

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

BLACK HOUSEHOLDS & COVID-19:
IMPEDIMENTS TO ECONOMIC SECURITY

Washington, D.C.
Thursday, August 13, 2020

Opening Remarks:

ROBERT E. RUBIN
Former U.S. Treasury Secretary;
Co-Chair Emeritus, Council on Foreign Relations

Roundtable Discussion: New Research on How COVID-19 has Exacerbated Racial Economic Inequality

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Director, The Hamilton Project,
Senior Fellow, Economic Studies, The Brookings Institution

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Roundtable Discussion: Exploring How Racial Economic Inequality has Affected Communities

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. RUBIN: Good morning, I'm Bob Rubin and on behalf of my colleagues with The Hamilton Project, let me welcome you to join our webcast entitled "Black Households & COVID-19: Impediments to Economic Security".

Over the years, The Hamilton Project has examined many issues, looked at many issues that involve economic policy and involve despaired conditions for communities of color, particularly for African-Americans. This includes a range -- wide range of topics, place-based policies, climate change, social safety nets, economics of criminal justice reform, and an enormous amount else. But this is the first event we've done in which we've looked at economic disparities directly and explicitly through a racial lens. And it seemed to us that this was a particularly germane time to examine racial disparities. The pandemic, as we all know, offended the lives of many, many millions of Americans, probably more so will occur in the future, and the evidence is clear that this ending of lives, particularly and especially effected people of color, especially Black Americans in particular, and that seemed to us at least to provide a particularly germane time for focusing on this issue.

Today's program, as you know, will discuss the many ways in which COVID-19 has exacerbated the already substantial economic racial inequality in this country. In that context, I'm going to start with three brief comments that go more broadly to addressing racial disparities. Firstly, it has been long in my view, actually for many decades, that providing everyone in our country with the requisites for being effective in the mainstream economy is a matter of an enormous economic consequence. By doing so, we could enormously and very substantially decrease social costs in our society, and we could greatly increase productivity. It's a condition that I have long held and have long felt that is central to the success of our economy in the future.

When I was in Treasury, we established an Office of Economic Opportunity. The object of the office was to develop -- address poverty, urban poverty in particular, but poverty more broadly, and that as you know disproportionately affects people of color. A senior republican senator whom I liked and respected called me up to the Hill and said that we should close down our office because he said the

Treasury should only be addressing economic issues, not social issues. I responded respectfully that in my view, overcoming poverty was a vital economic issue and that it was critical if we were going to have a successful economy in the future, and our office remained open and not only remained open, but robust in pursuing its mission.

Secondly, it -- it is my hope that the public focus and deliberation spurred by the unconscionable death of George Floyd may finally lead our nation to do what it has long since should have done, which is to address the unresolved issues around race that began with early in the life of our nation and has continued ever since. But there's an enormous amount to do, an enormous amount that government must do, an enormous amount for the private sector, and for the nonprofit sector. And at least in my view, it remains to be seen how fully and effectively our various sectors, the government, the private sector, and the nonprofit sector will address the kinds of disparities we'll be discussing today and how wisely.

Finally, in that context, the decisions about what measures to take in all of these sectors, government, nonprofit, and private sector, are complex and they need to be approached with rigor and thoughtfulness and sound judgment. In keeping with The Hamilton Project practices, I will not recite the resumes of distinguished participants in the discussions today, but simply say that we have -- because though the resumes are all in your -- in your materials, but simply say that we are fortunate to have such knowledgeable and thoughtful people with us and to help us think through these vitally important issues at this very important time in our nation's history.

Let me conclude by recognizing the leadership of The Hamilton Project, Wendy Edelberg, whom we are delighted to welcome as our new, brand new director of The Hamilton Project. Wendy comes to us with a distinguished career at the CBO where she was chief economist. Kriston McIntosh, who has served extremely well now for quite some time as our managing director after a long career on the Hill and the private sector, and Kristen Broady, who we are also pleased to welcome as a new member of our team, policy director of The Hamilton Project. Kristen was most recently dean of the College of Business, and Barron Hilton Endowed Professor of Economics at Dillard University.

And as always, let me recognize the extremely capable and hardworking staff of The Hamilton Project. They are absolutely essential to everything we do. Let me make one more comment. The leadership team at The Hamilton Project has done a terrific job of continuing the activities of The Hamilton Project in this new virtual era. With that, I look forward to today's discussions and I will turn the program over to Wendy Edelberg. Thank you.

MS. EDELBERG: Thank you very much, Bob. So this panel, this first panel will give a clear eye but incredibly worrisome view of how the COVID-19 recession has disproportionately hurt Black households. You will hear from three excellent economists; Bradley Hardy, senior fellow with Brookings, and chair of the Department of Public Administration and Policy at American University. Trevon Logan, he's professor of economics at Ohio State University and an NBER researcher, and Jevay Grooms who's an assistant professor of economics at Howard University.

So after each of them speaks, we'll have time for discussion including some questions from you, our audience. We've already gotten some of them, but we have various ways for you to send us additional questions including -- including through Twitter. So Bradley, we'll start with you. So you and Trevon have co-authored an essay that we just published, and we have been invited on The Hamilton Project's website. So the essay is titled, "Racial Economic Inequality Amid the COVID-19 Crisis". So can you tell us Bradley, about your findings and particularly how the COVID-19 recession is affecting Black households in an economic sense?

MR. HARDY: Sure, and first off just thanks Wendy, to you and Hamilton in general for shining a light on this important issue. You know, I think that in -- in our work, Trevon and I were really synthesizing much of the census data and -- and other great work that's occurring including some of our own on the topic of -- of racial economic inequality. This certainly has a current period component to it, given the large shock from COVID, but there's also a long policy and historical component here as well. And I guess what I would say there is that in our paper, "Racial Economic Inequality Amid COVID", what we're really talking about is the fact that there's great suffering throughout the United States in general and across, you know, groups. And -- and that typically Black families are doing even worse, so this is a -

- an economic shock that's hitting deep throughout the economy. And I think, you know, in short, I would say that you know, in our -- in our work, we -- we find and -- and I think this has been documented elsewhere, but we really find that you know, Black families and Black workers really face not just preexisting health conditions, but they face preexisting economic conditions, economic disparity, right, that -- that left these families more vulnerable to this, you know, really once every 100 years shock, right?

And so, just to give you some stats that kind of characterize this, you know, we -- we find that roughly 20% of Black households are experiencing some food hardship. We find that well over 50%, even as many as 60% of adults who are Black are living in a household where someone lost employment income since mid-March. Now that's still high for other groups, you know, you have in the pulse data from the Census Bureau, you know, many White families have a similar condition, but this is still higher for the Black families. You know, I think importantly, some of the longer term impacts that we might discuss later, we find that over 40% of Black adults have experienced some depression or anxiety and there's quite a bit of anxiety and lacking in confidence with respect to being able to pay rent in the next month, right? So, some survey data suggests that you know, almost half of Black adults are -- are very concerned about their ability to make rent next month, right? And this really gets at so much of the -- the policy analysis that occurs in our space and at Hamilton thinking about how state and federal policies intersect and -- and impact families.

So you know, we try to go over a lot of that in -- in the study and in -- in the paper. We try to give some context for the broad kind of policy and historical context, and I think one major takeaway is that, you know, we sort of have a nice figure that captures that there's not just well-documented income gaps, but there's also really yawning wealth gaps. And why that matters is that wealth is you know, also just emergency savings to buffer against an economic shock, right? And so it means that in many instances these households don't necessarily have that -- that resource of that -- that cushion to pull on. And -- and I guess one more thing because I want to leave some space for my -- my great co-author to lay in on this as well. You know, Black families are disproportionately situated in -- in stated that have tended to have weaker social safety nets. And so

we're talking about lower unemployment insurance payouts. We're talking about on average less cash assistance through the traditional welfare programs. And -- and so this has made the -- the federal scaffolding of benefits all the more important frankly. And so there's a well-documented literature on these sorts of inequities that have a spatial component, and so we try to kind of synthesize that, you know, for the reader. So, you know, I think there's a lot there and I think again, as far as where we are right now, this has certainly been a, you know, a deeper recession in terms of how far the fall has been, but then there's a lot of uncertainty remaining, too. And so, you know, I guess I'll just kind of pause there and I'd like to kick it to you know, Trevon Logan, my -- my co-author, because I know he wants to kind of weight in on this as well and talk about some other aspects of the paper.

MR. LOGAN: Thank you, Bradley, and thank you to The Hamilton Project for having me here today to talk about this, and it is an important issue to follow up on something that Bradley mentioned. The states that have not expanded Medicaid, for example, have a disproportionate share of the African-American population. So at a basic health level we see in healthcare level, and particularly the social safety net for health, we see a disproportionate effect on African-Americans. But I want to take a bit of a broader view of this to really concentrate on something that I think is missing as this pandemic has rolled out, and we talk about it briefly in the paper, but I think it's such a significant fact that I just can't escape it and I want to emphasize it here for a moment.

Already this year more than 33,000 Black Americans have died due to the coronavirus. In a typical year, around 335,000 Black Americans will die. So we are seeing already at August that 10% of the annual deaths of the Black American community are now concentrated in this coronavirus. So where does that place the coronavirus in terms of other causes of death? It is already the third leading cause of death for African-Americans. Only heart disease and cancer will kill more Black Americans this year than the coronavirus. If I told you on January 1 that a new virus that we did not even know about would in August be the third leading cause of death for the Black Americans, our hair should have set on fire and we would have an extensive public policy response to this unprecedented pandemic. We have not seen that, but the fact remains that the coronavirus is the third leading cause of death for Black

Americans and over 33,000 deaths, and it's a very, very high third. The next cause of death would be accidents, which kill under 20,000 African-Americans a year. That is how significant this is.

So where does this come from, right? The implications of this and the reason why I think we might have had some inertia in our policy response is these deaths are silent to us. And they're silent because our public health response so far has been a quasi-quarantine. So these deaths are silent because they go unnoticed to us and we don't see the range of the devastation that the virus has had on particular communities. And so, these are related to these historical factors, and we just want to cover a couple that we talk about in the paper.

The first is that we see an overrepresentation of African-Americans in the service economy and in the low-wage service economy. For example, African-Americans are more than twice as likely as other races to be in the front lines of the healthcare industry, which of course have been devastated in nursing homes and assisted care facilities by the coronavirus. They're also disproportionately likely to be in front line occupations for example, in meatpacking, which has had several outbreaks of the coronavirus so far. We also know that one reason for the disproportionate racial impact of the coronavirus is because in the initial wave of the pandemic, it had and was exploding in the incarcerated population, which is disproportionately African-American. So on all of these factors, on all of these waves in which we see racial disproportionality at work, we see these are the places where the pandemic was having these outbreaks.

We then see on the economic end when we think about this sort of as a shock, some recent research has shown that for a given income shock, so for the same proportional level income shock for a White and Black household, Black households are actually devastated to a much larger degree because they lack wealth, and this wealth of course is related to historical factors of segregation, discrimination in the labor market, discrimination in the lending market, discrimination broad scale in terms of zoning, that has lead to lower rates of home ownership in particular for African-Americans and then a higher cost of home ownership for African-Americans conditional on being a homeowner. So all of these things working together have led to us to this situation where we see this pandemic having a

disproportionate death effect, but also a disproportionate economic impact on Black Americans.

MS. EDELBERG: Thank you, Trevon, and thank you, Bradley. And Trevon, you're absolutely right. We should be -- and of course many of us are, hair on fire worried. So thank you for those remarks. So today, I now want to turn to you. So, you co-authored with your co-authors, Alberto Ortega and Joaquin Rubalcaba, a blog for The Hamilton Project titled, "The COVID-19 Public Health and Economic Crisis Leave Vulnerable Populations Exposed". And in that blog, you describe some survey evidence that you helped to collect. Can you describe what you found?

MS. GROOMS: Yes. Let me start off with saying, thank you, Wendy, for having me and the whole Hamilton team for having me. Before I talk about our survey and our survey results, I wanted to echo some of the things that were already said, right? The amount of cases and deaths that Black communities are experiencing is not minute, right? So I -- I looked up some data, right? In 23 states, Black COVID deaths are overrepresented relative to that state population. In 17 states in the United States as of August, the gap is 10%, and there's several states where the gap is 15%, right? So when we talk about COVID in the Black community and among Black households and Black families, cases and deaths are -- it's well-documented that there is a disproportionate effect that it's having on Black families.

In our survey, what we really wanted to focus on is given that we saw all these cases and deaths skyrocketing, what are some of the other effects that may not be as obvious on the surface? So I had a privilege of being part of a group of academics who fielded a national panel -- who fielded the national panel study on COVID-19. It's a multi-wave nationally represented study, which we aimed to track American households as the pandemic progresses. What makes the survey unique is as a whole, all the collaborators wanted to know what was happening with Americans on average, but with particular interest paid to vulnerable households, Black, Hispanic, or Latinx, and frontline workers who we know are overrepresented Black and Brown. So the survey allowed us to analyze different measures. We have some -- some working papers on mental health distress with Edward Vargas and also some education papers with Cassandra Davis at UNC Capitol Hill. But the piece we wrote, the blog post, it really focuses on disparities in our survey responses across race.

So we find disparities in unemployment levels, health insurance and benefit delays for insurance benefits. And so we talk about that a little bit in the blog post. Before I'd want to show a graphic on the delays in unemployment, just to kind of give an idea of the lack of health insurance. So we asked respondents common household level data of a few thousand. We are in, we just finished up wave 3, and so we asked respondents, you know, are you employed? If you are employed, are you an essential worker? Nonessential worker? And if you're an essential worker, do you work in the healthcare industry or not? So we're able to break it -- break the households of these respondents down by employment type and then we also ask questions about race.

We find those individuals that identified themselves as essential non-healthcare workers and Black, 9.8% of the time they lacked health insurance. This was over four times more than that of White essential non-healthcare workers. Again, a four times discrepancy, four times less likely to have health insurance and they're our frontline workers providing the necessities we need during the pandemic.

Now, I want to show one of the graphics that's in the blog post. So this shows -- we asked different questions. We asked, if you are unemployed -- so assuming that they responded being unemployed, did you apply for unemployment insurance? If you applied for unemployment insurance, have you received your unemployment insurance? Please allow us -- can you tell us the dates you first received your benefits? So we're able to track when they applied and when they received their benefit. It's on average we find, which is startling, all respondents on average, it was 20 days -- 23 days in delay from when they applied to when they received their unemployment benefits. But now when we break this up by race, we can see that individuals identified as White received their unemployment benefits in 22 days. Individuals that identified as Black received it is 28 days. And so this 6-day discrepancy -- first of all, the 23 days to wait for unemployment benefits is horrendous. Waiting more than three weeks to receive unemployment benefits could mean a matter of no longer being able to pay your rent. Right? And we also asked questions about living paycheck to paycheck, and we find that a lot of our respondents do live paycheck to paycheck.

But this discrepancy between 28 days and 22 days really startled us. And so we started investigating and using some other research to help understand this, and luckily, I was able to get access to the Howard Initiative on Public Opinions. It's a survey that Howard University had fielded and it looks at particularly Black and Hispanic households, and it's really startling to see the percentage of Black respondents who first off didn't know they even qualified for unemployment insurance or that expressed different issues they had in even applying for unemployment insurance benefits and they think caused delays.

And so, overall -- overall, this -- this survey is really allowing us to go beyond the surface and look at the different mechanisms and different ways policy or systemic racism may be playing a role in making these already vulnerable populations more vulnerable.

MS. EDELBERG: Thank you, Jevay. That was -- that was terrific and I have a -- I have a bunch of questions for you, but -- but first, I want to get to one question that I have for Bradley, so we're going to, as I said have a few minutes for discussion. So, Bradley can you say a little bit more about the long-term effects on Black households from the current crisis and how that this crisis is going to transmit itself through generations?

MR. HARDY: Absolutely. You know, so much of this kind of fits nicely, you know, kind of leaning on Jevay's commentary, you know, take something as simple as the -- the gap in receipt in unemployment insurance, well you know, the reality here is that when you think about Black households, we know that about half of them are considered to be cost burdened with respect to the idea that they're paying out 50% of their income to housing. They're on the edge, they're waiting for these benefits, and you know, they're waiting on these -- these safety net transfers, but these -- these offices are overburdened themselves. They're been under invested in, their infrastructure needs overhauling. What this means then is that for the families, we have to think hard about how these children are absorbing the shock, right? So you can think about everything from the interruption in the educational process, right, K through 12, access to online tools, everything from the broadband to the computer hardware, not to mention the position of Black families disproportionately as essential workers. So what's that supervision

look like in order to facilitate the educational process? That's a real big issue. And so, you know, that learning loss, how do you make up that gap? We're going to still be learning about what that looks like for our -- our Black children who are K through 12, let alone at the school level. Okay? Excuse me, the college level, right? So, you have college students who are going to have less confidence and who aren't necessarily going to have the infrastructure as well.

This is just sort of an unknown. But in general, I think the point would be that we have a lot of evidence in the social sciences with respect to the scarring and the long-term consequences of food hardship, housing instability, income loss, things like this. And so I think that while we have this immediate term look, there is this aspect of thinking about the children who are exposed to shock, many of whom were already in households that were economically vulnerable. So this is something we'll have to keep an eye on for -- for years to come.

MS. EDELBERG: Thanks Bradley. The -- the survey evidence that I've seen on -- on how the toxic stress and you guys mentioned as in your case, that the toxic stress affecting -- affecting children and how that's just going to have a -- a long-lasting effect on outcomes, it's quite sobering. So, Jevay, one of the most startling findings that you have is this -- is this greater delay in getting unemployment insurance benefits among Black households relative -- or Black recipients of unemployment insurance relative to White recipients.

You touched a little bit on what you think the reasons for that delay might be, but can you -- can you say a little bit more about that? I -- I'm guessing that I'm asking you to speculate, but -- but what might be underlying that delay?

MS. GROOMS: So, yes. So there's some previous research, this delay is nothing new, but given the scenario, it's really important that there aren't delays when we're just talking about financially vulnerable populations. But some of the research shows that prior to -- prior to the coronavirus, individuals that were Black were more likely to wait longer, they're more likely to have issues with their application. And if we think the coronavirus is happening, we also know that most applications are online. Who lacks most access to the most consistent online resources, right? Individuals that are in

poor households, Black and Brown households. They don't have the way to apply, to apply for unemployment insurance and I think there's also just a lack in un -- in education, and do they qualify?

The Howard University Initiative for Public Opinion, some of these individuals that were laid off weren't even aware that they qualified for benefits, and then if they did qualify for benefits, some were unaware of what the stipulations, how many hour -- how many weeks consistently do they have to work which changed under Cares Act. And so I think there was just, some of it was ignorance and some of it is just things that are systemic, that inhibited us, inhibited Black communities from having access to resources and safety nets that maybe other people do have access to that are overlooked.

MS. EDELBERG: So the issue about access to online resources and the internet is extraordinary because I've thought about the way lack of access to internet is affecting online education. I thought about how it's affecting people's ability to work from home, but I haven't thought about it in this one aspect. And in fact, if any of you want to jump in, how do you -- how do you think about -- how do you think about this disparate access to internet, and how -- and how it's affecting both children and workers, particularly among Black households?

MR. LOGAN: So we're looking at a moral anecdote, but I think it actually is informative following up on Jevay's point about unemployment assistance. Recall that in the early stages of the pandemic, we closed a lot of public facilities including public libraries where many people who do not have internet access in their homes to go to do things like file for unemployment assistance. So the pandemic would have a disproportionate impact on those who of course don't have their own internet access, but then are not able to go and access any public available source of internet access, and that would result in delays as they tried to find a place where they can apply for these resources, even conditional on having a successful application.

MS. EDELBERG: So Bradley, maybe I -- I have another question for you and/or maybe -- maybe Trevon as well. So -- so certainly we have -- we've had a lot of evidence looking at how past cycles have affected marginalized groups. It -- it, I think, it's fair to say that economic downturns have historically disproportionately affected Black households. So, the qualitative effects that we're seeing are

probably nothing new, disturbing, and a place where policy needs to do more, but not particularly new. Is -- is this recession showing disparate impacts on Black households in a way that we've seen previously and -- and we just have more evidence of the shortfalls in policy? Or is this -- is this recession even worse than we've seen in the past?

MR. HARDY: Sure, this is a great question, and I think that you know, the short answer there would be I believe this is worse, but there's still a lot of uncertainties. So, you know, there's a -- actually a very nice piece with Hamilton/Brookings by Betsey Stevenson that really tries to trace out, you know, statistics like labor force participation and differences by race. And one of the things you can see is that if you compare the early 2000s recession along with the you know, '07/'09 period great recession, and then compare it to today's economic crisis, the drop-off in measures likely where participation just across the board is just -- is just flat out far more pronounced. With that said, and I know that you know, we -- we've talked about this as a group, there's so much uncertainty with respect to the policy response and how that may or may not shape a recovery, that you know, maybe we will bounce back quicker, but right now on the data, I think there's many instances in which it is worse just across the board and for Black families.

Now, now what I would say though is that we have evidence for -- for many years now that the degree of economic risk or income volatility has been historically higher for Black families and much of that is attributable to where they're positioned within the labor market. So frontline essential work, lower wage work, work that's quite vital to what we're doing today but nonetheless work with less economic security -- and this actually ducktails into a point that Jevay and Trevon were making, which is that when you think about the gap in access to -- to UI benefits, one piece of this is that Black workers have historically had higher income volatility. Much of that has been to exits -- due to exits out of work. So their work histories have oftentimes been interrupted and shorter, and there's a whole host of reasons for that including but not limited to labor market exclusion, just being in more itinerate work conditions. And so there's less coverage in many of those sectors, and then that gets into the policy uncertainty where these workers probably were formerly in situations including part-time work where they weren't

aware the benefits were available, and so that sort of uncertainty or you know, information asymmetry didn't know this was a possibility, that's there. And then not to mention, if you're disproportionately situated in a stated that just hasn't had the resources or has not invested in the infrastructure, then you know, when you have this historic crush of -- of people coming in for benefits, you're going to have these - - these lacks. And so, you know, I -- I think that yes, it's worse. I think what's scary to me is that we don't know how much worse it's going to get, so I'll just stop there.

MS. EDELBERG: So, that's -- that's very helpful. I'm thinking about how this recession is having a disparate impact in ways that we haven't seen previously. One of the places that we've seen from research is -- is what some people are calling that this is a -- this is a gendered recession, that this is having -- this is having a more disparate impact on women relative to previous recessions that we've seen. So this gets me to one of our questions from our audience which is, hoping that the three of you, and I think -- I think this is really a question for Jevay because this gets to some of her research, how -- how the disparate impacts that we're seeing both on women and on Black households, how does that intersect? What does your -- what does your survey evidence show us about that, Jevay?

MS. GROOMS: So, some unique elements that our survey has shown -- sorry, I think my internet's cutting up, but I think the unique elements that our survey has shown is that Black households particularly headed by women are more likely to be single parents. They are more likely to be a single-headed household. Black women are also overrepresented in frontline industries as essential nonhealthcare and essential healthcare workers. When we think of that and they are -- they have children and are more likely to be single parents, this intersection of working during a pandemic and also having to be what we find in a paper we called "Proxy Educators" where their children, it just seems like right now it's not clear. We found some evidence of mental health distress at home among this group, but it's not clear what the long-term effects could be, but it's clear that there are going to be some.

MS. EDELBERG: So, another question from our audience, thanks for that, Jevay. So another question from our audience is, where -- where should people look for data? Like what's -- what's the -- the best summary statistic that -- that -- that's an interested -- an interested person should look to,

to see how Black households are faring? And so, I actually want each one of you to weigh in, if you would, just briefly. It's going to be hard, right? Because there's lots of data and there's lots of ways to -- to describe this problem. But if you had -- if you had to choose one, maybe we'll go for two, but if you had to choose really one statistic to point people to, what would it be? So, Jevay?

MS. GROOMS: So one statistic or two statistics if I had to point someone to it --

MS. EDELBERG: Alright, I'll let you off the hook. Wait, I'll let you off the hook.

MS. GROOMS: Yes.

MS. EDELBERG: Bradley, Trevon, do you have a -- do you want to weight in first?

MR. HARDY: It's -- it's -- it's hard --

MS. EDELBERG: We'll come back to you, then.

MR. HARDY: You're asking us, the economists, right? And it's like you know, if you have to just pick one, right? So, you know, I mean Jevay's the one who's actually administering a survey, so you know, she's trying to be kind. She might say like, I'm doing it, right? So, you know, in addition to Jevay's work with co-authors, I guess I'll just add that you know, the Census Bureau's poll survey is really doing this in real time and that's worth paying attention to, and there's some nice synthesis in data visualization of the polls results that the Urban Institute has put out. I guess another one that might be less well known is the data set coming out of Wash-U in St. Louis' Social Policy Institute. And I think that the richness of that data is that they're getting at gig work. They're getting at interesting questions surrounding you know, anxiety and worry about the future and sort of doing some retrospective looks. So I think you know, polls from the census, Wash-U's survey out of the Social Policy Institute, that's a nice one as well.

MS. EDELBERG: So before we get to you, Trevon, so Jevay, I'll get back to you. So -- so, your survey, it's a -- it's an excellent source of information. What I want to press on is should folks be thinking about disparities in income, disparities in wealth, disparities in access to healthcare? What's the one measure that you think best encompasses the disparate effects on Black households?

MS. GROOMS: Sorry, Wendy, I'm going to be that person. I think that, that default to

look at one, because I think that there's so many effects across the board, and on average, each effect may be small but when we add these all up and we look at these as a whole, their effect on Black households, it's tremendous. So if we just look at income or we just look at mental health, we may be negating education and all of these other small statistics that may seem like delays in UI benefits, may seem small, 6, 7 days. But when we add that to the fact they'll more likely to live paycheck to paycheck, more likely to be exposed and have higher exposure risks because they're frontline workers, all of these together kind of build a mountain.

MS. EDELBERG: It's a -- it's a -- it's a very good point. I will -- I will say this was a question from our audience (laughter) but that -- no, that's a very good point that there's a constellation of effects that we -- that we need to be focusing on. Trevon, do you want to -- do you want to weight in and bring us home?

MR. LOGAN: I will say that I -- I really like the pulse survey and the survey that Bradley mentioned about at Wash-U because we need real time information and it's critical that we know how this pandemic is rolling out in real time and we won't get that in annual or even many times monthly survey. So you see the disconnect between weekly unemployment, insurance benefit applications versus a monthly statistic, for example like unemployment. But also to add to that one thing to reiterate something I've said before is, look at the death and infection rate by race and that is available out from some -- some resources we are particularly using, the disaggregated racial data from the APM Research Lab. And it is important to take a look at that and we typically have the total number, the aggregated number, the 165,000 or 170,000 deaths, but look at that disaggregated and compare it to CDC data for example on mortality for the last two years, and there you will see the striking rise and a scale of COVID-19.

MS. EDELBERG: So thanks very much for this discussion. That was great. Thanks for your presentations. Again, I encourage everybody to go to The Hamilton Project website and read these excellent -- these excellent pieces that these economists have put up. And I'm now going to turn things over to Kristen Broady, who is going to be running our next panel and again, echo -- echo what Bob Rubin said, which is how thrilled we are that she's come on board as our new policy director. So, Kristen,

the floor is yours.

MS. BROADY: Thank you so much, Wendy. I'm so happy to join The Hamilton Project. And so our next panel, we are going to address what we've just heard from Jevay Grooms, Trevon Logan, and Bradley Hardy. And I'm so happy to be joined by Dr. Maya Rockeymoore Cummings, who is the founder and CEO for the Center for Global Policy Solutions. Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, who is with the 49th Mayor of the City of Baltimore and principal of SRB & Associates, and Danyelle Solomon, who is the vice president for Race and Ethnicity Policy at the Center for American Progress. So thank you all for joining us. I look forward to jumping into this discussion.

So we -- we just heard from Hardy and Logan about how COVID-19 confronts Americans with two crises, a public health crisis and an economic crisis. Public health crises have dramatically reduced economic activity and overall spending. The pandemic provides these broader economic and health consequences that are disproportionately impacting Black Americans. We also heard from Grooms about her research with her colleague about the national panel study of COVID-19, which is tracking American households during the pandemic. So I want to start off with my first question, which is for Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. So having served as the Mayor of Baltimore, can you address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Black community and particularly how it's affecting not only the lower income households, but also the middle and upper middle class Black households?

MS. RAWLINGS-BLAKE: Yes and thank you so much for the invitation to be with such a distinguished group of speakers. As I think and as I thought about the previous panel and I think about the time that I spent as mayor, what this pandemic is showing me is the vulnerability, the vulnerabilities of cities, the vulnerabilities of communities of color. This pandemic has laid them there and really shown the -- the weakness of so many systems that our communities depend upon. So when I think about the -- the ways in which the Black community is well -- is not well served, when we look at health disparity. Health disparities are -- are growing even wider when you have a lack of the ability for these communities to get the services that they need based on you know, the -- the impact of the -- the pandemic. So, whether it is health department, education, public safety, all of the things that people depend upon, you know, those

things aren't there. The foundations aren't there. The foundations are -- are crumbling. So it is a, you know, it is -- it is something that gives us all pause as we think about how we're going to rebuild on the other side of this pandemic and make sure that we're not just labeling the problems, but we're looking for ways to solve them in the future so on the other side of the pandemic our community can be -- our government can be more responsive to vulnerable communities in the future.

MS. BROADY: So my next question is for you, Maya. Considering the social determinants of health that were discussed in the two papers and considering your working experience, can you share more background about why the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting the Black community?

MS. ROCKEYMOORE CUMMINGS: So thank you, Dr. Broady. Thank you for the invitation and thank you to The Hamilton Project, Wendy, for your leadership. I appreciate the opportunity. I would posit this crisis as not just an economic crisis and not just a health crisis, but also a racial crisis here in the United States of America. And the social determinants of health actually provides us with a framework for understanding how racial discrimination and otherwise known as racism is an overlay on every aspect of our lived experience including how policies are made in this country. And then, that goes on to determine the outcomes in terms of who actually gets to live long, who actually has shorter lifespan, who actually gets the better jobs and who doesn't. I mean every aspect, every disparity that we're speaking of actually can be traced back to how we actually value people in our society, which is a racial hierarchy. Isabel Wilkerson has a new book out called "Caste", where she actually calls American or American republic a basically, a racialized caste system, which it absolutely is. And so what the COVID-19 epidemic has done is bring all of this into shock relief, where it's unavoidable to understand how the health effects of racism and how the economic effects of racism actually manifest in our society.

And so with that, the social determinants of health and the World Health Organization have actually been a leader on defining with the social determinants of health is, kind of really brings us home. So first of all, the live conditions of Black and Brown communities absolutely is a shaper of these outcomes. Disproportionately segregated into lower income neighborhoods that do not have the

amenities that are protective of life is an experience that African-Americans and Latinos by the way typically share in common. And this means that you've got cities like the cities that I live in, Baltimore City, where within a 5-mile radius, you've got a zip code that includes the wealthiest Whites in the city and then a zip code that includes the most low income Blacks in the city. Guess what the life disparity is -- the life expectancy difference between these two communities that are only 5 miles apart is? It's 20 years, 20 years. And so what's happening? What's happening is that we've allowed ourselves to build cities and to build towns based on our antiquated value systems on, you know, that are racialized in nature.

And so you have you know, geospatial distribution of race class in a way that actually you know, creates circumstances where people who are Blacker and Browner are underserved, are less likely to actually receive resources for their schools, for their healthcare, etc. You see this replicated on a state level with regards to, I heard a researcher mention earlier that the states that actually expanded Medicaid during the initial outlay of the Affordable Care Act, were actually states that actually had a -- fewer African-Americans in it. And so, you know with that, we've got to understand that the -- the politics of racism as it relates to public policy actually influences health and economics. And we know that to be true because a lot of public health officials are now coming out and declaring that racism is a public health threat and it's driving our economics and it's driving our health and education and everything else that matters.

So with that, you know that is the framework, the social determinants of health. And with that you also cannot avoid, you cannot avoid the third crisis, which is the crisis that we are facing of racism in this country made most apparently recently by you know, certainly the killing of -- of an African-American man by a police officer of the state.

MS. BROADY: Thank you so much for tying that -- that all together for me and for our audience. Danyelle, my other question is for you. Have Black small and microbusiness owners been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? And if so, what role can federal, state, or local governments play to address this disproportionality?

MS. SOLOMON: Well, thank you, Dr. Broady and thank you to The Hamilton Project for

having me. I appreciate the opportunity. So short answer is, yes. Black small businesses have been hurt by COVID-19, but here's why and here's what's most important for the viewers. Before COVID-19 ever hit, Black Americans owned less than 2% of small businesses with employees, and this disparity in small business ownership is directly linked to the lack of wealth and access to capital for Black Americans. A typical loan that a first year small business would get, startup money, for a Black small business owner is around \$35,000, compared to \$106,000 for a white small business owner. And that is likely because the most commonplace people get money, capital, to start a small business is from family wealth or personal wealth. Wealth is that thing that allows you to move through life seamlessly. It allows you to start a business. It allows you to buy a home. It allows you to help your kids go to school. And for Black Americans, wealth is hard to come by. Wealth is highly concentrated and unequally divided, and the lack of wealth for Black Americans is a direct result of intentional federal, state, and local public policy that was put in place for the last 400 years.

I also want to make a note that prior to COVID-19, Black Americans, again had much less wealth. For every dollar and wealth that Black families held, a typical White family held 10, so we're talking about one-tenth the amount of wealth. It's very hard to not only start a business, but keep a business going if you don't have resources to weather an unexpected emergency like COVID-19.

We also know through data and research that prior to COVID even hitting, 30% of college educated Black households couldn't afford to pay their bills, so if you're a small business owner, your bills, and an unexpected \$400 expense. That number actually increases and almost doubles, almost 60% for non-college educated Black households. So if you are a small business owner, a Black small business owner and COVID-19 hits, you're already in an economically precarious situation and this just makes it worse because you are less likely to have the resources and wealth to pull from to weather this storm.

We also should note this should not be surprising to anyone, right? We've seen this happen before. If you look back at The Great Recession, only 49% of small Black businesses were able to survive at that time, and we're seeing this happen again right now. Between February and April of this

year, the number of Black-owned businesses plummeted by 41%. We need to do something different. It can't be the same solutions that we've put forward before.

In December of last year, CAP actually set up a national advisory counsel to eliminate the Black/White wealth gap, and part of our mandate was to figure out what big bold policy economic ideas we could put forward to eliminate the gap. Recently, we just put out a paper where we called for a re-envisioning of the Minority Business Development Agency. This is the only federal agency that's dedicated to improving the economic well-being of people of color. And so we feel like right now they should -- they should be doing more, and so we wanted to give them some ideas of how to do that. We lay out five different ways to expand their authority. One, they should create an economic equity grant program to foster wealth in Black communities. They should also directly lend money, right? We know by giving money to small businesses, it will help them. Right now they don't do that. They should provide loans directly. We also think they should work directly with HBCUs and seed innovation in those historically Black colleges and universities. We also think the agency should conduct research and study the barriers to wealth and business development for Black communities. We also feel like it's important that they should score the impact of proposed legislation and regulation on barriers to minority-owned business creation and success. We should figure out what is going on. We should have much more robust data and we should seed capital to Black businesses. We know they are undervalued, and we should ensure that the federal government is supporting not only their creation, but their ongoing success.

One key fact that I wanted to also share and highlight is that the federal government or FY2020 appropriated \$42,000,000 to this agency. That is 0.0003% of total discretionary spending. In other words, for every thousand dollars the federal government spends in discretionary spending, three pennies, just \$0.03 goes to prosper, promote, and develop minority businesses. The federal government could be doing more. In regards to what state and local governments could do, I would just say, and I think we've heard this from the researchers/economists before, we need to expand Medicaid, support unemployment insurance, ensure paid sick leave, ensure that state aid and capital investments are directed to the small businesses that need it most. I would also encourage state and local governments

to look at women of color, particularly Black women, who are the fastest growing small business owners in our communities. How are you supporting them? Not only creating small businesses, but maintaining them and ensuring that they're successful?

MS. BROADY: Thank you. Thank you for that -- that very detailed answer. So, my -- my next question is -- is for the panel. And so, I want you to think about, compare how COVID-19 -- the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting childcare across income levels and why Black households might be hit particularly hard by childcare shortages and (inaudible). Danyelle, we can go ahead and start with you.

MS. SOLOMON: Oh sure, I'm happy to start and I would say a few things and I'm pretty sure that Professor Logan and Dr. Brady -- Hardy, sorry, wrote about this in their paper. A few things. One, we know Black women disproportionately makeup childcare workers. We also know that, that means that they are on the frontlines of COVID-19. And so, but we also know that they also have children, and so they are being put in a -- again, a precarious situation of either having a paycheck or protecting their personal health. Inequality is showing up again in real time because of COVID-19 and I think for Black women in particular, being overrepresented in service sector jobs like childcare, it is impacting them but it's also impacting their ability to have safe affordable childcare for their children.

MS. ROCKEYMOORE CUMMINGS: Right, and I'll pick up and just say that it's always been an economic crisis or presented a severe economic challenge to actually have quality healthcare given how expensive -- excuse me, childcare given how expensive childcare is in this country. This is across the board for women and families of every racial and ethnic group but especially, given what we've already heard with regards to the income disparities and the wealth disparities facing Black households, for you know, Black families who are looking for quality healthcare -- childcare that they can actually afford. So now we are in the midst of the coronavirus crisis and this becomes even more relevant because as mentioned, Black and Brown women especially are frontline workers. They are more likely to be unable to -- they'll have to make this choice. And so this gets us back to the question of how do we actually fill in the gap?

I believe in policies that are based on equitable principles. Equity is a concept that we

have to embrace here, understanding where the need is and making sure that we're filling that gap as appropriate for the need. And so with that, you know, there is a proposal out there for universal family care that's based on a social insurance concept that I actually think that we should all embrace. The nominee for the democratic party has suggested that he would be willing to go in this direction and certainly it represents an opportunity for the nation, if we finally solve the caregiving crisis in our country with a universal family care proposal.

MS. BROADY: So my next question is how will the majority of Black community continue to be Affected considering anticipated revenue short loss? Stephanie, can we start with you?

MS. RAWLINGS-BLAKE: Sorry, I'm just unmuting. I wanted to add to that last question, if I could, one of the other things that this crisis has laid there, is how much our families, the intergenerational composition of many of our families has been impacted by this virus. We talk about the fact that many Black women are in childcare. Many Black women are essential workers and because of that, before the crisis these women were dependent on their mothers and their grandmothers in some cases, and because of this pandemic we know that older -- older people are much more vulnerable and that has cut off an entire safety net to a community that needs it the most. So that -- that has really exposed a -- a weakness in our otherwise very -- the strong fabric of -- of our community.

MS. BROADY: Thank you for -- for adding that. That's absolutely right when you think about not wanting to expose people that are more at risk and that those people often are the very people that we rely on to help take care of children.

MS. RAWLINGS-BLAKE: And I -- you were talking, I'm sorry, and you also talked about the impact on cities. Many of -- when we talk about service delivery and people being on the front line, you know, it -- it is going to be harder and harder for basic services to -- to be delivered to our citizens because for example, in Baltimore, you know, things like trash delivery has been impacted because of the coronavirus. Whole days have been you know, have been missing. Whole teams have been taken off the streets because of the virus and we're -- we're going to see that spread in different service areas because of the uncontrolled virus. So you know, I think we talked, Dr. Rockey Moore Cummings

mentioned that November 3rd can't come fast enough because we definitely -- you know, I'm very optimistic that with a responsible federal plan we can get this under control so we can start to again to sure up this delivery that needs it the most.

SPEAKER: And Dr. Broady, I'll just add, the other issue around that anticipated shortfalls here is also that we know that Black workers overwhelmingly are state and local workers, and state and local work has provided a pathway for Black workers to you know, have a stable level of income. And so when we have more of those workers on furlough and not getting paid, that will have an impact not only on income, but wealth building as well.

MS. BROADY: So I want to ask a follow up to that question, which is how will Black votes be affected if Congress would not pass another round of COVID-19 relief measures very soon?

MS. SOLOMON: I think it's devastating. And I think we're -- we're already looking at I think a worsening of the racial wealth gap, a worsening of income insecurity in this country, food insecurity, housing insecurity. As we know, evictions are a major challenge and we've already seen the expiration, federal expiration of the moratorium on evictions. This is going to hit Black and Brown communities especially like a tsunami. It's a crisis of major proportions. We were talking about before the -- the coronavirus crisis, you know, the homeless issue or problem in our nation, we're going to see more families on the street unable to make ends meet, and certainly relying more heavily on what public assistance that they can get.

We can prevent this crisis with a responsible federal and state and local response driven by the feds because they actually have the ability to drive resources down to the state and local government. But it's going to require them to do something that they did different, that they did not do explicitly in the Cares Act. It's going to have to require them to actually adopt a frame of equity, and that means looking at where the hardest hit communities are, who the hardest hit populations are, and designing policy and strategies that deliberately and intentionally address the need. And so with that, yes, universal policies are going to be necessary for the unemployed in this era certainly, but universal policies with targeted strategies incorporated into them is absolutely what we need right now.

So, you know, the devastation is already real. It's going to be even increasingly apparent as we go along if the response is insufficient.

MS. GROOMS: I wanted to add to that, I think you're absolutely right. There needs to be equity in that policy and there also needs to be more partnership with organizations like -- organizations that are in this research with government so they can give communities the support that they need to apply to know what -- to know what is out there. What we saw in the first Cares Act in the payroll protection was, you know, it -- it seemed like those with -- those that had got more, and those without were left you know, running around for scraps. We need some -- some more partnership to make sure that our community has the wherewithal, you know, to access the resources once, you know, once they're equitably made available.

MS. RAWLINGS-BLAKE: And I'll just, I want to echo and support everything that was just said and also lift up the census household post survey, which is actually reporting on it in real time as others have said. Recently, they've just announced 54% of Black households have lost employment income, 45% of Black renters are unsure how they're going to pay their rent. So the federal government not responding is definitely going to be devastating. Again, we are putting Black workers in particular in a position of choosing between the protection of their health and a paycheck, keeping food on the table and a roof over their head, and that should not be the case. It's a complete abdication of federal government for not actually ensuring that people can keep a roof over their head and have food on their table. And so it will be devastating.

MS. ROCKEYMOORE CUMMINGS: And Dr. Broady, if I can just add to that and of course, Dr. Solomon can expound, but I've seen statistics of the first Cares Act in terms of PPP. You know, 90% of Black-owned businesses didn't get any access to PPP funds. And it was just as bad for Latino communities. And so that means that you know, there was something in the formulation of that program and how it was designed in addition to Mayor Rawlings-Blake's pointing out that there's assistance, technical assistance is needed in terms of help with the application processes. I think that the design itself was flawed in terms of how it did not account for how businesses with color, especially do or

do not actually interface with mainstream banking institutions. So the design of it was flawed. And so that means that even the -- the correction where they -- that they tried to do with a second round of PPP, while more generous in areas where Black and Brown businesses are more concentrated, I -- I don't think that the penetration has been sufficient for the need. So that means that in this round of federal assistance, the design and the policy is critically important, understanding, having a sophisticated understanding of how communities have differential access and needs, needs to guide how policy is crafted.

MS. GROOMS: That's exactly right. For Black small business owners, it was 95% of them were denied of PPP during the first iteration. And I think what we're really talking about is the need to change structures, right? Because the structures as created right now do not work for Black people and that's intentional. That's -- that's exactly why they were created the way they were created. But we are in a mode now where we should be designing systems that work equitably so we can ensure that when a small business owner that is Black, Latino, indigenous, actually has access to those funds, and right now they don't. I will say that Senator Harris actually introduced a COVID-19 task force dedicated to looking at the racial and ethnic disparities and the mandate of that task force and the bill that she introduced was to ensure that the federal PPP loans, but also the protective gear going out to communities was actually being targeted to the communities who needed it. And so there are, I think, members specifically who -- and thought leaders, academics, policy experts, thinking about how we ensure we create systems that deliver services to the people in the communities that most need it.

MS. BROADY: Considering communities and -- and their need for different levels of assistance, I want to come back to education and -- and think about the discrepancy in education that we know exists. So, what education challenges do you think exist for Black students that are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and what are some ways that you think and kind of suggestions that you may have for solving those issues?

MS. SOLOMON: So, I think that it's clear that the way that we structure public education and the system where you know, the financing of -- of districts and schools actually depends on the

relative wealth of the surrounding neighborhoods is bankrupt. I mean, this is by design again, design, this is a -- a system where you know, the financing of these schools depend on the -- the wealth of the relatively surrounding -- the relative wealth of the surrounding neighborhoods, which means that you have the persistent underfunding of schools where Black and Brown students disproportionately attend. And even Title I of ESEA is not able to fill those gaps in a way that is actually needed. And so with that, it's been exacerbated by coronavirus, the COVID-19 crisis because now we're actually looking at the closure of schools and the need for you know, kids to actually be able to learn at home through virtual learning mechanisms. And we know that Black and Brown kids are disproportionately amongst more lower income population groups in this country, less likely to have access to computers at home, or frankly even before the crisis, they were less likely to have access to computers even at school, much less at home. And certainly, the internet connections that are needed in order to make sure that the real learning takes place. We have a learning curve going on across the country with teachers actually having to you know, come up to speed on how to actually do online teaching, and certainly there's a huge learning curve that needs to take place at home with kids and their parents in order to actually make sure that they have not only the access, but also the -- the ability to actually you know, know how to use the equipment once they get it.

So here in the City of Baltimore, you know, the City Council along with the Mayor adopted a, you know, a fund to actually help meet the need providing tablets for students that don't have access, and -- and they're currently in a battle to try to get access to internet to these students and households in need. I think that, that should be a priority in the next iteration of the federal relief bill that we actually provide a universal access to these supports because it's going to be crucial for the continued education. And we know that if there's an erosion of education, that the -- the gap in educational disparities will get worse with Black and Brown students actually being on the -- the losing end of that proposition.

MS. RAWLINGS-BLAKE: One thing I wanted to -- to point out when we're talking about the supports that are needed when it comes to education, we spent a lot of time talking about the -- the instruments, you know, that -- that we need to get the tablets or we need to get the internet access. But I

think one thing that is missing in that is the -- the technical support and the educational support for parents. There's this assumption that -- you know, that -- that parents, because you're a parent, you're automatically a skilled teacher. Many of -- many parents need additional support to be able to teach the information or to assist their -- their children in learning. And we will continue to widen the educational gap if we're not looking at ways to support the parent as they're taking on additional role in the household.

MS. BROADY: Thank you, Stephanie and that's going to lead me to my final question. We started addressing what it's about, so all of you have talked about some of the challenges and the need for (inaudible) particularly to come together. So my last question is, can philanthropy make a useful contribution and if so, what do you think is the most important way that, that can happen for each of you? And Stephanie, I'll start with you.

MS. RAWLINGS-BLAKE: Definitely, philanthropy can be helpful. One of the main things is you know, once we identify these gaps, as Dr. Rokeymoore Cummings was just talking about earlier, once we identify these gaps, we have to look for ways to fill them. And I think philanthropy can do a lot to step in those gaps to be a conduit between government and the community and to help bring the assistance that's necessary.

MS. SOLOMON: So philanthropy has always been helpful with regards to piloting strategies that can be then brought to scale through policy mechanisms. And so in this case, so what we really -- if we're talking about, if we're still talking about you know, the -- the digital gap, you know, if philanthropy can help seed and experiment around the best ways to actually improve and accelerate learning for low income households through digital learning mechanisms and how to actually provide that support to those low income households, I think that, that would be a great contribution in addition to other things that they can certainly do.

MS. ROCKEYMOORE CUMMINGS: I would support and echo my co-panelists' thoughts. I would also say that you know, again, they can also fund race-conscious and explicit policy work and research. I think that is important and not always as robust as it could be from philanthropy. And I -- I couldn't agree more around funding pilot programs, especially for new innovative economic

policy ideas around the country to see how these policies work on the ground and see if we can bring them to scale.

MS. BROADY: So I'd like to thank Trevon, Hardy, and Brad -- Trevon Logan and Bradley Hardy and Jevay Grooms for their research and providing us such topics to discuss. I'd also like to thank Maya Rockey Moore Cummings and Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Danyelle Solomon for joining me in this panel today. Thank you for all of your input and thank you to The Hamilton Project for hosting us. Thank you to our audience for joining. I'm hopeful that you learned as much as I did during this panel.

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Expires: November 30, 2020

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