

**Summary & Action Outcomes Report  
National Convention & 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

**National Action Network  
April 13-16<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Sheraton Times Square New York**



**Reverend Al Sharpton  
Founder/President**

**Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson  
Chairman, NAN**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2016**

**Silvery Anniversary-Ribbon Cutting with Reverend Al Sharpton and Reverend Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, NAN Leadership & Elected officials**

Rev. Al Sharpton cut the ribbon kicking of the National Action Network's National Convention at the Sheraton Times Square New York hotel with dozens of political, labor and civic leaders by his side including New York City's Mayor Bill de Blasio.

President Barack Obama's cabinet and leaders from a wide range of areas, including civil rights, government and business will gather at the convention for four days. Delegates will hear about a range of issues affecting civil rights, including the 2016 presidential election, police and community relations, education, housing, employment, health care and immigration.

The annual "Keepers of the Dream Award" will highlight the program Thursday, April 14. The event will honor Judith Jamison, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Raymond McGuire, Gloria Steinem and Andrew Young. Actor Anthony Anderson will host the event.

**Outcomes: With over 7,000 convention delegates, this year's convention marks one of the largest gatherings of civil rights activists in the nation. Moving beyond the convention, activists must collaborate to make an impact in the 2016 presidential election and beyond.**

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**Plenary Session – Honorable Julian Castro (Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development).**

Housing & Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro delivered a passionate speech on the legacy of President Obama, the fight for equality, the work HUD has done to close the gap and the work we collectively need to do in order to keep progressing forward. He began by highlighting many of the achievements we have attained like walking into any corporate office and no longer being shocked to see a Black or Brown face, and of course, looking in the Oval Office and seeing a Black man not as a guest or staffer - but as a man in charge.

Castro pointed to some of the major accomplishments of President Obama such as saving the economy from disaster, health care reform so millions of uninsured Americans could get coverage, investment in education, work to protect the planet and much more, all while he faced tremendous opposition from those who questioned his legitimacy. But despite all of the gains, we have much work that remains before us he emphasized.

"As President Obama says, we've got a lot of unfinished business," said Castro.

Housing is more than four walls and a roof reminded Castro, as he discussed HUD's investment of \$4 million into underserved neighborhoods. He also touched on new affordable housing and how HUD will work to protect fair housing. Castro discussed investment in struggling neighborhoods, eliminating segregation whether it be in housing or education, and ways in which we can stop opportunities from flowing out of the community.

"It's hard to do homework when you don't have a home, and it's hard to concentrate in class when your stomach is empty," he said.

**Outcomes: Castro commended NAN for carrying the torch lit by the civil rights movement, and said all of us must work together to ensure that the fight for equality in all facets of society continues. We can do things like raise the minimum wage, make college affordable, have gun control, invest in all kids, have equal pay for equal work and much more if we continue our efforts.**

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### **Plenary Session – Honorable Thomas E. Perez (Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor).**

Thomas Perez began his remarks with a quotation from Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

"I must confess that I am not afraid of the word 'tension'... constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth," Perez said, quoting King.

Perez, who has been a regular guest on Reverend Sharpton's syndicated radio show "Keepin' it Real" talked about the opportunity that he's been afforded to discuss job numbers that the Labor Department releases on the first Friday of each month. "And we discuss both the undeniable progress our nation has made in the last seven years, and the pressing unfinished business we still need to address," Perez added.

"In 2009, President Obama inherited an economy in shambles — we hemorrhaged more than two million jobs just in the three months before he was sworn in. But thanks to the innovation of our businesses, the grit and determination of our workers and our President's bold leadership, we've come a long way. 73 consecutive months of private sector job growth, to the tune of over 14 million jobs. The unemployment rate was nearing 10 percent when the President took office — today it's 5 percent. The African American unemployment rate has been cut nearly in half. When this administration began, the auto industry was on life support, and Republicans were ready to pull the plug. Last year, auto sales reached their highest levels in history," Perez added.

**Outcomes: Perez pushed delegates to work from the bottom up and to embrace "the power of we."**

"The *power of we* means that, to create change, we need both grass roots and grass tops. We need bold leaders and galvanized followers. To pass the Voting Rights Act, you needed John Lewis and SNCC, ordinary people doing extraordinary things, willing to

take nightsticks to the face for the right to cast a ballot. And you also needed Lyndon Johnson and the bully pulpit, strong leadership willing, finally, to take the politically unpopular but morally indisputable step toward justice.

To create lasting change, *WE* need both. We may all play different instruments, but we belong to the same orchestra. So grab your cello or clarinet, your trumpet or tambourine, and let's make some music that reverberates across the nation. Together, *WE* can move forward toward shared prosperity and a stronger democracy. Together, *WE* can create **jobs and justice**. Together, *WE* can form a more perfect union," he said.

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### **2016: A Transitional Election Year with Much at Stake**

Moderators: Rev. Al Sharpton and Minister Kirsten John Foy

Panelists: David Plouffe (Senior VP of Policy & Strategy, Uber), Cornell Belcher (President, Brilliant Corners Research & Strategies), Tad Devine (Senior Advisor, Bernie Sanders Campaign), Rev. Omarosa O. Manigault (Professor, Howard University & LA chapter of NAN), Lawrence O'Donnell (Host, MSNBC), John Podesta (Chairman, Clinton 2016 Campaign), April Ryan (White House Correspondent, American Urban Radio Network), Angela Rye (CEO, IMPACT Strategies) and Armstrong Williams (Founder & CEO, Graham Williams Group).

Rev. Al Sharpton opened this conversation which focused on the 2016 election, the importance of voter engagement, continuing the Obama legacy and ensuring that the next President addresses the concerns of the African American community. He reminded the packed audience that this is a transactional, transitional and transformative time.

David Plouffe then delivered remarks where he touched on Obama's success as President including passing health care reform, fixing an extremely damaged economy, preventing war, increasing diplomacy, criminal justice reform and more. Each of the other panelists then shared his/her thoughts on the 2016 election and the power of voting as Kirsten Foy moderated.

Cornell Belcher discussed the importance of the youth vote and the African American vote both in electing President Obama into office and in the upcoming election. Angela Rye highlighted the scrutiny that the Obamas have endured, the current polarized electorate and why we cannot afford to sit this election out. John Podesta discussed the progress President Obama was able to achieve and how we must preserve it; he also pointed out Hillary Clinton's achievements in the past and how historic it would be for a woman to replace a man for the first time in the highest office in the land.

April Ryan shared her experiences as one of the few African Americans in the White House press corp, and how she has consistently raised issues concerning the community with three different Presidents. Armstrong Williams provided a counter opinion by claiming that not everything is about race, and that whether the candidates are Democrats

or Republicans, they must earn your vote. Lawrence O'Donnell discussed empty promises made by GOP candidates, while Omarosa Manigault emphasized how people gave their lives so we could have the right to vote. Tad Devine stated that we must build on the progress President Obama began, then discussed some of Sen. Sanders' policies that would do just that.

**Outcomes: Unless we organize around an agenda that protects our interests, our concerns may be ignored when a new President is sworn in next year. We must utilize the power of our vote carefully and strategically.**

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### **Plenary Session – The Honorable Hillary Clinton**

Rev. Al Sharpton introduced 2016 Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton to a full ballroom, and reminded the audience that Presidential candidates, Presidents and other dignitaries have been addressing National Action Network's convention for years. He acknowledged that he has known Clinton for over two decades, and though they may not always agree, there is mutual respect.

Clinton began by recognizing some of the work NAN has done like advocating for criminal justice reform, civil rights for everyone, gun control, holding corporations accountable and lifting voices that too often go unheard. She paid homage to the mothers and loved ones of those lost to senseless gun violence and discussed common sense gun reforms.

Clinton criticized GOP candidates like Donald Trump and Ted Cruz for their incendiary comments during this election cycle, and reminded everyone to repudiate the ugliness. "America's problems won't be solved by building walls," she said. "Our strength is our diversity."

She highlighted some of her policies, and some key issues affecting Black and Latino communities, the importance of this election, some differences between her and Bernie Sanders and more. Clinton discussed ending the era of mass incarceration, investing in minority communities and environmental justice. She touched on the Flint water crisis, pollution, clean water and high rates of asthma in the Black community. She also discussed ending the school-to-prison pipeline and rebuilding the bonds of trust between police and those that they serve.

**Outcomes: Clinton ended her rousing speech by reminding the audience that Democrats have a special obligation to not take you or your vote for granted; they must demonstrate a sustained commitment - not just say the right things.**

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**I Don't Need to See a Doctor: Mental Health in the African-American Community**  
Moderator: Terrie Williams

Remarks: The Honorable Chirlane McCray, First Lady of New York City  
Panelists: Dr. Regine Bruny-Oliwaye, (NYC Mental Health Corps), Kenyetta Reid (NYC Department of Education), Rev. Dominique Atchison, (Brown Memorial Baptist Church), Tonya Odums, (social worker), Dr. Kenneth Ashley, (Mount Sinai Hospital)  
The panel's name, "I Don't Need to See a Doctor," was chosen deliberately to speak very specifically to the black community, as moderator and author Terrie Williams noted in her opening remarks. The name touches on denial—that is, *I don't have a problem*. It speaks to the belief that as long as we have religion, we don't need to get help or treatment from a medical professional. Lastly, it reflects the deep distrust of the medical profession that is culturally embedded in our community for very specific reasons. The first lady of New York City, Chirlane McCray, kicked off the panel with a brief discussion of mental health in general and what her \$1 billion, four-year initiative to combat it in New York. ThriveNYC seeks to make mental-health services easier to access for the 1 in 5 New Yorkers who have a diagnosable mental illness.

McCray candidly spoke of her parents—her father, a World War II veteran from the Deep South, and her mother, the child of Caribbean immigrants—both of whom suffered from bouts of depression when she was a child. The first lady noted that back then, most people didn't talk about their pain.

"But those silences spoke volumes," she said. McCray added that having a parent suffer from a mental illness takes a "tremendous toll" on the individual, their families and the community at large. "We're all touched by this," she said. The first lady, who has also been very vocal about her daughter's fight with depression, anxiety and substance misuse, says that mental illness can "ripple through generations and communities, making it a 'multiplier of pain,'" therefore making it harder to maintain relationships, jobs, and a home.

"So really, mental illness is not just a health issue—it's a housing issue, it's an education issue, it's a criminal-justice issue, it's a social-justice issue," said McCray.

The panelists represented all aspects of the mental-health community and those who fight for it in different ways.

**Outcomes: We need to create new avenues and safe environments where individuals can talk about their mental health and seek professional assistance without fear of being embarrassed.**

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## **Corporate Investment in Communities of Color in a Post-Obama Era**

Moderator: Tony West (Executive VP, Gov. Affairs, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary, PepsiCo).

Panelists: Tony Williams (Sr. Director of Gov. & External Affairs, Comcast), Desiree Glapion Rogers (CEO, Johnson Publishing Company), Chris Lahane (Head of Global Policy & Public Affairs AirBnB), Don Peebles (Founder, Chairman & CEO, Peebles Corporation), Suzanne Shank (Founder & Co-Owner, Siebert Brandford Shank & Co.) and Carra Wallace (Chief Diversity Officer for the City of NY).

Rev. Al Sharpton opened the conversation and introduced the panelists, then passed things off to Tony West who discussed President's Obama's work to increase investment in communities of color. Don Peebles passionately discussed the importance of corporate responsibility to support minority and women-owned businesses, and said that economic disparity is the root of our problems.

Carra Wallace reminded everyone that both the City of New York and the state have money, and opportunities are there – we just have to eliminate the blockades that stop people of color from gaining contracts. Tony Williams discussed how corporations can thoughtfully support the community, whether it's through employment, or partnerships that encourage investment and expanding technology and digital literacy.

Desiree Rogers reminded everyone of the need to support Black businesses, while Chris Lahane shared how entrepreneurship and modern businesses are creating their own models of capitalism. The panel also discussed the importance of giving people a second chance and economically reintegrating folks who were formerly incarcerated back into society.

**Outcomes: We need to support Black-owned businesses, but also push for more women and minority-owned contracts so that we can uplift our communities. Financial inclusion and empowerment are key to changing inequality on several levels, as well as eliminating many of the problems that stem from economic disparity.**

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## **Women of the Movement – Then and Now**

Moderator: Dominique Sharpton

Panelists: Juanita Abernathy (civil rights icon), Donzaleigh Abernathy (civil rights activist), Dr. Hazel N. Dukes (President, NAACP New York State Conference), Paula Peebles (Chair, NAN Pennsylvania Chapters), Alicia Reece (Member, Ohio State House of Representatives, National Board Member of NAN), Mary-Pat Hector (National Director, Youth Move, NAN), Ashley Sharpton (Founder & Director, NAN Youth Huddle, Founder & President, Sharpton Entertainment LLC) and Brandy Shields (activist).

Dominique Sharpton moderated and introduced the panelists as they discussed their respective work and the power of women in the struggle for justice. Juanita Abernathy

shared some of her experiences and challenges that she faced in the past, and reminded everyone that God will take you through anything just so long as you believe. Her daughter, Donzaleigh Abernathy, discussed utilizing her artistic abilities and talent to educate and teach others. Hazel Dukes emphasized the importance of Sunday school, the commitment and sacrifice she and other women gave to be a part of the movement, and the importance of embracing young people.

Alicia Reece shared her personal journey of getting involved in activism from an early age, and the importance of the upcoming election, while Paula Peebles discussed entrepreneurship and its relevancy. Mary-Pat Hector told her own story of joining NAN when she was just 11 years old, and how much work NAN does to keep young people and women at the forefront by mentoring them and putting them in positions of power. Ashley Sharpton touched on the importance of elder generations and younger ones joining together to focus on the mission. Rev. Sharpton also briefly popped in to share some words about the significance of women in the fight for civil rights.

**Outcomes: Everyone agreed that the role of women in the movement cannot be denied, and that more work must be done to recognize their achievements and simultaneously uplift women and girls doing the work today.**

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**THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2016**

### **Lasting Legacy: The Impact of the Obama Administration**

Moderator: Rev. Al Sharpton

Panelists: Melanie Campbell (President & CEO, The National Coalition on Black Civil Participation), Dr. Michael Eric Dyson (Professor, Georgetown University), Heather Foster (Director of Strategic Partnerships, My Brother's Keeper Alliance), Terry O'Neill (President, NOW), April Ryan (White House Correspondent, American Urban Radio Network), Kellie LeDet (SBA) and Rev. K.W. Tulloss (Southwest Regional Director & LA Chapter President, NAN).

This lively panel featured noted intellectuals, journalists, government officials, clergy and more as they pinpointed some of the many successes of President Obama and the lasting legacy of his Administration. Everyone discussed the historic nature of the Affordable Care Act, and how millions of Americans now have health insurance. They all agreed that it is one of the most significant pieces of reform ever implemented.

April Ryan emphasized that a President's legacy really can't be assessed until 10 years after holding office. She highlighted Obama's national security achievements, (like getting Osama bin Laden), his initiatives to help at-risk minority men (My Brother's Keeper) and his efforts to address racial/policing issues whether it be incidents involving

Skip Gates or Trayvon Martin. Rev. Tulloss focused on the President's tremendous work to repair our economy and reduce unemployment.

Kellie LeDet of the SBA shared her own personal experience as the first African American woman in charge of the SBA (thanks to an appointment by the President), and discussed the importance of minority ownership and small businesses. Terry O'Neil of NOW focused heavily on the ACA and how women were directly impacted when things like pre-existing conditions were eliminated. Many panelists reminded everyone of what life was like before President Obama, and some discussed both his and Michelle Obama's lasting legacy which includes their own children and the mark left on all of our children. Michael Eric Dyson said that while he was in agreement with everyone on the panel, it is also important to hold people accountable and question policies.

**Outcomes: The legacy of President Obama may take decades to recognize, but it is up to us to remind the world exactly what that legacy is and what he meant to us.**

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### **Plenary Session – The Honorable Bernie Sanders**

Rev. Al Sharpton introduced Senator Bernie Sanders, Democratic Presidential candidate for the 2016 election. He posed questions about what we should do to tackle environmental justice, Wall Street reform, ending the racial and economic gap, bringing about true police reform and more. The audience, in a packed ballroom, gave a warm welcome to the Senator.

Sanders began by discussing how the foundations of American democracy are being undermined in many ways including the fact that there is too much money in politics and voter disenfranchisement is very much alive and well. He called out Republicans for passing laws that restrict the right to vote, and said we should instead be expanding voter turnout. He shared his own personal work in fighting for civil rights and how we should not be turning back the clock on all the gains that we have achieved.

Sanders touched on many topics including Flint, youth unemployment, investment in jobs, criminal justice reform, an end to police profiling and brutality, health care and much more. "Police shouldn't look like occupying armies; corporations shouldn't be making money to send people to jail; lethal force should be the last response, not the first response," he said.

He also discussed the rigged economy, raising the minimum wage and pay equity for women. Sanders hit on other key points of his platform like free college tuition, Wall Street and corporate greed, ending wars and reinvesting in America. Many in the audience cheered and sometimes stood up throughout his speech.

**Outcomes: Sanders reminded the crowd that he started way behind in this campaign, but his message has resonated with the people because he is the champion they have been waiting for. If you want someone that will stand up to**

**special interests and that will beat Donald Trump, you're looking at the strongest candidate to do so he said.**

**The Future of Black Intellectuals**

Moderator: Dr. Jamal Watson

Panelists: Professor Lani Guinier (Harvard Law School), Dr. Christina Greer (Fordham) and Dr. Khalilah Brown-Dean (Quinnipiac University).

This panel—now in its third year at the National Action Network convention—explored the role of the Black Intellectual amid ongoing attacks to civil rights and civil liberties. “Throughout history, Black scholars have often been audacious in providing a sharp critique of the social, political and economic landscape plaguing our people,” said Watson. “Black intellectuals have provided the probing analysis and deep interpretation needed in order to understand Black life.”

Greer said that she sees the Black intellectual as a bridge between several worlds: “those who have access and those who don't have access and all the gradations in between. Academic interests can also spawn community interests and activism. Degrees really don't matter if we're not speaking to the entire group,” Greer said. “Sometimes people get so caught up in the academy, they don't know how to communicate to the public. I see us as specialists, observers and analysts of not just the seen, but also the unseen, since we have had particular access that other people haven't had. It's our responsibility to go back into the community.”

Brown-Dean said that there is a need for more Black intellectuals to engage in public scholarship. “That is making what [we] do accessible to multiple audiences and figuring out how the work that [we] do can empower communities.”

**Outcomes: National Action Network should work more closely with scholars to bridge the divide between the academy and the organization. Scholars can write policy papers and provide analysis on a wide-range of social justice issues.**

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**AIDS Healthcare Foundation Presents: Vote-2-End HIV: #Black Votes Matter**

Sponsored by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation

Opening Remarks: Samantha Granberry, Senior Director Worldwide Sales, Marketing & Strategic Media, Partnerships for AIDS Healthcare Foundation.

Keynote address: Reverend Al Sharpton

Moderator: Debra Fraser-Howze (OraSure Technologies, Inc)

Panelists: Cynthia Carey-Grant (Women Organized to Respond to Life-Threatening Disease); Dr. Cynthia Davis (AIDS Healthcare Foundation); Ingrid Floyd (Iris House); Tracy Jones (AIDS Task Force Greater Cleveland); Calvin Leveille (Chicago Southside Help Center) and Dr. Rodney Wright, AIDS Healthcare Foundation.

Samantha Granberry noted that given how many African-American lives are touched by HIV/AIDS each year and how much is at stake in the upcoming presidential elections, she is encouraged that Rev. Sharpton and the National Action Network has been fully supportive of the need for frank discussion around HIV/AIDS. With national statistics continuing to show staggeringly high HIV/AIDS infection and mortality rates among African-Americans, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment must be at the forefront of our next president's agenda. She said that the AIDS Healthcare Foundation looks forward to working with the National Action Network and other partners to keep attention focused on this issue and securing the resources needed to win the battle against HIV/AIDS.

**Outcomes: Additional seminars and educational workshops are needed to educate the public about the deadly disease. Ongoing awareness is needed to remove the social stigma associated with HIV/AIDS**

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### **Economic Justice: Breaking the Barriers to Financial Inclusion**

Moderator: Nichole Francis Reynolds (Director, U.S. Federal Affairs, MasterCard)

Panelists: Nick Bourke (Director of Small Dollar Loans, the PEW Charitable Trust), Clayola Brown (President, A. Philip Randolph Institute), Wole Coaxum (Founder & CEO, Mobility Capital Finance, Inc.), Minister Kirsten John Foy (Northeast Regional Director, NAN), Bertha Lewis (Founder, The Black Institute), Charles Lowery (Director of Fair Lending & Inclusion, NAACP Economic Department) and Cy Richardson (Senior VP Economics & Housing, National Urban League).

This panel, focused on financial inclusion and empowerment, touched on everything from reasons as to why people are often left out of economic systems, to ways in which they can utilize modern mechanism to circumvent barriers. Nichole Reynolds shared some troubling statistics on the number of African American households that are currently underserved economically, while Wole Coaxum discussed ways in which technology can help to change the game and level the playing field.

Rev. Al Sharpton made an appearance during this panel and gave a rousing speech about how economic empowerment was at the core of Dr. King's own work. He highlighted gentrification, and how others are receiving loans and assistance to build in our communities when we don't receive the same financial support. Rev. Sharpton called on celebrities and artists to do more to buy TV and radio stations instead of things like clothes. He also said the need for more contracts and business ownership was essential in order to level the playing field. "If you move wealth from our communities, then you are talking about a real generational shift," he warned.

Charles Lowery reminded the audience that we must pool our resources, and that total inequality was the sum of financial, physical and cultural disadvantages. Cy Richardson

pointed out that financial service systems like banking are just as important as leveling educational systems and our criminal justice system because they are all interconnected. Clayola said people should not judge others regarding their economic situation until they have been in their shoes, while Nick Bourke emphasized the fact that there aren't even banking branches in some neighborhoods, and as a result, African Americans are twice as likely to fall victim to payday loans.

**Outcomes: When 55% of African American households and 49% of Latino households are underserved, people of color are starting off at a severe disadvantage. This, along with other disparities, must be addressed without delay because economic inequality is directly related to inequality across the board.**

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### **Plenary Session – Rev. Al Sharpton Speaks with David Axelrod, former Senior Strategist for Barack Obama, Director of the Institute of Politics, University of Chicago**

Rev. Al Sharpton gave a warm introduction to David Axelrod and shared his work in politics even prior to working with Barack Obama. “He is no stranger to progressive politics,” said Rev. Sharpton “And he has maintained his integrity – there are few people in politics that you can say that about.”

This candid conversation focused on Axelrod's key role in helping to shape not only Barack Obama's Presidential campaign, but also in helping to steer the political ship back on a progressive course after things like ‘the Reagan revolution’. Not only was the first African American man elected to the White House, but the nation saw a change in course on a plethora of levels.

Axelrod shared some of his personal stories and thoughts working so closely with the President, and touched on just how invested Obama was in many of the causes he championed. He focused heavily on the Affordable Care Act, and shared his own story of family financial hardship because of high health care costs. “Seven Presidents tried and seven Presidents failed,” he said regarding health care reform. “This President was able to get it done.”

Axelrod said there are some 20 million people that have insurance today that might otherwise not have any, and there are people alive today that may not have been with us if it weren't for the President's determination. He discussed Obama's work to repair the economy after the worst recession since the Great Depression, and the fact that the unemployment rate has been significantly reduced from what he had inherited.

**Outcomes: Rev. Sharpton reminded the audience that in November we are going to see a White person elected to an office that was held by the first African American, and we must ensure that our gains are not retracted. Axelrod echoed his sentiments**

**and said it was up to everyone to vote and participate in the process if they want to keep the nation moving forward.**

**Plenary Address – Broderick Johnson (Assistant to the President, White House Cabinet Secretary, Chair, My Brother’s Keeper Task Force).**

Rev. Al Sharpton introduced Broderick Johnson and praised him for all of the behind-the-scenes work that he has done to uplift young men (and women) of color. “He has the knowledge and wherewithal to get it done; that’s why he got the confidence of the President,” said Rev. Sharpton.

Johnson began by pointing to some of the many accomplishments of the President in 2015 alone. He highlighted 12 months of job growth, reducing the unemployment rate significantly, marriage equality, further improvements in K-12 education, an international agreement to combat climate change, a historic deal with Iran and much more.

Johnson then delved into the tremendous initiative the President created to help young men of color specifically titled “My Brother’s Keeper”. He shared several personal stories of people who have been directly helped by the program; many of these personal stories included just how hopeless and hurt so many of our young people are in communities across the country, and how this initiative has helped to empower them. Johnson said corporations and foundations have invested more than \$1 million into My Brother’s Keeper which is assisting youth in every state whether through creating a summer jobs program or working to stop the school-to-prison pipeline. He stated that 250 communities from coast-to-coast have committed to do the work of My Brother’s Keeper.

**Outcomes: The President is targeting problems affecting young people of color like extensive barriers to opportunities, and a cycle of mistrust and hopelessness. My Brother’s Keeper is a remarkable step towards combatting these challenges, but it is up to us to continue the work and make sure the next President is just as engaged as our first African American President was.**

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**FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2016**

**Summer 2015: Tragedy, A Flag Victory and Lessons for the Future**

Moderator: Craig Melvin, Correspondent, MSNBC

Panelists: Robin Bradford (VP, Charlotte, NC NAN Chapter), Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter (Democratic Member, District 66, Orangeburg County, SC), Elder James Johnson (South Carolina State President for NAN), State Senator Marlon Kimpson (Democratic Member, District 42, Charleston & Dorchester Counties, SC), Rev. Nelson Rivers (VP of Religious

& External Affairs, NAN) and Rep. Todd Rutherford (Democratic Member, District 74, SC).

Everyone heard of the removal of the confederate flag on South Carolina's statehouse grounds last year, but many aren't as familiar with the tragic incidents that took place prior to its removal – this panel focused on those events and the concerted push to have the offensive flag taken down. Comprised of a mix of elected officials, clergy and activists, the conversation gave context to the climate in South Carolina and the work that many put in so that this symbol of hate would eventually be removed.

The panel discussed the shooting death of Walter Scott by a police officer, and the horrific murders of nine members of the Mother Emanuel AME Church, including State Senator Clementa Pinckney. Robin Bradford asked why there was so much hate that took the lives of those innocent people, and emphasized that our lives are valuable, they do matter and until we accept that and project it onto others, we will always be victimized.

State Senator Marlon Kimpson explained how the death of Walter Scott brought about a body camera bill, and how the death of nine Church members forced officials to listen to the push for the removal of the confederate flag. Todd Rutherford discussed Senator Pinckney's work, and emphasized that the Governor only agreed to the flag's removal because of pressure (including from the RNC), and that she should not receive credit for something that many have been advocating for prior to her actions.

Elder James Johnson shared his personal work in the modern civil rights movement and the manner in which he learned of Walter Scott's death, as well as his work with NAN on the ground to seek justice in many cases. "Ten people died to get body cameras and to get a flag down," he said as he reminded people that blood is literally still being spilled today.

**Outcomes: African Americans must vote and elect officials that represent their interests so that we don't have to wait for tragedy to bring about change.**

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## **Let's Talk About Guns: Legislation, Straw Buyers, Incarceration and the Iron Pipeline**

Moderators: Iesha Sekou (Founder & CEO, Street Corner Resources, President, Anti-Violence VEPIC Committee, NAN NYC Chapter), and Pastor Steffie Bartley (New Hope Memorial Baptist Church and NAN Board of Directors).

Panelists: Laticia James (Public Advocate), Eric Cumberbatch (Program Director, Anti-Violence Programs, Office of the Mayor on Criminal Justice), Shanay (Representing for Life Camp Inc. and Erica Ford), Shaina Harrison (New Yorkers Against Violence Education Fund), Senator Raymond Lesniak (NJ State Senate), Rev. Kevin McCall

(President, Brooklyn East Chapter, NAN), Abdul Muhammad (Chairman, NJ Anti-Violence Coalition), Dr. Desmond Patton (Columbia University), Jumaane Williams (NYC Council) and Keith Wright (NY State Assembly).

This sobering panel focused on the residual and spiritual effects of gun violence, especially on our youth, and what the community can do immediately to combat some of these challenges. Iesha Sekou opened the conversation and gave a passionate speech on the subject. She was followed by Laticia James who discussed some of the work her office is doing to end gun violence, including bringing litigation against those that put out products of death.

Shaina Harrison pointed out that violence in the community is a public health issue, while Shanay echoed that some of the effects of gun violence are severe trauma, PTSD and a continued cycle of detrimental behavior. Senator Lesniak called out the NRA and said most politicians are cowards because they fail to stand up to the NRA. Eric Cumberbatch emphasized the need for trauma services and therapy for communities and especially for our youth.

“I was a perpetrator of violence; I killed my own brother,” shared Abdul Muhammad as he discussed his past, his imprisonment and eventual reform. Jumaane Williams discussed the need to implement stronger gun control laws that can prevent weapons from coming into the community in the first place. He said we must have personal responsibility to make the right decisions, but we must also fix the systemic problems that create an environment for violence and hopelessness to emerge as well.

**Outcomes: Guns are far too accessible for our communities, and we are losing too many of our young people. The solution involves passing legislation that makes it difficult for guns to be so readily available, but also speaking to our young people, intervening and creating an environment that gives them options before they resort to violence. We must provide services that begin to heal our youth.**

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## **The Crisis in Black Media**

Moderator: Ed Gordon (CEO, Ed Gordon Media)

Panelists: Mignon Clyburn (FCC Commissioner), Michele Ebanks (President, Essence Magazine), Earl “Butch” Graves Jr. (President & CEO Black Enterprise), Bishop Bobby Hilton (President, Cincinnati Chapter NAN, and Radio host 1230 AM WDBZ), Kim Keenan (President & CEO, Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council), Dr. David Porter Jr. (Exec Director, The Walter Kaitz Foundation), Elinor Tatum (Publisher & Editor-in-Chief, Amsterdam News), Goldie Taylor (Editor-at-Large, TheDailyBeast.com), Jim Winston (President, National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters) and Rev. Don Tolliver (VP, Tallahassee, FL Chapter, NAN, and radio host, WTAL, 1450AM).

Rev. Al Sharpton began this discussion and emphasized the importance of remembering where we came from and telling our own stories. He introduced FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn who gave stats on the lack of Black ownership in regards to commercial TV stations, FM stations and more. She highlighted some of the work the FCC is doing to combat this inequity, and why it is important that we raise our voices and address these challenges.

Jim Winston focused on the fact that things have gotten worse for the Black community because many companies have consolidated, reducing the number of ownership even more. Elinor Tatum said ad dollars don't go to positive shows we should be watching because people are afraid of an empowered and enlightened people. Goldie Taylor reminded everyone that you have to be careful who you let tell your story, while David Porter Jr. argued that if something isn't profitable, advertisers are not going to support it. Michele Ebanks said that at Essence they try to cover both entertainment and more serious topics to showcase all images of African American women.

**Outcomes: We must ask ourselves what media outlets and programs we are supporting; and everyone should subscribe to their local Black newspaper/outlet. We must also work with entities like the FCC to ensure that diversity in media becomes a reality both in front of the camera/mic and behind-the-scenes as well.**

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**SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2016**

### **Youth: Technology Beyond “The Gram”**

Panelists: Leah Gilliam (VP of Strategy & Innovation, GirlsWhoCode), Christina Lewis Halpern (Founder & Director, AllStarCode), Rev. Shane Harris (President, San Diego Chapter, NAN), Kevin Pemberton (Seniro VP, Strategy, Due Diligence), Naida Hill (Co-Founder, ChicksTech), Lauren Maillian (Author, Co-Star, Oxygen's “Quit Your Day Job”) and Breanna Rice (Co-Founder, ChicksTech).

Technology, innovation and entrepreneurship were the focus of this panel that combined both advice for tech startups and ways people can get ahead by utilizing technology. Leah Gilliam reminded the audience that teaching girls tech was key and giving them the exposure and support they need to succeed in a male dominated industry. Rev. Shane discussed the importance of utilizing the power of social media combined with grassroots activism on the streets in order to bring about effective change.

Christina Lewis Halpern gave tips on economically succeeding in the tech world and on your own, as well as celebrating and learning from your failures. Lauren Maillian shared advice on how to use social media for causes effectively, how to be consistent, timely and relevant no matter what your cause is, while Naida and Breanna shared their story of creating ChicksTech at such an early age. Kevin Pemberton discussed how to use tech to

solve the most pressing issues in society, and how to access greater opportunities in tech and biz.

**Outcomes: Technology is the future and we must be a part of it. Things like coding, STEM and more must be learned by both the young and old in order to be a part of achieving greater economic justice.**

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### **Youth Financial Literacy: Is There a World Beyond Cash?**

Moderator: Mercedes Garcia (VP, Senior Business Leader, Global Community Relations, Master Card).

Panelists: Tuesday Brooks (Parent of a student from World of Money), Ash “Cash” Exantus (Ash Cash Enterprises), Sabrina Lamb (Founder, World of Money) and Ciana Montero (Youth Board Member, World of Money).

This panel, sponsored by Master Your Card, focused on financially empowering our youth. Mercedes Garcia opened the discussion by highlighting how almost half of communities of color are underserved meaning they either don’t have a bank account or are under-banked and rely on things like payday loans, check cashing places, etc. This puts them at a severe disadvantage fiscally and in other aspects of their lives she said.

Sabrina Lamb spoke ardently about teaching young people that they are valuable and loved without having to spend money on material things. She discussed the work that her organization, World of Money, is doing to educate both parents and children about saving money, being responsible for legal and financial decisions and accumulating wealth. Instead of a spending goal, we need to have a savings goal she said, citing a hashtag we should probably start using: #saveyourmoneysaveyourself.

Ash “Cash” Exantus shared how he, like so many others, were never taught how to grow or invest money, but have just been taught how to spend it. “Every message that we have received from when we were babies to adulthood is about how to be a consumer,” he said. Exantus said everything is tied into economic prosperity, and that’s why it’s so vital for us to understand credit, and knowing the difference between debit and credit cards.

Ciana Montero discussed some concerns that young people have, and why it’s so important for them to comprehend how to budget, pay for the cost of living and also understand the language of money. Tuesday Brooks said she realized she was leaving her son out of financial decisions, and decided to do something about by including him in the process - taking him to the bank, filling out forms and more. “We must trust our young people with this information; they are capable and they are smart,” she said.

**Outcomes: Children are not receiving sound financial education in school; it is up to us to arm them with the knowledge to succeed economically and overall in life.**

**This will not only vastly improve their lives, their futures and the lives of their loved ones, but it will also uplift entire communities.**

### **Environmental Justice: Flint and Beyond 2016**

Moderator: Rev. Charles Williams Jr. (Michigan Chapter Chair, NAN)

Panelists: Lawanna Gelzer (President, NAN Central Florida Chapter), Quentin James (Co-Founder & COO, Vestige Strategies), Sam Riddle (Political Director, Michigan Chapter NAN), Vien Truong (National Director, Green For All), Minister Perry Warrior Jr. (Founder, Warrior Foundation) and Rev. Lennox Yearwood (President & CEO, Hip-Hop Caucus).

Rev. Charles Williams led this panel that focused on the current lead poisoning crisis in Flint, Michigan and the larger issue of environmental justice. He highlighted the petition that has called for the resignation of Gov. Snyder, and discussed many of the problems that people in Flint are suffering from such as rashes, miscarriages and all kinds of health issues.

Rev. Lennox emphasized the fact that the catastrophe in Flint is happening everywhere across the country, and he shared some of the things the hip-hop community has done to assist those suffering in Flint. Vien Truong discussed her work on these issues in California and how we can make polluters pay for environmentally friendly things for low-income communities. Minister Perry Warrior Jr. reminded people that the crisis in Flint amounts to murder, and that the poor don't even have the means to pick up clean water bottles. Lawanna Gelzer emphasized that Flint isn't unique; it is just the most recent place where this has happened, and that pollution leads to cancer clusters, high rates of asthma and much more. Jada Mosely shared her personal story of raising 30,000 bottles to send to Flint, and her concerns about young people not doing enough to give back.

**Outcomes: People of color must be more involved in the environmental movement because they are directly impacted the most.**