart city. Also, Maryland to me is becoming a smart state because right down the street from me (applause) in Prince Georges County, Prince Georges County will have its first county --

DELEGATE PRICE: Right.

MAYOR PUGH: -- elected African-American woman in also Brooke and she's going to be awesome. (Applause) But I think the pathway is really us deciding that we should do this. And what I would say to most black women out there is, you know, "Run. If you feel that you have the capacity and the capability for this work, run, because we, you know, when people say qualified," I said, "What does that mean? That means you stepped up to the plate and took the opportunity."

I also want to give a shout-out to Noble and Delta Sigma Beta because Noble women encourage women to run for office. And I started out as a -- I've always been in business. I own my own public relations firm. Started out actually raising money for other candidates as -- in my public relations business and was headed back to Baltimore after doing -- running nine radio stations and two television stations. And

someone asked me who I was going to raise money for a City Council seat. And I said, "What district?" They said, "Your district." "Oh. Shucks, I can raise money. I'll raise the money and run." So, I raised money and I ran for City Council and I won.

And here's the thing that I want all of us to remember. I won and I sat there for five years as City Councilperson and I asked the former mayor, "What should I know in terms of being an elected official?" And the advice that I got was, "Learn every single committee, study everything about your district, always be responsive to the people that you serve, and always be prepared to answer questions as it relates to your constituents." And so, I learned my district very well, I always served my constituents, and I ran for president of City Council and I lost.

And the reason I share that with you is because I got into the House of Delegates because somebody passed away and someone said, "You ought to be back in political office." And this is what was said of me: "Catherine, we know you want to run for mayor one day." And I had not spoken those words. "But you can't run for mayor for no -- from nowhere," and we know today that that's not necessarily true because you can. (Laughter) But maybe then you couldn't. "And so, you should take this House seat."

And I took the House seat and I was in that seat for one session and my Senator retired. My State Senator retired and he said to me, "Never in my 27-year history," and this is what I mean about serving and understanding your position, "has a delegate in their position, in their district, ever walked across the hall and said to the senator, 'Can I do anything to assist you?' You should be the next State Senator."

I was scared to death. I had just lost an election the year before and -- but I decided that I would take up the challenge and I ran and I won. And then two years later, I ran for mayor and I lost. And I became the majority leader of the Senate, the first African-American female majority leader in the State of Maryland and somebody told me

in the Senate, the first in the country, African-American female. And folks said, "You were on the path to become the President of the Senate and that's where you should stay."

And I wanted to become mayor of Baltimore, but I did not think that opportunity would present itself and I knew that becoming president of the Senate also meant that you would change lives and make decisions that others would not be able to make. But when the position came up, the opportunity to run for mayor came. I had a vision for my city, I knew where I wanted to take my city, and so, I ran. But being able to raise money is important for all of us and sometimes we can be swooped up by the energy and it doesn't cost as much in certain races as it may cost for others. And I always tell people, "Be prepared to raise money. You start with your family and your friends." You know, people can't just tell you to run for office. Write a check.

SPEAKER: Right. (Laughter)

MAYOR PUGH: You know. So, developing that capacity to raise money is important whether you are publicly funded or whatever. You've got to be able to cover those polls on election day. Elections are won and lost on election day because people haven't covered their polls. Know your district, know your city, know the areas in which you want to run, and be prepared to win.

And also, you know, and I just wanted to share this: a loss is never a loss. A loss is an opportunity to learn how to win. And that's what we're aiming for, to win.

MS. WHACK: Well, you know, I couldn't have paid for that segue because I'm coming right down here to you, Tasha. You have women like this who raise their hand who say, "Yes, I want to run. I've been, you know, convinced or I've decided that this is what I want to do. Now, I need the resources." What are, you know, because

that is a barrier for black women a lot of times, not having the resources. But also, you know, there's an opportunity there for us because of some of the institutions that both of these ladies have mentioned.

We have so, many networks that we are able to draw upon to get that financial, you know, support and to get, you know, that turnout support, but organizations like yours that really kind of help us because it's not that we are new to infrastructure at all, right? It may not look like, you know, what it maybe looks like what other people are used to recognizing as infrastructure, but that is there. Can you talk a little bit about the infrastructure that's needed for a black woman to run once she does raise her hand and say that she wants to get into this?

MS. COLE: Sure. Well, I mean, when women run, we win. We just need to be out there running, winning, and oftentimes, it's a situation where we have to wait to be asked. But I, over time, have seen where there has been a transformation of that. With Running Start, the organization is designed to recruit young women who are in college. Because we find that 42 percent of the women running who serve in Congress right now were in student government. And so, that's a real transformative time.

When we -- when young women are in grade school, they tend to be more vocal and outspoken and then as they matriculate during school, when they get to junior high and high school, they tend to be more passive. And college tends to be a time when, you know, you're away from home, you're away from your surroundings, you can try new things, you can make new relationships, and we purposely travel throughout the country to different colleges and universities to recruit young women, to encourage them to run for student government, and to start making those networks at that time.

I'm affiliated with Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. There's an internship program. Black women have so, many affinity groups that we can raise

money. I mean, we know how to balance checkbooks, we're managing our households, we're managing other peoples' households. So, the idea and concept of asking for money is not new for us. It's not new for our community. But it's also instilling with young women at an early age, honestly, that they can run for office.

Every college I've ever been to you can see the young women, the confidence the minute I walk into the room. And oftentimes, they've -- they didn't know what brought them to that, but the confidence that they -- just to see how they -- when they -- when I walk in the room and the skills that we bring and the assets that we bring and we teach them how to raise money, we teach them how to do an elevator speech, we teach them about networking. It's just so, critical. And we need to multiply that across the country. I mean, this is strategic. Politics is a business. It is not something that is happenchance and each of them probably have their own stories about things that they have overcome, but it is a business. And we have to have the infrastructures in place. But it doesn't take an overwhelming amount of money.

Many of you, I see friends in this audience who have run campaigns. There are many people who have been successful running campaign with the right amount of money. And in making those asks is so, important. And we do that. We go shopping. I mean, we have no problem. No African-American woman I know is a wallflower, none of them. You know, and we -- (laughter) no, they're not. I mean, we always are leading the way, we're breaking barriers, and we just have to encourage that and create these giving circles where we encourage young women at an early age and instill in them.

We did polling through Running Start and when you ask young boys what do they want to be when they grow up, they say president. When you ask young girls, they did not always say that they wanted to be president. We have to change that

paradox so, that they see themselves and see women like here, many of the women are on stage and the women that are in the audience and see those as role models and opportunities to run for office.

MS. WHACK: Thank you so, much for that answer. You know, I think -- I want to come back to you, Delegate Price, because you did talk about, you know, the training that you had to undergo to really learn some of this and we know, you know, there's black woman, we will become, you know, be twice as prepared to do anything before we even think about, you know, trying to do something. So, could you just kind of expand a little bit about -- on what Tasha was saying about kind of creating that environment for black women to really seize those opportunities?

DELEGATE PRICE: Yeah. And, you know, I think for my experience in Virginia, I think it's really important to call out the systems that hide resources from black women. And it's the party structures that don't want to take a chance. So, whatever money we don't raise we have to come up with and make the delta with creativity, like you said, our friends, our family.

I cannot fundraise what it costs to run my race out of my district who has high incidences of evictions, who are dealing with, you know, having to get multiple jobs because we don't have equal work, equal pay, we don't have livable wages. So, like, how can I be creative to fill it with energy or fill it with these other creative ways of doing things if I don't have $50,000 to run a race in the traditional ways?

I think we also, at least in my experience, have to call out the donors who give in inequitable amounts to black candidates versus white candidates. One of the things that we're up against in Virginia right now are heavily racially gerrymandered districts for which one, mine, the courts have said is unconstitutionally drawn. Well, for the three years that I have been in there, when I asked someone, "Well, why did I get a

$250 check, but you gave a $3,000 check to my equal," "Well, her race is more competitive." Well, I can't help that they drew the lines the way they did. Like, that's why we're waiting for the courts or whatever the General Assembly's going to do.

But it's like there are always these systematic answers as to why the money is not available for me. And I really feel strongly about calling those out because you -- I may not have as competitive of a race, but I know what I bring to the table. And the types of things that I bring to the table have made the General Assembly better.

This year is the 35th anniversary of black women serving in the Virginia General Assembly. I need you to understand that we turn 400 next year. The 35th anniversary of black women serving. And since Senator Evan Miller, we've had 19 and right now 11 are serving. Eleven black women are serving out of a hundred and forty and only three of us are under the age of 40. So, the progress that we've made has been in 35 years. So, don't tell me that I'm not a good investment because we've shown that we are.

MS. WHACK: Mayor Pugh, did you want to add to that?

MAYOR PUGH: Yeah, you know, I think of Carla Mae in St. Louis that everybody said couldn't win a race because she was a representative, but she was also a well-served person for her district which was not majority African-American and didn't look to the money to make her win. What Carla had done, which is what we all must do, is serve the people. And Carla, in spite of what everybody said -- everybody said, Carla could not win that race, because she was an African-American female up against a union white boss who had been selected for that position and Carla took the mindset that I deserve this position, I've served this district, I've served it well and I deserve to be the senator and she went out and fought like a tiger. And sometimes it's the energy that comes along with your raising of money or your challenging of those who are givers of

campaigns. Sometimes it's the energy that you bring to the race that will galvanize people to do the right thing. And again, when I got the phone call; because I believed Carla when she said she was going to win; I didn't know how she was going to win; I'm in Baltimore, but I didn't know how she was going to win because everybody who was calling me from St. Louis, including her colleagues, said she couldn't win. And it's the same thing, you think about the sister up in Boston who was on-slaughted (sic) by Congressional Black Congress members who went there to endorse her opponent, her opponent, because she was new to the scene. And so, it is -- there's something about black women's confidence that says we can win these races and we're going to give it our great shot. And I'm telling you the energy that we bring, the conversations that we have, the ability to elevate the discussion; not just along racial lines, because equity in this nation as we well know, is not there. And so, we have to have those kind conversations in such a way that I don't think that we're offensive, but at the same time, it's reality. We recognize that America is unjust but tying social justice to economic opportunity and being able to have those conversations in every hallway and in everybody's living room, gives fuel to the fire that we're in the right place we will do the right thing and we are the right people.

MS. WHACK: Absolutely. I want to get all three of you to kind of weigh in on this because you started talking about it Mayor Pugh, but I think that we're really talking about is and what we've been seeing with the wave of black women being elected as mayors. The number of black women that have been elected to serve in state legislatures, you know, the number of black women who are house candidates in this general election are really, you know, that's really working to dispel, I think, the notion of electability, which is something that we media folks like to talk a lot about. For those who try to make the case that it's not somebody's turn or that such and such can't get elected.

How do you see black women really just dismissing and dispelling the notion that electability; it just doesn't look like what it used to look or what people used to think that it looked like anymore. Tasha, we can start with you.

MS. COLE: Well, I'm always intrigued when someone ask if someone can win, I mean, if you are applying for a job and you're interested in a job; no one says to you, well, don't interview. I mean, you have to interview for the job to get the job, but yet we expect there to be electability, viability, all of these benchmarks; that does not have to happen. I'm not saying you should not be qualified, but you can't talk yourself out of that. No one does when you apply for the job. Again, if politics is a business, that's how we have to look at it. And I think it's discouraging every time we talk about the path to victory. We could be here all day talking about the number of candidates and elected officials who are serving now who we did think that there was a path to victory for them. And so, we have to own that politics is a business, we have to make an investment, and whatever those resources are to make for us to know that we are viable. Just the fact that you wake up and decide that you want to run for public office makes you viable. Because we need a cross section from all socio-economic to represent our interest at every level of government, but it has to be a pipeline. And to go back to why I'm committed; there's many ways that I could be involved in politics, but I felt it was important to get two young women and tell them that politics is a business and it's an option. But to also paint the reality of what they're going to be faced with. They need to know that, and they need to hear that from people who look like me and from the sisters who are sitting on this stage who have served, because they have to understand what they are walking into and it doesn't discourage them. I've had so, many people come out of my trainings who have decided to run for student government or local elected office. They never thought that before until we brought the program together. Same thing, you

see a job opening, oh, I can apply for that job; that sounds like something I could do. I mean, no one discourages you from doing that and we have to apply that same principle when it comes to running for office.

DELEGATE PRICE: So, I think something that was said in the presentation earlier that is important I think is when we're basing decisions off polling and data; ask questions. Who was contacted? Because if you're telling me that you polled all the black people in Virginia and this is what they said, but you used a landline survey; you did not talk to my district, you just didn't, right. And so, a lot times when you have these people that say, "Well, we have to do this or you can't do this based on the data," I think that as we've mentioned, the data is shifting, the trends are shifting, the norms are shifting, we're proving that we can do things that if we stayed within traditional models that could not be done. Like, when somebody tries to tell me that the messaging of being anti, you know, the current president is the way that you should go, but I know that really, because I've been on the doors in my district because I've been in contact with my constituents, that they don't really what you're against, they want to know what are you for, how are you going to help me. I'm going to listen to that poll because I know differently, and I think there's something about a black woman that is connected to her district and knows her district, that is more reliable sometimes than someone from out-of-state that called into the district, right. And so, I think we have to really start valuing the data that we have even if it looks a little different than the polls providing that information.

MAYOR PUGH: The other I think is really important; this is something I did when I was president of National Organization of Black Elected Officials is that we've got to educate elected officials. Because for some reason, when we get there, you get held to a different standard; a higher standard, so to speak. And some folks walk in the door thinking they can do A, B, C, you need to figure out how do you get A, B, C done.

And sometimes it's not in the traditional way, but you have to develop your allies, you have to develop your support system, you've to make sure you're elevating people who are going to make that what your vision is gets done. You've got to develop that pipeline, you know, I can tell you that when I walked in to city government, what was lacking most were African-American women leading. And I can tell you in the Department of Transportation, in housing, in employment development, in human resources, almost in every area that I could possibly find to put an African-American woman in place; I got an opportunity to do that, and we've got to do that, and if for no other reason than to develop that pipeline. Because if we don't elevate; not just in the political realm, but in the political atmosphere. We have a responsibility to train and develop and folks need to get experience. And so, when you talk about internships and opportunity, make sure that you're opening those opportunities up to African-American women. And, you know, we want to make sure that we're being as inclusive and diverse as others, but if you look at the scale; the scale is tipped in the other direction. And so, we have a responsibility as black women to uplift and push forward and that to me has been just an extremely great opportunity. Because oftentimes, when we get in these positions, we forget out responsibility to each other.

DELEGATE PRICE: Can I add something? And she doesn't even know it; I know she doesn't even remember, but she's not just saying that. I met Mayor Pugh when she was in charge of the MBCSL, in passing at a CBC reception and I got my courage up, I was running for office and I got my courage up to really talk to her and she said I have no doubt that you're going to win, but when you get there do something with it. And she's the reason that I even want to be involved in MBCSL now and it's women really speaking life into other women that can kind of give us that courage; that extra nudge to say, you know what, you might lose your committee or summit but you have to

fight for what's right and that sort of thing. And so, she's not just saying it, she actually lives it and I appreciate that. (Applause)

MS. WHACK: Mayor Pugh, to just continue with you a bit, because we are seeing mayors, really, on the frontlines of pushing back against a lot of what's happening at the federal level. Mayors are the ones that are really responding to that in a major way and so, obviously, that includes women like you and other black women who are leading major American cities. Can you talk about that role and kind of what you bring to that as a black woman in pushing back at the local level as mayor against our current political climate?

MAYOR PUGH: Two things. One, I'm so, grateful that there is a black mayors' organization, because we do come together and it gives us an opportunity to educate each other. Like, one of my big points in working with the black mayors across the country is teaching them about valuing their assets and they will tell you that one of the things I've said is don't privatize your water, don't sell off your assets, because when you get to these conferences, all of these privatizers will be in there trying to lure you into doing those kinds of things; understand the value of your assets. And I actually explained to them what I just did in my first 19 months; I've been in office 19 months, and I -- there was a proposal on my desk to sell off the assets of the city's garages. And it was there, it just needed to be signed and I said, no. I said you will not sell these garages. And so, what I did do was I said, we could lease them and let me tell you why. Forty years ago, Baltimore City owned its airport. We sold it for $36 million. Can you imagine if we owned our airport today? If you would have been instead of selling it, leased it and made the money off of it. So, in leasing our garages that we still own, I was able to raise $57 million to capitalize our investment fund, so, that I could invest in neighborhoods and communities that have been under invested for decades, which you

will see from mayors moving forward, are black mayors specifically, is their understanding of their assets and their value and realizing that they have a responsibility to create equity and opportunity across the board in their neighborhoods and communities. And so, we're teaching each other that and we're sharing that, because that support system is so, important. I remember when one of my mayor friends in Baton Rouge was struggling with some issues that were going on and I just picked up the phone and said, how can I be helpful? And we do the same thing across the board; it's how we help each other. Because we know that when you're in urban cities across this country; we're facing some tremendous problems. Urban cities have been underinvested in in certain neighborhoods for decades. So, we have a responsibility to lift up those communities when we think about the 65-year old and the 70-year old woman and man who have been living in neighborhoods who've been underinvested in, and so, we can create those opportunities. But knowing -- and I always go back to the advice that I got from a mayor many moons ago, know your city; know your assets; know your capacity; know your capability; develop you allies and make sure that you have folks on the inside who understand your vision and who will work with you. Those are the keys of mine own opinion in my 19 months of being in office to your success. Because if you don't have folks around you who are going to be honest, tell you when you're wrong or at least they think you're wrong, but tell you, but support where you're trying to go; that is just so, important for all of us as mayors. And there's a camaraderie around the African-American female mayors in this country because there's so, many of us now; not so, many, not enough, but a lot of us coming up in urban cities across this country. And the same thing with black male Mayors around this country; they're growing in numbers and we've got to support them. And I just want to say one other thing as it relates to this. And we've got to also have these public private partnerships; the private sector, but the

private sector needs to understand who is the mayor or who these mayors in these cities are? For example, I just had a group come before me. They called themselves the Washington Greater Washington Business Group. Underneath of it in small print it says, from Baltimore to Richmond, and all three of those cities are African-American mayors. Wasn't an African-American in the room, okay, and the fact that you have my city's name is small print; as I said to them, I said I'm having a hard time having a conversation with you all because Baltimore is in small print and you're talking about three cities run by three African-Americans and there's no diversity in this room. I said diversity is important and we have to be bold enough to make those statements. You can't do economic development; you can't create opportunity without being inclusive or the African-American community. And so, often we get in these positions and we get so, glad to be in the room; we can't be the only ones in the room and we can't turn out hurts on economic development; that's why in our conversations with the U.S. Conference -- with the black mayors in this country, it's about how you connect social justice with economic opportunity. Homelessness is a problem in our cities, but homelessness and then creating opportunities to put people in homes is an economic opportunity, and so, we've got to make those connections and we're doing it.

MS. WHACK: Well, I hope you all are enjoying the conversation as much as I am. I want to encourage you if you are not to use the #blackwomenlead. I know black women know a little something about social media, so, I'm pretty sure I don't have to worry about that too much there. And also, please do start getting together your questions because we do want to hear from you all about what you want to hear from the panelists so, please get your questions together because we will be moving to the Q&A portion of this panel in just a few minutes. So, with all of that said, Delegate Price you said you kind of had an intervention that got you into running for office, but now, I'm

wondering if you are somebody that is making the pitch to other black women to bring them along and what that pitch looks like from both of you. I'm sure it must be very powerful to have someone in either one of your positions say, well, what about you? So, what does that pitch look like?

DELEGATE PRICE: Absolutely, and the discussion is very, very, timely right now knowing that if we get fair districts in Virginia and African-Americans get the voting power that they rightfully deserve for every Virginians' vote to be equal, some of these districts are going to look a little different and ready for black women to stand up and to run. And so, at every turn that I have, I have to speak life into women who are thinking about it and weighing out these options and just telling them do not wait for the perfect moment because it doesn't exist. Do not wait for the perfect point of preparation, like she said, qualified, but not perfect. And all of these things that we put on ourselves as to why we can't do it, let's start looking at why we can and looking at the people that have been doing it. And I think another part of that is, if I'm going to spend as much energy as I can and put my neck on the line to open up these doors that have been closed, I need there to be droves of black women running through them. Like, I can't be holding the door and pulling you through too, like, be there in place, ready so, when that your opportunity comes or whatever it is that you want to do, like she said, she was putting black women in cabinet positions and things. So, have the resume ready, have the pitch ready so, that when that opportunity comes that it's there. But then also I think that in a sense of an asset evaluation, promoting what it is that we've accomplished, and I think that, that is so, hard sometimes but I do not have a problem telling you my strength, my weaknesses and what I've accomplished, because I need you to know and I'm finding that a lot of black women; if you ask them what are their weaknesses, they have three pages. But if you ask them what are their strengths, what do you bring to the

table; it's a hesitation, it's a moment of pause and I'm like, come on now, y'all, you know, be able to say it and I don't care if somebody calls me cocky or whatever because what I'm going to state is fact and I bring receipts and if that's how you heard it, I apologize for you, but let me tell you this is my narrative because so, many people have been telling my narrative and then when I step up to speak my own story, I'm not going to do it with apologies of who I am or where I came from because I'm backing it up with the work, and I think that's very important. (Applause)

MAYOR PUGH: We have economic buying power, advertisers, consumers, enterprise, they market to black women. We have been making a difference in elections for as long as I have been in politics. You know, beauty shops, church programs, we have been making a difference, but we have not been getting the credit for that; not publicly, not in ways that we deserve. And when you think about all that has happened in the last 10 years when I think about just the buying power that African-American women have; not the just the black community, but African-American women, we need to -- that is transferrable. If you all remember there was a few years ago there was a television, there was a reality show about the sororities; Delta Sigma Theta and AKA, I mean it was a whole, it was on for like a month and black women were incensed and shut it down on social media; shut it down. We didn't have to fly to New York; no disrespect to Reverend Sharpton or Reverend Jackson, but there was none of this, oh, we're going to go sit with Viacom and, you know, any of that; we just shut that down. We had the ability to do that simply by organizing online through social media. We have economic power, we have political power; we've proven that. And so, often the programs and plans that are put in place are designed to target us politically to get us out to vote, but yet those same plans and not put together to elect women. Tamika Mallory galvanizes how many millions of women across all communities, but not once have we

heard her name as a viable national candidate; I have not heard that, but I can imagine if there was someone who did not look like her who was putting together that march; they would be a vice presidential contender. And it doesn't take away from many of the women who are elected office, but there are different pathways to serving in public office. And we have to identify those pathways, we have to identify and look at those women like the women sitting here and say, Mayor Pugh, where do you want to go next; how can we help you; what is your pathway; how can we -- and we have to embrace that and look at that and be strategic about that. We pour into each other and support each other in so, many ways in our personal lives. If someone has a death in the family, any tragedy, any personal triumph; we support each other. We have to translate that when it comes time for them to run for public office.

MS. WHACK: This is the important election period right now, and people say why. The U.S. census is why. This is the most important election because after this election comes the re-districting and we need to make sure we've got folks in place, you know, and people are taking it lightly. You know, in Maryland, we have an opportunity to elect a democratic governor and folks are comfortable with where we are and talking about how great the other side is, but the reality is, this is the most important election. This election will decide how your district is re-districted. It will decide whether or not you have more congressional or non-congressional folks in place. You know people talk where I want to go. Look, I've already said in eight years, Angela Alsobrooks ought to be the next U.S. Senator from the state of Maryland and I haven't even said it to her, but I'm just saying it out here because that's reality; because that's what the state looks like. And she can be the first black governor, she'll be almost at the end of her term when this senator gets done, so, we ought to speak truth to power and make it happen. The reason people say, well, Pugh what do you want next? I said Baltimore City needs a

mayor who's going to be focused. Everybody else has been focused on how to get out of Baltimore; I'm focused on how to move Baltimore forward, so, somebody needs to stay there and make sure that it moves forward. But vision is reality and making sure that we have folks in place for this census; because this won't happen for 10 more years, you all. So, how we shape our cities, our state in this country in the next decade happens right now. So, if you know a black woman and you've heard of a black woman who's running somewhere; run give them some money so, they can win.

MS. WHACK: Last question ladies before we open this up to the audience here. Obviously, yes, this is a very consequential election, but black women tend to show up for every election no matter who is running up and down the ticket. So, I want to talk about, you know, not just 2018 or even 2020, but beyond that; long-term strategies and investments. To really do exactly what we're talking about on this stage; expanding the number of black women that are running at all levels of government across this country. What are those long-term investments and strategies that are needed? Tasha, we can start with you.

MS. COLE: Well, I think Mayor Pugh talked about in terms of the census and the numbers, again, we just have to be strategic about where is their growth. I mean, we saw the map; we're concentrated in one part of the country. There is growth in what we call the fly-over states. We have to look at the demographic trends, where are communities moving, where is their growth. We have to smart in those areas so, that we can understand where is our strength? How can we organize around where we see growth in our country? Because that's where our political power is. There are African-American women living across the country and it's not that just African-American women are going to elect African-American women. We know that African-American women can serve all communities, but we have to be very strategic and invest in those organizations.

There's a litany of organizations that are putting together data and we've got to be smart and invest and make sure that we are aware of where the trends are. Because those that are working against us, they know that; they're making those investments and we have to be smart and strategic about where do we see trends; where do we see growth; where is the opportunity? And when we do that, like I said, when women run they win, it's that simple. We just have to have the resources together to be able to do it.

DELEGATE PRICE: I think for the women of college age and older, invest in the organizations that are the boots on the ground that are doing the work. Like, we don't have to re-invent the wheel; we have the organizations that are doing the work that can use more resources to expand what their current work is and then what I see my role as it's growing from an even younger age. So, I did summer program and I want to tell little black girls, like, when you close your eyes and you envision what a delegate looks like; it's you. Like, starting that and being able to see it so, that they don't have as much crap to fight through when they get their 30's and it's time for them to run in their 20's and it's time for them to run. But we have to invest in -- I think the flip of the mindset that we can't do it, the flip of the mindset that we have to wait our turn, and the flip of the mindset that it's not a good investment to give to black women candidates. The other part that I think that is part of a long-term investment will be a message to our white allies. Where you see resources being under-utilized in the building of black political power; check that stuff, man, like you have the power, you have the checkbooks, what are you investing in, because your budget shows your priorities. So, don't use the hashtag if you're not putting your dollars behind it. Don't use the hashtag and push somebody out front if you're not going to be there to have their back all the way through. And then for us friends, we have got to build these sustainable networks of sisterhood because until others will; it's just us supporting each other. So, this inter-generational

beef that areas may have about the older women not really liking some of the things that some of us wear because if it wasn't for my assistant I would have had jeans on today, like, you know, getting over the petty stuff and really seeing how prime this moment is for us to strike and to build and to continue to do the things that we know we can do but even taking it to the next level.

MAYOR PUGH: So, as I gauge the future, what I see is -- let me just back up for a second. I made Baltimore City Community College free in Baltimore. And the reason I did that is because we've got to invest in education and I'm a big support of juvie centers and that's educating our babies from six months going forward. And we've got to be in there to educate our children so, that they know that they've got every opportunity they can to be successful; that's the first thing that we must do. The other thing is to mentor. I'm looking around this room and I see all the mentoring capacity that exists in this room. We must mentor our young people; we have a responsibility to do that. And then we must strengthen and support black organizations and organizations that are compatible with us as well, who understand that we can't always get here by ourselves and that we need the support of others. We've got to develop private and public partnerships and we've got to raise money. I tell people I'm raising money every chance I get as an elected official. I raise money every chance I get and I invest it in other women. In fact, this past election I invested in just all African-American women who were running in my area for office. One women who was up against a candidate who had a quarter of a million dollars to run against her and she didn't have anything and we raised $70 thousand and she won. Your voice, your voice makes a difference. Another one had a half million dollars posted against her and she won. So, it's not just about the money, it's about the voice and it's about the support. And so, when we say we support someone that means we stand up and we stand with them. You don't wait until

they win and say, hey girl, you know I was right there with you. Because I can't tell you how many of those I got after the election. If you're with me, you're with me. If you're with them, be with them. And if you're with them, that means you go to the carpet with them, you fight for them, you fight with them and you're there on election day, you're helping to cover those polls, because the future is ours, but it's how we chart our path and I'm looking forward and encouraging as many black women as possible. If you want to run, just run.

MS. WHACK: Well, okay. I think that's a good segue here to kick it out to the audience. Does anybody have any questions? Okay, you know, what? We will start over here and then make our way over. Yes? And if you could just please say your name and your question?

MS. O'CONNELL: Yes, June O'Connell. I want to ask you about your outreach and the role of outreach to Veterans. To their –- are increasingly more African-American women who have served in the military in say the last 20 years, as opposed to the preceding 20 years.

We've seen a lot of new white Veteran candidates out, and at least two of you come from places with a number of Veterans -- both Baltimore area and your district. So, what about the role of recruiting African-American Veterans?

MS. COLE: Black women Veterans to run for office?

MS. O'CONNELL: Mm-hmm.

MS. COLE: So, I didn't have to reach out to them because they were already well organized and reached out to me. So, I think -- but some of the, some of the obstacles that are in place for some of our Veterans with issues that they're dealing with are real and true lived obstacles. That I think, once we can work on better access to quality healthcare; once we can work on better access to quality mental healthcare, I

think they would be more willing to -- some of the women that I've tried to talk to you into running for office. They seem to want to -- they feel like they can get more done by not being in elected office, and sometimes that might be real; that might be true. But a lot of folks in my area are very active about improving the quality of the VA.

But I will continue talking to them and one of our Senators -- Senator Warner and both Senator King, they have leadership series for women Veterans. And so they are, they are trying to build that, that activism, as well. But thank you for the question because it reminds me I can always do more.

MS. WHACK: I saw a couple of hands over here on this side.

MAYOR PUGH: I think she was --

MS. WHACK: Oh.

SPEAKER: The Mayor was --

MS. WHACK: Oh, yes.

MAYOR PUGH: So, we had a portal where we asked women to join the Women's Commission and what I was -- when my government relations person came back she said, "You know, you can only choose 12." Well, there were over a hundred women who applied. I said, well, we don't get to choose; we include. And so, every woman who applied is a member of the Women's Commission. And then what we did was we broke it down into the areas of their concerns which included Veterans' issues. And then we divided up into 12 areas, so they said you can only choose 12; so, the 12 areas everybody filtered into. And then they elected their chairs, so they became the Board. Then the Board elected the chair, so all of our issues are covered because we're inclusive of all women.

SPEAKER: Hi, I have a quick comment and then a question. I want to first thank you all for your courage and for doing this. I am a single mother of four

daughters. I'm a native Washingtonian. I moved to Gaithersburg, Maryland --where I live -- Montgomery County 13 years ago. And I was ready to buy home. Could not see educating my children in D.C., where I would have preferred for them to go to school, on upper Connecticut Avenue, and I wasn't able to afford a home there, so I moved to Montgomery County.

My question is for you, Mayor Pugh. My now ex-fiancé looked at a home for us in Baltimore. And I looked at it; did my homework. I was furious. Looked at the ratings of the schools. It's in Reisterstown. My question to you is, what in the vision of your administration, how could -- what in input do you have that could, perhaps, convince someone like me who has -- I moved to Montgomery County for their education and --

MAYOR PUGH: So, let me start answer your question because I'm sure others have. Reisterstown is not Baltimore. Reisterstown is Baltimore County. So, Baltimore City, I live in Ashburton -- which I tell folks I was going to stop telling people that I live in Ashburton because it's -- you know, not that I don't want diversity. But it is becoming more diverse and I think it was really true what you said earlier, that black communities are underrated. And I live in a single-family home community. You know, where you can buy a house for less than 250, you know. I mean, I'm talking about a three-bedroom. Mine was a five-bedroom house --

SPEAKER: Now see, I thought you weren't selling this neighborhood.

MAYOR PUGH: Okay.

SPEAKER: Go ahead.

MAYOR PUGH: So, we have plenty of homes and then we have a first-time home buyer’s tax credit for 5,000. If you work for John Hopkins University, you get a $35,000 first-time homebuyer's tax credit. If you work for the University of Maryland, you get an $18,000 first-time homebuyers --

SPEAKER: What's that neighborhood, again? (Laughter)

MAYOR PUGH: -- -home buyer's tax credit. If you --

SPEAKER: I'm looking for a home.

MAYOR PUGH: -- work for Life Bridge, you get another 20,000 first-time homebuyer's tax credit. If you are a first responder, you get nearly 10,000. So, we have all kinds of opportunities for people to live in our communities. The number one teacher in the State of Maryland is coming out of Baltimore City and so we have, we've built -– we're on target now on to build 28 new schools; more than the entire State of Maryland because of the billion dollars that we brought back when I was a senator in the State of Maryland. We just opened up seven brand-new schools in Baltimore City and again, we're on target; and five last year on target to build 28 more. And I built the first brand-new school in Baltimore, the Baltimore Design School.

SPEAKER: Wow. (Applause)

MAYOR PUGH: Thank you.

MS. WHACK: I'm going to take your question, yes? Mm-hmm. Could you please just stand up and -- when you ask, too?

MS. SMITH: Hi, my name is Carla Smith. I wanted to ask about organizing people for -- to run for office. I know Tasha Cole is with Running Start. Looked at their website just now and the diversity is obvious. It's all over the website. Then you go to EMILY's LIST and they have three white women on there. But EMILY's LIST is who is reaching -- you know, they're reaching out to us. They're pushing their message to us. Then, you know, you make your donation. I go to the reception and then I have to say, well, where are black women? Who were the black candidates? It's an uphill battle. So, I just wanted to say, what can we do to help to support you all? To help you organize people? That's what I want.

MS. COLE: Well, I really appreciate that question because I will tell you, it's interesting. Running Start is a predominantly white organization. I went to an HBCU. I grew up in -- you know, very mixed neighborhoods growing up. But there are so many sisters that are in the audience and working in communities that are making in-roads in so many organizations. But I said, where can I have the most impact? And I have travelled to Jamaica; I have traveled to California. And again, when I walk into the room at a college campus and these young women see me -- and I'm purposeful about making sure that I look and present myself, so that they see what they can aspire to. And we're purposeful about -– yes, we need local activists, but there's something to be said to travel; that we have invested, and traveled, and brought someone in from Washington, D.C.

And so, we have to make those -- I'm in a sorority. I'm a Delta Sigma Theta, you know -- yes, yes. And there's so many affinity groups, right. Mayor -- I went to college with Mayor Keisha Bottoms and she is making those investments, but we really -- I cannot stress the strategy of looking at where are we under-represented and how can we make a difference?

EMILY's LIST is a great organization, but there are Emerge America -- there are just so many organizations that are making a similar impact and we have to be strategic about it. I know I've said -- I keep repeating it, that politics is a business, but it is a business. It's a multi-million-dollar business. There's all kinds of areas: the media side, not just the grassroots. There's so many different areas that we can be involved in, but we need to be present. We need to show up. If we see that we are not there, we need to call someone.

I have brought so many people of color into Running Start, but it is a fight. I love them dearly, but it is a constant fight in terms of just explaining the value of

not just African-American women; but Hispanic, Native American. I mean, we are not traveling to those communities, either. So, there is value in -- and not only where are you currently, but looking around and saying, okay, where else can I make an impact?

And these gatherings and the data that we have that was presented here today; we need to take that data. We've seen it on a screen, but we've got to take that data and use it to make strategic decisions about how we invest -- how are we investing our resources?

MS. WHACK: And just real quick, how many hands do we have in here, black women organizers that are in the room? If that's you, raise your hand. So, there's already a working network of folks right here in this room, it looks like.

MAYOR PUGH: But there also groups like Black Girls Vote.

MS. COLE: Yes.

MAYOR PUGH: Yeah, they're organizing in different cities; I know they're in Baltimore City, but it is important for us -- and when I say I'm raising money every chance I get. I raise it, not just for me, I raise it, so I can invest in other candidates, as well. And we can be in two places at the same time. I mean, we don't have to be isolated.

SPEAKER: Right.

MS. COLE: And we should; and we can't let them tell us that we cannot. We can support our own; we can support other communities. That's okay, but we can't feed into that message of divide and conquer.

MAYOR PUGH: Right, but that's why -- even in EMILY's List, you know, we've got to be present because they invest in candidates. We've got to be present to say, what about us?

MS. COLE: Right.

MAYOR PUGH: Yeah, what about us? We see -- and we've got to move up the hierarchy. You know, the best way to help change things is to get into the leadership. You know, I said that when I was the President of National Black Caucus with the state legislators. I said, "I don't want to be in leadership." And then young people said they didn't want to be involved anymore.

And so, I said, "Well, wait a minute." I told a group of young people. I said, "Wait, hold on, don't go anywhere. We going to change this," and we did. So, what I did was when I became president, you know, it's hard to get sometimes to move the older folk out the way. So, what I did was every committee was co-chaired. I put a young person right beside a older person, so that they could learn what they knew.

And so, the best way for us to change things and to develop those kinds of partnerships is to get into the leadership. You know, we can't change it if we're not there.

MS. WHACK: We're going to take one over here. Yes?

MS. CLAYHOUSE: My name's Tonya Clayhouse --

MS. WHACK: Oh.

MS. CLAYHOUSE: Sorry.

MS. WHACK: Sorry, I -- yes, she just had the microphone there.

MS. CLAYHOUSE: Hi.

MS. WHACK: Oh.

MS. CLAYHOUSE: Okay. Hi, my name's Tonya Clayhouse. I'm actually here on behalf of some funders and so I want to ask a question in a C3 context, since I cannot speak on the pack context. There is -- this question was raised about the development of building of black power. Within many in the community, that is a threat. And I think -- I want to get to this point a little bit more, in terms of how it is that you have

the conversation. Particularly, in term -- you know, with the larger foundations. Particularly, the white foundations in which you're trying to organize and at least get money into the community in order to support, either the organizing efforts.

What are some of the conversations that you're having and what are you saying? It would be interesting for me to know in that community as we're engaging. And I'd love to, kind of, put that out there a bit more because I think it is something that comes up; maybe that is not spoken as much. But, you know, many are not interested so much in the building of black power. Maybe the building -- getting out the votes. You know, organizing and supporting leadership development; maybe those are some of the other code words that can be used, but I'd love to hear a little bit more conversation about how do you engage on that larger front; particularly, from the funding perspective to really develop -- essentially, what you're talking about here.

MS. COLE: So, my day job is actually running a non-profit for organizing black power in political power and community health in Hampton Roads; specifically, Newport News and Hampton. I was approached to start the organization because they had tried -- other outside organizations had tried to come in to give money, but it just wasn't sustainable. And the reason why I was approached is because I'm a fourth-generation resident of my area and I've been working in my area since I was 3-years old and tall enough to sit at a table.

And so, some of the relationships that they were spending time building, I already had; and so, it was a good investment. And we're already going to vote; we've already shown you that, right. But for us, the hashtag is it starts with the vote. What is the rest of it look like? Because we've been voting for people that we've then didn't hold accountable. We then didn't get the return on the investment that we spend in our time and resources.

We had a silenced voice instead of an amplified voice. So, it's really about -- for my organization, education. We hit the map because when you looked at the national presidential election, Virginia was where a lot of eyes went. And then in 2017, for our gubernatorial race, Virginia was where it was; like that was where the big show was. And it wasn't, it wasn't all of Virginia. It was Northern Virginia, Richmond and Hampton Roads. And there's no coincidence that that's where the black folks live, right.

But to show an investor, not only the resources that need to be mined and excavated from these areas. But not just at August through November, but year-round organizing. What we've been able to show in two years, it's for Virginia Block. It's a project of New Virginia majority. What we've been able to show is, you're telling me that I must vote because somebody's ancestor I never met died for the right -- not making light of the history; just showing the disconnect with the messaging -- does not get me there. But you showing me that I got evicted because people are voting for policies that perpetuate my poverty; now I'm listening.

For voting for why this school is underfunded versus this school being overfunded; now I'm listening. And making politics accessible to where they are no matter where they are, and then moving them up the ladder of engagement from unaware to leader. That's where the investment is. We were able to show a double-digit increase in voter participation, but we've also shown a double-digit increase in participation in civic groups and town hall meetings. In city hall meetings, and school board meetings, and now more African- Americans are actually running for office. (Applause)

MS. WHACK: But -- I was going to say, we, we've got time for just one more. Geez, I got to come -- you guys are making it hard. (Laughs) You, you -- right. You're going to burst if you don't ask this one. I can -- I can tell.

MS. MINDWA: I'm sorry, I'm Denai Mindwa. I'm at Howard University. So, I had to say that because I love Howard University. But what you guys are talking about in terms of going into office is very important; you know, wanting black leadership in office. But last week, as I was looking at the confirmation hearings and I looked back at all the congressional aides, no one who writes policies look, looks like me; looks like a whole lot of people in this room. I'm like, what do we do to get more access in those areas? They're writing legislation. They're writing laws. So, how do we make that more accessible to people? And the reason why I asked that is because I am on the university campus. You know, is it something that, we, you know, can do to push it more? You know, to do more so.

MAYOR PUGH: So, I think the question, first, that you should ask of Howard University is, how many interns do you have working up on Capitol Hill? You know, because when I was a state senator, all my interns came from Morgan State University. And so, if we don't get them up on the Hill and then -- that's why I'd said -- you're talking about this census is important because there -- those folks who were working up on the Hill are working for the folks that they -- that are elected and so they come from their districts. They -- you know, they're hired by them. So, until you change that, you don't get to change that.

And so that's why it's important that, we -- those of us who are in our positions -- I mean, she's got policy people in her office and the reality is, is that the frontline right now, is the states and the cities. You know, so who we have writing policy? You know, that's how it's going to change. And to her point back there about investment, that's why I said we've got to connect social justice -- which is what she's done so -- connect social justice to economic opportunity.

When I can say to you that I can get the homeless to vote because if you

house them, you know, they are more likely to go to the polls because they got a place to lay their head; then you're willing to invest in me. If I tell you that this population doesn't get to the polls because, you know, they need a job, an opportunity; you're more willing to invest in me. But again, it's how we train our frontline.

We have a responsibility at the city level; at the state level and at the federal level, but until we change what you see up there and -- that are, that are the Congressional representatives, and that are your U.S. Senate representatives. Until we change that, you won't see the change that you want to see. But again, we have that responsibility. You got enough folks out here running; we just got to encourage some more, but policy starts at the university; knowing how to write it and then getting those internships. Again, that's what we did and that's what I know she's doing, and those are the kinds of things that all of us need to do. But our universities need to connect with our city, state and federal elected officials.

MS. WHACK: Well, I think that's a good note to end on -- an action item as black women are always coming up with action items. I want to thank you ladies, again. Tasha Cole, Delegate Price, Mayor Pugh. (Applause) This was a robust conversation; some fantastic insights. Thank you to the audience for your questions. I'm sorry we couldn't get to all of them. I want to bring back Andre Perry here to close us out. Thank you all so much.

MR. PERRY: So, we're not actually going to close us out, but we're going to -- yeah, I actually want to introduce the partner of this endeavor. First of all, I want to -- it's been a great event (applause) thus far?

And in introducing, Glynda Carr, I also want to remind us why we're here. That it's clear black women are powerful -- building off what Tasha said. Black women are very powerful, but they are not protected. When you look at how much black women

earn versus white women earn. When you look at the maternal mortality rates; true protection comes from the folks who are making laws and making policy. At least, from a Brookings perspective, we need more black women elected to change those policies that are impacting negative outcomes.

We also need people who are going to protect black women. And that's why when I first met Glynda Carr, it was actually at a CBC event, and she was hitting the streets; in the aisles; hosting events. And I saw that this woman was protecting black women. You know, Higher Heights is not a -- you know, an organization that has a bunch of muckety-mucks in it that are schmoozing with people. They are truly trying to change people's lives. And so, I -- I'm very happy for her to be a part of this.

And before I bring her up, I also want to acknowledge the Brookings people here who made this possible. And I just want to be -- also be clear. We're building capacity at Brookings. Many events don't look like this. We need you here. We need you to sign up for the newsletter. We need you to follow us on Twitter. We also need you to get the information that many of our scholars present. And Glynda Carr is now one of those scholars. (Applause)

This document -- and I mean, okay -- this is -- I'm saying this tongue in cheek. This is going in the middle of the night type edits. A lot of -- like burning the midnight oil, but it's worth it. Because, again, black women are powerful. They just need protection in legislative offices. And so, without further ado, I really want to have you give Glynda Carr a warm reception. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. CARR: Thank you, Dr. Perry. Because he is true -- we've -- I was driving down -- I drove down from New York and I'd pull over for edits. It's been -- what's great about creating a great document is having those courageous conversations about framing and that -- that is what this team has been doing over the last couple of months.

You know, and this came out of a conversation that Dr. Perry and I had about our work at Higher Heights Leadership Fund; which is our arm that does our research. And was that we needed to build a data set to be able to analyze the possibilities that exist for black women to run across this country. To create a blue map that our colleagues in this room and our partner organizations can determine where we should be deeply investing in black women.

And what you will find, and when we do the postmortem after this election is that we're going to throw this map out; because the possibilities and the pathways for black women to lead in this cycle has shown that we can claim our seats across this country and be stellar leaders like Delegate Price and Mayor Pugh.

This is the 50th anniversary of Shirley Chisholm's run in election to Congress; making her the first black woman to hold a seat in that hall. So, building on her legacy, this 2018 election cycle is all about the Chisholm effect, right. And she once said if there isn't a seat at the table, bring your folding chair. And at Higher Heights, I think what black women have been doing -- building on her unbought, an unbought legacy is not only -- we've, like, thrown the folding chair out. One, we're claiming our seats, and we're defining what the decision-making table looks like in a very, unbought and embossed way.

So, in this election cycle, you know, Higher Heights is a national organization building the political power of black women from the voting booth to elected office. We look forward to building on this blueprint to determine deep investments in where we are going to create the next Catherine Pugh, right. Because it is about investing, not only in encouraging black women to consider running for office for the first time, but also investing in a pathway to invest in women looking to run for higher office.

And I think her pathway, in particular, of talking about running from the

local office to now a city-wide office is a perfect example. If we're going to envision a white -- a black woman in the White House, we have to break some glass ceilings that we continue to have as black women. So, although we have made gains, we are, as Dr. Perry talked about in our briefing, is we are still severely underrepresented and underserved.

And one of things I think the takeaways from this discussion today is that we need to look at driving a new narrative about black women in political leadership. So, although we're underrepresented and underserved, we have been making major gains over the last couple election cycles. So, for example, in 2014, there was only one black woman serving -- black woman elected mayor of a top 100 major city; we now have seven. And imagine if we actually created a blueprint in investment, that seven could be 20. And I don't know if Mayor Pugh mentioned this; Baltimore has had three consecutive black women mayors, right. So, there's, there is a model there.

In 2016, the day after election, we all woke up assuming that there was going to be this glass ceiling breaking by the election of the first woman president. That was not the headline; wasn't even the byline. In that story, is that we actually elected the largest number of black women to serve in Congress in 2016. The largest number of black women to serve in the state legislatures in 2016; when the top of the ticket didn't turn out for many people thought it was going to be.

In this election cycle, I think, you know, the data set will point to that we have -- there were 77 black women running for House seat this cycle; we now have 39 nominees. So, there's going to be gains across this country. We have an opportunity, as you all know, to elect the first black woman governor in our country's 242-year history showing that black women not only can lead in the south; but can lead on a state-wide ballot.

But what do we need to do? We need to drive the narrative that many of the lessons learned we've seen in the field is that there are different pathways for black women to run for office. We come from different experiences. We come from different backgrounds. And the reason why we need to drive a new narrative is for early investment. Oftentimes, black women -- women are not encouraged to run for office. Research that we partnered with the Center for American Women in Politics actually points to that black women are discouraged from running from office.

So, we need to change that, but we also have to change the notion around viability. Because what has happened in this election cycle and in the brief you will see, you have women like Lorne Underwood running in a District that's only three percent black. You have an Iona Presley who won against a 20-year incumbent. So, there are new pathways and new ways, but you will see in that narrative that these women still are underfunded and under-supported by traditional institutions.

We need to create a multi-year investment in recruiting, training and supporting black women. It is what Higher Heights is committed doing. This is just phase one of that work -- is determining where in this country we should be looking at investments and working with funding partners, and state stakeholders, and organizational partners on how do we deeply invest in black women. It is not just about the -- where the in-group right now. Black women are the new –- The Orange is the New Black. (Laughs) That this just can't be the cycle. It is about -- when you talk about deep investments in women's leadership, it is that long-term investment and that it is us determining, literally, what the pipeline will look like through 2014, and giving those women the tools they need to run, win and lead.

And then finally, it is about building a network. That is why Kim Peeler, Alan and I started Higher Heights -- is to build a national network that looks like this room.

To encourage black women to step off the sidelines and do what we've been doing since my great-grandmother -- is that we've been leading. And that our leadership is important in decision-making tables, but we need to be strategic about it. We need to create a movement.

I have to share that this little room of mostly black women have trained at the hashtag during the last hour and a half in the District. So, imagine, (applause) that power of how do we harness the $565 billion a year we spend in economic involvement. If we use our time with our Twitter thumbs to spread the message, and to continue to do what we do is not only lead; organize ourselves, but organize our networks. We can recruit, train and support the next generation of black women to continue to be in the Shirley Chisholm's legacy, very, unbought and embossed and continue to speak truth to power. So, thank you for joining us today. Please share this report and the data. And we look forward to partying with you in the coming months to determine how we truly create seats at every decision-making table for black women. So, thank you. (Applause)

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