



CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

2017 First Interim Report Chairman Cedric L. Richmond



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MESSAGE

The purpose of this first interim report is to give CBC members information about the actions the Chairman has taken to advance the mission of the esteemed 46-year-old caucus from the day he was sworn in through March 2017. While the CBC's mission has remained the same since it was established, the tools used to advance the mission have not. This Congress, the CBC is focused on using old and new communications strategies and aggressive and adversarial legislative strategies to expand engagement, economics, and equity in the African-American community.

Caption: On January 3, 2017, the CBC swore in 49 members – 47 Representatives and Delegates, including one Republican, and two Senators – making it the largest CBC in history. In fact, this Congress, the CBC makes up almost one-fourth of the House Democratic Caucus.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS FOUNDATION, INCORPORATED
PRESENTS

A Ceremonial Swearing-In



The Congressional Black Caucus 115th Congress



Redesigned the CBC Logo

The CBC redesigned the caucus logo and started using it on nameplates, letterhead, and folders. The CBC also signed a contract with Fireside 21 to redesign the [website](#). Phase 1 of the website redesign is complete and Phase 2 has begun. Finally, the CBC also worked with House Administration to shorten the caucus website address to www.cbc.house.gov.



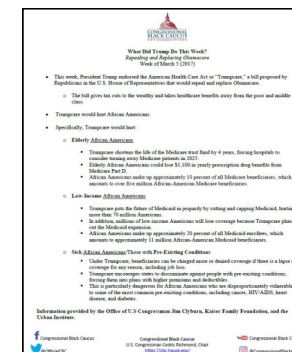
Improved Communications with the Caucus

The CBC has improved communications with the caucus by using a text messaging service. CBC staff have also started holding regular meetings with chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors to talk about caucus activities and positions. Meetings for chiefs of staff and legislative directors are weekly, and meetings for communications directors are bi-weekly. In addition, the CBC communicates with chiefs of staff, legislative directors, and communications directors via email almost daily.



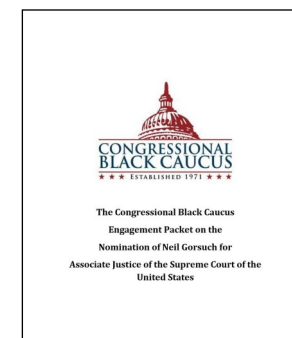
Launched “What Would Trump Do?” Document

The CBC launched the “What Would Trump Do?” rapid response policy and messaging document to inform caucus stakeholders about how the actions of the Trump Administration affect their everyday lives. From December - March, the CBC has sent “What Did Trump Do” documents on health care, Russia, and the budget.



Developed Engagement Packets

The CBC developed engagement packets for legislative and communications staffers about cabinet and judicial nominees and issues such as voter suppression to ensure they had accurate and accessible information they could use on these topics at a moment's notice.



Used New and Old Media to Increase Visibility

The CBC has used old and new media strategies to increase the caucus's visibility to both African-American and non-African American audiences. In three cases, the caucus' message went viral – #LetLizSpeak/Coretta Scott King testimony, President Trump/April Ryan exchange, and Missing DC Girls.

Missing DC Girls

The story of more than a dozen missing Black and Latina teenage girls in DC had been getting local DC coverage for weeks, but hardly any national coverage. In response to the story and in an effort to bring national attention to the issue, the CBC sent a [letter](#) to DOJ and the FBI asking whether 1. the missing girls were representative of a national trend and 2. what, if any, federal resources could be used to help find the missing girls. The CBC gave the letter exclusively to an *Associated Press* reporter whose story led to other stories that caught the attention of the public, including celebrities such as Tina Knowles-Lawson and Lala Anthony. This attention led to a public outcry and the viral social media campaign #MissingDCGirls. Since then, the Mayor of DC has responded with six local initiatives, and Reps. Norton and Scott have introduced legislation.

#LetLizSpeak/Coretta Scott King Testimony

When Senator Warren (D-Mass.) was prevented from reading Coretta Scott King's 1986 testimony about then U.S. Attorney Sessions on the Senate floor, the CBC issued a strong [statement](#) that criticized Republican leadership's decision to silence King "from the grave" and criticized Sessions' record on civil rights. The statement went viral on Twitter. "Wow. This is scorching," [tweeted](#) MSNBC anchor Joy Reid.

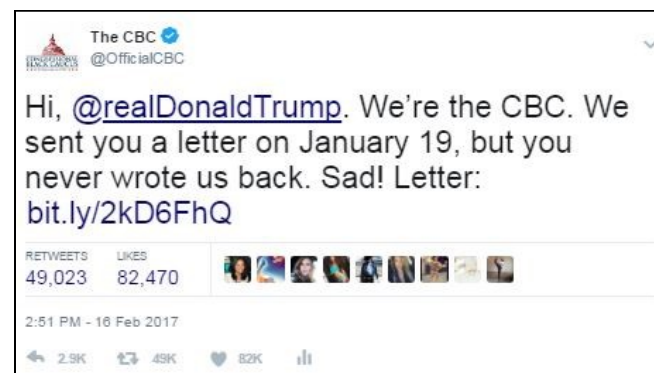
President Trump and April Ryan

When *American Urban Radio Network* reporter April Ryan asked President Trump if he would meet with "the CBC." President Trump said, "Who?" When Ryan clarified her question by saying the "Congressional Black Caucus" instead of "CBC," President Trump said, "Tell you what, do you want to set up the meeting? Do you want to set up the meeting? Are they friends of yours? Set up a meeting." The CBC responded to the exchange with a [tweet](#) that went viral. The tweet was liked by 83K, retweeted by 49K, and replied to by 3K. National news outlets also aired the tweet. CBC's Twitter followers more than doubled, from 20K to 55K.



"Are they friends of yours? Set up a meeting"

-President Trump

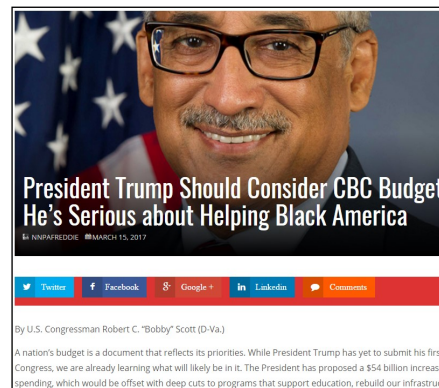


"Hi, @realDonaldTrump. We're the CBC. We sent you a letter on January 19, but you never wrote us back. Sad! Letter: bit.ly/2kD6FhQ."

Strengthened Relationship with African-American Press

The National Newspaper Publishers Association, which has over 200 newspapers and an audience of 20 million, offered the CBC the opportunity to publish a weekly op-ed. Six CBC members, including Chairman Richmond, published op-eds on [national security](#), [health care](#), [economic investment](#), [voting rights](#), [Judge Gorsuch](#), and the [budget](#). In addition, CBC members have made regular appearances on Joe Madison's The Black Eagle/Urban View radio show on Sirius XM as part of CBC's commitment to the host of the show to be more accessible.

"To me, there is only one option. We fight back for ourselves, our families, and our community." –Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Ill.)



Controlled the Trump Meeting Narrative

After the White House confirmed the day and time of President Trump's meeting with the CBC, the CBC strategically used the words of the President Trump against him on Twitter to control the message. The CBC tweeted that the caucus would answer President Trump's campaign question to Black America, "What do you have to lose?" As a continuation of this message, the CBC named the 130-page [policy document](#) it delivered to President Trump on the day of the meeting, "We Have A Lot To lose." The title of the document answered President Trump's question. The CBC's call-and-response messaging was used by a majority of the news outlets who reported on the meeting. The CBC also live tweeted the meeting using the hashtag [#ALotToLose](#) and held a press conference at the White House immediately after the meeting to ensure that the public received an accurate readout of what was discussed. Finally, the Chairman and members of his executive committee participated in one-on-one interviews with several national outlets: [NPR](#), [Mother Jones](#), [USA Today](#), [Associated Press](#), [McClatchy](#), [Washington Post](#), [Ebony](#), and many others.

"The answer to the question he posed during his campaign is this: we have a lot to lose. In fact, we're beginning to lose a lot already under his Administration; the Republican repeal and replace bill, the proposed budget cuts, and the actions Attorney General Sessions is taking at DOJ are just a few of the many examples of that."

–Chairman Richmond

Presented History-Making Testimony at Attorney General Nomination Hearing

On Tuesday, January 11, Chairman Richmond, Senator Booker, and Congressman Lewis, a civil rights hero, [testified](#) at then U.S. Senator Sessions' nomination hearing for Attorney General to urge the Senate to oppose his nomination because of Sessions' record on civil rights. As a result of this testimony, Senator Booker became the first sitting senator to testify against another sitting senator for a Cabinet post during a confirmation. Chairman Richmond's full testimony is [here](#).



“Senator Sessions has demonstrated a total disregard for the equal application of justice and protection of the law as it applies to African Americans and falls short on so many issues... Now you all must face a choice – be courageous or be complicit. If you vote to confirm Senator Sessions, you take ownership of everything he may do or not do.”

–Chairman Richmond

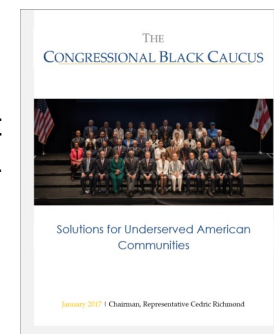
Held Annual CBC Legislative Retreat

The CBC held its biennial two-day retreat to discuss the CBC's legislative strategy for the 115th Congress. During the retreat, the CBC heard from former CBC member, Mel Watt, who heads the Federal Housing Finance Agency, and leaders from SEIU, National Coalition of Black Civil Participation, and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. The CBC also heard from young leaders who are helping to lead grassroots movements.

Criticized President Trump's “New Deal for Black America”

In response to President Trump's “New Deal for Black America,” the CBC sent a [letter](#) to then President-elect Trump and his incoming Administration on the day before his inauguration criticizing the plan as “the same old ‘Trickle Down’ economics assumptions that didn't work for our communities in the 1980's or in the 2000's when these failed experiments were tried before.” The CBC also sent the Administration a caucus-authored policy document titled “[Solutions for Underserved American Communities.](#)”

“Unfortunately, most of our offered solutions were stymied by the leadership in the House and Senate during the 114th Congress.” – CBC



Exercised Our Role As “Conscience of the Congress “

White House, Russia, and National Security Forum

The CBC hosted a [panel](#) examining the potential constitutional and ethical violations committed by the Trump Administration and their impact on the safety and security of the nation and the American public’s trust in democratic institutions. Panelists included Malcolm Nance, a combat veteran, commentator, and former naval intelligence collector, Richard Painter, University of Minnesota law professor and former chief ethics counsel under George W. Bush, and Susan Hennessey, a national security fellow at the Brookings Institute and former attorney at the National Security Agency. Information learned from the panel supports the need for an independent investigation into any and all connections and collusion between the White House and Russia. CBC also called for the Attorney General to resign for lying under oath during his nomination hearing about conversations with Russian officials and for the removal of Chairman Devin Nunes from the House Intelligence Committee for mishandling intelligence information related to Russia. Read more about the panel [here](#).



“The American people deserve to know the truth about the potential connections and collusion between this Administration and Russia. That is why the Congressional Black Caucus held this panel, and why I think an independent investigation is needed and Attorney General Sessions needs to resign.”

–Chairman Richmond.

Co-Hosted Forum on Building Trust Between Communities and Police

The CBC co-hosted a [forum](#) with Ranking Members on the House Judiciary Committee and the House Oversight Committee on building trust between communities of color and police. Panelists included NFL Players Malcolm Jenkins with the Philadelphia Eagles, Anquan Boldin with the Detroit Lions, and Professor Phillip Atiba Goff, PhD, the Co-founder and President of the Center for Policing Equity. During the forum, panelists discussed their own experiences with the police, including the experiences of their family members, and how they hope to improve relationships between communities of color and the police while supporting programs to help inmates successfully re-enter their communities. Boldin’s cousin Corey Jones was shot by a police officer while waiting for roadside assistance.

“Corey was a good kid. He played drums in church. But his faith couldn’t keep him alive. – Anquan Boldin, Detroit Lions

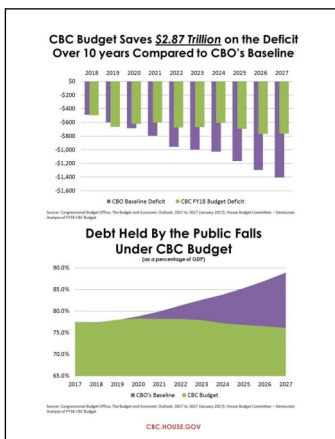
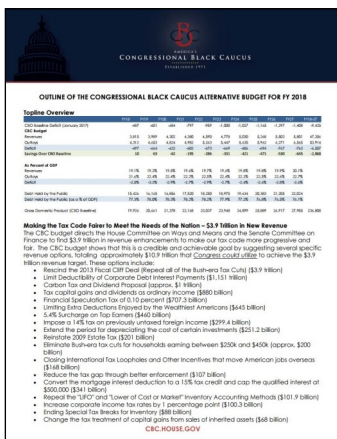
Developed an Alternative FY 2018 Budget

The CBC developed an alternative FY 2018 [budget](#) that invests in programs and policies that will help African Americans and the rest of the nation achieve the American Dream. In addition to protecting social safety net programs and providing other pathways out of poverty, the CBC budget proposes to make the tax code fairer by closing loopholes for the wealthy, provide universal health care by adding a public option to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and make college more affordable by reducing interest rates on student loans and investing in HBCUs. The CBC budget also reduces the deficit by approximately \$2.87 trillion over 10 years compared to CBO's January 2017 baseline. The CBC budget was developed by caucus member Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and former member of the House Budget Committee. Congressman Scott has been developing the CBC budget for the last decade and works with the Democratic staff of the House Budget Committee to finalize it. NewsOne anchor Roland Martin [interviewed](#) Rep. Scott about the budget shortly after it was released.



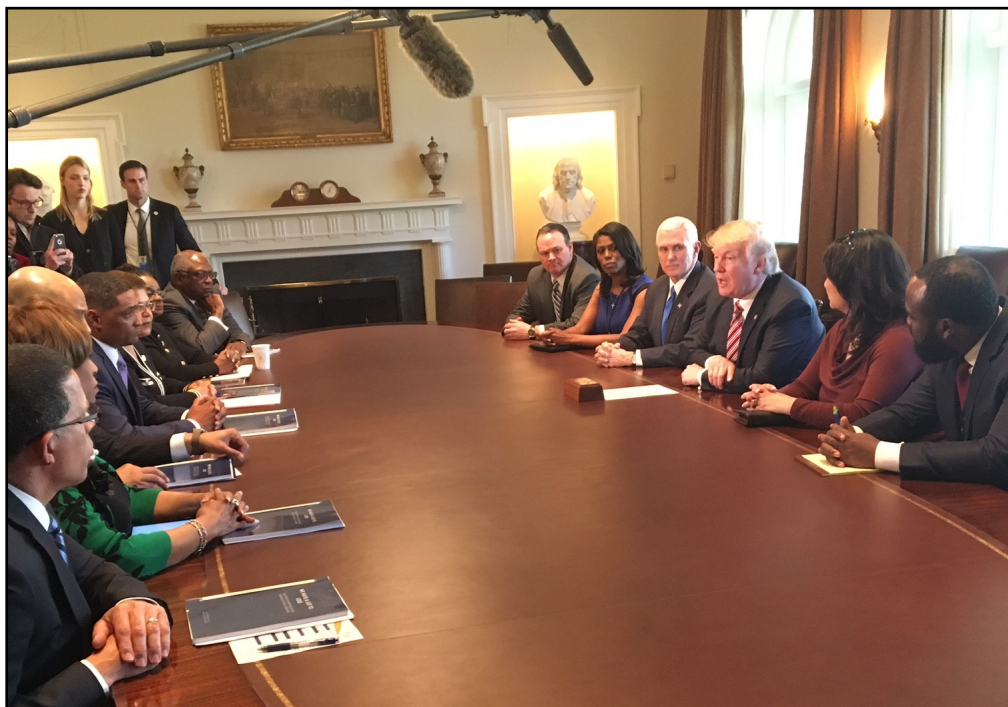
“If the President is serious about moving the African-American community and the rest of the nation forward, he need only to look to the alternative budget developed by the CBC. Almost every year for the past three decades the CBC has developed a morally and fiscally responsible budget regardless of who occupies the White House or which party controls Congress. Our FY 2018 budget is no different. The CBC budget makes targeted investments in programs that support working families, students, seniors, and the most vulnerable in our communities. At the same time, the CBC budget actually improves the fiscal situation of our nation by reducing the deficit by nearly \$2.9 trillion over the next decade.”

– Congressman Bobby Scott



Challenged President Trump and His Administration

At the request of the White House, the CBC Executive Committee and Assistant Democratic Leader Jim Clyburn met with President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Senior Adviser Omarosa Manigault to discuss issues affecting the African-American community and why the Administration should follow the CBC's lead if it's serious about addressing these issues. During the meeting, members discussed criminal justice reform and re-entry, education and job training, infrastructure and economic investment, and poverty and proposed cuts to domestic programs. Members also discussed President Trump's comments about President Obama and inner cities and how those comments hurt the African-American community. On the morning of the meeting, the CBC hand-delivered a 130-page policy document to the White House titled, "[We Have A Lot To Lose: Solutions for Black Families in the 21st Century.](#)" The title of the document was the CBC's answer to President Trump's campaign question to Black America. Members also carried this document with them to the meeting and told the President that many of the solutions in the document had been blocked by members of his party even though they would help a lot of the people who voted for him. Finally, the CBC told President Trump that the caucus needs to hear from members of his cabinet and he agreed. Consequently, the CBC is in the process of setting up meetings with Attorney General Sessions, Secretary DeVos, and Secretary Carson.



“President Trump has a law and order perspective and we have an education and opportunity perspective.”

–Chairman Richmond



“It’s his budget, it’s his policy, it’s his rhetoric; all of these factors demonstrate what we stand to lose.”

– Congresswoman Bass, Second Vice Chair

Important Meetings

From December - March, the CBC met with dozens of advocacy, government, and corporate organizations. Below is a list of key meetings.

- Civil Rights Organizations (Jan 10)
- The National Coalition of Black Civic Participation (Jan 27)
- Tri-Caucus Chairs (Jan 31)
- CBC Strategic Planning Retreat (Feb 8-9)
- Delta Sigma Theta (March 7)
- White House (March 22)
- Association of Black Foundations (March 23)
- National Newspaper Publishers Association (March 23)
- Walker's Legacy Women Entrepreneurs (March 23)
- Civil Rights Organizations (March 27)
- National Bankers Association (March 30)

Important Events

- Senate Diversity Panel (Jan 5)
- CBC Press Conference on Sessions (Jan 5)
- CBC Chair Testifies Against Sessions (Jan 11)
- Morehouse Sesquicentennial Keynote (Feb 16)
- Center for American Progress Black History Month Event: Focus on Black Family (Feb 28)
- Russia Forum (March 1)
- NFL/Community Policing Forum (March 30)

Actively Opposed Cabinet, and Judicial Nominees

The CBC actively [opposed](#) the nominations of then U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) for Attorney General, then education activist Betsey DeVos for Secretary of Education, then U.S. Representative Tom Price (R-Ga.) for Secretary of Health, and Judge Neil Gorsuch for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. In the case of the cabinet nominees, the CBC held two press conferences opposing their nominations before they were confirmed and sent letters to [Sessions](#) and [DeVos](#) after they were confirmed that criticized their positions and policies. In the case of Judge Gorsuch, the CBC submitted [testimony](#) and published an [op-ed](#) opposing his nomination and sent a [letter](#) to senators asking them to do the same.

Advocated for HBCUs

On February 27-28, the White House and Senate and House Republicans met with more than 70 HBCU presidents in Washington, DC. In the days leading up to the meeting, the CBC sent a letter to the [President](#) and Republicans ([Rep. Walker](#), [Sen. Scott](#)) urging them to follow CBC's lead when it comes to strengthening and supporting HBCUs by increasing funding for Pell Grants, Title III of the Higher Education Act and other policies and programs that help these institutions. A few weeks later, the President proposed in his budget outline to give HBCUs the same amount of money they received the year before.

"We are pleased that Republicans in Congress recognize the importance and history of HBCUs and have recently expressed such a strong interest in helping them. We hope your Administration has the same interest. If you are serious about helping these schools, then this meeting is not a photo op. It is a real opportunity to make a real impact on the lives of real Americans."

–Chairman Richmond

Streamlined Appropriations Process

The CBC has a long tradition of advocating investment in our communities across a range of programs, from education and housing, to job training and infrastructure investment. Accordingly, the CBC sent a [letter](#) to House Appropriations Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey calling for robust funding for over 70 programs, agencies, departments, and accounts in fiscal year 2018. The CBC also restated its commitment to the principles of the bipartisan budget agreement, mainly parity between defense and non-defense spending and the prohibition of poison pill riders. In order to collect information for the letter from member offices, the CBC used Google Docs, which streamlined the process.

Why Elizabeth Warren was accused of 'impugning' Jeff Sessions

Steph Solis, USA TODAY Published 11:29 p.m. ET Feb. 7, 2017 | Updated 3:20 p.m. ET Feb. 8, 2017

Congressman Cedric Richmond, a Democrat from Louisiana, slammed the ruling as an effort to "silence Coretta Scott King from the grave."

"Mrs. King's characterization of then U.S. Attorney Senator Sessions was accurate in 1986 and it is accurate now," Richmond said in a statement. "He is as much of a friend to the Black community and civil rights as Bull Connor and the other Good Old Boys were during the Civil Rights Movement."

Sen. Elizabeth Warren Reprimanded for Reading a Letter from Coretta Scott King at Sessions' Hearing

Meanwhile, her colleagues are demanding the Senate #LetLizSpeak.



A couple hours later, Congressman Cedric Richmond — chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus — also released a scathing statement in response to McConnell's decision to invoke Rule 19 while Warren was reading King's letter.

"Republican senators' decision tonight to silence Coretta Scott King from the grave is disgusting and disgraceful," he said. "Mrs. King's characterization of then U.S. Attorney Senator Sessions was accurate in 1986 and it is accurate now. He is as much of a friend to the black community and civil rights as Bull Connor and the other Good Old Boys were during the Civil Rights Movement."



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Black Caucus Members to Judiciary Committee: Sessions Is Unfit



African-American lawmakers have vocally protested the selection of Sen. Jeff Sessions as attorney general—and they took their concerns to the men and women who stand to approve his nomination.



BETSY WOODRUFF 01.11.17 9:15 PM ET



Congressional Black Caucus: We wrote Trump a letter, but he never responded

BY BROOKE SEIPEL - 02/16/17 03:38 PM EST

161 COM

Just In...

41,065 SHARES



SHARE



TWEET



PLUS ONE



HBCUs, advocates looking for help from Trump on funding

By JESSE J. HOLLAND Feb. 27, 2017 10:24 PM EST

The CBC said it was ready to help the Trump administration push through help for the black colleges and universities. They suggested that, as a start, Trump should increase the maximum Pell Grant award for students and double the funding for Pell Grants, or provide two years of free tuition at HBCUs.

"We hope that you and your administration are serious about supporting these schools," CBC chair Rep. Cedric Richmond, D-La., said in a letter to the White House. "The way to show that you are is to not only talk the talk, but walk the walk. Give these schools the resources and support they deserve and that they and the CBC are asking for."

Wonkblog

Trump asked black voters: 'What the hell do you have to lose?' Black lawmakers answer: 'A lot.'

By Tracy Jan March 23



From left, André Carson, Cedric L. Richmond, Karen Bass, Gwen Moore and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus meet with President Trump at the White House. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

President Trump, as he campaigned for the job, touted a ["New Deal for Black America,"](#) promising to be their "greatest champion" and to rebuild the inner cities.

Mother Jones

POLITICS ENVIRONMENT FOOD MEDIA CRIME & JUSTICE PHOTOS INVESTIGATIONS MAGAZINE

Congressional Black Caucus Shows Trump Its Policy Vision for Black America

The group met with the president for the first time on Wednesday afternoon.

P.R. LOCKHART MAR. 22, 2017 5:15 PM

'What Do You Have to Lose?' Black Legislators Answer Trump's Question

[Analysis] Members of the Congressional Black Caucus presented President Trump with an answer to the question he asked African-Americans during his campaign. Now it's his move

EBONY



Black lawmakers call on FBI to help on missing black girls

By JESSE J. HOLLAND Mar. 23, 2017 5:05 PM EDT

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's historically black colleges and universities are pushing for President Donald Trump to set aside more federal contracts and grants for their schools, and take a greater hand in their welfare by moving responsibility for a key program for those colleges to the White House.

The presidents of the nation's 100-plus HBCUs, pressing their case for greater attention from the new Republican-controlled government, met with Trump briefly in the Oval Office and later with Vice President Mike Pence. On Tuesday, they planned to meet with GOP lawmakers.



The Congressional Black Caucus Is Urging The FBI To Help Find Missing D.C. Teens



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6:03 AM **Ask Dr. Sherry: 'After My Ex Threatened To Expose That I Have Herpes, I've Been Afraid to Move On. Will I Ever Find Love?'**

By Mariya Moseley
Mar. 24, 2017

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus are calling on Attorney General Jeff Sessions along with the FBI to get involved with missing teens cases in D.C.

As continued concern builds around disappearing teens of color in the U.S. capitol, lawmakers are seeking high authority to bring aid in finding the missing children.



Black Caucus calls on Ryan to remove Nunes as Intel Committee chair

BY MAX GREENWOOD - 03/29/17 08:51 PM EDT

192 COMMENTS

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2,847 SHARES



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ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS HEAD MAKES THE CASE AGAINST JEFF SESSIONS

LIVE
MSNBC



Congressional Black Caucus 46 Years of Service

Executive Staff: Fabrice Coles, Executive Director; Caren Street, Policy Director; Kamara Jones, Communications Director; Reggie McCrimmon, Member Services and External Affairs Director



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