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USA

Trump's Reality for African Americans

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The Trump administration fired Carla Hayden, the first African American and first woman librarian of Congress, by text message.

AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE under fire from the Trump regime on all fronts. President Trump says the Black population is receiving unfair advantages over most whites, particularly young white men.

The attack targets concepts of “wokism” (which originally meant awakening to realities of oppression and DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion)).

Pure and simple, this is a broadside racist assault with the goal of reversing every socio-economic and political gain won by this oppressed segment of the population.

When Trump and his underlings say he plans to go after the “radical left,” at the top of his list are civil rights groups.

Capitalism, National Oppression, Sexism

The source of these assaults is the structure of the capitalist system, where billionaires come first and working people last.

American capitalism is deeply rooted in its historic race-based class structure. Before independence from colonial England, the founders saw native peoples who welcomed them as inferior.

The white European settlers and colonists saw African slaves as less than civilized. They viewed Mexicans and other brown future Latino immigrants as invaders.

The largest oppressed people, Blacks have been targeted as “less than” since the formation of an independent country. It took a Civil War (the Second American Revolution) to end slavery and former slaves to become citizens.

Despite their debates over slavery, the founders never supported equality for nonwhite people. Native tribes faced genocide.

It is not surprising that white future rulers of both major capitalist parties imposed a system of white supremacy based on enforced segregation, exclusion and “last hired, first fired” for African Americans.

Women of course suffered double or triple exploitation — racism, sexual oppression and today's threats by the extreme right wing of further rollbacks of abortion rights and even contraceptives.

The “Secretary of War” Pete Hegseth, a patriarchal Christian-supremacist ideologue, has even questioned whether women should continue to have the right to vote. Transgender people are facing threats to their physical existence.

Rising Unemployment and Cuts

A study of the August, 2025 employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows the true nature of capitalism and Black oppression.

The Black unemployment rate of 7.5% (up from 6.1% in July 2024) remains significantly higher than the national average of 4.3%.

Black workers face persistent disparities due to many factors, including geographic concentration in high-unemployment urban areas, and systemic barriers in hiring and promotion.

The latest unemployment rates by race and ethnicity as of August 2025, based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

White 3.7%
Black/African American 7.5%
Asian 3.6%
Latino 5.3%
National Average 4.3%

The data show in short that African Americans continue to face the highest unemployment rate, nearly double that of Whites and Asians. They don't show, however, the rise in homelessness from working people being laid off and unable to pay rent and keep their homes.

Hardest hit are Black men and women, including those with children going to school without permanent addresses. Cuts in SNAP (food stamps) and fewer free meals at public schools are leading to undernourished families, especially among Black and Latino communities.

Asian Americans consistently show the lowest unemployment, often attributed to higher educational attainment and concentration in high-demand sectors.

Latino workers fall in the middle, with rates above white and Asians but below African Americans.

These disparities persist across age groups but are most pronounced among younger workers (ages 16–24), where Black youth unemployment can exceed 19%.

Black Women Hard Hit

In Trump's federal work force cuts, Black women are among the hardest hit. He cut hundreds of thousands of jobs from the federal work force, disproportionately affecting Black employees, especially women who got jobs and benefits unavailable to them in the private sector.

For example, when Trump started dismantling federal agencies and dismissing rank-and-file civil servants, Peggy Carr, the chief statistician at the Education Department, immediately started to make a calculation.

She was the first Black person and the first woman to hold the prestigious post of commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics. As a political appointee, she knew there was a risk of becoming a target.

But her 35-year career at the department spanned a half dozen administrations, including Trump's first term, and she had earned the respect of officials from both parties.

Surely, she thought, the office tasked with tracking the achievement of the nation's students could not fall under the president's definition of "divisive and harmful" or "woke."

On a February afternoon, a security guard showed up to her office just as she was preparing to hold a staff meeting. Fifteen minutes later, the staff watched in tears and disbelief as she was escorted out of the building. Dr. Carr said in an interview:

It was like being prosecuted in front of my family — my work family. It was like I was being taken out like the trash, the only difference is I was being taken out the front door rather than the back door.

While tens of thousands of employees like Carr have lost their jobs in President Trump's slash-and-burn approach to shrinking the federal work force, labor experts say the cuts disproportionately affect Black women.

Black women make up 12% of the federal work force, nearly double their share of the labor force overall. However, they make up 25% of the work force in agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Education where the cuts have been the deepest.

The Education Department was a special case, more than a quarter of whose work force was Black women, suspending dozens of people whose job titles and official duties had no connection to DEI.

Their only apparent exposure to DEI initiatives came in the form of trainings encouraged by their managers. To Trump being Black in a job is proof you were hired because of "wokism" and DEI.

Why Defend DEI

Federal employment has served generations as a ladder to the middle working class who were shut out of jobs because of discrimination. The government has historically offered more job stability, pay equity and career advancement than the private sector.

Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the federal government aggressively enforced affirmative action in hiring and anti-discrimination rules. Trump calls those programs "reverse racism."

The right wing, controlling a majority in Congress and the White House, defend Trump's overhaul of the federal government. In July, the Supreme Court majority ruled the president could continue his racist firing across the federal government

In a statement, Harrison Fields, a White House spokesman, said that Trump was "ushering in an economy that will empower all Americans, just as it did during his first term."

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He added that "the obsession with divisive D.E.I. initiatives reverse years of strides toward genuine equality."

This agenda is exactly why DEI must be front and central to the resistance to rising moves to entrench Trump's move to a presidential system with no checks on its powers. (The government shutdown gives Trump and the Office of Management and Budget a pretext for even more abuses.)

During the first 200 days of the Trump presidency, of the 98 of his nominees for the administration's highest staff, only two were African American. These were Scott Turner, secretary of Housing and Urban Development and Earl G. Mathews, general counsel in the newly named Department of War. In the first Trump administration, of the 70 nominations, Ben Carson, who became Secretary of the housing department, was the only Black official confirmed.

Purges

Statistics compiled by Kathryn Dunn Tenpas for the Brookings Institution reveal the extent of a white administration. In comparison with this two percent rate 200 days into other administrations, Black officials represented 21% of Senate-confirmed nominees under Joseph Biden, 13% under Barack Obama and 8% under George W. Bush.

In the same time period, the Trump administration fired high-ranking Black officials who had been previously confirmed by the Senate. These include Alvin Brown, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board; General Charles Q. Brown, chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Carla Hayden, Congress librarian; Robert E. Primus, board chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Gwynne Wilcox, member of the National Labor Relations Board. (See "Trump Fires Black Officials From an Overwhelmingly White Administration," Elisabeth Bumiller and Erica L. Green, New York Times, updated 10/10/25)

Most were fired via email or text message without a reason. Several found their work phones and computers switched off and were escorted off federal property shortly afterward. But General Brown was clear about the reason he was shown the door. Pete Hegseth had called for his firing, claiming he harmed the military because he was implementing D.E.I. programs.

General Brown, along with Primus and Wilcox, are suing to be reinstated. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the administration could temporarily remove Gwynne Wilcox, the first Black woman to serve on the NLRB, as her suit goes forward.

Wilcox is concerned about the agency since it no longer has a quorum and its work has ground to a halt.

Others have been pressured to step down rather than face the humiliation of a brutal firing and smear campaign. Willie L. Phillips, the first African American chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, resigned last spring at the request of the White House.

Trump's attempt to fire Lisa D. Cook, the first Black woman governor at the Federal Reserve Board, has so far been unsuccessful. Unlike in the Wilcox case, the Supreme Court ruled Cook can continue to serve as the Administration's challenge goes forward.

Although Trump initially targeted the board chair, Jerome Powell, for removal, rules state that a member can only be removed for cause. Then the administration charged that Cook had lied on a mortgage application. Even if true, the incident had nothing to do with her qualifications or performance on the board, and occurred before her confirmation. (Media reports indicate that the charge is specious.)

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Cook is a former economics professor whose research focused on racial disparities, the history of financial institutions, and crises in financial markets and innovation.

Activist LaTosha Brown explained to the Guardian why Trump picked Lisa Cook:

He picked her because he is betting that, in an industry that is probably 90% or more white male, his odds of removing her are greater than the odds for removing others from the board. That in itself is rooted in the history and how insidious racism is built into the fabric of how we see people of color in this country.

So far Cook has fought this attempt to fire her all the way up to the Supreme Court, which found that she could continue as Governor as her case progressed. It has been added to their docket in early 2026.

Many of these individuals were the first African Americans to be nominated, confirmed and work in their category. This is true for Alvin Brown, Lisa Cook, Carla Hayden, Willie Phillips, Robert Primus and Gwynne Wilcox. General Brown was the second Black chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Clearly these purges demonstrate why defending DEI must be front and central in fighting Trump's authoritarianism and his white supremacist policies. The unity of the working class that's essential to defeating the far right is not possible unless that occurs.

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