



# AMERICA'S CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS



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in order of seniority*

The Honorable Barack H. Obama  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), I want to thank you for your statement of support for our "For the People" Jobs Initiative, which included job fairs and town hall meetings in five cities throughout the United States during the month of August. It is evident that the most important and pressing policy issue for the American people is jobs. Therefore, the CBC took action by bringing jobs to our constituencies. Therefore, the CBC took action by bringing jobs to our constituencies. We visited Cleveland, Detroit, Atlanta, Miami, and Los Angeles; saw over 30,000 people at these events; and connected them to thousands of jobs currently available with the assistance of tremendous public and private sector partners. After concluding the events portion of our initiative, the message is resounding: the American people are desperate for jobs.

Therefore, the purpose of this letter is to:

- 1) Share with you our recommendations for your upcoming jobs speech and subsequent actions taken to remedy the crisis;
- 2) Urge you to adopt a targeted approach to any job creation proposals in order to provide jobs in communities with the highest rates of unemployment, including communities with high numbers of unemployed people of color; and
- 3) Request an urgent working meeting with you and your staff who are charged with economic recovery to discuss best practices in reviving, revitalizing, and repairing the economic conditions of the most vulnerable communities—including African American communities.

I agree that it is essential for the United States Congress to immediately remedy the disastrous economic state through job creation legislation. However, the Republican Leadership in the House of Representatives has failed miserably in their ability to consider real jobs legislation despite the fact that—for example—the CBC has introduced well over fifty bills during the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress to address job creation. To urge Congress to consider our legislation, the CBC introduced and unanimously co-sponsored the "For the People" Jobs Initiative Resolution (H. Res 348).



I respect your desire to ensure that the American economy as a whole recovers from this crisis we now face, but it is incumbent upon all of us to realize the grave disparities that exist in achievement, wealth, and unemployment. As you may know, a Pew Research Center study released on July 26, 2011 found that the typical black household had just \$5,677 in wealth (assets minus debts); the typical Hispanic household had \$6,325 in wealth; and the typical white household had \$113,149. Moreover, about one-third (35 percent) of black households had zero or negative net worth in 2009, compared with 15 percent of white households. The results translate to a median wealth of white households at 20 times that of black households and 18 times that of Hispanic households, according to the study of newly available government data from 2009. I think you will agree, Mr. President, that these statistics mandate a strategic approach towards leveling the playing field.

Throughout our month-long initiative, we have found that the need for recovery is great, but the desire to see tangible economic opportunity is even greater. As you prepare to address the nation with a jobs proposal that will address the 14 million unemployed Americans, we make the following general recommendations:

1. Acknowledge the depression-like unemployment crisis in the African American Community and articulate a targeted approach for job creation to ensure that communities with unique needs are assisted in a direct and comprehensive fashion.
2. Discuss ways in which you will begin to address the jobs crisis through Executive Branch processes such as Executive Orders and agency rulemakings. While the legislative process is important in solving the jobs crisis, we cannot ignore the power you have as the President of the United States to issue directives that have broad authority and impact.
3. Our nation's small businesses are often referred to as the economic engine that sustains the American economy. Given that fact, you should identify tax credits and incentives not only for small and medium sized businesses, but also determine ways to incentivize larger companies to form alliances with smaller companies. As you know small, minority owned businesses are often the first to hire people within their communities and neighborhoods.

More specifically, the CBC developed the *Congressional Black Caucus "For the People" Job Creation Policy Recommendations* for your consideration. Our recommendations are a reflection of information gleaned throughout the month of August and best practices from our varying experiences as legislators. The proposal includes everything from the establishment of a national infrastructure bank in order to finance the repair and upgrade of the nation's bridges, roads, ports, airports, schools, and water and sewer systems; to reducing payroll taxes on employers that bring previously outsourced jobs back to the United States; and eliminating barriers that prevent the growth of small and medium sized businesses—those responsible for more than half of the jobs created since the beginning of the "Great Recession".



The agenda items are as follows and are thoroughly explained in the document:

**CREATE**

- Create and Maintain an Infrastructure Bank to Invest in Our Nation's Aging Infrastructure
- Pass a Surface Transportation Bill to Create Millions of Jobs for Our Nation's Citizens
- Establish and Revitalize Critical Programs with Tangible Results for Our Nation's Local Communities

**PROTECT**

- Protect Our Nation's Most Vital Programs to Preserve Our Economic Security
- Provide Tax Protections for Our Nation's Citizens to Spur Economic Growth
- Eliminate Barriers for Small and Medium Business to Ensure Better Economic Opportunity

**REBUILD**

- Rebuild, Strengthen, and Retrain Our Nation's Workforce
- Reestablish Manufacturing Industry in US to Create More Jobs
- Revive the Educational Pipeline to Ensure Critical Training for Long Term Global Competitiveness

The CBC is a partner and stands ready to assist you in addressing the economic woes of this country. Please reply with a date that is suitable to convene a meeting to begin addressing the policy recommendations enumerated in this letter and proposal. I look forward to working with you and for the American people to remedy the jobs crisis.

Sincerely,



Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Chairman

