

According to the Rockefeller Foundation, an inclusive economy is one in which there is expanded opportunity for more broadly shared prosperity, especially for those facing the greatest barriers to advancing their well-being. Understanding this, the work of National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) is grounded on a foundation of critical concerns in the areas of education, health equity, economic justice, and social justice and are used to get us steps closer to an inclusive economy for Black women. Preparation and growth in these areas allow Black women to participate in an economy that provides free and fair exchange of goods and services, while shaping their own future and the future of generations to come. We want to make sure each of them would have the opportunity to build and pass on wealth.

Focused, we know the Black community has had to absorb insurmountable economic setbacks like no other community. From the Great Depression to a spiraling GDP in 2009 to where we are now, an economy that cannot be identified as a trickle down economy. In modern day, the closest we have come to an inclusive, some may say a utopian, economy was 1993 to 2001, where we had: more than 22 million jobs; the lowest unemployment in 30 years; education standards were raised; higher incomes on all levels, lowest crime rate in 26 years due to 100,000 more police across the nation, and a balanced budget to boot. With more Americans having access to opportunities that set quite a few Blacks on the track to be successful entrepreneurs or holding their dream jobs, not just realizing the American dream but living it.

The realization is all of this is clearly a result of true opportunity. Opportunity can only be realized if we truly care for all people, have dedicated leaders across all sectors, and understand growth should be inclusive of good living. Truly caring for people means that policies would be well thought out to include the least of us, giving way to a level playing field that is fair and just across the board. Having dedicated leaders across all sectors will allow there to be honest measures taken that are based on the belief prosperity benefits everyone. Understanding that economic growth is not always rooted in income but also includes well-being, making qualitative and quantitative variables interdependent, which keeps us accountable and proving this is not just a concept. Opportunity is a viable option.

In closing, it is imperative to understand that this experiment we call the United States of America, is fragile. History has shown that thriving economies that were once rooted in opportunity and brought about prosperity in the forms of “Black Wall Streets” in Wilmington, NC. in 1898; Tulsa; OK. and Durham, NC in 1920, and Rosewood, FL. in 1923, were not easily accepted. Since then, the practice of providing access to opportunities to those who have been excluded has been hard for America and day-by-day continues to decline. A delicate balance must be struck to find ways to promote freedoms and equity, as this is where opportunity lies to break down economic barriers. Until we truly view

opportunity as a measurable catalyst for change we may never see or experience anything close to an inclusive economy again.