

The State of Black America

Written by

Thursday, 12 June 2014 15:44



New York – The National Urban League released its 38th edition of "State of Black America – One Nation Underemployed: Jobs Rebuild America," which explores how un- and under-employment have widened the divide between the nation's richest and poorest and transformed the dream of upward mobility into a reality of diminishing prospects.

From President Barack Obama to Pope Francis to the World Economic Forum, income inequality has been identified as one of the most critical issues threatening the future of many on a global and domestic scale. Amid the discussions and debates about the wealth and income gaps facing Americans, for many, simply having a job remains the biggest impediment to equity and empowerment in America.

This year's "State of Black America" presents the 2014 Equality Index, now in its 10th edition for the Black-White Index and its fifth year for the Hispanic-White Index.

"The 2014 'State of Black America' and corresponding Equality Index indicate that while each state and city has its own economic recovery story to tell, the consistent refrain is that there is an urgent and growing disparity between the few who are reaping the rewards of economic recovery and the majority who are still reeling from aftershocks of the Great Recession," said Marc Morial, President and CEO of the National Urban League. "While 'too big to fail' corporations went into the bailout emergency room and recovered to break earnings and stock market records, most Americans have been left in ICU (intensive care unit) with multiple diagnoses of unemployment, underemployment, home losses and foreclosures, low or no savings and retirement accounts, credit denials and cuts in education and school funding. We must work to restore the very essence of 20th century America – the possibility of upward mobility for all – with a focus on meaningful solutions to these pressing challenges, including job creation and training and ensuring that Americans are paid living wages for the work they do."

According to Morial, the "State of Black America – One Nation Underemployed: Jobs Rebuild America" issues a clarion call for a keen focus on job growth, access and training, as well as education, voting rights, criminal justice reform and health care to drive opportunity, equality and prosperity for communities in every corner of the nation.

Key findings of this year's report show Black median household income is about 60 percent of

The State of Black America

Written by

Thursday, 12 June 2014 15:44

that of whites (\$33,764 vs. \$56,565, respectively), down from 62 percent before the recession and Black/white unemployment equality index is 50 percent, or a two to one ratio.

The report also showed that at 63.9 percent, the smallest Black-to-white unemployment gap was in the Augusta, Ga. metro area. Three metropolitan areas are within the top ten of the lowest Black and white unemployment rates – Oklahoma City, Washington, D.C. and Harrisburg, Penn. – but Oklahoma City, is the only one with a smaller unemployment gap than the nation.

For Latinos, 33 (out of 83) ranked metro areas have smaller unemployment gaps than the nation, and in four of those areas – Memphis, Madison, Wisc., Indianapolis and Nashville – Latinos actually have lower unemployment rates than whites. There was one city, Madison, among the top 10 metro areas for all three Hispanic-white unemployment measures. Madison also ranked last in Black-to-white unemployment rate equality.

"Half a century after President Johnson declared the War on Poverty, the state of underemployment has become a legacy that gets passed down from generation to generation for far too many people," said Morial. "What we have before us is a fierce urgency to take steps to address the income and wealth divides that threaten our nation's economic recovery, our ability to successfully compete in a global marketplace and as importantly, our belief in our country as the land of opportunity – for all."

For more information about the "State of Black America – One Nation Underemployed: Jobs Rebuild America" or to access the full publication, visit www.nul.org .