

Weber Shandwick

Kellogg Conference

“Discussion on Current Racial Climate”

Moderator:

**Melissa Harris-Perry,
Host of “Melissa Harris-Perry,”
MSNBC**

Panelists:

**Marc Morial,
President and CEO,
National Urban League;
Janet Murguia,
President and CEO,
National Council of La Raza;
Kathleen Ko,
President and CEO,
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum;
Ben Jealous,
President and CEO,
NAACP;
Rinku Sen,
Executive Director,
Applied Research Center;
Jacqueline Johnson Pata,
Executive Director,
National Congress of American Indians;
Judith Browne-Dianis,
Co-Director,
Advancement Project;
Ralph Everett,
President and CEO,
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Inc.;**

Philip Tegeler,

**President and Executive Director,
Poverty and Race Research Action Council**

**Location:
New Orleans Marriott
555 Canal Street,
New Orleans, Louisiana**

**Time: 12:30 p.m. CST
Date: Thursday, April 27, 2012**

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, at this time please once again welcome President and CEO of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Sterling Speirn.

(Applause.)

STERLING SPEIRN: Good afternoon, everyone. The mini-series “America Healing,” continues. I want to welcome you to the back-by-popular-demand Anchor Institutions panel discussion, this amazing group of stars who live in their own solar systems and have entire planets of work revolving around them.

But when the Kellogg Foundation began to ask ourselves how broad and deep would we reach into grass-roots organizations, grass-tops organizations, new emerging groups and some legacy groups that have been around, in some cases, for a very long time, it was how we came to – one part of the strategy was get – support our anchor institutions that have been doing this work and are on the battlefronts every day, every month, every year. So this group we did as one part of the America Healing and Racial Equity Portfolio. What we didn’t know is whether we could ever get this many stars all in the same room.

Now when you bring stars together, you call them constellations. So, prize to anyone who comes up with a name for this new constellation in our – in our sky, because we need them. You might also consider them our avengers of America Healing, since they’re our superheroes and they often have to work by themselves battling the bad guys. But together, they’re even stronger.

So I’m just going to introduce them. You know them – you have their names and affiliations and probably know their histories and bios – and then I’ll introduce our moderator and let them have at it.

The far right, Kathy Ko is with the Asian American Pacific Islanders America Health Forum; next to her, Ralph Everett, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; Rinku Sen, with the Applied Research Center; and next to her, Marc Morial, with the Urban League. I’m going to skip Melissa for a sec. Janet Murguia, with National Council of La Raza; Benjamin Jealous, with the NAACP; Judith Browne-Dianis, with the Advancement Project; Phil Tegeler, with the Poverty and Race Research Action Council; and Jackie Johnson Pata, with the National Congress of American Indians.

And we are so grateful that Melissa Harris-Perry has come to our conference – (applause) – from MSNBC to moderate this panel. Thank you, Melissa.

MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY: Thank you.

Well, good afternoon. This is really quite cool, that we all apparently sit here with water while you eat. (Laughter.) But maybe it’s an expression of American inequality. We can sort of get to have that experience.

It is – it is really my pleasure to have an opportunity to sit and moderate on this panel. I won't take the time to read the lengthy bios of the folks who are up here. I will take a little bit of moderator privilege for an opportunity to frame the conversation just a bit, and then my goal is really to open it up and have a broad conversation.

That said, this is a huge group, and so I want to be sure that we will manage our time well. We have two hours – which is a surprisingly short period of time, it turns out, as someone who has a two-hour television show and always feels like I have an hour and a half more to say.

Four years ago, in 2008, I was extremely optimistic about what the election of President Barack Obama meant about American politics. And let me be really clear: I don't mean I was extremely optimistic about what then-Senator Barack Obama would do politically. I had a sort of reasonable optimism about that, but I'm enough of a political scientist to know that, first of all, presidents are only moderately powerful – particularly if they're not despotic – and that the realities of a system that is as closed as ours is means that any individual will only make changes at the margins.

But here is what I was incredibly excited about. I was excited about the fact that in the context of an economic downturn, Americans did not do the thing that Americans are so good at doing, which is kind of initially retreating to our various ethnic and racial and ideological corners. As the economy was crashing, our idea was, I know; let's form a multi-racial, intergenerational coalition behind a black guy.

Like that had never happened before in American politics, the idea that that was a reasonable way to respond to eight years of an administration that in many ways felt like it had – in saying that it did not govern by focus groups, also felt as though it was not governing often in the interests of a broad group of Americans.

And so it was an exciting moment for me, less because of what it said about Barack Obama and more because of what it said potentially about who we are – which I suppose is part of why, four years later, it feels very distressing to have to engage in a conversation about the American racial climate.

Because I take very seriously that it was a big deal to elect an African-American man as president of the United States. (Applause.) I don't think that it could have happened in '84 or '88 or '92 or '96 or 2000 or 2004. I think there were a whole series of political and economic and social forces, and a darn good campaign, that made it possible.

But more than anything else, I thought that perhaps this was certainly not the initiation of a post-racial America, but I thought perhaps a watershed moment that we would soon look back on and think of as changing point in the American racial climate. And to the extent that it has been, it has been depressingly in the opposite way – right – in the direction of often feeling like a backlash.

So what I want my panelists to try to do today is both to assess where we are in terms of this current racial climate and try to assess it as fairly as we can within a long history, because

however bad things are, I never believe that this was the worst moment ever – right – but, like, actually where we are. And also to see if we can't reclaim some level of optimism about the possibilities of where we will move structurally in the future.

That said – and this will be my last point of privilege on this – almost immediately after the inauguration of Barack Obama, Eric Holder, as attorney general, made quite an impassioned statement about race in America in which he called Americans cowards on the issue of race and called for us to engage in conversation.

As much as, as a teacher, I really like the idea of being in conversation – it is, after all, the only skill and tool I actually have – (laughter) – Eric Holder, of course, is not a college professor. He is the lead attorney in the country. And my thought was, you know, I appreciate that, Attorney General Holder, but rather than having conversations I'd just like you to sue somebody.

(Laughter, applause.)

Now, it turns out that actually Attorney General Holder's been extremely good at suing people. There's been lots of suing happening. But I'm also going to encourage that from all of my panelists, so as to try to recapture some optimism, to try to realistically assess where we are – but also as we start talking about what we could do, to go to a step around our actual tools that we have at our disposal that help to bring justice, rather than simply devolving into let's have a national conversation.

So while we can't just have a national conversation about this, we can have a conversation here. And rather than starting on my extreme right, I will start on my extreme left, because – (laughs) – it just seems like a good place to start with this conversation.

(Laughter.)

So if you could just start – start by giving us just a little bit of a sense of how you see our current racial moment.

JACKIE JOHNSON PATA: OK. Thanks. First of all, I'm glad to be first, because for Indian Country, it seems like we were always left off the table from every conversation that was happening, even amongst ourselves.

(Applause.)

So we – so part, for us, the election of Barack Obama brought some campaign promises, hard-earned campaign promises, during the get-out-the-vote effort that we all need to be engaging on, to bring us to the table for the first time in dialogues that were happening within the White House, whether it be about rural conversations, whether it be about immigration issues, whether it be about Supreme Court nominees – a number of things that we really weren't engaged in at the time.

And what's happened for Indian Country is that through this administration they've said, yes, we want to bring you to the table. Yes, we want to have a conversation with you, and we are pushing consultation – the government-to-government, nation-to-nation dialogue that needs to happen with the sovereign entities of the tribes in the United States.

And so that's great; we're having a good dialogue. But when you talk about what's those opportunities and where do we need to go to really ground that structural component – we now are having good dialogues, but we recognize the huge gaps that hadn't been talked about.

So today, Violence Against Women. They're being debated right now on the Hill about what are we going to do with jurisdictions, with tribal communities, and how do we deal with the fact that, you know, nine out of – or, eight out of 10 Native American women are violated, and eight out of the 10 are done by non-native perpetrators?

And guess what? We don't have jurisdiction over our lands. We can't deal with them in our courts, and we have to rely upon the federal government. It's a structural issue that says over and over again that Native women get to be violated because nobody's there to protect us. And so, you know, as this amendment's being debated right now by the leadership about whether or not we should include the Native protective provisions in it or not, I say that this is where this country is.

We're at the table, finally. We're in the circle here. We appreciate Kellogg Foundation for including us. But we still have to deal with the very differences of the structural components that keep some of us out when we have these larger dialogues of protection and inclusion in the whole healing that has to happen in America.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: We'll just keep going along the – (laughter).

PHILIP TEGELER: Thanks, Melissa. In terms of the lack of progress on a number of fronts in racial justice and racial justice law, I don't think any of us were really surprised at the difficulty the Obama administration would have advancing new racial justice initiatives at the executive level. But – that's not to say a lot of good has not happened, but I think a lot of good, a lot of progress has been postponed to the second term. And all of us are kind of waiting for that second term to try to move the – move the ball forward.

I think where we're at in the long run is, you know, a need – a need to bring folks together. And I think the theme of this conference, "America Healing," depends on dealing with the structural factors that keep us apart. And in particular, what we're focused on in our work is segregation in both housing and in schools.

In spite of some increasing diversity in our suburban communities, our schools are more segregated than ever, and a recent report we did with the Joint Center showed increasing poverty

concentrations from 2000 to 2010, during the economic crisis. And as long as we're keeping white children and children of color apart, I think we're going to perpetuate the divisions in this country. You know, we've heard over and over again at this conference that racial and economic segregation is the driver of racial disparity – racial disparity in health, in education, in employment, in income, in incarceration. It's an underlying structure that feeds disparity and division.

And I think what's not on the table for many of us in the room – all of us who are working to deal with these problems – is an effort to try to deal with the underlying problem of segregation and to try to bring children together into more integrated communities and schools.

And I think for the long-term, kind of one-on-one America healing agenda moving forward into the future, to have a real multiracial democracy we need to start to bring children together more intentionally to break down racial stereotypes, break down implicit bias and so on. And that's a multiyear project. It goes beyond the second term.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: OK. So I've heard at least two pieces here so I'll just kind of try to keep pulling us together.

So one is this question particularly on rethinking our war on women narrative as it is emerging in the context of this new VAWA conversation, right? So Republicans are now telling us, there's no war on women, right? In fact, here is our – we're going to go ahead and extend VAWA; it's going to look just '94 VAWA. And really what that means is there's no war on these particular kinds of women. But don't worry, there's still a war on women who are in same-sex relationships, men who are in same-sex relationship and indigenous women, right? But don't worry, because they weren't going to vote for the Republican Party anyway, right? So we have a little bit of needing to have a more inclusive conversation around – and not only conversation but an impulse towards ensuring that when we say a category like women, that we are inclusive of everyone, right? And particularly also thinking about the issue of sovereignty.

And then I also heard a bit here around not only the structural issues around segregation – residential segregation and education segregation, but also a bit of a contact hypothesis. That if we live near each other, if we grow up near each other, if we get to know each other intimately in our families and communities as kids, then maybe that begins a piece of healing early on, OK?

Yeah?

JUDITH BROWNE-DIANIS: So I think one of the things that for me looking at the election of President Obama was that I actually didn't – even though I'm a civil rights lawyer and an eternal optimist at heart – didn't actually think he could be elected, because I see the underbelly of race in the work that we do.

When he got elected, I think that there was – we overestimated what it meant. And we overestimated what the consequences would be. And that really, we were not necessarily prepared for the backlash. And the backlash has been significant and has come at us with a vengeance.

And so one of the things that Advancement Project and others in this room have been working on, we have seen the pushback with regard to voting rights. So 2008, he wins; 2010, Republicans take over many legislatures and immediately start to put in place efforts that would restrict the votes so that it wouldn't happen again. And so in the first two months in 2011, we saw 34 states take up voter ID bills. And these were to require state-issued photo identification. In Texas, it was passed as emergency legislation. And we know that there are 21 million Americans that do not have state-issued photo identification. Twenty-five percent of black voters do not have it. Significant numbers of Latinos, of Native-Americans do not have it – students and elderly. All the people who turned out in record numbers.

And so what we have seen post-election of President Obama is the most significant roll back of voting rights that we have seen in a century in this country. And it didn't just stop there. And so we – we have to put this in the context of he gets elected and there's a slogan called "Take Back America." And this is one of the ways in which it gets taken back is to cut off our right to vote, because when you think about Election Day, it is the one great equalizer. It doesn't matter what your race is, it doesn't matter how much money you have. When you go into the voting booth, we all have the same amount of power. But there are those who want to undermine our democracy by cutting off participation, because they don't like the results of participation.

And so now we see these efforts. In 2011, we were actually – you know, we actually were victorious, because there were a number of states – 34 took it up, but only nine passed it, because we were fighting on the ground against these laws. In – (interrupted by applause) – that's right; we should clap for that – but it didn't stop. In 2012, 23 states took it up and so – and there are states that are putting it on their ballots. Because the thing is for them, is that if they can control the conversation with rhetoric around voter fraud – when in fact you are more likely to be struck by lightning than to find a prosecutable case of voter fraud – and they can tell people you have to have it to get on a plane – that's not true – you have to have to get it to buy Sudafed. And they control the conversation with rhetoric and the American public buys into it. Then we think there is voter fraud. But in fact, they're not preventing fraud; they're preventing voting.

And so we have to put this in the context of how there are those who want to take back America, because they're scared of the demographics, they're scared of who's in the White House. And that we really have to be galvanized for this longer-term fight. It's not just about this election in November, but in order for us to keep on the same trajectory of not just electing him, but to be able to move the – not only the conversation, but the result around reducing disparity – racial disparities on every level – we've got to have the longer term movement building that will allow us to do it. It's not just about November, but what are we going to do the day after? (Applause.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: So Ben, you are youngest person to ever lead the NAACP, an organization that has addressed, over the course of its history, each one of these issues. So as the NAACP looks at this particular moment, how does it understand its mission within this context?

BENJAMIN JEALOUS: You know, I think it's important right now to talk about why there's reason to be optimistic, right? We spend a lot of time talking about the problem, stating

the problem, educating folks about the problem. But right now, times are so hard we're on the verge of disempowering ourselves and each other. We aren't talking – if you think about four years ago, we were talking about hope. We were talking about, yes we can.

I see four reasons to be – to wake up each morning and be optimistic about changing this country. One is I spend a lot of my time working on criminal justice reform. And whether it's Texas where we passed 12 very progressive criminal justice reform bills that were signed by Governor Perry, because the tea party and the NAACP got together; or Mississippi, a few years ago, where Derrick Johnson out of there took time-served requirements were 85 percent for nonviolent offenders to 25 percent; or Connecticut where the governor just signed the bill yesterday to abolish the death penalty. (Applause.) And the vote that we got in the House was bipartisan and it wasn't the two- or three-vote margin we expected; it was a 24-vote margin.

There are issues out there – and especially within criminal justice – where we can actually get consensus between the left and the right and get great things done in this moment that'll drive down the incarceration rate and reform draconian sentences. That's one.

Two – voting. The attacks have been horrible and we are preparing – many of us – for a massive progressive push in 2013 to push things forward, expand the vote as much as possible. But in the meantime, people like the folks in this room who made 2008 – and if we're honest, there were many stair steps up to that – made 2008 the largest, most diverse presidential electorate we have ever seen. And even with these laws, I mean, the lessons from – you know, from the old poll taxes and literacy tests Reverend Sherrod was at – at the end of the day, you just got to pay them; you've just got to deal with them. You have to vote anyway. You don't let somebody say that just because we're going to make it more difficult, that means you ain't going to vote. And that's why we at the NAACP this month are mailing out voter registration forms to every single unregistered black 18 and 19 year old in the country – all 1.2 million of them. (Applause.)

The third reason is I look at a room like this – let me ask you a question: Raise your hand if you have ever won a victory against great odds? (Laughter.) Raise your hand if you have ever won a victory against great odds. OK, right. So number three is remember who we are, right? Remember what we've done; remember how many times we've seen our great faith affirmed against great odds.

The fourth reason is –

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Oh, I know the fourth reason!

MR. JEALOUS: The fourth reason is that –

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: It's –

MR. JEALOUS: Yes. She's on TV. (Applause, laughter.)

The fourth reason, the final reason is this: The folks who are driving up hate crimes in this country, the folks who are investing in the politics of hatred in this country, think back maybe 50 years ago. Just think what it would be like to be sitting there thinking, you know, how would those folks act when white supremacy was mathematically ending in this country? They're acting exactly like you would act – you would expect white supremacists to act when the long days of white supremacy being the law of the land in this country are coming to an end.

The reality is that in climate change, when the climate gets hotter, things get worse. But sometimes when you're talking about the racial climate, things get worse before they get much better.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: So I love Ben and Judith next to each other a bit, because it feels like this is how bad it is, but also here's the long history of where we have been. And so we know that it has also been much worse and so we keep moving forward. So as bad as it is, it might be the death rattle of American racism, which would sound very scary, because –

MR. JEALOUS: Well, at least white supremacy. I don't know about racism.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: OK, all right.

MR. JEALOUS: But white supremacy.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: OK. So the death rattle of American white supremacy. We'll imagine that as a possibility.

Yes?

JANET MURGUIA (?): Yeah. Well, I think that is a good set up, because you know, I sit here and I'm conflicted. You know, I feel the sense of optimism and I agree with Ben that there is oftentimes the worst before the dawn – the darkest before the dawn. But I have to tell you, for the Latino community in this country, as I look at the theme of the conference – America healing – I think about, you know, in order to heal, the harm must be done. And right now, we're under attack. And you know, I can't sugarcoat it. And I'm an optimist, but the Latino community and immigrant community and people of color where people can't tell whether you're here in this country legally or not, we are under attack.

Yesterday, I was in the Supreme Court. And we held a rally in front of the Supreme Court when they heard the Arizona law, S.B.1070 – a law we've talked about as “show me your papers, please” – essentially requiring law enforcement to check the immigration status of anyone they stop in Arizona. That law – there's been attempt to copycat it across the different countries. But what the impact of that law has been – and it has been enjoined, but because there've been other efforts across the country to mimic this law, we've seen pain and suffering in the lives of many families, particularly in Latino and immigrant families. And the civil rights nature of these laws is getting lost. That wasn't an immigration case they heard yesterday. That was a civil rights case – (interrupted by applause) – because it is our own people – (interrupted

by applause) – because it is people like you and me, many of us who’ve been here, you know, a generation, several generations, who are now going to be suspect in our own communities.

I want to look at that bright future, but to me this looks like the dark past that we’ve been through. We’ve been down this road before. And to me, it feels like the optimism is in we have been down this road before and we have moved forward at different obstacles along the way. And right now is a time for unity. We need to be able to show the strength of all of our communities coming together to push back on these and all the efforts that you’ve heard about here. (Applause.)

And I am encouraged, because when I was able to be in Alabama a couple of months ago – and many of the folks here at my side – we recreated the march from Selma to Montgomery. And we were there, obviously, to honor those who had been on that march, you know, in 1965, ’63, when they took that march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

You know, we’ve heard over and over again at this conference that racial and economic segregation is the driver of racial disparity – racial disparity in health, in education, in employment, in income, in incarceration. It’s an underlying structure that feeds disparity and division.

And I think what’s not on the table for many of us in the room – all of us who are working to deal with these problems – is an effort to try to deal with the underlying problem of segregation and to try to bring children together into more integrated communities and schools.

And I think for the long term, kind of one-on-one America Healing agenda moving forward into the future – to have a real multiracial democracy we need to start to bring children together more intentionally, to break down racial stereotypes, break down implicit bias and so on. And that’s a multiyear project. It goes beyond the second term.

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MS. HARRIS-PERRY: It's –

MR. JEALOUS: Yes. She's on TV. (Applause, laughter.)

The fourth reason – the final reason is this. The folks who are driving up hate crimes in this country, the folks who are investing in the politics of hatred in this country –

Think back maybe 50 years ago. Just think what it would be like to be sitting there thinking, you know, how would those folks act when white supremacy was mathematically ending in this country? They're acting exactly like you would act – you would expect white supremacists to act when the long days of white supremacy being the law of the land in this country are coming to an end.

The reality is that in climate change, when the climate gets hotter, things get worse. But sometimes when you're talking about the racial climate, things get worse before they get much better.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: So I love Ben and Judith next to each other a bit, because it feels like this is how bad it is, but also here's the long history of where we have been. And so we know that it has also been much worse and so we keep moving forward. So as bad as it is, it might be the death rattle of American racism, which would sound very scary, because –

MR. JEALOUS: Well, at least white supremacy. I don't know about racism.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: OK, all right.

MR. JEALOUS: But white supremacy.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: OK. So the death rattle of American white supremacy. We'll imagine that as a possibility.

Yes?

JANET MURGUIA (?): Yeah. Well, I think that is a good set up, because you know, I sit here and I'm conflicted. You know, I feel the sense of optimism and I agree with Ben that there is oftentimes the worst before the dawn – the darkest before the dawn. But I have to tell you, for the Latino community in this country, as I look at the theme of the conference – “America Healing” – I think about, you know, in order to heal, the harm must be done. And right now, we're under attack. And you know, I can't sugarcoat it. And I'm an optimist, but the Latino community and immigrant community and people of color who – where people can't tell whether you're here in this country legally or not; we are under attack.

Yesterday, I was in the Supreme Court. And we held a rally in front of the Supreme Court when they heard the Arizona law, S.B.1070 – a law we've talked about as, “show me your papers, please” – essentially requiring law enforcement to check the immigration status of anyone they stop in Arizona. That law – there's been attempt to copycat it across the different countries.

But what the impact of that law has been – and it has been enjoined – but because there've been other efforts across the country to mimic this law we've seen pain and suffering in the lives of many families, particularly in Latino and immigrant families. And the civil rights nature of these laws is getting lost. That wasn't an immigration case they heard yesterday. That was a civil rights case – (interrupted) – because it is our own people – (interrupted) – because it is people like you and me – many of us who've been here, you know, a generation, several generations, who are now going to be suspect in our own communities.

I want to look at that bright future, but to me this looks like the dark past that we've been through. We've been down this road before. And to me, it feels like the optimism is in, we have been down this road before and we have moved forward at different obstacles along the way. And right now is a time for unity. We need to be able to show the strength of all of our communities coming together to push back on these and all the efforts that you've heard about here. (Applause.)

And I am encouraged, because when I was able to be in Alabama a couple of months ago – and many of the folks here at my side – we recreated the march from Selma to Montgomery. And we were there obviously to honor those who had been on that march – you know, in 1965, '63 – when they took that march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. And I was reminded that back then very few people wanted to take that walk. But there were brave people who did, and thank God they did.

Well, the same type of feeling came together when I took that march in Alabama, because while we were pushing back against the voter suppression laws in Alabama and making a point about those types of laws across the country, I was so proud that my brothers, like Ben Jealous of the NAACP, Al Sharpton, Marc and others said, at the same time, we've got to push against – back against the worst anti-immigrant, anti-Latino law that's been passed in this state. And we are going to make a statement about that together. (Applause.)

When we can come together in this modern era to understand that it's not just about our separate struggles, but to be reminded about Dr. King's words, words that he wrote to Cesar Chavez at the height of his fast, and he said our separate struggles are really one - the fight for justice, for humanity and for dignity.

I mean, that's what's at stake again today. But we need to recognize it, embrace that fight, and use the tools that we do have. But one thing is for sure. We've got to come together. We've got to stay together and understand that together we will move forward and conquer these difficult challenges. (Applause.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: So, Marc, the Urban League – and whatever we see at the national level becomes very real in our cities. And you and I both have a particular commitment to and love for this city. But I wonder if you can talk to me a little bit about how some of what we've been seeing here – what that racial climate looks like when we start imagining it in the more local space of the American cities.

MARC MORIAL: Well, first, I want to congratulate you for all of your success on MSNBC. We love your voice. (Applause.) And we appreciate it. Congratulations to you.

And I want to just make sure that we also thank the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Dr. Gail Christopher and the team here – (applause) – for bringing us together with America Healing once again, with the hope that we'll be able to do this on an ongoing basis. Right?

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Yeah.

MR. MORIAL: Let me hear it. Right?

PANELISTS: (In unison.) Right.

MR. MORIAL: I'm reminded of Dickens, who said these are the best of times and these are the worst of times, that this is the age of darkness and it's also the age of light.

These are the worst of times because of deep unemployment and joblessness in our local communities across the nation. These are the worst of times because yet, in a short period of just a few months, the Supreme Court could reverse the dramatic Affordable Care Act, which gave us universal – or a step towards universal health care, something that has been in the public policy debate since the 1940s; that the Supreme Court might sanction an onerous, draconian, 19th century immigration racial profiling law; that the Supreme Court could, in a matter of months, wipe out affirmative action and inclusion in higher education; that across this nation, we've had this effort by forces to pass, in an orchestrated, organized way, new restrictive voter ID laws which take us back 50 years, or a rewriting of the criminal laws when it comes to self-defense for these – I don't call it stand your ground, but kill-at-will laws, which bring back 1890s wild, wild West justice. These are the worst of times.

But they're the best of times. And one of the reasons why they are the best of times is because I look at this stage, I look at all of you, and I see the seeds of the future. I see the

beginnings of this very important step that this nation must take towards an affirmation as a multicultural 21st century democracy. And that's the journey that we are on. (Applause.)

When the president was elected, I, like many of you, participated in endless numbers of panels, a whole host of television and radio and newspaper interviews, where the question was posed, is this the beginning of a post-racial America?

My response was it's the absolute wrong question. The goal is not a post-racial America. The goal is a multicultural democracy which affirms each and every person, which affirms the history and contributions of each and every ethnic group, but on a level and even playing field, where people can affirm their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I am optimistic, but I'm only optimistic if this generation can rise to the occasion, if this generation, with all of its talents, all of its education, all of its organizational skills, all of its sense, its great sense of history and the future, can rise to the occasion to demonstrate the kind of courage and conviction as people like Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez, like so many demonstrated to fight the great odds of those times, when there was no sense that there would ever be a very, very different nation.

I'm from New Orleans. My grandfather was born the year of the Plessy v. Ferguson decision. He was born in St. John the Baptist Parish, which is rural Louisiana. He told me in the 1970s, when I was in high school, that as he grew up, he never imagined that segregation would ever end, that it was just a fact of life and it looked like it was there to stay.

And along came the movement. Along came Rosa and Martin Luther King. Along came all of the lawyers and activists toiling in the vineyards. Along came Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Along came a titanic shift. Along came Earl Warren and a changing Supreme Court. And the nation indeed changed.

So I am optimistic if we, at this time, can muster up the courage and conviction to confront the immediate challenges that we face, that I think we've all talked about and that we've outlined; but secondarily, that we can form and shape a vision, a vision of a very different 21st century America. And that vision is a vision of optimism and hope, in contrast to a vision of fear and retrogression, the idea that America's best was its past, that the way to go forward is to look up and look through the rear-view mirror and imagine what was behind you.

We must confront that idea in and at the public square. We must confront that idea when it comes to the shaping of public policy. We must confront that idea in the work of our organizations, because we must lead and we must embrace the future.

So these are the best of times and these are the worst of times. But as Dr. King said, sometimes only when it's dark can you see the stars. So let's look at the stars and let's reach for the stars. (Applause.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: So I sense again, between Janet and Marc, some of the same tensions – creative tensions, I think – as I also felt with Judith and Ben in terms of thinking about

both on the ground what these policies look like, how regressive they are, but also feeling like, in the long sweep of history, we don't want to fail to lay claim to what our victories have been and the capacities that we have.

Rinku, part of what I love about the work that you and your organization do is that you often force us to get out of talking points, out of rhetoric and into empirical evidence. It appeals to the nerd in me. (Laughter.)

So talk to me a little bit about, as you and as ARC are doing this work, sort of what does it look like to you empirically?

RINKU SEN: Well, I mean, I have to say I think we have an enormous opportunity right now - and it has been building, and it's going to last for a while longer - to engage so many more people in not just the conversation, but in the fight.

I think that the contradiction between having a black president and then, for all of the people who are able to see that every black kid is not able to get a decent education in this country, that we are - we have, you know, a quarter of our children living hungry, unable to have enough food to eat - that contradiction is actually galvanizing to people and it moves people and it gets them wanting to talk about it.

I think that is why, you know, "Color of Change" was able to draw the kind of attention to Alec and the way - the role that Alec played in the Trayvon Martin murder. (Applause.)

So I just think the country is primed for those stories. And if you can tell the stories, which we are able to do because we have the media tools to do it, that is what enables Melissa to have that show, her show on television. I know - everybody I know watches your show. And it -

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: You need to know some more people. (Laughs.)

MS. SEN: Yes, well, everybody in this room needs to be on Twitter, tweeting Melissa's show every Saturday and Sunday morning.

So what we find is that we have this chance right now to connect the stories of individuals to the system, because it's not like individuals don't experience things and don't observe things. They do. It's not like people have not been pushed out of schools and losing their kids and knowing folks who have been deported. They have. It's just they don't really understand what is the systemic way in which that is enabled to happen.

And we have a chance to tell those stories in such a way that people can really understand, oh, there's - this is the piece of the system that could change the experience for this individual, for my family, for myself.

So our experience is - you know, what we do a lot of is translating, you know, political analysis and policy analysis and data into language and into stories that everyday people can

relate to and understand. And every single person in this room, every single person that you relate to in your home communities, has that same ability. It's not actually that difficult, but it means that you have to be going back and forth between the individual and the system all the time.

I actually think that is the core of this initiative by the Kellogg Foundation, which includes racial equity and racial healing, because the equity is about the system, but the healing is about the individual. And they're connected like this. And that's the way that we need to do our work is being able to see and show other people those connections. (Applause.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: So, Ralph, your organization also appeals to my inner nerd with the data that you all collect and have been – you all have really been at the forefront of trying to generate a sort of think tank. And it feels to me like part of what the right has been so incredibly effective at doing over the course of the past 40 years is generating think tanks and generating knowledge that then becomes the received wisdom of our political space.

So in this moment, what is – what are the possibilities, what are the opportunities for some received wisdom and knowledge that might, in fact, be counter to so much of the kind of racial angst that we currently experience?

RALPH EVERETT: Thank you, Melissa.

I think that I too am very optimistic about where we are now, and I think that it provides us with an opportunity to move forward in terms of a lot of the data and stuff that we do at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

First of all, before I address exactly what you asked, I wanted – I was reflecting back on your initial question about how I felt on the day that President Obama was elected. And my parents had died two years prior to that, and I thought about them growing up in South Carolina and wishing that I could have picked up the phone right then and said, Mama, Daddy, guess what?

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: You're not going to believe it. Right.

MR. EVERETT: And my daddy, who was a Baptist minister, would have said, no, you're not telling the truth, you know. But then the other thing that I thought about on that day was my grandson and how he reflected on the election of an African-American president in terms of what he dreams about - what he could dream about and what his future would be.

At the joint center – you're exactly correct – we work in a lot of different areas where we provide the data and the information necessary to allow our public officials to what I say make the right decision. When the joint center was started in 1970, there were less than 1,500 African-Americans who had been elected to any office.

Today that number is a little bit over 11,000. We provide them with data and information that they need when they go in to our other policymakers to convince them of different things.

We're working right now in the health area where we're getting ready to release a number of studies.

We have a program called "Place Matters" that's funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation where we operate in 24 different communities. And we're getting ready to release some studies that will show how your Zip code determines how long you live. There will be some studies that we will release that will show that the lesser time you live, there's a 25 to 33 year difference.

We're also working – we have a Media and Technology Institute. So we're working in the media and technology area in terms of the broadband issues to be sure that does not become another civil rights issue in terms of people having connections there. We're also spending a great deal of time and energy and environment in terms of again that impact, you know, where you live, whether or not you have asthma, whether or not you live on a dirt road and things along those lines.

We also have just launched a civic engagement and governance Institute. In 2008, the highest percentage of African-Americans voted. We want to be sure that we provide the information, the data that will keep that going because in 2010 during the midterm elections, 5 million less African-Americans voted than in 2008. It's very important that everybody votes and participates in the process.

And then the final reason I'm encouraged, I'm encouraged because of all of you in the room. As we sit in the different healing sessions and I listen to the folks who are here who are committed to the cause, who are committed to our children and our grandchildren who are following behind us, I remain very optimistic that we will be able to move forward.

And for that, I'd really like to thank the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for having the vision to bring us together to talk about these issues where we can go back to our communities with a new sense of purpose and a new sense of energy because we have met other people who are doing the same thing. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Stephanie, let me let you weigh in also on this question of where we are at this moment.

MS. : Well, I think for me, it's been not only listening to the panel today but also being here these last couple of days, it's really been about three levels. So at the level of all of us working together, so I want to give an example, I want to talk a little bit about the how-tos. So if we take the End Racial Profiling Act that just had its hearings at the Senate judicial committee, that act historically has been led by African-American advocates and leaders and this time it really brought out the issue of racial profiling across all of our communities – Latino communities, South Asian, Muslim American and Arab American communities.

And so that level of unity and really, as Janet as said, pushing together on important legislation is a way we can work together on a national level. Then at the local level is how do

we get our local partners and our affiliates of all of our organizations and all of the organizations here to really work together and come together on the local level.

One of the conversations we were having this morning is about how we also try to do state-by-state strategies. We can push at the national level but how do we start to bring coalitions together at the state level. I work in healthcare. We already have seen that, to pass the Affordable Care Act, to continue to support that. But how do we do that in all the different areas that we're working, whether it be for voter suppression or any of the other issues.

And then, really about the racial healing work, that heart-to-heart work that all of us have been doing here not only these last couple of days and in Asheville, but I hope in all of the work that we do. It's that learning about – or each of our sense of being outsiders as well as our sense of belonging.

And what I've really learned through the racial equity program and initiative is that my sense of belonging keeps expanding. It expands to this broader circle of human dignity because of the relationships that we can build in these kinds of circles and these kinds of conversations.

So it brings to me a great deal of optimism and hope while we're also fighting, as Marc has said, some of the worst of times, some of the darkest hours. But the way we'll get that is really through these connections, through the strategies and tactics at the local and state level as well as our unity at the national level.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Thank you. (Applause.) So I'm going to change up the format a little bit. I'm going to make a couple of quick comments and then what I'm going to do is just ask some questions that are sort of short questions and then anybody who wants to jump in to respond.

So you know, of course, Dubois at the turn of the 20th century talked about the experience of being black in America in a way that I believe reflects on being a person of color and American in two ways that I want us to think about here. One was his discussion of double consciousness – the problem of both having an identity rooted in one's racial self and one's American identity.

The only moment – it was very brief – when I never felt no sense of double consciousness was in Denver in 2008. I got all beside myself and was waving an American flag and just losing my mind. (Laughter.) But then double consciousness showed right back up. But that's a pretty ordinary experience.

But as ordinary as that experience is, there are some very real psychological costs to it, some very real emotional costs to it. So since we're talking about healing, I'd like us to think a little bit through the question of double consciousness.

And then as you're thinking about that, the second element of how Dubois talked about the experience of blackness in America was to say basically that everybody has problems, and

particularly in an economic downturn. It is true that even if you are, for example, white and male and rich and heterosexual, you can still have problems. Just ask Mitt Romney, right?

So all – right – all people have problems. But that the unique experience of being a person of color is that you don't just have problems. You actually are a problem, right. So he said how does it feel to be a problem.

So the problem with being a problem, of course, if we were to take, for example, the case of residential segregation, is if you in your black or brown body move into a nice neighborhood, you actually make it less nice by moving into it. You actually reduce the value of the property that you just bought because you bought it.

When you put your children into the public schools, you actually reduce the perception that that is a good public school because you have integrated it with your body. If you are – if you are Latino and living in a state that is passing an SB 1070 law, it's not just that you have problems.

It's that you are perceived to be a problem fundamentally. So it is both this question of double consciousness, how do we heal our duality with our American identity, but also how do we address the issue of in fact not just having problems but being a problem.

And so I want to ask each of you – I want to ask each of you what would be the one policy that must go and what would be the one policy that must pass, right. What would be the one policy that must go and what would be the one policy that must pass that could address either the double consciousness issue or the problem of being a problem?

MS. : Boy, that's pretty tough. (Applause)

MR. : We marched to get rid of racial profiling in this country. In New York City, it's known as stop and frisk. In 2003 in New York City, they frisked 170,000 people. In 2008, they frisked 685 – or sorry, 2011, eight years later, frisked 685,000 people. In 2003, a little less than 90 percent of the people they stopped and frisked were people of color.

In 2011, more than 90 percent were people of color. In 2003, 12 percent of the people were guilty of something. They got a ticket or arrest – not guilty, if you will, but found to be – the hit – found to be a problem of some sort that needed to be dealt with. But 88 percent of the people were innocent.

In 2011, it was 11 percent and 89 percent of the people were innocent. This is what has happened in a decade that we've stopped talking about racial profiling in our country. The silence that we tolerated in the wake of September 11th, this is what it has wrought. A generation has come of age with a level of racial profiling in our nation's largest city, just for example because it's elsewhere as well, that is five times worse than what Giuliani was doing there when people said he was so bad. Kids have been ritualistically humiliated.

There is one stop and frisk in that city for every black male between 18 and 35 of a black male between 18 and 35. That's how broad the net is. But here's what we don't realize. My grandfather was in law enforcement in Baltimore for 30 years. He would tell you simply this. If I do something, I can't do something else. If I focus on something, I can't focus on something else.

When they do a half million new searches – when they do a half million new searches, that's 1 million police hours spent on throwing Johnny and Joey up against a wall and checking their pockets. Now, the mayor will tell you he's doing this to make the streets safer. Ask him how many guns he got last year – 685,000 searches, 819 guns. You give me 10,000 bucks, put me on a street corner in Harlem for three days, I will get you 819 guns. (Laughter, applause.)

But what that is is that's a million policing hours that weren't spent solving unsolved homicides. That's 1 million hours that weren't spent opening unopened rape kits. That's 1 million hours that weren't spent in other ways getting the most dangerous people off the streets. So I would say we have to get rid of racial profiling in our country.

The thing that we need to pass, we must as a country decide once and for all, recognize that we are paying for this recession. And we must decide to invest in job creation. It's considered to be folly. You know, perhaps we will have to pass tax reforms with it. But the reality is that we have a generation of young people coming up who are being treated like outsiders in the extreme twice.

They are being treated like suspects in their own community simply because of their color. And then they're being told that their labor is not valuable to us because while we will invest to send them to prison, we will not invest to ensure that they have a job. (Applause.)

MR. : I – oh, you go.

MS. : It's a tall order. One piece I can't identify. But comprehensive immigration reform is critical, really critical to our community. One of the things – and it crosses over so many parts of our community, whether it be the report that ARC did on – (inaudible) – live about the impact of deportations of parents and then children in the foster care children or in the Affordable Care Act.

One of the things I've continued to say is that come 2014, the Supreme Court be willing, immigrants and your immigration status will be the single strongest social determinant of health access because immigrants have been left out of the Affordable Care Act gains.

While we will have 32 million more people covered with the Affordable Care Act, and that's historic and really needs to – we really need to support that, that the vast majority of people who will still be left uncovered will be immigrants, including both those who are documented as well as those who are undocumented. And so the only way to really address that is through immigration reform, whether it be just provisions around the DREAM kids or family reunification. But all of those fixes that are needed so that we really can come together.

MR. : I think that the first thing I would do is I would get rid of all voter ID laws because of how our parents and forefathers fought for us the right to vote. So that'd be the first thing I would do. The second thing in terms of what I would create is not quite as clear. But I would want to ask people to get to know someone who is not like them in terms of we talk to each other all the time in terms of people who agree with us.

There is nothing wrong with talking to people who don't agree with us because, you know, I have some crazy friends who are – who are pretty right wingers. So I talk to them on a regular basis to see why they are so stupid. (Laughter.)

But I do this in order to crystallize my own views and to understand because, again, you know, think about how many people who you see on a regular basis that you've not had in your home who are of a different color or a different religion. That helps a lot with the understanding and the healing process that we are talking about here today. So there would not be a law to mandate that, but I would want to kind of encourage people to talk to people who don't – who they don't know that well or whose views are different, because I think it helps overall with America's healing.

MS. : I'm going to come down to this side. Yes.

MS. : (Off mic.)

MR. : I'll start. I'm certainly not going to speak to the double consciousness of people of color. (Laughter.) But I do want to just differ with your characterization of, you know, the effect on property values when an African-American family moves into a community, the effect on school quality or the perception. You know, I think, you know, perhaps that was true 40 years ago. It's not true now. There's no effect on property values or school quality or even the perception of school quality. Most Americans want integrated schools and housing; they're just not getting it.

And you know, I think that the reason that these perceptions endure is because we've created schools that are, you know, 95 percent poverty, where we place only children of color. And then we disinvest in them, and they become failing schools. And so the perception is that we have children of color in failing schools. And we've done that. And we've created neighborhoods through government actions that we depopulate. They become neighborhoods of poverty which are reserved for black and Latino families and children. And then that builds on a perception, a stereotype that those communities of color are failing, et cetera. You know, we have created these perceptions through the structures.

And I don't know what the one thing is we can do, coming from a policy take. But I think one thing we need to do is to share the reality of the communities – many of the communities we work in that are successfully integrated, where people of all different income levels and races live together. There's a lot of successful communities like that that are stable, that are working, have stable property values and high-quality schools. We have to tell those stories and get them out there to change the perception. And overall, I think, honestly we all need to be much more aggressive in our messaging. You know, we are – an onslaught of this

negative messages of color-blindness and the conservative message machine – we do not push back nearly hard enough.

MS. BROWNE-DIANIS (?): I wanted to just go back to yesterday. You – folks that were here saw the film by Advancement Project board member Harry Belafonte. And during that film there was a clip of the arrest of a five-year-old girl named Jaisha Scott in Florida. And I remember actually when we had our board meeting right after that, and Mr. Belafonte said, isn't there a Rosa Parks moment in this?

And I think the one thing that I would say that would perhaps affect both things is that we as a country cannot allow the mistreatment of our babies. (Applause.) I mean, you know, at the time that that happened – it was 2005, and I had a three-year-old. And to watch the treatment of a black baby such that she was treated like an animal – you know, we have to commit to never again should that happen. Unfortunately two weeks ago in Milledgeville, Georgia, another one of our babies – a little girl who was a kindergartener – again, for a temper tantrum was arrested in school.

We have got to reform our schools, but not in the way in which we're going. The trajectory of education reform in this country is wrongheaded. (Applause.) We are going down the road of privatization, which means that there will be sorting-out of our children, sorting that will disadvantage children of color for centuries. You may have heard in the past few days, in Philadelphia they have announced the dissolution of their public school system. How are we allowing this to happen?

And so the things that we have to do is we have to be able to pass legislation that will finally close the funding gap that we have had in this country between our schools. My child goes to a public school in Prince George's County Maryland. And I chose to send her to a public school because I'm a believer in public schools. (Applause.) I am a believer in the fact that every child is entitled to have a high-quality education.

But she goes to a school where – one of my colleagues sends their kids to school in Fairfax County. And every child is able to avail themselves of a smart board in every classroom. In my school – John, you and I have talked about this, John Jackson from Schott Foundation – my child does not have one smart board. Her child was seven at the time and mine was seven. And her child was doing presentations on a smart board. We don't know what a smart board looks like.

And here we have two children the same age, already having different opportunities. If we as a country don't come together around our babies and make sure that they have the opportunity to understand that, yes, a black man was elected and that you can become that because you have toilet paper in your school. There are schools without toilet paper, people. There are schools without paper for copies. There are schools without books. This is what we believe our children should have? How are they going to follow in the footsteps of President Obama if they don't have the bare basics? (Applause.)

And so we have to be able to really come together as a country to understand that our – we have to invest in our children, because that will get rid of the double consciousness, when our children are able to think that they are equal to every other child, and that they believe that America is a place where they can reach their potential.

MR. : So, I – yeah. (Applause.) So the question was one thing.

MS. : Yeah.

MR. : So I saw – I sat here and I said, well, I’ve got a single package of 12 ideas for comprehensive job creation. I’ve got a single package of eight points for education reform. I’ve got a single package, a dozen ideas to fix the challenges and the problems of the housing market. Then I said, you know, the one thing I want to do? I just want to change one Supreme Court Justice. (Laughter, applause.)

MS. : (Inaudible.)

MR. : That’s right.

MS. : (Inaudible.)

MS. : Y’all are a bad influence. (Laughter.)

MS. SEN: So – I really think that we need corporations to pay their fair share of taxes. (Cheers, applause.) We need to close the loopholes that allow corporations to park their profits in some bank in – you know, offshore in countries few Americans have – know exist. We need that money to be coming back and into our public coffers. Americans generated those profits and they need to be coming back and funneled into the kinds of school systems that would allow all of our kids to have the kind of education that they deserve and that they need to have.

And the other policy I’d like to talk about, actually, is – so Kathy, thank you for referring to our Shattered Families Report. That’s a report that’s in all of your materials. And what we found from doing a few years of research is that when parents are detained by immigration or they are deported, and their kids are in foster care, the parents end up losing their – what are known as parental rights and the kids are put up for adoption. So if that doesn’t sound like abduction, I don’t know – I don’t know what kidnapping is.

But it’s not just immigrant parents who are separated from their kids. It’s not just the children of immigrants who survive this. When parents are incarcerated also the same thing happens. A clock starts ticking. If the kids are in foster care, the parent is incarcerated – there’s a clock that starts ticking. And you know, within 12 to 18 months most states are going to try to separate that child from the parents permanently and make the kid eligible for adoption. And in American Indian communities, there are – is a long history of kids being ripped away from their families and sent to someone that is thought to be, in the court of a family – in the mind of a family-court judge – some family that’s thought to be a better family.

But I'm going to tell you, from all of the kids that I have spent time with, when you are a child and you are separated from your parents permanently, that is a wound that never heals. It never heals. (Applause.) And it seems to me that for parents who have been structurally prevented from getting their kids back, we could change the law together. We could do it together.

We could solve that problem for American Indians, for black and Latino families dealing with incarceration, for immigrants, in ways that protect the kids, because it isn't good for children to be separated from their families that way. It's not good for their futures. Their outcomes look very poor when that happens. So that's something that I would love to work on with other people who want to see that kind of systemic change happen in the foster care as well as in the incarceration and immigration systems. (Applause.)

MS. : Thank you, and thank you for the support for our children and all your messages. I don't think there is any Native American who doesn't have to make a conscious decision sometime in their life how they're going to walk in two worlds. It's a very common conversation we have ourselves. If you leave your community, then how do you keep that balance of walking in two worlds? We never actually see the worlds come together. It's always we're choosing to walk in two worlds.

And we do that in a variety of different ways. Even with our voting issues, it's a conscious decision, and it's a perception that we have to change in our communities. If you vote in a national or state election, are you being loyal to your recognized tribal sovereignty and to your tribal community? And so that's why we – you know, our challenge with our native vote and our native vote turnout.

If I had to choose a policy – and there certainly isn't a policy, but there's a theme of policies that I think affect our communities. And that is the theme of policies that lead to suppression of our communities – that we have to continue to go to the Great White Father for permissions about how we use our lands, what kind of economic development choices that we make – (applause) – whether – you know, what can we do in our communities; and dishonored treaties about our education and our health care delivery system. I think that would be the paternalistic feeling and temperature that I would – I would love to dismiss.

And (in ?) replace, of course, the counter to that is those policies of empowerment, to really make self-determination work, which means that we as tribal governments who know best for our own communities actually get to make laws and to be able to implement programs that work for us. We can actually have our tribal leadership help make decisions about our school curriculum and not have the state government guide what cultural activities are acceptable for our communities; that we could actually have the governmental tools like other states and other communities – governments, so that we could have tax-exempt bond financing to stimulate our economic development. (Applause.)

Those are the kinds of things that I think are really critical for us, that we could actually have our tribal courts recognized, so we could have protective orders that would be recognized in the states and in the counties and in the other law enforcement areas in our communities. I think

those are the things that will empower our communities to be able to have that parity with other governments. Thank you. (Applause.)

MS. : Thank you.

MS. SEN (?): (Yeah ?), for me – for me, I think I would have to reiterate a couple of the things that have already been mentioned. But it is unsustainable for us to have a segment, a large segment of our population, living in the shadows – and who’ve been here a generation. And now their children, through no fault of their own, also here but without a status – (inaudible) – that is something that really, as a country, you know, we’re going to be having to make some big decisions about.

You know, we can come up with the elements that I think would make the most sense for comprehensive immigration reform or immigration reform, that will deal with, you know, the border issues. Because God knows, we’ve poured a lot of money into making sure already that there’s been security there.

The real issue though – I think the deeper issue, when we come to resolve this issue I hope soon and once and for all is, you know, it’s going to define the kind of country we want to be. You know, we’re hearing about bills that are part of – these DREAM Act bills that perhaps may not offer a path to citizenship. For the first time in our history as a country, we may be in a situation where we would grant legal status to a segment of people who’ve been in this country, who only know this country, but won’t have access to citizenship.

What kind – to us, that’s a nationless – you going to have a segment of kids who are nationless or second-class citizens if they don’t have that equal status. The current environment though is begging for a solution. The types of pain and the stories that you’re hearing out there, or maybe that you’re not hearing but are happening, when people have been here, again, with established families, and abiding in lawful ways across every other facet of their lives. They are here now and have been here for generations.

You know, it does – it is a policy issue in many respects, but it’s not a difficult policy issue. But the bigger, deeper issue is that the country – when are we going to decide that we finally have to address this? Because until we do immigrants, Latinos, and people of color who could be confused for immigrants, are going to be subject to racial profiling, discrimination. But worse than that, we’re not going to be living up to what our principles and values in this country that we have had, and that is that everybody should be allowed to live up to their full potential and to be full contributors to this society.

We’re not allowing that – for that to happen. There’s a threshold moment coming in this country that is going to really, I think, turn the tide in terms of the demographic change that we’re seeing. And I think some people want to push back on that demographic tide and they can’t. That demographic tide – you know, one out of every four children under the age of 18 is now Latino. When you combine that with Native America, Asian-Pacific American, African-American, we’re closer now to at least over half – 50 percent.

That cohort of kids is already coming through the system. If we aren't investing smartly in terms of what we're doing, because that is going to be the future workforce, what does that say about us? Are we looking ahead to the kind of country we want to be or are we closing our eyes and putting our head in the sand and hoping that this demographic change will take us back? Take us back to what? What do they want to take us back to? Those bad times we've had to endure and overcome?

We ought to be looking at what the harvest is within these individuals, within these cohorts, make smart investments so that they can make contributions. And that ought to be what we're trying to achieve. And hopefully, through all of the policies you've heard here – poverty, education, access to health care – we can make smart decisions now, investing in those young people right now. I really appreciate Kellogg understanding – the W. K. Kellogg Foundation understanding that that focus has to be on children and families now. Thank you. (Applause.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY (?): I want to suggest that one way we could deal with a range of policies is to establish a pattern and a practice in governments that requires a racial equity impact analysis to be done – (applause) – of any policies that we're going to consider. So we've talked a lot at this conference about unconscious bias and how it seeps in even though people don't want it to and it can create these unintended consequences. You know, we want – we want to build unity. We want everybody to have access to resources. But these ways in which our brains are wired kick in and we – we're not – we're not aware of them.

Well, if we had to actually go through a process as legislators, as administrators, as voters, as citizens of the nation, where we actually ask ourselves the questions – I mean, one way you bring out what might be operating unconsciously is to ask some conscious, intentional questions. And so it wouldn't be – just like we have environmental impact analysis and environmental impact study – you're going to put up a building, we need to know what's going to happen to the surrounding area. We could fight across all levels of government in corporations, in all kinds of institutions for a process to take place that gets us thinking about these things so that we can cut out unintended consequences before we're even at that place where we have to clean that up. We can prevent rather than – (applause) –

MR. : Ralph and I just volunteered to be on the committee to develop that –

MS. : Awesome.

MR. : -- framework for that analysis –

MS. : Great.

MR. : -- because I think it's a – it's a great –

MS. : Scheduling email is on its way.

MR. : -- you know, analytical tool. And the other thing I wanted to add is I want to invite your attention to the National Urban League's 2012 version of the State of Black America,

where we publish an equality index. We do a black-white index. We do an Hispanic-white index. Every serious policymaker needs to take a look at that. It's an analysis of 300 data sets. And just for your information, the African-American number is about 71 percent – 71 percent status of whites. The Latino number is about 75 (percent) or 76 percent. I can tell you in the half a dozen or so years that we've been doing it, the African-American number has – the gap has widened slightly. It has not closed. So again, we'll volunteer for your committee.

MS. : All right.

MR. : I think it's a great idea.

MS. : So you have on your tables notecards. And so in eight minutes and 34 seconds, I'm going to start asking your questions. So if you want to write down notecards, you can pass those forward. But in the eight minutes and 26 seconds before that, I want to ask one last question for any of you all who want to jump in on this.

The quote that I live by as a teacher is from "The Little Prince," and it says that when you want to build a ship, you don't bring people together and give them tasks and start gathering wood, you actually teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea, because if you teach people to long for the endless immensity of the sea, they'll figure out how to build the ship. On the point of trying to think forward and optimistically, in what ways do we develop a desire for the endless immensity of a(n) egalitarian, multiracial democracy so that our kids might later start building the ships? What's that vision of the sea?

MS. : I want to start by just saying for us, when we teach our children – and we teach them to respect all things. We have a word for something that respects everything that you see in front of you. And if you start with that conscious decision of respecting all things, it actually makes you find a space or helps you recognize the space that everybody has within it. And it's not just the people, but it's our earth, its, you know, climate change, it's how we deal with everything, respecting all things and keep that in our consciousness.

MS. : Yes.

MR. : First thing is that we need – and this kind of goes in a way to a different type of double consciousness – we have to really give our children permission to own this country. (Applause.) Our – I'm looking at Melanie Campbell out there, and I'm thinking about Dr. Height, who we miss, and the connection Dr. Height gave us to so many great leaders before.

And the leaders of the civil rights movement and those men who came back from World War II and women who came from World War II, when they confronted the country, they did it with the flag in their hands or on their shoulder. They said that we own this country. This is our country. We fought for this country. In other words, they weren't afraid of their patriotism; they weren't afraid of the flag. And since Vietnam, progressives have generally shied away from the flag. And I think that we need to take the flag back. We didn't march from Selma to Montgomery the first time – they carried the flag with them the entire way.

I think we also need to give our children permission to speak in terms of their faith on the other six days of the week and not their day of worship. Flags are a powerful symbol in our country. The language of faith is the most powerful vocabulary in our country. We move the world forward when we gave our leaders permission to speak in terms of their faith. I remember reading an article by a Jewish brother in *The Nation* in the '90s who was lambasting Christian progressives – progressives who happen to be Christian, you might say – for ceasing to speak in terms of faith basically ever since Dr. King died.

So when we did that, when we stopped speaking publicly in terms of – first of all, when we did that, Dr. King never made me feel like I was something other because I was Jewish and he was Christian. I knew Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a Christian. And when he spoke in terms of his faith, he affirmed me as a person of faith, and he affirmed the principles that were common between our faiths.

But most importantly, he wielded the most powerful sword we have for justice in this country, which is the language of faith. And when y'all – when y'all Christian progressives gave – stopped talking in terms of your faith, you handed the Bible to the Christian right. And they've been beating up the rest of with – of us with it ever since. (Applause.) The last thing I would say – you know, give – (let ?) our children own this country. Let our children really own (and ?) give them permission to speak in terms (of our faith ?).

We believe in a new majority. And we say – (inaudible) – and poor white folks, and white progressives, and people – (inaudible) – real room has to be created at the table and real resources need to be invested in organizing poor white people. (Applause.) There is no way – until we get beyond – until we get beyond this moment, especially when the labor movement is so challenged – until we get beyond this false division amongst people who have very simple self-interest in common, where they don't feel comfortable talking to each other, embracing each other, organizing shoulder to shoulder, we don't get to the new majority in this country.

And so we have to understand that – just as when we say there's so many other groups – look, if you want the black vote, then you'd better go engage in it. You better go ask for it. You better go organize those communities. Well, if we want to really see the new majority happen, then we have to invest in making all of it happen. (Applause.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Is there anyone else who wants to weigh in on this one? No – (inaudible).

Yes, OK.

MS. : Well, I think part of it is also taking a long view. So we've all talked about what we need to do this year around really getting our communities out to vote, to register, to get there; but really to take the long view out to 2020 and beyond, and how we really invest in each of our communities to really develop those multiracial coalitions, develop the institutions that are about racial healing and racial justice, and really how to translate that into these stronger state-based and stronger national coalitions and advocacy campaigns.

So that investment at the local level in terms of the relationships, the infrastructure and institutions in our communities is really going to be the backbone of then how we can mobilize, do the work, translate it up to each of these other levels at state and national levels.

MR. : You know, I – (inaudible) – you know, I agree. And I think all of these are great. And you know, this is a little bit – maybe a different take on that. And that is to better educate ourselves of the global transformation taking place, the way in which the power dynamic on the world stage has changed: the rise of China and India and Brazil and South Africa, and the changes that these nation – now not perfect cases of progress in all these instances, but I think that it's so important that we not confine our views and our thinking and our education basis to only what's happening here in the United States, because the world is indeed changing.

I had a long conversation with someone who's active in international affairs, who was telling me about the internal dynamics of what are now known as the G-20 – used to be the G-8 – and the way in which nations who were not even in the room or at the table 20 years ago are now flexing their muscles, demanding things when it comes to economics, when it comes to trade, when it comes to how the rules in fact are written.

So we have to see this future. We have to sense this future. We have to feel this future. And I think we've got to understand it in terms of a vision and not be only confined to the here and now or to where we are while we have to fight these battles. We are in a global transformation of significant proportions. We don't quite understand it. My sense is, is that we're – we are at the beginning of it; not in the middle of it, not at the end of it, but in the beginning of it.

And the question for us as a nation is how this nation – because I think if this nation affirms its multiracial composition as an asset affirms the words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence in terms of what they mean in the context of now, I think it helps us see this very important vision.

But we've also got to, I think, do some reminding and re-educating, that the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, the movement for women's right all the way across the world, was not a Sunday school picnic. It was difficult work. It took great sacrifice. People lost their lives. It took a lot of work. And this is not a battle that is only going to be waged; this is a great discussion in a great hotel ballroom. (Laughter.)

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Rinku, I'll give you 32 seconds on this question. You give me the question then I'll open it up.

MS. SEN: I think that for people to have a vision of a multiracial democracy they need to see it sometimes. And in fact, we do have places where it has happened. I mean, we're here. And I'm struck by when people come to a conference like this or to our conference, Facing Race, and they actually see all of us together, and they can – they – people don't actually get to see that that often. So I think we do need more spaces like this.

And where we have built things – you know, I know of stories in Idaho and North Carolina and certainly New York City and Miami, where folks have built multiracial communities that are moving the democracy. And I think we really have to tell those stories in much bigger venues to much larger numbers of people, because when they see it they're like, I want that. I want to be in that. How do I get to that? And – but if you never see it, it's hard to imagine what it could look like.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Thank you. (Applause.) All right, so I'm going to turn to some of the questions from the audience then. This is one is a very straightforward: What is the common action we can take for the 2012 election?

Yeah?

MR. JEALOUS: We can make sure that every person who can possibly be registered is registered, and every unlikely voter is turned out. We at the NAACP do our part and purchase a 50-state (LAN ?) system. It's now us and the two major parties that can track every voter in this country. And we're doing that because we're absolutely serious.

Right now, as Ms. Arnwine was talking about this morning, the right is seeking to organize one million people – yeah, one million people to discourage people at the polls. We could theoretically organize 30,000 throughout the progressive movement to monitor and encourage people at the polls. They can miss their mark by 90 percent and swamp us. We must all be figuring out how we get people registered, how we get them to the polls, how we clear the hurdles that have been placed in front of us. (Applause.)

MS. : Yeah. I would reinforce that notion. And for many of us in the communities of color there's a first step to that spectrum, and that is that there are many folks who are eligible to be citizens and become naturalized but haven't taken that step for a lot of reasons, and a lot of them are – don't – are confused, don't understand or just hesitant. So I think we have to look at the whole spectrum of civic engagement and really think about every part of that spectrum.

So for us, it's making sure that folks who are eligible to be naturalized become citizens, making sure that they understand that it's important to register to vote, making sure that they're educated voters too. The last thing you want is to send someone in there and know that they're registered, and not do the appropriate follow-up. Of course you want to be able to make sure that they get to the polls on Election Day. It is a spectrum.

And I would argue that we have to stop thinking about our civic engagement efforts around one cycle leading up every four years in a presidential election year. (Applause.) We have to understand that there is an opportunity in these off-election years to do broader work to continue to engage our communities, to do advocacy, to educate them and to actually allow them to understand that there's a role they could be playing at the local and state levels, that this isn't just about every four years turning out for a presidential election.

Are they important elections? Of course they are. But if we're going to see the change that we know that we can create, that we can determine our own destiny and be empowered to do

that, it's about the spectrum and it's looking at it over the course of a few years – several years, so that we can actually get to that point where we're leveraging our demographics and understanding that when we turn out to vote, we will be able to hold elected officials accountable to the policies that we know will benefit not just our communities but the entire country.

MR. : Yeah.

MS. : That's what we need to do. (Applause.)

MR. MORIAL: Some people – some people say Occupy Wall Street. Some people say y'all want to occupy the – (inaudible). (Laughter.) I say occupy the vote. And let me say this, this is not a year where the NAACP acting by itself, the National Urban League, the Advancement Project, La Raza acting by themselves can do this (lift ?). There was a local election this past weekend here in New Orleans. Twenty-three percent of the people turned out to vote.

MS. : It was raining. (Chuckles, laughter.)

MR. MORIAL: This is a city – this is a city where before 2000 we never had a municipal election with less than a 70 percent turnout. That's the history. What we have to work to confront is a sense of complacency, in some a sense of disappointment and dejection. I'm not going to sugarcoat, because it frames the challenge that's in front of us: to change voting from, we do it because it's hip or trendy, to, we do it because it's an absolute responsibility of democracy and in this year a responsibility of survival.

We have to communicate the sense that this nation is at a crossroads, a challenge of visions: those that want to eliminate the Medicaid program by turning it over to the states, take Medicare and make it a private voucher program, engage in mass privatization of public schools, dissuade the idea that home ownership is a piece of the American dream – these are all of the policy narratives that are part of what is at stake in this election.

I hope that what we will do in voter education is not just say to people, hey, look, people fought and died for the right to vote. They did. And we do need to remind people of that. But that in this election there is a lot at stake, one's future at stake. There's a responsibility to raise the stakes in this election that we are going to be faced with. And it's important. I see signs – 2010 local elections around the nation, where participation and turnout has dropped off notwithstanding door knocking, phone banking, robocalling, traditional methodologies of politics.

But I see a need for us to re-energize people about what is indeed at stake in 2012. That's got to be the formula. We need a 2012 message about voter education. And we cannot believe that the constituency out there is going to simply respond to the arguments we've traditionally made, because 2008 was a high point. And we're going to have a lot of work to do to get the participation levels where they were before.

So we're challenging ourselves at the National Urban League to occupy the vote. We're challenging people to go the extra mile. We're challenging people, even if resources are not what we want them to be or what they ought to be, to get out in communities and certainly lift the – lift the conversation. So that's what we have in front of us. And I guard all of us who are part of leadership at the state, local or national levels to not only listen to ourselves but to listen to a broader constituency beyond ourselves, and what they are saying and what they are feeling and what they are sensing.

We've got to tap that energy in order to get the participation out. And we've got to change the paradigm to make voting habitual, to make voting a sense of responsibility, so that people don't think it's just something you do if somehow you think that there's a really appealing candidate that gets you jazzed up and then you vote, and if that particular personality is not present on the ballot, well, maybe I just will vote by not voting. So let's take that challenge, folks, tonight – today.

MS. BROWNE-DIANIS: Can I just – I wanted to add just quickly to what Marc said was – that I think we do need to, you know, make sure that we're doing the voter education, but what's important is giving people concrete stories about why and how it has made a difference to vote. We are dealing with an enthusiasm gap. People's lives are not such that they feel like voting in 2008 made a hill of beans for them.

And so for people, we've got to connect the dots on local stuff for each – everybody in this room probably has a story about how voting made a difference. And so we've got to highlight the concrete. The theoretical is not going to work this time. The idea that we could elect the first black president – been there, done that. And so we've got to be able to connect the dots and give people the real deal of how you do this, and this is the actual situation that happened, and this was the outcome. And then make sure that we stop taking people for granted by showing up every four years to knock on their door. (Applause.) But how do we do the longer-term engagement with folks so that they know it's not just that one act on that one day, but it is everything that we are going to do in between to hold the person that we elected accountable?

And that's even making connections to – for example, to Trayvon Martin's incident. You know, states' attorneys and prosecutors in many places are elected. So how do we make those kinds of connections for folks to say, you see what could happen if we elect the right people, or if we sit home and don't vote at all? And so I'm just – I mean, every one of us has those stories. Use them. And make sure that we're engaging people beyond knocking on the door to say, please register.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Ralph, I know you've been trying to jump –

MR. EVERETT: Yeah, I was trying to GET – but that's OK. I associate myself with what Marc and Judy just said. I just wanted – and I think what they – what they're all saying is look at the issues that we have discussed up here today. There are two words: The election matters. Election matters. And who you vote for matters.

But there was also – not only do we want to encourage you to get people to the polls, we want to encourage you to get folks registered to vote. I was just looking at a statistic last week in the African-American community, and I just wanted you to kind of think about this a little bit in terms of what it means. There are 10 million African-Americans who are eligible to register to vote who are not registered to vote – 10 million. And that’s only in the African-American community. So just think on that for a little while.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: Yes, Ben, you want to jump back in?

MR. JEALOUS: You know, the – again, I really want to thank the foundation and the leadership – (inaudible) – here and then Rod Gillum and Gail Christopher. This is a tremendous gathering. I think in the spirit of this gathering – I think all of us who come here and seek renewal and find it have a responsibility to go home and operate from a 21st-century notion of self-interest rather than a 20th-century sense – notion of self-interest.

I remember right on the turning of the centuries, I was in South L.A. and Jack Kemp was giving a speech. We used to call it South Central; now they call it South L.A. And he was giving a speech and he was talking about our children. He was clearly talking about the children down the street, but he was talking about our children and the need to invest in our children and the – and what we must do so that our children succeed in this century.

And so an older black woman was sitting next to me and she said: Is he from South Central? (Laughter.) I haven’t seen him before. (Laughter.) I said: Ma’am, that’s Jack Kemp. He once ran for president. She said: Oh, yeah. I thought he was a little familiar. But I haven’t seen him around here before. (Laughter.) What does he mean our children? I said: Ma’am, I believe his point is that we are all citizens of this great country and these are all our children. All of America’s children are our children. The children who are seeking the DREAM Act are our children. They grew up here in our schools and our neighborhood. Then she said: Oh, yeah.

We put a lot of adjectives before we say child in this country. We talk about that black child, that poor white child, that illegal immigrant child. We seek to divide ourselves from our own children again and again and again. And while we think we might be hurting somebody else’s kids that we may fear actually more than we love our own, we are truly damning our own children by constantly replaying the divisions and reinvesting in the divisions.

And so I would ask is, as we go out of here, to think about – if we’re black, to think about how do we make the dream – (inaudible) – happen? If we’re white, how we truly end racial profiling, and what can we do and how do we make that case in our community? If we’re Asian, how do we make sure that Native American women on reservations are treated with dignity and the law is designed to show that that happens? If we’re native people, how do we ensure that all people in this country get jobs, even as we fight for the economic health of our own community?

Reverend Sharrod (ph) and I were in Georgia right before we had a big march on Washington called One Nation. And I hadn’t seen a Latino person in the 24 hours I was in (Albany ?). And I said to him, do you have any suggestions for this march? He said, make sure

that you have significant Latino participation. Now I would expect that from an organizer in Harlem or in Chicago or L.A. He was – (inaudible) – southwest Georgia.

And so I said, Reverend Sharrod (ph), I'm just curious, why is that your top recommendation? He said, son, because if our (hosts ?) get that right – blacks and Latinos get that right in this century – this century will get better and better. And if we don't – (applause) – it'll get worse and worse. And that can be said for all of us and for all of our groups. If we get it right, this century gets better and better. If we don't, it will get worse and worse.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: So I'm going to ask a last question that comes from the card. And it's – I'm going to call it my Cathy Cohen question, even though I'm not sure if Cathy actually – (inaudible) – this question. But it's one of those questions that, in my years of working with her, helped frame my own work. And the question here is: In our efforts to be inclusive, how do we still make sure we are paying attention to the most vulnerable?

It's also a question that I think I spend a lot of time trying to think through in the context of the show as my producers are constantly asking me things like, if I am a viewer at home and I'm watching, why do I care about transgendered people? Why do I care about immigration questions? Why do I care about missing African-American children, right? So any time I have a big show pitch – I want to do this, I'm excited about this – I am forced to answer the question, if I'm a viewer sitting at home – read, apparently, 64-year-old white women, who's apparently who watches – (chuckles) – TV on Saturday at 10:00 – why should I care?

So the question is, how can we simultaneously be inclusive and yet maintain a laser focus on those who are most vulnerable?

MS. : I'll go first, and I'll be quick. I was thinking a lot about the "Oppression Olympics." We talk about that, you know, how we can compete for the position at the bottom of the ladder. And it's not a terribly useful way to build alliances and to – and yet, without competing for that bottom position, it seems to me that the way in which oppression works actually does differ from community to community.

And without comparing the amount of suffering, maybe we could actually focus on what those mechanisms are and how they create suffering and – in a way that's about solving the problem for everybody, not about equating anything and not about pretending that, you know, immigration systems affect everybody in exactly the same way. But they do affect everybody. So it doesn't have to be the same way – it doesn't have to be the same way, but we can't solve the problem for everybody unless we understand what is happening in different communities.

And I think that applies to white folks as well as all the groups of color, and also to the groups within us – you know, the gay people, the women, the girls and boys, the people who are poor in this way versus the people who are poor in this other way. But maybe focusing on the mechanism rather than on the amount of suffering would give us some openings to build that kind of solidarity and empathy without having to compare the amount of suffering would give us some openings to build that kind of solidarity and empathy without having to compare the amount of suffering that different people are going through.

MS. : I would take that one step further, because I think she's right. And I think that we're – all of us, at some time, in some place are the most vulnerable in some instance. So there's a whole bunch of issues that we've talked about here today. And one of our communities is in that most vulnerable at that moment. But what most vulnerable does to us, it puts us into a collective space that this whole America healing is about, is sometime we feel like we're not good enough. So we're not good enough in what we contribute or we're not good enough in our roles in this country. And then it takes away the power that we have as individuals and the power that we have collectively to do something about it and to feel empowered and strong, so that we can actually help hold each other up when we need to. And that's what I think this America healing is about, is making sure and recognizing those vulnerabilities, so that we don't get into that space.

MR. : I'll say this, care and compassion for the vulnerable may not always be popular but it's right. It's right. And in the context of – you used it in the context of your show, and it may not work for your show because your show has got at – but if we are going to create, you know, in this bountiful nation with the a 12 (trillion dollars) to \$14 trillion economy, a recognition that the benefits and the fruits and the opportunities have left many, many people stuck behind – our top 10 percent controlling 80 percent of the assets and 90 percent having 20 percent of the assets, we – and it may not be part of the edict and ethic and mindset of the majority of people today, but I think we have to appeal to people if we're true to the sense of what American healing is about, true to the sense of racial equity that there is a right and a wrong when it comes to caring about the status and the outcomes and the conditions of people. And I don't – I don't want to miss that. I know in my own personal code I don't want to miss it, in how I raise my children I do not want them to miss it.

And I think it should be a part of the political discourse. I think it is in the very DNA of all of us and the organizations and would compel the founding of our organizations, that concern and caring and advocacy for the weak, the disadvantaged and the dispossessed is American, is patriotic, is right, is consistent with everything that this nation faces, but understanding it may not always be the most popular thing in the world. (Applause.)

MS. : In learning from the disabilities community, it's – to me, it's about universal design. And so it's about designing our world – so we take universal design in building, it's about designing for those who are least able, that then gives everyone access. It's the same concept in designing society, to really design for the least able or the most vulnerable, then gives us all chance and opportunity, it gives us all the opportunity to fulfill our greatest promise that all of us are offered.

So that concept of universal design, I think, really speaks to me in how we think about how we build our society together, and really pulling all the themes that all of us had talked about today around unity, around healing, and around equity and justice.

MS. HARRIS-PERRY: I think I'll give you the last word here.

MS. : Well, I do think that there is a values moment that we need to take an assessment of. And I didn't articulate this very well earlier. I'm going to take one more shot at it, because I think context is important particularly for some of us who have been up against the real pain that we've seen in some of our families as a result of the lack of resolving immigration.

But there was a front page story in The Washington Post, I think it was yesterday maybe the day before, and it centered around the architect of those anti-immigrant bills – the SB 1070. And there's a person by the name of Kris Kobach, who's been the lead architect. And they interviewed him and another partner of his.

And they said, what were you trying to get at? What exactly – why would – why are you writing these laws? You know, there's lots of different ways to try to get – to solve this problem. And they were like, yeah, but those other ways – well, they're – they complicated policy ways. What we really wanted to do is we wanted to find the way that would create the most pain and make people most uncomfortable and really cause people to leave because they're so afraid and they're so scared, and it's because it's so painful.

That's the motivation. He's not hiding that. They're not – that's not somewhere where we have to look in one of those dark books and get a subpoena to find it. That's on the front page of The Washington Post. And he has the right to believe that, but we have the right to engage ourselves in putting a values filter across this problem and across this conversation. (Applause.)

Is that the – and I guess I would just say, when I hear him – and again, he's got a right to his – that doesn't feel like the American way. That doesn't feel like what all of our forefathers, our grandparents, our parents fought for and died for in this country. And it doesn't feel like that's the American way that's represented in the – or the values that are embedded in the Constitution.

We have to make sure that we're assessing the kind of country we want to be. And we need to put a values filter on that. And we need to take actions to complement that. And for us that's a call to action. We need to absolutely think about the most vulnerable, and we need to make sure that our values can be a part of this conversation. (Applause.)

MR. : (Off mic.)

MS. : That was beautifully stated, and allows me to make my kind of final statement here around exactly this issue of American identity. So on this panel, where we have focused so much around the questions of diversity, I'm going to leave us with an old, dead, white Founding Father. And that is Thomas Jefferson, who of course wrote that astonishing line that it is self-evident that all persons are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Now, I know that typically it would be quite easy for us to ignore these words because they were written by Jefferson, who was, you know, problematic. (Laughter.) That whole thing where he not only owned slaves but, you know, owned his own kids in intergenerational chattel

bondage – and for as much as people will say things like, oh, he was a man of his time; he couldn't have thought beyond that – you have to remember he was perfectly willing to take on the entire British Empire. So like, maybe he completely could have thought beyond whatever, right?

So Jefferson is a deeply, deeply troubling figure. But that is precisely what makes that sentence so exciting, because there is nothing on the Monticello mountain in the 18th century that is less self-evident than the notion that all persons are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. There is nothing even in the American colonies less self-evident than that sentence. There is certainly nothing less self-evident in the interactions of men and women, blacks and whites, of indigenous people. He is profoundly problematic and yet had an extraordinary democratic imagination.

And although the Constitution, it's a troubling document but, you know, inscribed with things like slavery and women's inequality – the Declaration of Independence is such a wonderful document in part because it chooses not to; because it does provide us, when we start to say, that doesn't feel American – we're not just talking about how we feel. We have a document that suggests that American-ness is rooted in a democratic imagination, the self-evident equality of all human persons. Even when it doesn't exist in empirical reality, we nonetheless assert its self-evident nature. And we have built a government whose only responsibility is to make that imagination a reality.

And so I am incredibly pleased – (applause) – to have spent this time with all of you who are doing the work of taking that democratic imagination and making it real. Thank you. (Applause.)

(Off-side conversation.)

MS. : I really want to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone, and especially to our moderator, Melissa Harris-Perry. We have kind of seen ourselves go full circle in the last couple of days and I just wanted to take a moment to remind us that this is a journey. And we are making steps – dramatic steps – and I'm asking the people in the back to hold for a minute because we have some logistical things as well – dramatic steps, but we're not there yet. We're going to get there.

And one of the learnings so far in our work together and with these anchor panels has been the request from these panelists that we bring in more representatives of white organizations, so that we really walk the walk, walk the talk. And so I know I could feel the tension in the room that we weren't really bringing in enough of the consciousness of the diversity that's not only people of color but everyone. And so I wanted to make that point that we're aware of that and we're working on that. And next year when we do this you'll see a broader – if possible – a broader panel of representation.

The only other thought I wanted to remind us is that – and I'm going to try to channel my Charles Ogletree here – (chuckles) – he was so smooth this morning – we have wonderful

leadership and advocacy and the opinions that they express and the passion that we bring that has a partisan tone is that of them and their organizations and not the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (Laughter, applause.) I don't think I did that quite as well as Charles did it this morning, but I was compelled to do it – by many things. (Laughs.)

OK. But on that note, I'm going to give it to Natalie (sp), because you all have surpassed our expectations and planned all these open, engaging sessions that you want to get into. Join me one more time in thanking our panelists so they can leave. (Applause.) And then, Natalie (sp), you want to move us into the open sessions after the break?

MS. : Thank you. Hi, everyone. Very quickly, with regard to the open space, in response to your requests I think we have upwards of 25 open-space sessions that are going to be taking place. We're going to have those to start at 2:55 promptly – at 2:55 to give you all a chance to stretch your legs, stretch your brains a little bit and get ready to engage in some real and meaningful dialogue with your peers.

When you go out, our staff is going to be ready to help you around that 2:50, 2:55 timeframe to get you to where you need to go. So you'll see where all of those sessions are being held. Some of those will have to be roundtables that are in this room, so over the next 20 minutes you'll see folks flying around and getting it set up for you, but at 2:55 we'll be ready – (audio break) – somebody lost reading glasses. They're at the registration area.

Please, please, please, please, please fill in your evaluations for this panel. We want to know what you think, and we need your feedback, again, for next time, because Gail said there's going to be – (audio break). And also, many of you have asked about materials for the meetings. They will be made available on Yammer. And for those of you who are not on Yammer currently, you will get information and instructions on how to become a part of that Kellogg Yammer community around this racial healing work. So stayed tuned for that, but those materials should be up within a week to eight days, from what I understand.

(Audio break) – please remember that the racial equity survey is outside and respond to that. Again, your open-space sessions will start at 2:55. Please look for logistical clues from the staff out in the registration area at about 2:50. Thank you, everybody.

(END)