

**TOM PUTNAM:** I'm the director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. And on behalf of all of my Library and Library Foundation colleagues, I welcome you to this very special Forum.

We apologize for the delay. While waiting, it occurred to me that the focus tonight is, how best to push our country forward. And we might start by figuring out how to get Boston traffic to move a little more quickly. But we thank you for your patience, and we'll compensate. And so for your planning, we'll end tonight's discussion around 7:15.

Let me begin by thanking the underwriters of the Kennedy Library Forums, including lead sponsor, Bank of America, along with Boston Capital, the Lowell Institute, the Corcoran Jennison companies, the Boston Foundation, and our media sponsors, *The Boston Globe*, WBUR, and NECN.

John F. Kennedy wrote often about the virtue of political courage. But if there was one moment in his own career when he exemplified it, it was the night of June 11th, 1963, when he spoke to the American people about the issue of Civil Rights. He was the first President to define the movement as a moral issue facing the country, to put the full force of the Federal government on the side of the NAACP, and other organizations and individuals advancing the cause, and to address his fellow countrymen directly to state that discrimination of any kind was not only illegal, but wrong, and that the remedy required not only Federal action, but changes in all of our daily lives.

It is therefore, one of the central missions of this Library to continue that legacy, to learn from the lessons of that time, and to apply them to contemporary challenges. It's right to pause at moments like this to appreciate how far we've come in fifty years. We meet on a day when the Nobel chairman invoked the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr. in bestowing Barack Obama with the Nobel Peace Prize. President Obama in turn quoted John F. Kennedy, stating that our efforts to build a more peaceful and equitable world should be

based, "...not on a sudden revolution in human nature, but on a gradual evolution of human institutions."

I cannot imagine a better panel to discuss Civil Rights issues, both in a historical and contemporary context, than the one we've assembled here tonight, in part to help mark the one hundredth anniversary year of the NAACP.

[applause]

As you know, we have a Civil Rights giant in our midst. From his student days to his current chairmanship of the NAACP, Julian Bond has been an active participant and national leader in the movements for Civil Rights and economic justice. [applause] In 1960, he was a student at Morehouse College and took a class taught by Martin Luther King, Jr. At the same time, he helped organize the Atlanta student sit-ins and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, serving as its first Communications Director.

Elected in 1965 to the Georgia House of Representatives, Mr. Bond was prevented from taking his seat by members who objected to his opposition to the Vietnam War. He was seated by order of the Georgia Supreme Court, and served in the legislature for a total of twenty years. He's been a commentator on America's Black Forum. He's lent his voice to numerous documentaries, including the prize-winning and critically acclaimed series, *Eyes on the Prize*. He's served since 1998 as Chairman of the Board of the NAACP, the oldest and largest Civil Rights organization in the United States, and is currently a distinguished professor at American University and a professor of history at the University of Virginia.

The genesis of tonight's Forum occurred just a year ago when the Library hosted a session with Gwen Ifill and Bob Herbert about Ms. Ifill's book, *The Breakthrough*. In it, she describes a 1993 rally in Washington, D.C. when Julian Bond, speaking at the

Lincoln Memorial, encouraged a new generation of Civil Rights leaders by stating, “If you perceive that I have a torch that represents power and you want it, you shouldn’t be asking for it. You should snatch it.”

In the audience that day was Benjamin Jealous, then a 20 year-old AFL-CIO organizer who took the words to heart as evidenced by his having been named the seventeenth president of the NAACP, the youngest person to hold that position in the organization’s one hundred-year history. [applause]

Before joining the NAACP, Mr. Jealous served as president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, an organization of over two hundred historically black-owned newspapers, as director of Amnesty International’s U.S. Human Rights Program, where his work addressed, among other issues, anti-Arab racial profiling in the wake of 9/11, and as president of the Rosenberg Foundation, focusing on immigrant rights and critical justice reform. His unique background and passion for the cause of freedom makes him one of the most dynamic leaders in the struggle for Civil Rights and social justice in our country today.

Before introducing our moderator, Patricia Sullivan, and handing the program over to her, I wanted to recognize a special member of an audience filled with distinguished guests. With us this evening is Elaine Jones, former president of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund [applause] a longtime friend of this Library who currently serves on the Library Foundation’s Profile in Courage Award committee.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. describes Patricia Sullivan’s newest book, *Lift Every Voice*, as the definitive history of the NAACP and an extraordinary contribution to our understanding of the history of the Civil Rights movement. The book is on sale in our bookstore, and Ms. Sullivan will sign your copies at the conclusion of the Forum. She concludes her book with these words: “The NAACP’s formative role in the struggle for Civil Rights is

not measured by any one achievement. It rests in the lives of men and women who, in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, fought racial discrimination in its many guises, and worked towards realizing an inclusive democracy.”

“While holding up the mirror of America as it was,” she writes, “...they built a movement around a vision of what America could be.” Tonight, we pay tribute to the NAACP and its leadership, as well as all those men and women in our nation, our state, and our city, including many who are with us tonight in this audience, who have dedicated their lives to helping us achieve that vision of what America can be. Please join me in welcoming Julian Bond, Benjamin Jealous, and Patricia Sullivan to the Kennedy Library.

[applause]

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** Thank you. Well, it’s really more than a pleasure to be here tonight with all of you, and to share the stage with Benjamin Jealous and Julian Bond. And it’s especially fitting to commemorate the centennial of the NAACP at the John F. Kennedy Library during the inaugural year of Barack Obama, our first black President.

Nearly a century ago, President Kennedy introduced the Civil Rights legislation that would remove legally enforced racial barriers from American life, and vastly expand Federal protection of citizenship rights. And these were among the original goals of the NAACP when it was founded a hundred years ago, the organization that really did more than any other to lay the foundation for the great changes of the 1960s.

And I just want to sketch out a few general themes that I learned through my long ten-year process of researching this book. I’ll take a couple of minutes just to set up the discussion. Because so much of what the NAACP has left us is a legacy of its history,

which really helps us understand so much about our country, about where we've come from, how we got here, and where we need to go.

Because as momentous as the Civil Rights victories of the 1960s were, as we all know here tonight, deep racial inequalities persist. And racial segregation, though not mandated by law, is a fact of life in many of our public school districts more than fifty years after Brown.

The history of America's oldest Civil Rights organization provides a way in, a context for understanding the nation's long struggle with race. It's a history that disrupts the popular perception of the Civil Rights movement as a seamless march to victory from 1954 to 1968, and turns attention to a richer, more complicated story, one that is woven into the fabric of the American experience.

Founded by a small group of black and white reformers in 1909, just as a battery of laws fastened the caste system throughout the South and racial segregation began expanding its reach in the North, the NAACP was a remarkable leap of faith. To borrow the words of President Obama, it represented, "...a peaceful and determined insistence on the ideals of the center of America's founding."

During the early years with very minimal resources, a handful of dedicated organizers and volunteers moved into the courts, into legislative arenas, and into the field, building and infrastructure of branches across the nation to challenge the color line that permeated American life, and advance a vision of an inclusive democracy.

And the mirror of America, James Walden Johnson said that's what the NAACP offered, a mirror of America. And anyone who goes into their rich collection of papers and follows around the organizers and the local people, the people who built this organization and built this movement, gets a view, a very different kind of view of what we think we

know about our history. In the South, you witnessed the terror, violence, and lynch law that enforced Jim Crow, and come to a deeper understanding of what it took to challenge and ultimately dismantle the segregation system.

In the North, activists waged a largely unsuccessful battle against the spread of racial segregation and exclusion. With growing black migration, segregation and discrimination in housing, education, access to jobs, became more deeply entrenched. And so these efforts, which were persistent in every community across the nation with support from the New York office, the limited success of them really exposes the kind of social and political forces that were struck during the racial inequality, and that constrained black opportunity with devastating consequences for black Americans living in urban areas.

And then nationally, from Woodrow Wilson on, the NAACP had a representative in Washington to publicize racial outrages such as lynching and violence against people trying to vote in the South, and to begin the hard work of fashioning a coalition of support to get the Federal government to enforce constitutional guarantees or pass the legislation that was needed to enable the Federal government to do that.

And, you know, the story of the NAACP is really a story of countless men and women who built and sustained and led the association across several generations. And that's the pulse and life of the history. And I think people, you know, think of the NAACP, you know, it's a hundred years-old, it's this institution. But it's more than that, these stories. And when you follow this history, you get a sense of the vision and influences that inspired people in the face of often seemingly insurmountable odds to persevere and move on, and, you know, learn about the nature of race in our country and what the process of racial change has been like.

Julian Bond came of age under segregation in the South and was a leader in the student movement that mounted the final assault on segregation in the 1960s. And he has been chair of the Association for more than a decade.

Benjamin Jealous, a native of California with Southern roots, attended college during the Reagan years, and cut his teeth in the anti-Apartheid movement and the student movement of that decade.

And I want to begin tonight by asking them to reflect on how each of them became involved in the movement and came to devote their lives, really, to this continuing struggle for racial justice and a full and inclusive democracy.

**JULIAN BOND:** First, let me apologize for us for being late. We did our best. We're sorry you had to wait.

I got involved in the movement for Civil Rights almost by accident. I was going to Morehouse College in Atlanta. I was sitting in a café place where people went between classes or instead of classes. And an older student came up to me and showed me a newspaper. And he said, "Have you seen this?" And I said, "Yeah, I've seen that." It was pointed to a story that said, "Greensboro students sit in for third day." And it told how black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, for the third day in a row, had gone to the local F & W (sic) Woolworth's department store, had bought things over here and over there, and had sat down at the lunch counter and asked to be served and had been refused service and stayed there for awhile and got up and then came back the next day.

And I said, "Yes, I've seen that." He says, "What do you think about it?" I said, "I think it's great." He said, "Don't you think it ought to happen here in Atlanta," where we were. And I said, "Oh, I know somebody's going to do it in Atlanta. I know somebody's going to do it here." And he said the magic words. He said, "Why don't we make it happen?"

And before I could resist, he said, “You take this side of the café, and I’ll take that side of the café, and we’ll make it happen.” And over the next couple of days, we drew a larger and larger group together. And then about two hundred of us went to restaurants in downtown Atlanta and were arrested. And that was my entry into the movement for Civil Rights.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** I was fourteen. It was 1987, I guess. Jesse Jackson was fixing to run for President. And the local NAACP leadership took off their hat and organized a meeting in my community in Seaside, California. And I had volunteered to go. My father was going to go, “Do you want to go?” I said, “Sure, I’ll go.” He had a point in the meeting where they said, “We need somebody to organize the high schools.” And I said, “That sounds great.” And my dad looked at me and said, “You’re the only high school student in the room.”

And you get the picture. At the time, I was the shortest person in my high school class. When I graduated, I’d be the tallest person. At that point, I was the shortest- not the shortest guy, the shortest person in the high school class. And I stuttered horribly if I had to get in front of a group. I was, you know, a freshman. So it was more than a notion.

But we did it, you know? We got kids together. We figured out it was very persuasive to ask people to vote. When you’re fourteen, you ask a forty year-old who’s never signed up to vote, “Would you like to sign up to vote,” they have a hard time saying no. They feel so ashamed that some kid, you know, wants to vote and they’ve been taking it for granted for half their life.

We signed up thousands of people in our county. And we were part of an effort that moved Jesse Jackson to Monterey County, which is sort of the backdrop of a lot of César

Chávez's work, from seventh in the polls to second at the ballot box at the primary. And we felt like we had been part of something.

And fourteen is sort of a magic age in the NAACP. It was the age that my mom got involved. She desegregated her high school. Have a young organizer in my office, it was the age that she got involved. Seems to be sort of the first age (unless you're Jim Clyburn, you started at ten) seemed to be the first age where most people feel like they're sort of empowered to go out and be part of politics in our country, and the fight.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** What were some of the formative figures or influences? Because you got involved in the fight, but you stayed in the fight. I mean, you've dedicated your lives to this struggle. And I think one of the things that interests me as an historian, when I look at people in the movement, that they see the problem in such relief. I mean, it does seem so tough. It's deep. It has such a hold on the country, the tremendous challenges.

On the other hand, you've got this capacity to see beyond that. And so what-- something that sort of enabled you to-- any sort of individuals or family members? I mean, your father took you to the meeting. But I remember you talking about your grandmother--

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** Yeah, my grandmother is 93. And she's a third generation member of the NAACP. [applause] Her grandfather was the first person in our family to join the Association. And he had been born a slave and died a state senator and co-founded Virginia State along the way. And he joined the NAACP sort of as he was approaching the end of his career, as much as a way to continue the work. So those first Civil Rights activists, we forget that really the Civil Rights movement started the day that the Civil Rights amendments to the Constitution were passed. Founder of our movement really isn't DuBois or even Mary White Ovington; it's Frederick Douglass.

And so he was part of that generation. And this was very much a charge to his children to continue the pattern of free blacks during slavery and freemen after slavery, of taking whatever dime of privilege that you gained, and investing half of it and extending the ladder of opportunity for somebody else.

And so in my family, being involved in the struggle for human rights-- My father, by the way, comes from here. His family is 1636 Salem. And his great grandfather was promoted at Bunker Hill from corporal to lieutenant. And so both these families, the idea was that the struggle for the human rights was something that was continuous, that it was both the most you could aspire to and the least that you ought to do. And so at the end of the day, I'm afraid of my grandmother. And that's why I joined.

**JULIAN BOND:** I was fortunate enough to grow up on black college campuses at a time when black intellectuals and prominent black people had no other place to appear, to speak, to entertain if they were entertainers, to carry out whatever magic they did except these campuses. And so my father was president of Fort Valley State College for Negroes in Georgia, and then for Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. And through our house, trooped this who's who of important people in black America.

I have a picture of myself standing next to Paul Robeson with his arm around me, and he's singing to me "The Four Insurgent Generals" (and I can feel that chest rumbling, you know, like an earthquake with this deep, rich sound he made) and a picture of myself and my sister (I'm three and she's four) standing with W.E.B. DuBois and E. Franklin Frazier and my father, Horace Mann Bond, these men in academic regalia investing my sister and myself in a life of scholarship and academics.

And so I'm surrounded by these notable figures who came in and out of these schools where my father worked, who were engaged in this fight. I remember seeing Walter White who came to the Lincoln University campus (I don't remember the year, but I was

quite young) and he was escorted by Pennsylvania State troopers in motorcycles and big black boots. And I thought, “Wow,” you know? And, you know, Walter White appeared to be white. His best friend was Algernon Black. And they used to say, “I’m White. He’s Black. Or, I’m White, but I’m black. He’s Black, but he’s white.” But anyway, I knew Walter White was a black man. And I never imagined a black man would be escorted by Pennsylvania State troopers in this regal way. And he was such a commanding figure. And he spent his life doing this. And I thought, gee, that’s, you know, something. Maybe I could do that someday.

I don't think I really thought that far about it. But I lived in the midst of this ferment and talk about this problem of race. My father was one of the scholars who did some of the research for the Thurgood Marshall and the legal team, investigating the questions a court had asked. After the first hearing on Brown, the court asked the lawyers to answer a series of questions. And my father was assigned one of the questions to research. And so this was part of a conversation in my house. And I just lived in a house and in an atmosphere where race and race’s affect on me and we and us was ever present. And what to do about it was an ever present part of the conversation. It was just inescapable. You could not help but think, this was something you should be doing.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** Would you like to address that a bit as well, Ben, how racial consciousness-- does it, or how it affects your work and your approach to your--

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** Sure. Yeah, I can remember my mom telling a story about being in the Philippines, in the Peace Corps in the early 1960s and writing a letter back to her grandmother. Our family has gotten, in some ways, has gotten darker from multiple generations. My black great, great grandmother was a very fair-skinned woman, very fair-skinned. And it was because-- She was sort of made in the Jeffersonian model, you know? And that had been the tradition. That had been the tradition, unfortunately for generations, where we had been kept as slaves.

And so she writes a letter, you know, to her grandmother. And she says, “Well, here in the Philippines, they could consider us this,” or consider us that. “And the racial hierarchy is so complex.” And she said she got the shortest letter back she’d ever received, which was, “Dear Ann, you’re one hundred percent black and never forget it. Love, Grandma.”

And there’s this conundrum in the plantation South, which is, is your mother or your grandmother’s rapist your father or your grandfather? Right? That’s the conundrum. The law, through the early ‘80s in Virginia, made it very clear that the answer was, if you were one-32nd of African descent, you were black. And my father was disowned by his grandfather and his uncles (not his mother or his brothers but his grandfather and his uncles) for marrying my mom. So he knew both, he was going to lose most of his white family, and he was going to have black children if he married my mom. And that’s how we were raised.

I’ll go a little further, which is to say, there’s a difference between parentage or heritage and race. And we need to be clear about that. It’s a tough thing. I know people want to, I think rightfully, sort of imbue their children with every bit of privilege that they have, they want to be able to pass on to their kids.

But creating a hierarchy-- What you do when you say, “Okay, we’re going to go from white/black to white/biracial/black”- And it’s not anything new. In the State of Alabama, they had white, negro, colored. In South Africa, they had white, black, colored. You don’t end up-- Somebody, as my parentage ends up calling themselves biracial, if that’s what you’re talking about, your heritage or your parentage, it makes all the sense in the world. If you’re trying to improve race, don’t bother. Race is a lie based on a lie. And if somebody looks at you and they say, “Well, you’re black. That’s odd,” well, race is odd

to start with. And better to antagonize the construct of race than try to sort of escape a little bit of antagonism yourself, if that makes any sense. If that makes any sense.

And so, you know, that's-- I think there's a fine line to be walked. I was asked once by a reporter for ABC News, she said to me, you know, "Why is it the hardest thing in America to be a young black man?" Now she asked this question to four young black men. Three of them would show up on the nightly news. I, for what I'm about to say, was the one who was not on the nightly news.

And I said to her, "First of all, I reject your premise." She said, "Pardon me?" I said, "I believe racism and sexism compound each other. And watching my mother and my grandmother's lives, I'm not sure it's the hardest thing in the world to be a young black man." I said, "But honestly, I don't know a black person who really wants to be white. I don't know a black person who really wants to be white."

And so, you know, it raises this thing, I mean, where on the other hand, I think as a black person, you feel cursed by the racial hierarchy in this country and what it's done to your people, the way that it puts, you know, your life at jeopardy at times. On the other hand, you feel blessed by the heritage of your community and what that legacy of overcoming and all the creativity and just the wonder of it.

And so that, I think, is a tightrope that we walk. On the one hand, we're in business to go out of business. We want to end racism. And that means that race has to be deemphasized. On the other hand, we have to create a new space in this country. And hopefully it'll happen in this century as we all become minorities, where we can celebrate culture and we can own culture without having the horrible caste system that goes with it.

**JULIAN BOND:** A friend of mine told me yesterday that he-- He lives in Jacksonville, Florida. And his wife went to the local historical society and unfavorably compared

Jacksonville with St. Augustine, and said St. Augustine is very, very proud of its history, you know, the oldest city in America. And she said they have all these plaques around St. Augustine that point out this thing and this thing and this thing and this thing and this thing. And so they really boast about their history.

And here in Jacksonville, which has its own history, which is quite notable, we don't seem to have much of that. Why don't we put up some more plaques than Jacksonville? And the guy said, "Well, to do that would pit race against race." To put up plaques recognizing the black history in Jacksonville would pit race against race.

So here's a man who deals with race and all its complications by pretending it doesn't exist, and by refusing to include it in his discussions or his perceptions of what the world he lives in is like. And I've always thought that-- Well, I don't know if I've always thought, but since the election of President Obama, I've just been overwhelmed by the number of people who said, "Wow, it's all over now. We got it now," you know, "Got this black man as the President," and, "...everything's fine now."

And then you see this story in the paper about these black graduates of elite colleges with high honors on their records who are whitening their resumes and are removing from their resumes the markers that say, "This is a black person." If they have a graduate degree, and they went to, say, Morehouse College, then they say, "He got a BA degree from an Atlanta school and then went on to MIT to get a Ph.D.," or something like that.

And to observe this phenomenon, and to hold at the same time the thought that race, no matter is a concern, I mean, how can you balance these two things in your consciousness? How can you hold these two things in your idea? But apparently, a great many of our fellow citizens do, against all reason. But I've always been fond of the people who were called when I was younger (not so much today) race men, and sometimes race women, people who held their race high and who thought about their race first, who didn't

denigrate other races, didn't think their race was superior to other races or better than other races, but always put their race first. And I always admired people like that. And I always wanted to be someone, about whom it was said, "He was a race man."

And I've often thought, on my tombstone, I'd want to put, "He was a race man." On the other side, it would say, "He was easily amused."

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** Just one last thing on that. We're in a moment where the black-- You know, I tell folks, if you stand in the middle of central Harlem-- I always talk about white flight and how it changed urban America. You don't miss white people, you miss middle class black people. Right? You miss middle class black people. And so black flight, black middle class flight has defined the urban landscape as much in many places as white flight.

What that means, that separation of black, middle class blacks out to the suburbs from the cities is that people in our communities who are suffering most are much easier to ignore than any point in history. Because we don't live next to them in most instances, 'we' being blacks who are educated, who have access to institutions and to the levers of power in society, and know how to work them.

In that respect, race consciousness becomes more important. And there's a tradition about maintaining, of getting, you know, group identity, getting young blacks coming up who grew up in the suburbs invested in solving the social problems of people who they don't know and they don't live near.

On the flipside, if you want to win those battles, which are primarily about poverty and increasingly are human rights battles, not Civil Rights enforcement battles-- They're not about enforcing existing social contracts. But it's about expanding the social contract, like the current battle for healthcare, or the battle to ensure that all kids can go to a good

school, or every person can work at a good job, so you only work one job, then go home and take care of their kids.

Those, we have to create consensus. We have to get to, you know, fifty percent of any legislative body, plus one vote, sometimes more than that. And that requires you, not to speak in racially explicit terms, in many instances. Because there's all sorts of-- John Powell and all sorts of leading, you know, black communication theorists who have said, you know, "Look- if you lead with racial disparities, you're going to turn off and harden folks."

And so that's an interesting dance that we're having to do right now. Because on the one hand, you want to maintain a cultural tradition that keeps young people engaged. You don't want to become like other communities where the rich side of the family doesn't know the poor side of the family, the rich folks aren't worried about the poor folks, they don't see any connection. Want to maintain that sense of connection, and yet you also want to get people to speak in a way that's more universal so that they can bind together all the folks who have an interest in solving these problems, and get them solved.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** You know, DuBois, early on, talked about-- during the early years in the NAACP-- That goes to this issue that the challenges facing African-Americans were connected to all the challenges facing America around education issues, political issues, criminal justice issues, peace issues. And so interestingly, I mean, why, if paying attention to these issues of inner city African-Americans, is considered not an issue that should concern everyone, as well as while linking those issues, issues of poverty, schooling, and all the rest-- I mean, it seems that's something NAACP from the beginning, founded as an interracial organization, that looked at the problem of race in America as an American problem, you know, created at the founding of this country. And somehow that doesn't-- it's hard to bring that into the conversation.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** It's hard to bring what in particular into the conversation? I'm not clear.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** To look directly at the issue of the black experience, and not saying you've got to hook it up to poverty issues, but how the issue of race is an American issue, not a black issue, I mean, the issue of racial inequality.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** Having won the battle over *de jure* segregation, then you have to look at de facto segregation and what enforces that. And poverty enforces that. Lack of access enforces that. And yes, racism enforces that. But so much of it is about just simply poverty.

You know, if you look, payday lending, for instance- payday lending, you know, this is an industry-- Most folks in the country, or at least most educated people in the country don't know what payday lending is. We just do polls, "Tell me what payday lending is?" Payday lending is usury. Payday lending is, you have a job, you have a paycheck, you need \$300 bucks to fix your car. Your middle class cousin doesn't live in the neighborhood anymore, so you can't just walk over to his house and knock on his door and say, "Hey buddy, I need \$300 bucks."

So you go to the payday lender. You say, "I need \$300 bucks." And they say, "Great." They said, "That'll be \$15 per hundred or actually denominations over fifty." So the equivalent rate (this is in California for instance) 469% interest- 469% *interest*. You have 1.9 million families in California paying 469% interest. And, by the way, that's a fairly reasonable rate because the range of payday lenders which are regulated by state in this country go for some 390% all the way up to 1955%. I can't quite figure out what that means. I mean, it's such an astronomical interest rate, an idea about, you know- *really?*- in the state of Missouri.

To put it in perspective, sharecropping top rate was 40%. Loan sharks, the most common rate is 520%. So here you have an industry where the floor starts ten times above the ceiling of sharecropping, and where its ceiling is about four times worse than loan sharking in its most common form. And if you get rid of that, \$6 billion dollars goes right back into working people's pockets.

Then you move to free checking, also known as banking overdraft protection, because that's how they finance the free checking. Those overdraft fees add up to \$28 billion dollars a year taking up working people's pockets. Payday lending is disproportionately in states that have large black populations. And the interest rate is worse- it is directly related to the black population.

So if we attack and we fix the issue of payday lending, we disproportionately help black people. And somehow race seems to be a factor in whether or not-- you know, the race of the population depending on whether or not the legislature will tolerate this.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** That's reality.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** That's right. Because part of it is that black people are disproportionately poor. Part of it is that, in the political imagination, we imagine the poor to be black, even though most of them aren't.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** Most are white. That's right. Well, the issue of education, from the beginning of the NAACP's work, I mean, education and the struggle for equal education, again, segregated education has been defining. DuBois, in his first editorial for *The Crisis* in 1910 talked about the spread of segregation to the North. It was sort of a warning. And he said, not only are separate schools inferior schools, but segregated schools are an argument against democracy. Separate children according to skin color,

and-- They don't understand that you cannot ever judge a person by the color of their face.

And we think of Brown. And of course Brown has become taken out of history. And Brown is the culmination of twenty years of litigation and organizing- the intellectual capital of Elaine Jones's predecessors, Thurgood Marshall, Charles Hamilton Houston. And so they get the Brown decision in '54, a pivotal decision. And now we look at our schools today. And the last thirty years, they've become more segregated. And studies show that separate is inferior in terms of resources, in terms of teacher preparation.

What is the NAACP trying to do today to address that, especially in the aftermath of the Roberts decision, which really doesn't allow local districts to voluntarily promote a desegregation program? What are some of the strategies or approaches to this challenge? Because, again, that does affect all children.

**JULIAN BOND:** Well, around the country, we have about 1,500 to 2,000 units scattered around the country of varying levels of efficiency and strength. And each of them has an education committee. And each of them is tasked with monitoring the educational opportunities in their communities. And in some communities, they're struggling mightily to redress these tremendous disparities. And they're just so striking, that they're plain for anyone to see. And it's hard to think that some people can deny them.

What you said a moment ago about the increase in segregation is just so stark. I read a statistic someplace that said that Hispanic children in California today are more segregated by race than are black children in Mississippi, that the degree of segregation in California is greater among Hispanic children than among black children in Mississippi today. Not to say that it's not great among black children in Mississippi, but it's greater in Los Angeles.

And the very fact that you can put your hands around a statistic like that just shows you how little attention the nation gives to this and how little interest we seem to have in this. It's almost as though having won Brown in 1954, the country said, "Well, this is over now. And we've won this great victory. And we don't have to do anything." But this old organization, a hundred years-old now, tries as best it can to redress these grievances. We've won some victories in-- was it-- I forget what city that we railed against closing minority schools, that just increased the chances that these kids would-- level of education they get would just be worse and worse and worse and worse.

But it's a hard, hard struggle. And to the degree that we can engage larger and larger portions of the population in these struggles, that's the degree to which we'll be successful.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** We just had an education retreat two weeks ago. And what was significant about this, we realized was that the strategy that'll come out of this process (which should end by February) will be our first top-to-bottom plan for addressing education in this country since the Brown strategy— since the Brown strategy, not for the lawyers and legal defense, but for the organizers. We had Brown. We had the enforcement of Brown. And then we became triage centers for families in crisis for the education system. And our units, you know, spend their time, as Julian will say, fighting, you know, city by city, fighting family by family, dealing with kids who are discriminated against in school discipline, kids who feel like they've been locked out of advanced placement, a whole range of issues.

I've grown up, my generation has grown up only knowing the local NAACP primarily as a triage center. And so what came out of it were three priorities: teacher quality, reform of school discipline, reform of high stakes testing. Why? Because in this country, we don't use the tests that the countries whose kids go on to do best use. We use bubble tests. They're just not very good.

But the strategy for us will be a strategy that has clear goals for reform at the city level, the county level, and the state level, and the Federal level. And it'll be a strategy that's primarily a strategy based on organizing.

Julian talks about our, you know, 1,500 active units around the country. We've started a process of retraining all of them. We had pilots in mass trainings in the southeast this year, partnered with Midwest Academy, which is a big organizing, training academy, to retrain our folks in what they do. Because what we're fixing for is a massive organizing push at the county and the state level, focused on teacher quality, at sort of the tip of the spear. We know that if you--

So we know two things, right? One is that we know that if you redistribute teacher quality, if you uniformly distribute quality, teachers across the country, the quote/unquote, "racial achievement gap" closes by forty percent. What we also know is that in a city like Baltimore, great, so you close the racial achievement gap by forty percent. The racial achievement gap in Baltimore is seven points. Those are the seven points between 31% of the black males graduating and 38% of the white males graduating from the public schools.

And so what we're fundamentally talking about is a movement that's both a movement that needs to be rooted in black communities and citywide in every community. Because we don't just have, like, an achievement gap crisis in this country; we have a quality of education crisis in this country. It impacts every community in this country. And we have to organize aggressively to make that known and understood.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** You know, again, reflecting back on the history, when Brown-- And the NAACP is working on all these fronts as it is today and then. And when Brown was coming up to the court in '54, they were also fighting a big struggle around

appropriation for housing after World War II, tremendous amount of Federal funding going into urban redevelopment, expansion of public housing, and then FHA loans and all the rest.

And they tried to get a no discrimination clause attached to a housing act in 1949, and they failed. And the debate around that is so interesting in terms of liberal Democrats who were friends of Civil Rights. But Thurgood Marshall made a prediction in 1953. He said, if we don't solve the housing problem, which meant the zoning and the restricting and the confining, he said, school desegregation is not going to have the impact that we hope it will have.

And so they saw. Again, history, they saw. I mean, they knew and people knew. And so I think that you struggle on various fronts and you move forward on getting desegregation. But then you have the housing problem that--

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** And the equivalent-- Housing issues continue to haunt us, right? Because we fund schools out of local budgets and the values of housing equate to how much money you have for a school. But we also have to recognize the other big connection. The big connection for us right now is the incarceration budgets.

We are, Americans of all colors, five percent of the world's people. And we're 25% of the world's prisoners. We're 25% of the world's prisoners. And the money that we spend on that greatly restricts our options for what we do with public education, all the way through higher education. California is one of five states in the country-- You talked about California earlier and the level of segregation. Well, you know, when I was a child, California was in the top five states in the country. It's now in the bottom three states in the country, 48th in education. Part of that is about property tax reform, which-- Part of that is they took all the ...(inaudible) they had and put it in the prison budget. It's one of

five states that spends more money on incarceration than public higher education. The UC system is raising tuition next fall thirty percent.

In Pennsylvania last year, I've been told they took \$300 million dollars out of the education budget and put it in the prison budget. There's twelve more states that are about to join those five states. In California, talk about youth incarceration, we're willing-- They spend \$248,000 per year per child to incarcerate kids in the California youth prisons, in the CYA, and about \$8,000 dollars per child for public schools.

What that means is that the price they spend to put a kid in prison is the equivalent of a classroom full of kids. We don't like to talk about criminal justice issues. We like to believe it's sort of the end, that if we fix everything upstream, then we'll take care of the end. But it's really the middle. If we don't bring down the prison budget, if we don't do what New York State has done to steadily bring down its incarceration rate over the past decade, we'll never have the money we need to fix the schools. And so that's sort of the equivalent of what Marshall was talking about, of the paradox of his moment. That's our paradox.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** Well, Julian mentioned that, with the election of Barack Obama, many think the problems are solved, that we're moving into a post-racial, totally ahistorical concept. On the other hand though, what difference does it make that Barack Obama is our President and we have a White House that is invigorating the Civil Rights division, hiring more attorneys? How does that affect what the NAACP is doing, trying to do? And to what extent are you trying to help focus the Obama Administration around issues that you're concerned with?

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** What's happening in the Department of Justice is what needs to happen, quite frankly, what should happen regardless of which party is in office. What Bush did was went beyond partisan. What Bush did was an assault on the

Civil Rights enforcement infrastructure of the country and an insult to what every American believes this country should be. They sought to systematically dismantle the Civil Rights division. And so when they set up a situation, they would bring, like, reverse discrimination, quote/unquote “reverse discrimination” claims, people had to doubt them because it seemed to be the only claim that they were bringing, the only thing that they were interested in, you know?

And you look, we’re moving to a point where white people are becoming minorities, where black people very well may be discriminating against white people. Those white people deserve, if they’re really being discriminated against, to have everybody take that seriously because they trust the Department of Justice is there to defend all of our rights. That’s critical. And I would hope that we can move beyond it being seen as partisan.

Having Obama and working-- You know, there’s great people, not just in DOJ, but in the Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Education who really are some of our best allies that we’ve had in my lifetime, just unafraid and focused. With regards to having Obama in the White House, it’s quite a different thing, from my perspective. We have somebody who’s an organizer in the White House. And that means that those of us who lead mass movement organizations in this country, frankly have a very harsh judge in the White House. We’ve had very frank conversations about different issues, which basically come down to, both with him and his senior staff, “If you can make this issue visible, if you can make the anger and the outrage visible, we’ll follow through. You put pressure on Congress at the bottom. We’ll put pressure on the Congress on the top. But if you are in sort of optimal movement mode, don’t expect us to stick out our neck further than you’ve been able to organize.”

And so, you know, there’s a lot of folks right now in this country who are saying, “I’m so unimpressed.” You know? “That President doesn’t talk like the candidate I was so excited about two years ago.” And my only question for them is, are you acting the way

you did two years ago? Are you as fired up, just texting people and emailing people and calling people and convincing people at cocktail parties to get involved and to stay involved and to raise their voice and to make sure that change happens? Or are you playing, you know, Sunday morning quarterback with the talk shows, you know, sort of griping from your armchair about what should be happening, because we did this and we did that? That's not the way that Washington works. That's not the way that Washington works.

If we see a sea change next fall and Civil Rights allies are swept out of Washington because people are fed up, that will ultimately-- we will bear a lot of responsibility, all of us who believe in progress will bear a lot of responsibility, because we allowed our allies to be perceived as defenders of the status quo, rather than appreciated as defenders of the dream, of the great American dream. And that's really the challenge of the next ten months, is to close the enthusiasm gap in this country and get back into a movement mode.

**JULIAN BOND:** You know, only two elections held in the country this year were in Virginia and in New Jersey. And in both those states, the Republican candidate won and the Democratic candidate lost. And one reason that happened is because in both those states, the number of young people who voted earlier didn't turn out, and the number of black people who voted earlier didn't turn out. So in both those states, the number of black people, young people went way down, and the election result was radically different than it had been in the election year that chose Barack Obama to be President of the United States.

And if that pattern continues- *if that pattern continues*- then you will see this same result occurring again and again and again and again. Now, we're nonpartisan. We've never endorsed a candidate for public office, never endorsed a political party, never said,

“Don’t vote for Joe. Don’t vote for Jim. Vote for Mary. Vote for Sue.” We’ve never said that.

But we have said, we want to elect people who respect Civil Rights to public office. And that won’t happen if a segment of the electorate that’s most inclined to do that stays at home. If for some reason (and I can’t imagine what reason it possibly could have been) some reason you say, “Well, I’m not voting this time. I voted last time and nothing good happened. So I’m not”-- anyway. I just can’t believe that.

I’m just amazed to find people who don’t vote, or who did vote and won’t vote again. But we’re going to do everything we can do to make sure everybody who should be registered is, and who should be voting, does. Because this is just crucial for us. We’ve got to do more than keep the pressure on Obama. We have to keep the pressure on America. Because it’s not just him; it’s all of us who need to be engaged with him. And we can’t just say, we’re leaving it to him, and think it’s going to happen.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** If I could just jump in for a second-- Yeah, that’s sort of the short-term. We have a long-term crisis, you know? Maine is the land of the lost. You know? Way up in the north corner of the country, there’s a place where moderate, pro-Civil Rights Republicans exist. And everywhere else, that’s something that we hear about in history books, in conversations with our grandparents.

You know, we have to recognize that when we were founded, it was bleak times, and Civil Rights was a one-party agenda. It was the provenance of the Republican Party. The decades that were most productive for us, we had black people voting in significant numbers in both parties. Nixon was pro-affirmative action. Why? Because he wanted to get re-elected. And eighteen percent of black people had voted for him, if for no other reason. That mindset (and I hope to return to those days) sort of stuck with his generation of politicians. So you see Dole, and you see Bush trying to hold on to some semblance of

connection through old, aging operatives, many of them Tuskegee airmen, who were the connection to the Civil Rights community from the Republican Party.

Well, the transfer of power to the next generation, to the Rove and the George W. Bush generation- look, they can't remember black folks voting for their candidates. So I've been working with a number of senior Republicans, trying to figure out what a pro-Civil Rights Republican agenda looks like, that they can sell. Sit with them and, you know, they quietly say that they think racial profiling is stupid, that it doesn't work, and they understand it's just a failed law enforcement strategy.

So my question is, well, you know, how do we get you the courage to say that publicly? You sit with them and they say, "Look, we want to make the markets work. We understand that payday lending has to stop." Well great, let's get you to say that publicly. We have to be invested in ultimately getting bipartisan support for Civil Rights or we really condemn the future of our children and our grandchildren. And it's a tough thing to countenance, having lived through these eras where they've chased every pro-Civil Rights Republican out of the Party, right through Arlen Specter. And we're just left with Maine as the land of the lost. But it's a leadership challenge for all of us who want to see a sort of bipartisanship, that Obama talked about, really be a reality.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** We have time up here for one more question before we open it up. I guess since we're here in the Kennedy Library-- And of course this year, we lost Senator Kennedy, which led to much reflection about his career. And, you know, he himself said, Civil Rights was the unfinished business of America. And I'd like our panelists to comment on the Kennedy legacy. Because Teddy Kennedy really, his brothers lived short. John F. Kennedy introduced the legislation. Bobby was a passionate crusader. And Ted Kennedy was someone who really helped give definition and meaning to those beginnings. Oh yes, and I think Julian can--

**JULIAN BOND:** I want to try to do something which I'm technologically incompetent to do. If this works, this'll be a great thing.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** So let him work on that. And I remember seeing-- Ben, you were at the funeral mass for Senator Kennedy. So any thoughts of your own about their relationship to this history we've been talking [simultaneous conversation]--

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** First of all, I think that, you know-- I just saw Robert Kennedy, Jr. speak at the hundredth anniversary of the *Amsterdam News*, the black newspaper in Harlem. And the tradition goes on, you know? His focus on the privatization of the environment, the way that we privatize the air by poisoning it, therefore denying entire populations of children, disproportionately children of color, disproportionately poor children access to clean air, and we privatize the water by poisoning the water in disproportionately the same neighborhoods, is just a reminder that, sort of-- You know, families have characters, just like people have characters. And there's a trait in that family that's a gift to this country.

With that said, we pray that the person who replaces him has courage on Civil Rights issues. And frankly, I have concerns about every person who's likely to succeed him on these issues. One thing Senator Kennedy understood, and that I had the honor to work with him on during the last ten years, was that we had to shift the paradigm in this country from 'tough on crime' (because it was failed and stupid) to 'smart on crime', because it actually works. We had to get beyond politicians who are afraid to be courageous and speak up and say, "Let's move to an evidence-based approach and base criminal justice reforms that actually make our communities safer," and away from a paradigm which says, "I'm scared. I'm afraid of being perceived as soft on crime. And therefore, I'm going to try to out-tough my opponent with something that we know is a failure, that we know wastes money, that we know wastes lives, that we know breaks up families, that we know is an abomination."

And right now, when I look at the field in this state to replace Senator Kennedy, I don't see anybody as enlightened as him. And that worries me.

Ultimately, the Kennedy legacy should be the legacy of the people of Massachusetts, to send to our Congress leaders who believe in this country, who feel ownership over this country the way that New England and New Englanders-- I was teasing my dad the other day. I said, "You know dad, if I inherited anything great from you, it was your outsized sense of entitlement," you know? Because when a white man, especially a white New Englander, has to raise a black man in this society, they get really, really angry-- really, really angry. And I would hope that the people of Massachusetts insist that whoever represents them in the Senate maintains that legacy, because the Kennedy legacy is not just his family's legacy, it's the State's legacy. And it's a legacy that ensures that this country continues to move forward.

**JULIAN BOND:** I didn't have the technological skill to do what I wanted to do. I wanted to play you a voicemail message I've been keeping since the first part of this year. It says, "Hello Julian, this is Teddy. I want to call you to congratulate you on the hundredth anniversary of the NAACP. The organization has done great work. Keep it up." And I've kept that ever since. [applause]

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** And Pat, you know, to that point, one thing I would say, one of the reasons why it's so hard to lose him and we were there and one of the reasons why I'm so passionate about, person replacing better have as much courage as he did-- You know, when he had to step down from the judiciary committee because he put all of attention on healthcare, he called me twice to assure me that he was fighting as hard behind the scenes as he had on the committee to make sure that things went the way in that committee that they needed to go.

And this was a man who was near death himself, who was knee-deep in a hundred other fights. And, you know, while that was what I was praying for (you know what I'm saying?), felt obligated to make sure that we understood what he was doing so that we wouldn't feel demoralized and fight any less hard because he wasn't there. You know, he's sorely missed, sorely missed.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** It's wonderful to have that, though, and to challenge us to keep it alive in the State.

Well now we'd love to hear from you all.

[housekeeping remarks]

**QUESTION:** First of all, I'd like to thank both of you for your tremendous work on behalf of the nation. I think it's very admirable. I think the nation really approves of it. My name is Dr. Peter Hill. I'm a father. I'm really glad that you touched on that we have 25% of the nation's population of prisoners and that many of them are fathers. One of the problems that-- I think in this country is that in the past forty years just about, there's been a tripling from nine percent of the kids raised without a father in the household to over 28% today, over 20 million kids. Forty percent of all new births are to unwed mothers.

I believe that in addition to lack of equal share parenting laws in the states, it's really been Federal changes, well-meaning Federal changes, that have caused basically a lot of fathers to be thrown out of the house. So my question is, is will the NAACP work to advocate the change back or change those Federal laws that have contributed? Those laws include the Violence Against Women's Act, which is not gender neutral, the crime bill of 1994, which is unequally applied to men instead to women, the Bradley amendment, which has thrown more nonviolent fathers into jails than anything else, and

has allowed (also the Violence Against Women) for more false accusations against men. Will the NAACP work to change well-meaning laws that have really had terrible effect on the family in this country?

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** Fatherhood is something that we don't talk about or really treasure enough in our society. Fatherhood is an important half of parenting that is-- We just haven't reached a place in our society where we value it enough. You know, when we look, for instance, at our country's decision to, in so many instances, send typically poor (because folks with means get lawyers who can get them out of it) nonviolent drug offenders to prison instead of to rehab, you know, we really don't talk about the impact on the family until it's the mother that's sent off. Because when the mother is sent off, the kids go into foster care. When the father's sent off, typically (because we don't have as many single fathers as we have single mothers) it's a two-parent household and the family gets poorer. And somehow in our view of people who have broken the law in this society, we feel like that's acceptable.

The pain behind bars, the fathers behind bars is tremendous. And it's mirrored in the pain of the children on the outside. At the Maine State Prison, where, by the way, we have 900 inmates-- ninety black inmates and 200 members of the NAACP, one of the principle activities is recording each other reading books to their children and mailing it out, in part because using a phone is so expensive. It can be up to \$3.00 per minute, depending on which state your loved ones live in to try to call them, and thirty cents in-state. And many of the men just simply can't afford.

So I'd be interested in having a further conversation on those issues. One of the things that we also have to look at is the way that we've criminalized delinquent child support, and how that system works.

**QUESTION:** It's terrible.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** We have men who are sent to prison and the clock keeps running. And they get out of prison and they're twenty or they're thirty thousand dollars in debt.

**QUESTION:** That's the Bradley amendment.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** And they're told that the-- You know, we believe quite frankly that child support should go to the child. And what they've set up in state after state is that, first, it goes to the state to pay them back for, you know, anything that the state has done to support that child. And so then what happens is you have fathers who say, "Look, I work hard. My child needs new shoes. My kid," whatever, you know, "...needs to go to that school. It costs a little bit of money. I'm going to give the cash to the mother." And they don't send it into the state. And the clock keeps going up. It's a terrible bind. But it starts with the fact that we don't value fatherhood enough and we have to start and we have to ask tough questions.

The one hand, men who have child support obligations need to pay them. And we as a society need to have a way to encourage that. On the other hand, we need to have at the center maintaining a healthy relationship, fostering a healthy relationship, encouraging healthy relationship between a child in a broken home and both their parents. And the current policies, I would agree, in many instances are lacking and worthy of review.

**QUESTION:** The reason why I ask you is that I feel like the NAACP can be a tremendous voice. I'd love to sit down after you and talk. Thank you.

**QUESTION:** Good evening. Thank you. My name is Steven Goode and I'm a teacher here in Boston at the John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science, AP government and U.S. history. My question for you today- you mentioned something of a paradigm shift

for the organization. My question deals with more than paradigm shift. What part of that paradigm shift of the NAACP includes connecting more of your mission with the students, especially the students that I teach? How do I get them to invest in this organization and this cause using Facebook, using the technology, that is all around us, that's right up here?

**JULIAN BOND:** Well, let me answer that, because I'm trying to get off Facebook. My brother encouraged me to join. It's the biggest mistake I ever made.

**QUESTION:** You can un-friend him.

**JULIAN BOND:** Having said that, the NAACP uses Facebook. The NAACP uses Twitter. The NAACP uses communications devices that I have never heard of before and does an effective job, I think, in reaching out to young people. You know, we're the only Civil Rights organization that reserves a seat on our board of directors for young people elected by young people. I've had high school students on my board of directors, elected by other young people in the NAACP, not elected by gray-haired people like me. We regularly-- Our board meets four times a year. And a regular feature of each board meeting is chartering new branches. And over the last two years, the number of youth branches we've chartered has just gone through the roof.

So we do now and always have had a relatively healthy complement of young people in our organization who carry on activities by themselves, on their own, wonderful activities all over the country, both in college branches and in a relatively smaller number of high school branches. So while we've never had enough adults, we've never had enough young people, we have more of both than anybody else does. So we're quite proud of what we do in this field and realize we need to do more. And that's why we're Twittering. We're Facebookin'. We're doing all the things that young people do, I'm told. Let the young man answer the question.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** We also plan to do an even better job. And we've been investing in experiments over the last year. And we've made some conclusions. We just hired our first Web strategy director. We're building up a Web strategy team. We've developed software, for instance, called Upload to Uplift, that allows you to run a viral online voter registration drive from your desktop. And we ran it just in the tail end of the voter registration period last year, and it-- the last three weeks, the national period where every state, every person can sign up to vote. And then after that, it vulcanizes(?) the different state rules.

And we increased our average for the year, I mean, our number of registrations for the year by twenty percent in the last three weeks because people are basically able to spam their friends online voter registration forms. And we brought down the cost of a new registration, online versus in the field, by ninety percent. And so we're fixing to do that on a much bigger level in 2010, and on a massive level heading towards 2012. It takes us time to ramp up.

We've partnered with Blue State Digital. We'll be rolling out a new Web system early in the Spring. Blue State Digital built the platform for the Obama campaign. And we've experimented. Now we're going out to Google to really kind of ramp up and get some of their programmers working on it, something called Rapid Report. Look, we have 1,500 active units around the country. We get thousands of phone calls from people in distress with Civil Rights complaints at the national headquarters. We probably get hundreds of thousands each year in the field.

We are in the process of putting them all online. Right now, for a law enforcement complaint, if you believe you've been a victim of racial profiling or police brutality, from your iPhone or your BlackBerry or your desktop, you can fill out a complaint form, give

us everything that we need for our conversations with the Department of Justice and our pattern of practice investigations.

But if you captured video of the incident on your phone, you can actually upload it directly to our website. And that allows us to maintain a video library. And we have that connected up to Google Maps, so that we can see the patterns and hotspots in the country. And that's the trend. And the intention is to do that with all the areas for which we receive complaints so that we can really aggregate them in real-time.

State advocates-- You know, that's the way that you've got to play if you want to get respect from young people. Right? You know? If it's, you know, call my friend's, you know, mother who's the local NAACP branch president and talk to her on the phone, it's probably not going to happen. You know, if they don't get sort of information back about what they should be doing and how they can-- You know, if they don't get the sense that you're using technology to its fullest to be able to strengthen your hand to help them-- So we're in the process of building upon the strong foundation that Julian just ascribed to be even better, and really kind of lead the way.

We have a little bit of a catch-up. The Rapid Report thing that we did was taken from-- The idea was taken from Witness who's been doing this in countries around the world. Their idea came from the Rodney King case. Their idea, but inspired Peter Gabriel to do everywhere else but here. So we're trying to get it done here.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** Since our time is getting short, we thought it might be a good idea if each person who's waiting to ask a question, ask it briefly, and I'll compile them. And I'll remind you of what the questions are. And they can answer them all.

**QUESTION:** With the exception of Ms. Sullivan's Harvard connection, you all seem to be possibly alien to the ephemera of Boston behaviors and small details. But the name

Ted Landsmark in Boston is a trigger to all sorts of-- poster child for discrimination, whites against blacks. He is the guy who was caught on the City Hall Plaza, about to be impaled on a flagstaff still carrying the flag, by three young white men.

At a Forum, somewhat smaller than this, last year, Mr. Landsmark was the speaker. And when he finished, I asked him, I said, "It's been 54 years from Brown. Has anything happened? Has anything changed?" He didn't have a lot to say. I am going to my reward in a few years. And when you all pick up the pieces, fifty and a hundred years from now, you will find I think, if the nation survives, that the Brown decision was absolutely antithetical to its intent of equality. The Brown decision mandated brotherhood and it doesn't work. Thank you.

**JULIAN BOND:** First, let me refute your earlier part of what you said. I don't give way to anyone on my connections to this region of the country. I went to Boston University, summer school, 1958. I lived in Harvard Square. I worked at the Hayes-Bickford. I then taught on two separate occasions at Harvard University. My wife, sitting back there, is a graduate of Boston University Law School. I've cousins who went to Harvard and Boston University. I used to go to-- What was the club...? Anyway, I have a deep rooted association with this part of the country.

And, you know, there are disputes in academic circles about the worthiness of Brown. And I think theirs and I think yours are wrong. I think it was correctly decided. It was incorrectly enforced and insufficiently enforced. But I think it was absolutely correct.

[Housekeeping remarks]

**QUESTION:** My name is Gabriela. I'm a student at UMass Boston. And I'm here with my classmates and Professor O'Brien from the poli-sci department. And I'm very honored to be in your presence. So Professor Sullivan, you had stated earlier, the issue of

race is not a black issue, but it's an issue of inequality in America. And my question for you gentlemen is, Civil Rights, as many people perceive it to be, is an African-American movement. How can you speak to Civil Rights being more inclusive? And I think you, Doctor, had mentioned Latinos in L.A. So how can you include Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans as part of the movement as well? Thank you so much.

**QUESTION:** Good evening. My name is Reynolds Graves. I'm a 21 year-old college student at University of Massachusetts Boston as well. My question relates to education, specifically with higher education and historically black colleges and universities. I previously attended Hampton University in Virginia, and recently transferred for the academic year of 2008, mainly because when I first got to Hampton, I was disappointed with the caliber of academics. I'm sure there's some alumni in the crowd I might be upsetting by saying that. But the school may not be the school it was when they went there anymore, specifically because of academics and the lack of intellectual stimulation among the students.

In addition to that, funding and endowment is low. Scholarships are slim. And the Michael Eric Dyson, Cornel West, and Julian Bonds of the world teach at UVA, Georgetown, and Princeton. And I was wondering what the NAACP, if there are already initiatives with that to make HBCUs, keep their relevancy and their academic caliber.

**QUESTION:** My name's Elizabeth Clay. My background is in urban planning. And my question is, how do we, and the NAACP work to put urban areas and inner cities back on the political agenda? Urban areas are, without question, the absolute economic drivers of the entire country, and yet are left behind every time we get to a presidential election year. We wait for questions to come up at debates. We wait for a single question to be asked around the critical urban issues. And I'm wondering if the NAACP might be working with the Obama Administration to push their urban policy further, or if that's one of the areas that the NAACP sees itself working on in the next few years. Thanks.

**QUESTION:** Julian, it's good to see you.

**JULIAN BOND:** Good to see you.

**QUESTION:** And I appreciate what you and Mr. Jealous have been doing towards Civil Rights. About five or six years ago, a study was done in New York that said, fifty percent, 51% percent actually of black males were unemployed. I think it was 1900 that W.E.B. DuBois said, the issue of the 20th Century would be that of the color line. 1944, a guy by the name of Gunnar Myrdal wrote a book, *An American Dilemma*, and showed where 87% of the crime in this country is committed by white people. Thirteen percent at that time was committed by black people. He showed where 70% of blacks went to prison while 30% of whites went to prison.

My question to you is, based on the fact that the development of the prison industry complex and the amount of joblessness among black males in particular (and while you alluded to it a little earlier, Mr. Jealous) can the NAACP put these issues, along with education, at the top of its agenda? My name is Bill Owens.

**QUESTION:** Hello, my name is Barry. I attend the John D. O'Bryant. And in Massachusetts, we have the METCO, and this allows minorities to have the chance to attend suburban schools. Problem is, the list for the students is very long. And I wanted to know if you think this is a fair education, a separate education, or a form of organized busing.

**QUESTION:** My name's Jim Recht. I'm a physician and a father. And my question is, what about the war? I just feel that the legacy that we've been left potentially includes what Martin Luther King did when he took that greatest step, I think you could say, trying to increase or expand people's minds so that they could see the nonviolent

movement as being sort of the ultimate Civil Rights movement. And I'm just worried that we're losing touch with that, and wondering whether you can help us with that. Thanks.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** I'll jump in. With regards to the school to prison pipeline, our failing schools, the work/wealth/health crises, and the burgeoning criminal justice system, I've made very clear to the staff, to the membership that that is our focus, 'til we crush and dismantle the school to prison pipeline.

In everything that we're doing as a staff, the way that we're rebuilding the program (and we are rebuilding; the national office is rebuilding, and successfully so) is with that goal in mind. At the NAACP, our history tells us that we do best when we set out big goals (that we know will take decades to achieve because the crises that we're confronting took decades to create) and order our steps towards those big goals. If we start with incremental goals, because we think that's what we can achieve in three years when we have to file our next foundation report, we demoralize ourselves and the movement of which we're a part.

That has to be our focus, because my generation, generation of these students here from the university, people used to refer to as the children of the dream or the kids who were born as and after the great Civil Rights victories happened, we came of age just in time to find ourselves the most murdered generation in this country and the most incarcerated generation on the planet. If you look at the Civil Rights and human rights situation in our country from 100,000 feet, what you see in this century is the mass incarceration of American people, just like what you would have seen in the last century was the *de jure* segregation of our people, and the century before, slavery.

To the student who asked about being more universal, our branches are already leading the way. I tell people, we are a very black organization, but we are not a Black Organization. And there's a significant difference. We are a black-rooted organization.

We are known as a black-led organization. When you travel as I do, the branch level, all over the country, what you see is that, in the Maine State Prison, we're overwhelmingly white. What you see is that in Seattle and in San Jose, we have Southeast Asian American leadership of the branches. And the city confounds me, but it's Hamtramck, Michigan, we have a south Asian president. And we have branches in the southeast that have significant Native American involvement, branches in the southwest have significant Latino involvement, and even in northern Virginia, significant Latino participation.

Why? Because again, our branches have been triage rooms for the last thirty, forty years for families in crisis. And those populations are catching it, either with the school system, the housing market, the job market, or the criminal justice system in those areas.

**JULIAN BOND:** Just to follow up on the answer to that, in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, we have always believed that colored people come in all colors. And anybody who shares our values is more than welcome. There's never been barriers to membership in the NAACP based on anything besides interest in what we do. I'm a university teacher, and I won't let my students use Wikipedia because I looked at the entry for the NAACP and it said, "The NAACP is debating now whether to admit white people to its membership."

Well, a hundred years ago, we were founded by majority white and black group of progressives in New York City. And the notion that in the modern day, we'd be debating something which we solved decades and decades ago is just ridiculous. And so I knew this source could not be trusted. Just by the very nature of it, it couldn't be trusted.

But unfortunately I think there's a perception in the country, that has been said, we are a heavily black organization, and therefore, we're a Black Organization. We are a heavily black organization, but we're not a Black Organization. And I can't remember the other question.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** How about the NAACP and the current state of HBCUs?

**JULIAN BOND:** We've always had a strong relationship with HBCUs. I'm a graduate of the greatest of the HBCUs, Morehouse College in Atlanta, and have always fostered good relationships with them, and always been advocates for them. And as you may know, some of them are in awful, awful financial shape today. It's pleasant to know that the Obama Administration has someone whose main preoccupation is ensuring that these schools survive and continue to the level of excellence that they've demonstrated in the past. But it's rough times for them, as it is for most schools.

I'm at the University of Virginia, which is by no means poverty-stricken, but has lost money in the current downturn and is having to cut budgets and do things. So this is a common phenomenon across the educational landscape. But it's particularly hurtful for these schools, because they tended to be poor when they began. They've always been poor. They've always been struggling. They've always received secondhand attention. Those of them which are state schools have always received secondhand attention from their states and receive that now. And those of them that are private receive the miser's share of the private budgets for education.

But we want to make sure they are preserved and thrive and are doing everything we can, both to encourage the administration, and on our own, to make sure they maintain the standards and the kind of service that they've given in the past. I have grandchildren at these schools. And I don't want these schools to go away.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** I mean, Mr. Graves raised an important question about faculty. You know, since they are under-funded and-- You know, who goes to teach there? And I think that, you know, that's an important issue, I mean, whether people take a job there or go visiting for a year, I mean, some way to really provide, you know--

**JULIAN BOND:** I just spent four days at my alma mater, teaching.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** That's great. And I think that's an important point that should be put forward at the ASALA, you know, in terms of historians (that's what we are) but to really try to encourage some kind of involvement on that level. And the other one thing (I know we're running out of time) but archives- historically, black colleges and universities are the sources of incredible archival collections. And the under-funding in terms of preserving and making them available is a real crisis. So thank you for bringing that up. And I think that's something that everyone involved in academic life, as well as Civil Rights and the rest needs to pay attention to.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** I'm a bit of a strange bird. I'm a guy who's, you know, under forty and has spent a good deal of his life rebuilding old black institutions. The NNPA was a federation of two hundred black newspapers, founded in 1909, brought them online as a group, now the NAACP, and the-- very black institutions. But the analogy to black college, you have to be clear about what your mission is. You have to be very clear about what your mission is.

I was very clear when I came aboard the NAACP that we were going to confront the crisis in the criminal justice system with all our force, the same force that we'd go after the crisis in the schools. Because I understood that for this generation, the fact that the Civil Rights community wasn't fully and forcefully recognizing the crisis in the criminal justice system threatened its own credibility with young people who were caught up in it. And they needed to see us speaking forcefully on that issue regularly.

With black colleges, especially-- and you get beyond sort of, you know, the Morehouses and the Spellmans, and the sort of crown jewels, get into the, just the regular colleges-- And my family co-founded two of them. We have to be clear about what the mission is.

And at a time when we have a quality teacher crisis in this country, a time when we literally are having a hard time finding enough qualified teachers to teach black children, we need to resurrect the essence of their founding, which was, among other things, to solve that crisis more than a hundred years ago. And we need to promote that trade of teaching. And we need to promote black colleges as a place to go if you are focused on the mission of teaching in the communities that need it most.

You have to have that type of focus, because part of it is convincing the alumni to be more generous. And we're involved in that effort. We just got Tyler Perry to give one million dollars to the NAACP. And we're hoping that that will be a lead gift in changing-- my friend, Elaine Jones, knows what it's like to sort of change wealth, transfer patterns in the black community.

But it starts with having a real sense of mission. I fear that we nationally aren't, as a community, equipped to really-- saying succinctly, what is the mission of black colleges today? We have to say that, and it has to be an urgent mission if we want to turn the fortune of all of them in the right direction.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** The three questions that haven't been addressed: what is the NAACP doing to focus on issues in urban areas and putting inner cities back on the agenda, and putting on the agenda, the Obama Administration, and of the Association, or is it there; METCO, in terms of the long application list to get bused out to these schools, is that, thoughts on that-- He put it very well. I'm using my notes here. And the war finally-- For METCO, is it fair? Is it separatist? Is it organized busing?

**JULIAN BOND:** Well, it is organized busing. But there's nothing wrong with organized busing. Who was it? I can't remember who said, it's not the bus, it's us. You know? Schoolchildren go to school on the bus. That's a fact of American life. And I don't know

a great deal about METCO. But the little I know about it tells me that it's a wonderful program and it ought to be emulated, and you wish there were more--

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** -- more spaces--

**JULIAN BOND:** -- you know, affected more children.

**BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS:** But it's also not a substitution for what ultimately needs to happen, that we really need to regionalize and expand, at least at the state level, the education budgets. We need to make sure that good schools are available in all communities. But having, you know, been bused in a similar program, you know, it can be, for that child, you know, a way to get what they need.

With regards to the war-- the expense of the war in this recession is really challenging our ability to fulfill the domestic agenda. And it is fair for Americans to ask that question if none other, which is, with our Treasury, what's the top priority?

I think that we also need to really wrestle as a country with just our role as sort of the world's policeman. On the one hand, we want to be very supportive of our troops. On the other hand, I believe we often abuse their commitment to serve at our nation's whim.

With regards to our cities, rest assured that we certainly have a President for whom big cities are a priority. And that was clear throughout the campaign. The recession and the expense of a war I think has made fulfilling his agenda much more difficult, I know has made fulfilling his agenda much more difficult. We, our contribution, there's, you know, any number of priorities. Quite frankly, a lot of our criminal justice priorities and our education priorities sort of, the target of mine.

One of the more creative ones that we've been focused on is a big initiative with corporate America to bring about what should be within the next decade a sea change in how formerly incarcerated people are treated when they apply for a job, and to reduce unnecessary barriers to employment for formerly incarcerated people. [applause]

**JULIAN BOND:** Two things- one thing quickly about the war, we oppose the war in Iraq. It was young people on the NAACP Board of Directors, college students who led the Board of Directors to unanimously oppose the war in Iraq, something I'm very, very proud of. We did it early and we did it loudly. [applause]

And I hope each of you here buys a copy of Professor Sullivan's book. It is the first academic history of the NAACP. And it's no wonder that it's the first. The NAACP papers at the Library of Congress are the biggest collection of papers at the Library of Congress. We have destroyed many trees in America over these hundred years. But this history is so rich. I'm a history teacher. I teach Civil Rights history. But this book was just an eye-opener for me. It's so rich. The organization did so much. And so many people have been engaged in it and in so many corners of the country did this and that and the other thing.

I think if you read it, you'll be amazed and you'll be saying to yourself, "That's why I became a member." And of course if your membership has lapsed, if you just go to NAACP.org, you can join up when you get home.

**PATRICIA SULLIVAN:** Great. Well, thank you. And thank you all.

[applause]