



## Black Women Still Face Race/Gender Disparities

[Washington Afro](#), News Report, James Wright, Posted: Mar 07, 2008 [Share / Save](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Black women face a number of challenges in American life and have few resources to draw on in order to solve their problems concludes the National Urban League's 2008 "The State of Black America" annual report.

Last year's study focused on Black men. This year, the 254-page study concentrates on Black women. It features contributions from Dorothy Height, president emeritus of the National Council of Negro Women; Julianne Malveaux, president of Bennett College; Maudine Cooper, president of the Greater Washington Urban League, former Labor Secretary Alexis Herman and former Essence magazine executive editor Susan Taylor.

"This year's report explores the challenges encountered by the females within our community—the mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters who have been the backbone of the Black family," National Urban League CEO Marc H. Morial said at a news conference this week. "Women typically hold the family together, especially in the African-American community, where the marriage rate is lower than in other communities and where a higher percentage of single mothers are the heads of households."

Morial said that Black women's troubles are a part of general anxiety in the country, with the subprime lending crisis affecting Blacks in general more than the general population.



"According to the 2006 Home Mortgage Disclose Act data, African-American women receive 54 percent of subprime loans," Morial said. "Worse yet, upper-income Black women were five times as likely as White men to receive such loans."

Height said that Black women have often to fight a two-prong battle.

"It is Black women who face most strikingly a double disadvantage in the world of work," she said. "Our earnings are reflective of both a race and gender pay gap."

Malveaux, an economist, reflected on that gap in her essay, "Shouldering the Third Burden: The Status of African-American Women."

"While more likely to be employed than African-American men, African-American women earn lower wages than African-American men and White women do, with White women earning a median \$663 per week in 2007, compared to \$629 for African-American men and \$566 for African-American women," she said. "All groups earn less than White men, whose weekly median earnings were \$850."

Malveaux said even highly-educated Black women face limitations.

"While African-American women represent two-thirds of all African-American undergraduates, and the majority of graduate students, African-American women are less likely than African-American men to reach the pinnacle of their occupations, especially in corporate America," she said.

Malveaux said that while a handful of Black men lead Fortune 500 corporations, and a dozen or so White women, no Black woman can claim that status.

Cooper, who leads the D.C. affiliate of the National Urban League, wrote an essay titled, "The Invisibility Blues of Black Women in America." She wrote, "There is no social safety net for the invisible Black woman who often struggles along with children abandoned by the males who fathered them. These women are left with little or no income and bureaucratic red tape that wraps around them until they smother."

Labor expert Herman said that despite the success of Black women in the world of work, from U.S. Secretary of State to 14 seats in the U.S. Congress and 215 in state legislatures, there is still a lack of earnings progress.

"Women overall make up just 7 percent of those making \$250,000 or more a year and 18 percent of those making \$100,000 a

*You are there for her.*

*We are here for you.*

San Mateo County Caregivers Collaborative

year or more," she said.

"African-American women make up less than one percent of those making \$100,000 or more a year. While we are six percent of the overall workforce, we make up 14 percent of those making between \$15,000 and \$30,000." The former Clinton labor expert said that while strides have been made in Fortune 500 companies, still only 1.1 percent of corporate officers are Black women.

Not surprisingly, Susan Taylor wrote about "Black Love Under Siege," with an emphasis on the difficulties that Black families face.

"Life for Black people in America is still a dangerous, perilous thing," she said. "It has wounded and crippled so many of our men – if not physically, then surely mentally and spiritually."

For Black women, Taylor writes, it is often an issue of being judged by alien standards.

Quoting co-authors Charisse Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden of [Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America], she said, "From early childhood through adulthood, many Black women, pressured to be physically attractive and to live up to European beauty standards, experience tremendous pain and shame related to their skin color, hair texture, body shape and weight."

Shifting gears, the Opportunity Compact section of the report offer some specific suggestions:

- \* Provide mandatory childhood education and access to college for those who want it;
- \* Ensure universal healthcare for all children;
- \* Provide tools for working families to be economically self-sufficient;
- \* Start an urban infrastructure fund to reinvigorate urban communities;
- \* Index the minimum wage to inflation and expand the EIT to working families;
- \* Expand "second chance" programs for high school dropouts, ex-offenders and at-risk youth;
- \* Adopt the Urban League's Homebuyer's Bill of Rights;
- \* Reform public housing for low-income families;
- \* Explore minority business opportunity goals to ensure that minorities get government contracts;
- \* Expand the use of instruments such as grants, corporate partnerships and micro-financing to gain access to capital.

Morial said that the report and its Opportunity Compact should be seen as a work-in-progress.. He said that the presidential race is an opportunity for the candidates to show how committed they are to developing urban America.

"We are going to invite the major party nominees to address us in early August to see whether they agree to our goals," Morial said. "We are also asking our Urban League affiliates, board members and supporters to question the presidential candidates on these issues and make a determination on which they support based on that."

#### Related Articles:

[Hair Salons Help Shape California's Democratic Pick](#)

[Congressional Black Caucus Split Between Clinton and Obama](#)

[Private School Outcast -- Why Being Black at Majority White Schools Works for Me](#)

Page 1 of 1

[Return to Normal Version](#)  
[Send Page to Friend](#)  
[Subscribe to NAM Newsletters](#)

[Share / Save](#) ↕

[bookmark this on Delicious](#)

saved by 1 other person

[Jobs for African American](#)  
 Find Diversity Jobs Near You. 25 Great Companies for Black Women.  
[www.CBAANetwork.com](http://www.CBAANetwork.com)

[Free Grant Kit For Blacks](#)  
 30,000 In Grants Available for Blacks, Never Repay!  
[iGrantCash.com](http://iGrantCash.com)

[Black In America](#)  
 Join free social network based on CNN special - Black In America.  
[www.BlackInAmerica.com](http://www.BlackInAmerica.com)

[African American Grants](#)  
 \$30,000 in African American Grants Never Repay - Get Your Free Kit.  
[AfricanAmerican.GrantKi](http://AfricanAmerican.GrantKi)

Advertisements on our website do not necessarily reflect the views or mission of New America Media, our affiliates or our funders.