

TO: Black Economic Alliance
FROM: Guy Molyneux, Mario Brossard, and Corrie Hunt
DATE: June 5, 2019
RE: Black Americans' Views on an Economic Agenda for the Black Community

On behalf of the Black Economic Alliance, Hart Research and Brossard Research conducted a dual-frame survey of 1,003 Black adults nationwide, including 503 interviews conducted by phone and 500 conducted online. Interviews were conducted May 17 to 28, 2019. Below we outline the key findings from the research.

1) Despite signs of growth in the United States economy overall, Black Americans see significant economic challenges in their own communities.

- Black Americans view the economic conditions in the United States as significantly worse for Black communities than for the country overall. Fully 72% of Black Americans say they are dissatisfied with the economic situation for Black Americans today (including 37% very dissatisfied), compared with 57% who are dissatisfied with the state of the U.S. economy in general.
- Black Americans express concern about a number of obstacles to improving work, wages, and wealth in the Black community.

Proportion of Black Americans Who Say This Is a Big Concern

Black Americans facing discrimination in recruitment, hiring, and receiving promotions	84%
Not enough jobs with good wages and benefits being available in Black communities	84%
The wage gap between Black Americans and White Americans	83%
Black Americans not having the skills or training to qualify them for the good jobs of today and tomorrow	81%
The wealth gap between Black Americans and White Americans	79%
The challenges Black Americans face when trying to access capital, financing, and loans for small businesses	78%

2) Economic challenges have put the American Dream out of reach for many Black families, who say their incomes are not keeping up with the cost of living.

- A large majority (81%) of Black Americans say it is hard to achieve the American Dream today; this is true among Black Americans of all ages, income levels, and in urban, suburban, small town, and rural areas alike.
- Half (50%) of Black Americans say their family's income is falling behind the cost of living, while 38% say it is staying about even and only 10% say it is going up. Nearly two in three (65%) worry very or somewhat often about their income not keeping up with the cost of living.

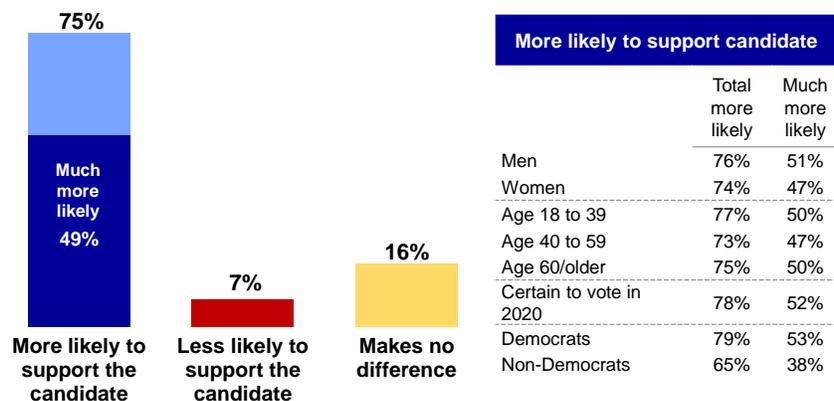
- Many Black Americans say that they lack the financial resources to withstand an unexpected expense or job loss: 45% report their savings would last no more than four weeks if they suddenly had no income and had to live off of their savings.

3) There is an urgency and a demand for candidates who embrace a Black economic agenda that improves work conditions, wages, and wealth for Black communities.

- Support for a candidate with a clear policy plan to advance economic opportunities for Black Americans is both strong and broad among the Black community. Three in four say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate with a plan to improve working conditions, wages, and wealth in the Black community, including 49% who would be *much* more likely. Among Democratic voters, 53% report that they are much more likely to support such a candidate.

There is strong support for a candidate with a clear economic agenda for Black Americans.

If a candidate running for president had a clear policy plan that would advance economic opportunities for Black Americans and improve working conditions, wages, and wealth in the Black community, I would be:



- Black Americans put a very high priority on improving opportunities for good jobs in the new economy. More than three in four Black Americans rate each of the following as extremely important priorities when it comes to improving the economic and financial situations of Black Americans.

Creating more good-paying jobs with benefits (77% rate as extremely high priority)

Making sure people have the training and skills needed for the jobs of the future (76% extremely high priority)

- These numbers are on par with making sure everyone has access to affordable healthcare (77% extremely important) and making college more affordable (77% extremely important).

- Building wealth and increasing access to capital are similarly important priorities for improving the economic and financial conditions of Black Americans.

Helping people build wealth (63% extremely high priority)

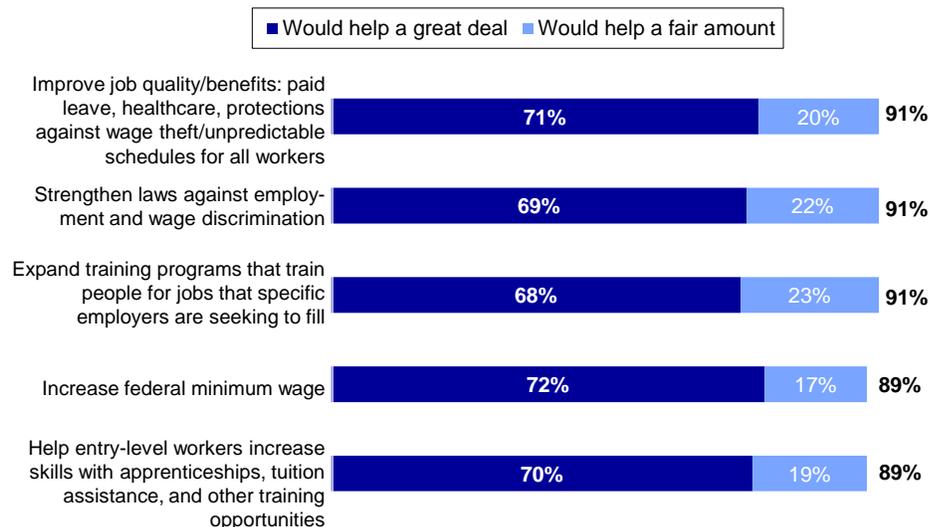
Increasing homeownership (61% extremely high priority)

Increasing access to capital and financing for small businesses (59% extremely high priority)

4) Black Americans put priority on policies that prepare Black communities for the future of work.

- Current employment opportunities and conditions in Black communities have left significant numbers of Black Americans concerned about their economic futures. Nearly half (47%) of Black Americans say they often worry about themselves or a family member not being able to find enough work, and 41% say they often worry about themselves or a family member losing a job.
- In addition to their concerns about discrimination and not having the training or skills to qualify for good jobs, 74% express big concerns about Black Americans losing their jobs because of automation.
- Policies aimed specifically at improving wages, benefits, and training are seen as especially impactful when it comes to improving economic conditions in the Black community.

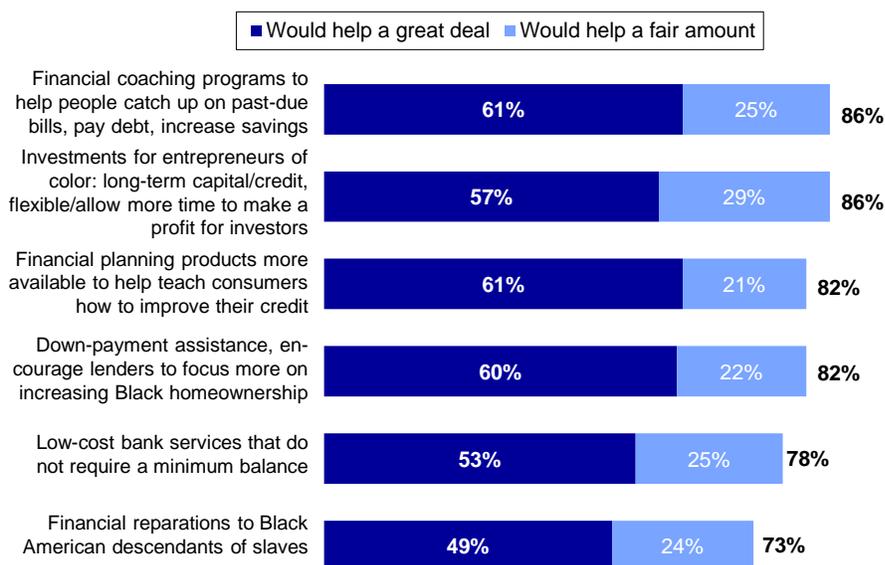
Policies that Would Improve Work Conditions for the Black Community



5) Policies that help to build wealth in the Black community, including supporting small businesses, are also important priorities for Black Americans.

- Supporting Black entrepreneurship is a key component of improving economic outcomes. Fully 30% of Black Americans say they personally own a business or expect to start a business within the next five years.
- Lack of credit or challenges to obtaining capital are significant barriers for Black Americans. 40% of Black Americans say they worry often about not being able to get a loan for a business, including 57% of those who currently own a business or expect to start one within five years.
- Similarly, 45% of Black Americans worry about having a low credit score or not being able to access credit when they need it and 43% worry about not being able to get a loan for a home.
- Black Americans believe a number of policies that empower people to build wealth and support small business owners would help improve economic conditions for the Black community.

Policies that Would Improve Access to Capital and Build Wealth



- While nearly two in three (65%) Black Americans say the United States should pay reparations to make up for the harm caused by slavery and other forms of racial discrimination in this country, the chart above shows that other forms of building wealth are seen as more impactful.

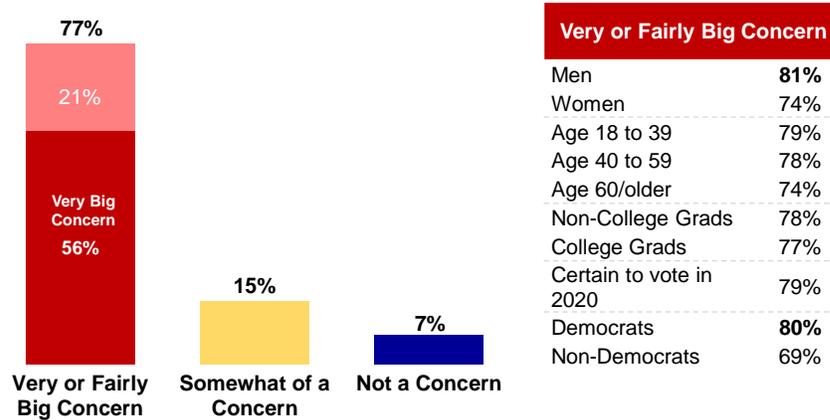
6) A Black economic agenda that improves economic opportunities for Black Americans should include support for re-entry programs for people with prior convictions.

- More than three in four (77%) Black Americans say they have big concerns about Black Americans with prior convictions not being able to get hired for good jobs.
- Nearly nine in 10 (87%) say that expanding re-entry programs would help the Black community a great deal or a fair amount, and 59% feel that ensuring Americans with prior convictions have opportunities to get jobs is an extremely important priority.

Re-entry for Black Americans with Prior Convictions Is a Major Concern.

How big of a concern for you personally is...

'Black Americans with prior convictions not being able to get hired for good jobs.'



7) Looking ahead to 2020, Black Americans are considering a range of Democratic challengers against a highly unpopular President Trump.

- The overwhelming majority (82%) of Black Americans say they disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as president (just 13% approve). This is true of 89% of Democrats as well as 63% of Black Americans who identify as independent or Republican. Furthermore, just 9% of Black Americans say they would be comfortable or enthusiastic about Trump as a candidate for re-election in 2020, while 77% feel very uncomfortable.
- Very few (11%) Black Americans believe they are better off today compared with before Donald Trump took office while 40% say Black Americans are worse off and the remaining 48% say they are faring about the same.
- Among the Democratic challengers, Joe Biden is the most popular, with 68% of Black adults saying they are enthusiastic or comfortable with his candidacy, followed by Bernie Sanders (58%), and Kamala Harris (47%). Among those familiar with Harris, her support is a strong 60%, comparable to Sanders's support.

Support for Selected Democratic Candidates

