Executive Summary: Systemic (Institutional) Racism
Bob Coffman and Bonnie Tucker

Systemic Racism is an extremely broad topic because it involves a large number of institutions (and their policies) of American society, such as housing, lending, health care, the environment, justice (both the courts and the police), employment, political power (local, state & national), voting (voter suppression), education, & immigration.

By definition, Systemic/Institutional Racism is distinguished from racial bigotry by the existence of institutional systemic policies, practices, and economic and political structures that place minority racial and ethnic groups at a disadvantage in relation to an institution's racial or ethnic majority.

A review of the history of Systemic Racism in the United States shows that it began in 1619, when the first slaves were traded by privateers for food in the settlement of Jamestown. There were attempts to abolish the slave trade in subsequent years, but the practice continued. With the advent of Eli Whitney's cotton gin, it became more profitable to grow cotton in the South, which created the need for more slaves. Even though the South lost the Civil War and the 13th, 14th, & 15th amendments became part of the US Constitution, white supremacy and racism became codified leading to the Jim Crow era, which lasted until 1965. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregation and discrimination, although barriers to voting and gerrymandering were put in place. Today, White Supremacy appears to be more vocal and is gaining ground, with the FBI stating that the most serious type of terrorism threatening America is the domestic terrorism of White Supremacy (January 6, 2021 Insurrection). There is also an onslaught of new voting laws to increase Voter Suppression now taking place across the country with the effect of making it difficult for minorities to vote. It appears that there is a concerted effort to reinstate the Jim Crow era of the past. In addition to the discrimination of African-Americans, Latino/Latinas, Asian-Americans, Native-Americans, Jews, Muslim-Americans, LGBT, etc. are also often victims of systemic bias, bigotry, and/or exclusionary policies.

Our position paper provides details and examples of Systemic Racism in the institutions of Housing and Lending, Voting and Voter Suppression, Education, Health, Criminal Justice, Immigration and Environmental Justice. A variety of solutions to these issues are also provided.

We know that the data we have provided is only the "tip of the iceberg" and can and should be explored further to get a more robust picture of what is at stake in our country today.

Sources are listed in the full report.

Systemic (Institutional) Racism

Bob Coffman and Bonnie Tucker

10/5/2021

This paper will include summaries related to the groups listed below & the areas where systemic racism is prevalent, but can hardly be expected to be the definitive word on the topic addressed. It is suggested that this concern be discussed within our larger group to see where other information gathered by members can be infused with this narrative.

After reviewing our notes, it is apparent that Systemic Racism is an extremely broad topic because it involves a large number of institutions (and their policies) of American society, such as housing, lending, health care, the environment, justice (both the courts and the police), employment, political power (local, state & national), voting (voter suppression), education, & immigration: including African-Americans, Latino/Latinas, Asian-Americans, Native-Americans. Also included are the systemic bias, bigotry, and/or exclusionary policies for many other groups of people, including Jews, LGBT, Muslim-Americans, etc.

I Definition(s):

Institutional Racism also known as **Systemic Racism**, is a form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues. Institutional racism can have harmful effects on people, especially on students in school where it is prominent.

The term *institutional racism* was first coined in 1967 by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton in *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. Carmichael and Hamilton wrote that while individual racism is often identifiable because of its overt nature, institutional racism is less perceptible because of its "less overt, far more subtle" nature. Institutional racism "originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than [individual racism]".

Institutional racism was defined by Sir William Macpherson in the UK's Lawrence report (1999) as: "The collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behavior that amount to discrimination through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people."

* Institutional Racism is distinguished from racial bigotry by the existence of institutional systemic policies, practices, and economic and political structures that place minority racial and ethnic groups at a disadvantage in relation to an institution's racial or ethnic majority.

Sources:

Wikipedia: Institutional Racism (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_racism)

https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/instituional-racism

II History

The information presented below is a summary of the article by Mr. Kent on the History of Systemic Racism:

- White Lion, 1619: A privateer ship called the White Lion visited Jamestown, the first permanent settlement in America. The ship was on its way to Veracruz, New Spain (N.M.) and traded some of its slave cargo for food, thus slavery came to America.

- U.S. Declaration of Independence, 1776: Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration with a clause attacking slavery as being an antithesis to the concept of "all men are created equal." However, it was removed during debate because of refusal by southern slaveholding states along with their northern merchant partners.

- U.S. Constitution, 1789: The Constitution was ratified in 1788 and took effect in March, 1789. Once again southern states working with northern merchants voided any sections that would have eliminated slavery. Although the Constitution acknowledges the presence of slavery, the writers to took great pains to avoid the use of the word "slave." (i.e. Article 1, Section 2; Article 1, Section; Article 4, Section 2)

- Abolition of International Slave Trade, 1808: Congress voted to abolish the slave trade in January,1808, although the northwest territories had already done so via the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. While slavery still existed, actions were taken in an attempt to encourage its demise.

- Antebellum Period, 1689-1860: Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin made it more profitable to grow cotton in the South. With more acreage planted, more slaves were needed. The purchase of the Louisiana Purchase in 1847 doubled the amount of land available for expansion. Also, the Mexican War of 1847 allowed for the formation of additional states in the South and with that more slaveholding power in Congress. Thus, more power was provided to the southern states, which threatened to secede from the Union if its new power was not extended to them. As slavery expanded, it became more likely that a peaceful resolution of the slavery issue was impossible.

- Civil War, 1861-1865: Led by South Carolina, the southern states seceded from the union claiming that the election of Abraham Lincoln was an attack on slavery. Most Republicans and Lincoln had believed that the Constitution barred federal authorities from abolishing slavery. Despite that Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation as a war measure knowing that once the insurrection was over their authority would be rendered moot. John C. Calhoun had stated a decade earlier that the highest form of civilization was a chain of hierarchy from master to slave. With these positions believed White supremacy and racism were officially codified.

- 13th, 14th, 15 Amendments, 1865-1870: Free and formerly enslaved African-Americans were protected under these 3 amendments and began work and education to allow them to exist as free men and women. They eagerly embraced their right to vote and ran for local, state, and national office. However, these rights were slowly eroded away and the south slowly moved back again toward slavery.

- Jim Crow/Segregation/White Supremacy, 1877-1965: White Americans began a system of blatant racism and white supremacy designed to keep black Americans "in their place." Black Americans were treated as inferior. Organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan grew as a way to keep the black population from exercising their rights. This blatant white supremacy and systemic racism supported terrorist activities such as lynching and cross burning, and other atrocities. Local law enforcement and conservative politicians were often the leaders of these terrorist groups and activities. "Separate but equal" became the law of the land.

- <u>Civil Rights Acts, 1964-1965:</u>The Civil Rights Act ended segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Act sought to eliminate the barriers that local & state governments had put in place to prevent African-Americans from exercising their right to vote.

- <u>Shelby County v. Holder, 2013:</u> The Supreme Court eliminated a key section of the Voting Right Act that required states with a history of discrimination to get pre-clearance prior to making changes to their voting laws, because many of these states had used Jim Crow policies and other laws to keep minorities from voting. Many of these states immediately put up barriers to voting by minorities. Gerrymandering was expanded to ensure Republicans would win more seats even when receiving fewer votes. Systemic racism had joined forces with voter suppression.

<u>Today:</u> White Supremacy appears to be more vocal and is gaining ground, with the FBI stating that the most serious type of terrorism threatening America is the domestic terrorism of White Supremacy (January 6, 2021 Insurrection). There is also an onslaught of new voting laws to increase Voter Suppression now taking place across the country with the effect of making it difficult for minorities to vote. (i.e. The new law passed by Georgia lawmakers and signed by the governor.) It appears that there is a concerted effort to reinstate the Jim Crow of the past.

<u>Sources:</u>

<u>David Kent. June 8. 2020- A Brief History of Systemic Racism in America (davidjkent-writer.com)</u>

III National Concerns-areas where Systemic Racism persists:

*Housing and Lending

How Systemic Racism Exists in U.S. Housing Policies – Forbes, Atticus LeBlanc

- The evolution of housing policy has both implicit and explicit racial bias.
- Racial segregation addressed by Supreme Court in 1917, 1948, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Fair Housing Act of 1968. <u>BUT</u> racism persists today in zoning and housing laws.
- 1917: Buchanan v. Warley – Supreme Court ruled that race-based zoning was unconstitutional. As a result, cities began relocating segregated schools to undesirable areas, forcing black families to live close to them (de facto zoning segregation).
- Black war veterans returned from WWII – FHA did not allow them to obtain mortgages! Banks viewed them as "higher risk" loans. Developers, in order to get federal funding, had to include in their codes a refusal to sell to people of color.

Understanding and Dismantling Systemic Racism in Housing.

- Subprime Mortgage Crisis:

  Black and Latino families subjected to "financial redlining". Banks <u>targeted </u>Blacks and Latinos even though they should have qualified for better terms. Banks steered them away from prime loans to subprime loans – higher interest rates and unexpected payment increases! This was catastrophic!
  - o Financial Exclusion

- o More foreclosures

- o Discrimination in mortgage approvals

Center for Responsible Lending (CRL):

Black and Latino borrowers 30% more likely to get sub-primes than white borrowers with similar risk characteristics.

CRL report "Lost Ground 2011: Disparities in Mortgage Lending and Foreclosures"

- o Shows percentage of higher rate mortgages of borrowers with FICO 660 or higher

- o Foreclosures 2004-2008:

    - ▪ Black homeowners 9.8%

    - ▪ Latinos 11.9%

    - ▪ Whites 5.1%

- o Foreclosures 2007-2009:

    - ▪ Blacks 790 per 10,000

    - ▪ Latinos 769 per 10,000

    - ▪ Whites 452 per 10,000

Pew Research Center 2017 found that median wealth:

Black families fell 47% to $33, 600

Hispanic families fell 55% to $38900

White families fell 31% to $131,900

*Voter Suppression in the United States (Wikipedia)

Voter suppression in the United States concerns various legal and illegal efforts to prevent eligible voters from exercising their right to vote. Historical methods include Poll Taxes and Literacy tests.

The passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 guaranteed the right to vote to men of all races, including former slaves. In the 1880 Presidential Election, in eight Southern states, Black turnout was equal to or greater than White turnout. At the end of the Reconstruction Era, Southern states began implementing policies to suppress Black voters, such as Poll Taxes and Literacy Tests. As a result, after 1890 less than 9000 of Mississippi's 147,000 eligible African American voters were registered to vote or about 6%. Louisiana went from 130,000 registered African American voters in 1896 to 1,324 in 1904 (about a 99% decrease).

Contemporary methods include:

- • Purging of Voter rolls

- • Limitations on early and absentee voting

- • Voting procedure disinformation about when and how to vote, leading them to fail to cast valid ballots.

- Caging lists – Political parties would send registered mail to addresses of registered voters. If the mail is returned as undeliverable the mailing organization uses that fact to challenge the registration, arguing that because the voter could not be reached at the address, the registration is fraudulent.

- Identification requirements. – Some states have imposed photo ID requirements to suppress the turnout of minority voters. 8% of white Americans lack driver's licenses, compared to 25% of African-Americans. During the 21st century, several states with Republican-controlled governments passed laws that do not allow people to vote using student ID cards for identification; students tend to be more liberal than the general population.

This Wikipedia article includes many interesting historical and modern examples of voter suppression which are worth reading.

Southern Poverty Law Center – Article: Civil Rights Groups Sue Georgia Over New Sweeping Voter Suppression Law

Civil Rights Groups have filed a federal lawsuit against Georgia's sweeping new law that makes it much harder for all Georgians to vote, particularly voters of color, new citizens and religious communities.

The law being challenged is S.B. 202 which was passed by the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate and signed by Governor Brian Kemp in under seven hours on March 25, 2021. This law places burdensome, unjustified and unnecessary restrictions on voters, particularly voters of color and other historically disenfranchised communities.

*Education:

In looking at the history of systemic racism in education the following can be found:

- In the South, laws against African-Americans completely shut out the ability to get an education. Plantation owners felt that if African-Americans were denied an education, they would not revolt and slavery could stay in place. Jim Crow established "separate but equal." Students had difficulty finding schools or were forced into schools that did not meet proper standards. Funding was under constant threat. The 1950 Brown vs. The Board of Education stopped the separate but equal doctrine, but enforcement created much violence. The Civil Rights Movement brought about additional legislation such as The Civil Rights Act of 1964, with the Department of Civil Rights being created. These laws were enacted to ensure that civil rights were upheld and that federal funding would be distributed equitably without discrimination. These rights are under increasing attack today.

  In the 1800s Native American children were taken from their homes and forced into boarding schools where they were forced to abandon their culture in order to assimilate into White culture. It was held at the time that White culture was far better than Native American beliefs.

  Chinese-American children were barred from going to school altogether. Later legislation gave them the right to a public school education, but in a segregated setting.

  Latinos were also shut out from education, but were later granted access, since a judge ruled that Latinos were of white descent.

- Today Institutional racism has created limitations and denials of access to educational opportunities within communities of color:

- Support staff such as counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses may be inadequate.

- Students may be overlooked because it is felt that they have nothing of value to offer.

- Counselors may discourage students from applying to college.

- Students whose families have moved to the suburbs may feel they are outsiders and do not belong.

- There is a lack of after school enrichment and/or after school support.

- Positive reinforcement for schoolwork well done and appropriate behavior may not be part of district/school policy.

- All Staff within the school hierarchy need to raise their expectations of student performance to include all students.

- In addition, schools in minority areas may be underfunded:
    - Curriculum resources and materials are lacking,
    - Technology and/or student access to computers may be inadequate, both within the classroom and at home.
    - Teachers do not always have all the necessary resources that they need to fulfill their obligations to their students.
    - In addition, school districts/school sites need to address their infrastructure problems: such as HVAC systems, plumbing, lighting, chipping paint, graffiti, weed infested school yards, lack of play equipment in good condition, etc. All students and staff deserve a work environment that is clean, attractive, healthy, and safe.

- An article by Roby Chatterji (7-8-2020) for The Center for American Progress writes that the following could help in fighting Systemic Racism.
    - Provide for equitable funding: He writes that at the present time non-white school districts across the country receive $23 billion less than predominately white districts. This applies to both curriculum, staff, and infrastructure needs. (see above)
    - Advocate for less policing and surveillance of students and more mental health services with the addition of counselors, therapists, and social workers, instead of increased police presence and security.
    - Increase transparency regarding school discipline data and policies to insure that students' civil rights are not being violated.
        - (The USA Today News reported on June 18, 2020 that black students face disproportionate rates of suspension. For example, Black girls face more severe penalties for suspension for the same behavior as white peers. They are nearly 6 times more likely to get out-of-school suspension. Graduation gaps also persist.)
    - Push for a school boundaries and selection criteria that are designed for race-equity.
    - Eliminate tracking in favor of enrichment programs available to all students.

- Create polices that ensure equitable access to rigorous and advanced coursework for all students, and additional support and help for students who may need additional skills to access such curriculum.

- **Post-secondary education-**
  - Enrollment of minorities and students of color has risen, however, colleges and universities are still mostly white (63%). Hate crimes have also risen with 1250 hate crimes reported in 2016, up 25% from 2015.
  - Access also seems to be an issue: being prepared for college is integral to whether or not a student will be successful. Additional programs to help minorities with this preparation when needed should be implemented.
  - Cooperative arrangements with business/corporations and educational institutions regarding employment trends should be initiated, thereby assisting students to match their interests/skills with appropriate courses of study.

Sources:

www.theadvocate.org Matthew Lynch

Center for American Progress: article by Roby Chatterji; 7/8/2020

Wikipedia: Institutional Racism

*Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action is a set of policies and practices within a government or organization which seeks to increase the representation of groups based on gender, race, sexuality, and nationality in areas where they may be under-represented, such as education and employment. Support for affirmative action has sought to achieve goals such as bridging inequalities in employment and pay, providing access to education, promoting diversity, enriching state, institutional, and professional leadership and addressing apparent past wrongs, harms, or hindrances, in particular the apparent social imbalance left from slavery and slave laws.

In the United States, current policies were introduced in the early 1960's to combat racial discrimination in the hiring process, and later to address gender discrimination. An Executive Order was used by John Kennedy which required government employers "not discriminate against an employee or applicant because of race, creed, color, national origin; Lyndon Johnson added sex to list of protected categories.

Affirmative Action has been the subject of numerous court cases and has been questioned upon its constitutional legitimacy. In 2003, the Supreme Court decision regarding Affirmative Action in higher education, permitted educational institutions to consider race as a factor in admitting students. Some states use financial criteria to attract racial groups that typically have been under-represented. Other states have passed constitutional amendments banning public institutions from practicing Affirmative Action (i.e. California). Some conservative activists have alleged that some colleges use illegal quotas to discriminate against Asian, Jewish, and Caucasian backgrounds and have launched numerous lawsuits to stop them.

Critics have viewed affirmative action as counterproductive, argues that it is a form of reverse discrimination, and/or devalues the actual accomplishments of people.

A 2014 poll showed that 63% of Americans thought affirmative action programs on college campuses were a "good thing." A 2015 poll showed that 67% of Americans support affirmative action aimed at increasing female representation, with 58% supporting programs aimed at increasing representation of racial minorities.

Source:
Wikipedia

*Health-

Racism affects many aspects of U.S. health & healthcare, including emergency treatment, pregnancy, mental health, and more.

- Black women die 3 times more often when giving birth. In pregnancy-related deaths there were 13 deaths per 100,000 white women as compared to 41 deaths per 100.000 black women
- COVID-19:
  - While Black people make up about 13% of the overall U.S. population, in geographic areas where COVID-19 is spiking, they make up 18% of the population.
  - The risk of death within the Latin population was nearly twice that of the white population.
  - Healthcare workers in marginalized communities have voiced concerns about the lack of protective equipment and COVID testing early in the pandemic's early stages.
- Longevity is also affected: Black men lives on average 71.9 years when compared to 76.4 for white men. Black women live on average 78.5 years as compared to 81.2 years for white women.
- Between 2013-14 42.4% of black males had high blood pressure as compared to 30,2% of white males.
- Less Black and Latin people over the age of 65 get fewer flu vaccinations than white people of the same age bracket. (65% to 70%)
- A 2015 review showed that racism was associated with mental health difficulties, contributing to increased stress, anxiety, and depression.
- In 2014 approximately 20% of Black adults and 35% of LatinX adults could not access health insurance compared to 10% for white and Asian adults.
- There has also been a shortage of primary care physicians (67%) in neighborhoods with Black zip codes.
- There is also evidence that racism exists within healthcare itself and lead doctors to neglect, disbelieve, or discriminate against minority patients.
  - Treatment for pain, emergency room care, and need for hospitalization may not always be sufficient for people of color.

Biases and stereotypes have had a serious impact on how doctors treat people of color, which can lead to over- or under-diagnosis for conditions such as pain management and increased health risks.

In addition, environmental factors have also had an impact on the health of minorities and marginalized people. For example, chemical substances within communities such as lead paint, respiratory irritants like diesel fumes, crowding, litter, and noise are factors that can and do affect a person's health. Contaminated drinking water can also create major issues (i.e Flint, Michigan's water crises).

Sources:

USA Today; 6/18/2020: 12 Charts how racial disparities persist-

Racism in healthcare: What you need to know: Reviewed by Alana Biggers, M.D., MPH, written by Mathieu Rees; 9/16/2020

Wikipedia: Institutional Racism

*Criminal Justice:

In his study of systemic racism within the Criminal Justice System, Radley Balko has gathered evidence that indicates that there is clear racial bias in our criminal justice system and that the evidence is "overwhelming."

He has cataloged the evidence to include the following areas:
- Policing and profiling
- Misdemeanors, petty crimes and driver's license suspensions
- The Drug War
- Juries and jury selection
- The Death Penalty
- Prosecutors, discretion and plea bargaining
- School suspensions and the school-to-prison pipeline
- Prison, incarceration and solitary confinement
- Bail, pretrial detention, commutations and pardons, gangs and other issues
- The dissent-contrarian studies on race and the criminal justice system

Within his study, he provides numerous examples of systemic racism with the Criminal Justice System.

Another article by Bill Quigley indicates that 1 or every 4 African-American males born in this decade can expect to go to prison in his lifetime, while the U.S. population is 13% Black, 61% white and 17% Latino. It states that in 1954 100,00 Blacks were in prisons. In 2016 that figure rose to 800,000 in prisons and over 263,000 in local jails. Black men at that time were nearly 6 times as likely to be incarcerated as white men and Hispanic men are 2.3 times as likely.

Black males are twice as likely to be stopped in cars or on foot as white males.

Examples of the problem are listed below:
- Three times as many Black and Hispanic drivers were searched once stopped as white males
- Police were more likely to use force like Tasers, dogs, pepper spray, and physical force against Blacks than Whites in making arrests.

- o Blacks and White use drugs including marijuana at about the same percentage. However, Blacks are arrested at a rate greater rate. 29% of the arrests are African-American people. Blacks are arrested for marijuana use 3.73 times as likely for possession of marijuana.
- o Blacks are imprisoned at twice the rate of Whites and often receive longer sentences.
- o Over 65% percent of prisoners serving life without parole for non-violent offenses are black.
- o After serving a sentence, Black men have greater difficulty getting a job than White men.
- o 1 out of every 13 African Americans has lost their right to vote due to felony disenfranchisement versus 1 in every 56 non-black voters.

The author states that these and many other facts demonstrate the deep racism embedded in the criminal legal system.

(* A question: What impact are privately funded prisons having on the Criminal Justice System)

Sources:

Article by Bill Quigley, Law Professor, Loyola University, New Orleans; 10/4/2016

Article by Radley Balko; June 10, 2020

*Immigration

Our nation's very first immigration law passed in 1790, creating a process to grant naturalize citizenship to immigrants who had lived in the U.S. for at least two years. This opportunity applied only for "free white persons", and for all intents and purposes, "persons" meant "men".

This law excluded Native Americans, indentured servants, and both enslaved and free Black people from access to citizenship. In 1795, Congress amended the law to increase the minimum residency requirement to five years, which remains today.

Throughout the 19th century immigrants arrived in the U.S. from all over the world, particularly Northern and Western Europe and East Asia. Chinese immigrants first came to work in the gold mines, then tool agricultural jobs and factory work in the mid 1800s.

The land which now makes up the Southwestern U.S. once belonged to Mexico. In the 1840s and 1850s, wars and treaties during the time when James K. Polk was president, moved the border south. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) Included safety and protection of land ownership, language and culture , and access to U.S. citizenship. However, many of these promises were broken.

Near the end of the 1800s, the welcoming of Chinese immigrants to California abruptly stopped as fear grew that they were taking over jobs and posed a threat to society. In 1882 Congress passed the first of three Chinese Exclusion Acts, banning additional immigration. In 1943, when China and the U.S. became allies during World War II, these exclusion laws were finally repealed.

In 1924, Congress passed the National Origins Act which established a quota system to limit the number of immigrants entering the U.S. The law deliberately based the new quotas on census data from 1890, more than 20 years earlier when the majority of immigrants to the U.S. were white protestants from Northern and Western Europe.

During the Great Depression, those in power blamed Mexican immigrants for the nation's economic troubles. Herbert Hoover used the campaign slogan "American Jobs for Real Americans".

State and local governments across the country conducted the "Mexican Repatriation" efforts in the 1930s with the support of, and funding from the federal government. Historians estimate that approximately 1 million people of Mexican descent were forcibly deported.

In 1935, a similar repatriation effort was instituted for Filipino immigrants. The Tydings-McDuffie act instituted a new immigration quota of only 50 Filipinos per year.

The Wagner Act of 1935 affected farm workers and domestic workers, many of whom were Blacks, Latinx and Asian immigrants, by prohibiting them from organizing and creating unions.

Other policies that affected immigrant communities and the descendants of immigrants include the National Housing Act, the Federal Highway Act, subprime loans and the war on drugs.

We are a nation that welcomes immigrant labor, but not immigrants. During World War II, there was once again a labor shortage, and immigrants were needed to fill the gap. In 1942, the Bracero Program was created. Temporary workers were welcomed in from Mexico, Barbados, the Bahamas, Canada and Jamaica to work in agriculture. These workers were not eligible for permanent residency. Wages were low, and their children were not allowed to attend public schools. These workers were not allowed to organize or form unions, so employers could pay as little as they wanted. Congress ended this program in 1964, but other forms of temporary worker visas continue to this day.

Immigrants continue to face many challenges today. Despite the fact that the majority of visas are granted to family members of citizens and legal permanent residents, even those with family connections can experience unreasonable wait times to get into the U.S. Those coming from the four countries with the longest wait times (Mexico, India, China and the Philippines) can face wait times of more than 20 years.

The issue of wait times is separate from the current crisis of asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border. Violence and instability in Central American countries is causing many to leave their homes and come here to our border seeking asylum to enter the U.S. for a determination of eligibility. The former president's policies to close the border or require these asylum seekers to remain in Mexico contradicted our laws and put people in very dangerous situations.

Undocumented individuals face uncertainty in every aspect of their lives and face barriers in employment, healthcare and other necessities. DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans), programs proposed by the Obama administration, raised hope of security for some undocumented individuals. Those hopes were never realized. The Supreme Court declared DAPA was unconstitutional. DACA has faced legal challenges and attacks by the Trump administration over the past few years.

Immigration enforcement has been responsible for cruelly separating families through detention and deportation. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) was created in 2003 in response to the September 11 attacks. Along with the creation of ICE, immigration was moved to the purview of the

Department of Homeland Security, away from the Department of Labor where immigrants were seen as positive contributors to our nation and economy.

For more than a decade, Congress has discussed passing comprehensive immigration reform, but with no legislative success. It is time for our government to reflect and respond to the current realities of immigration in our world.

*Environmental Justice
The Center for American Progress itemizes the following are issues that have plagued communities of color for decades:

- Communities of color have a higher exposure rates to air pollution than their white counterparts.
  In a study by Yale University which monitored 14 pollutants, it was found that whites had the lowest rate of exposure to 11of the identified 14 pollutants; Hispanics had the highest rate for 10 of the 14 pollutants; African-Americans had higher rates of exposure to 13 of 14 pollutants than whites. Some of the pollutants studied have shown connections to asthma, cardiovascular issues, lung disease, and cancer. A Bronx, New York study showed that people who lived close to noxious industrial facilities and waste sites were 66% more likely to be hospitalized for asthma and were 13% more likely to be people of color.

- Landfills, hazardous waste sites, and other industrial facilities are most often located in communities of color.
  A review of data collected ("Toxic Waste and Race at Twenty") over a twenty year period found that more than half of the people who lived within 1.86 miles of toxic waste facilities are people of color. These facilities contribute to both safety and health concerns.

- Lead poisoning disproportionately affects children of color.
  Children of color living in urban areas are at the highest risk of lead poisoning caused by lead-based paints. A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that 11.2% of African-American children and 4.0% of Mexican-American children are poisoned by lead as compared with 2.3% of white children. Health issues such as anemia, seizures, and brain development can result.

- Climate change (extreme weather conditions) disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color. For example, after the Katrina hurricane disaster in New Orleans, black homeowners received $8,000 less in government aid than white homeowners due to disparities in housing values; in 2013 the city's Lower 9th Ward had not returned to their community due to inadequate building efforts.

- Water contamination plagues low-income areas and communities of color across the nation.
  Limited access to clean water in rural areas, indigenous communities, and migrant farmworker communities can cause many health issues including waterborne diseases, blood diseases, and cancer. A prime example of the affects of water contamination by lead poisoning occurred in Flint, Michigan only recently.

  Source:
  Jasmine Bell, intern with the 2050 team; 5 Things to Know About Communities of Color and Environmental Justice; 4/25/2016; Center for American Progress

✓ In addition, regarding the environmental concerns cited above, many cities may have communities that are blighted: decaying or destroyed buildings, inadequate trash pick-up, inadequate parks, streets in disrepair, closed businesses, poor access to public transportation, schools in disrepair, inadequate housing, lack of groceries so citizens can adequately shop for healthy food and other needs of daily existence, inadequate health and safety services, etc. Many of these issues exist in minority communities, and need to be addressed in a thoughtful, organized, and timely manner.

IV Solutions:

Throughout our history many leaders have written and talked about equality for all, while at the same time establishing policies, programs, and institutional practices that have only led to the inequitable outcomes for many, thus leading to the present day Systemic Racism that persists. The following are ways that this inequality can be remedied:

- o Close the racial wealth gap
    - o Incentivize saving
    - o Expand access to credit
    - o Offer financial education counseling, and coaching
    - o Research possibilities of baby bonds
- o Eliminate inequities in public school quality
    - o Recruit more Black teachers
    - o Reform the education finance system that presently relies primarily on property taxes
    - o Improve federal funding assistance for lower-income school systems
    - o Additional suggestions are listed on page 6 of this document.
- o Close employment and earnings gaps
    - o Expand apprenticeship programs
    - o Increase certificate programs at the community school level (and possibly high school) that align with industry and business current and future trends
    - o Review enrollment boundaries or school assignment policies to make schools more racially and economically integrated
    - o Encourage employers to pursue strategies to attract, promote, and retain people of color
- o End punitive policing
    - o Provide mandated training on implicit bias
    - o Develop policies and reconciliation processes to build public trust
    - o Provide greater transparency of policies, processes, and interactions between the police and the public
    - o When hiring, have a stringent application process
    - o Invest in community=based alternative systems
    - o Cooperate and coordinate with community leaders and advocates when developing policies and processes
    - o Invest in community safety training, conflict mediators, and strategies to advance well-being of youth rather than relying on policing and incarceration

- Review data regarding private (for profit) prisons and determine their effect on the levels of incarceration
- Determine if incarceration or if <u>treatment</u> is more effective in dealing with drug offenses
- Environmental Justice issues should be recognized and prioritized as a national issue, and not just for local and state leaders to deal with.
  - Local and state government leaders need to create task forces comprised of government liasons and leaders within affected communities to identify where issues listed above exist, prioritize needs, and then develop implementation plans to correct those problems.
  - Effective environmental justice policies need to provide communities where all people can live, work, play without fear of exposure to toxic deadly surroundings. It is recognized that this costs money. Cleaning up blighted neighborhoods and providing citizens with safe, clean, healthy environments would go a long way to improving the lives of people who need and want to live within them.
  - Some examples:
    - Establish community task forces to meet with/establish volunteer organizations to help with clean up.
    - Encourage private business to donate funds/ materials/personnel to assist.
    - Demand local and state governments address inadequacies through the legislative process.
    - Ensure that land and building owners are following code enforcement rules and if not, are held accountable.
    - Encourage town-halls where community members can discuss what they want to see in their communities and how they can be part of the process.
    - Establish community gardens/parks in place of land that is not being utilized and may be "dumping grounds" for unwanted materials.
  - Pilot bold remedies
  - Seek out and encourage those with the vision to create new systems
  - Implement studies to test new ideas that could stem systemic racism
  - Ambitious changes in distribution of public funds would be necessary
- Model "what if" scenarios
  - System Analysis of pros and cons to innovative ideas/policies
- Quantify costs and benefits
  - A look at the trade offs between near and intermediate costs and long-term benefits
- An example of a positive remedy that is helping people in minority communities with employment opportunities, improving the health of residents, utilizing land limitations in urban areas, improving food insecurity is the giant indoor vertical farm being developed by <u>Plenty</u> in Compton, CA.
- Another example is the launching by the ACLU of the <u>Systemic Equality Agenda</u> which includes specific asks of Congress and Biden that will advance societal equity and empower civic participation

<u>Sources:</u>

U NEXT50 Structural Racism; Article: What would it take to overcome the damaging effects of structural racism and ensure a more equitable future?

<u>Vanderbilt Business; http://vu.edu/fall2020; Jong Eun Jung/im Vogus; 10 Remedies for Systemic Racism.</u>

CNN article on vertical farming in Compton, CA; Alaa Elassar; April19, 2021

WWW.ACLU.ORG/SYSTEMICEQUALITY;sPRING 2021, Volume LXXXV Issue2; ACLU Starts Its Next Century Reaffirming its Commitment to Ending Systemic Racism

V Additional Sources:

Isabel Wilkerson; Caste;2020

Southern Poverty Law Center; A Report from the Southern Poverty Center: The Year in Hate and Extremism 2020