

The Inclusive Office: Black Lives Matter: The numbers incontrovertibly demonstrate systemic oppression

By: Special to The Daily Record Heather Neu September 24, 2020



Black people have been systemically oppressed for centuries in America; millions of harrowing personal experiences bear that out, and these voices are corroborated by an ever-expanding universe of empirical and academic data, studies, and analyses. Yet, many people find themselves disagreeing with the sentiment that Black Lives Matter — wrongly, immorally, and in the face of objective fact. The data presented below is just a small sample of the unimaginable oppression faced by Black people in America every day. Use this information to bolster your support of BLM and to fight against and educate BLM's opponents in your communities. (Citations are available at heatherneuesq.com.)

The average Black household has 6% of the wealth of the average white household. In 2011, the median white household had \$111,146 in wealth holdings, compared to \$7,113 for the median Black household.

Black women earn 65 cents for every white man's dollar, and Black men earn 73 cents, a figure that has not changed since the 1980s.

In times of economic contraction, Black employees are the first to be fired.

A recent study "found that anti-Black racism in hiring is unchanged since at least 1989."

In 1954, the Bureau of Labor Statistics began consistently collecting unemployment data by race; in that year, the white rate averaged 5% and the Black 9.9%. The 2-to-1 ratio of Black to white unemployment has not changed since.

American police forces find their roots in slave patrols in the South and Night Watches in New England, "both designed to control the behaviors of minorities."

Black adults are 5.9 times more likely to be incarcerated than whites; Hispanics are 3.1 times more likely.

One in 3 Black men will be incarcerated in his lifetime, as will 1 in 6 Latino men, and only 1 in 17 white men.

The Center for Policing Equity found that Black people were 4 times more likely to experience force by police, including force by hand like hitting and choking and the use of pepper spray, Tasers, and guns, than white people.

Black drivers are 23% more likely to be pulled over than white drivers. Black drivers are 1.5-5% more likely to be searched than white drivers; and while Black drivers are also less likely to have these searches turn up any contraband, they are far more likely to be ticketed and arrested at traffic stops. In 2016, Oakland police handcuffed 1,466 Black people at traffic stops, and only 72 white people.

An average of 16% of Black students are suspended each year, compared to only 5% of white students. The rate of suspension for white students has remained steady for over 30 years, while the rate of suspension for Black students has almost tripled.

Preschool teachers are more likely to look for problem behavior in Black children, indeed expect such behavior in Black children, and empathize less with children of a different race than their own.

In higher education, enrollment of minority students drops 23% when schools ban affirmative action.

Sadly, the lives of our Black neighbors are even worse — as recently illustrated by an ACT Rochester report. Compared with Black people in the United States, Black people in the nine-county Rochester region are more likely to live in poverty and in childhood poverty; are more likely to experience unemployment; have lower incomes (75 cents on the dollar); are less likely to own a home; pay a higher percent of income for rent; and own homes of a lower value (less than 50% of the nationwide value).

In the nine-county Rochester region:

Black people are three times as likely to live in poverty.

Infant mortality rates are three times higher for Black babies than white babies.

Black children are almost four times more likely to experience child poverty than white children.

Black children pass standardized tests in elementary school at half the rate of white children, and in many subjects, the passage rate is even lower.

Black people are nearly three times more likely to be unemployed than white people; meanwhile, Black people earn incomes less than half of that of white people.

Nearly three-quarters of white people will own homes, while only 32% of Black people will; for Black homeowners, their homes will be valued at 59% of the homes of their white counterparts. Black people will pay a higher percentage of their income on rent than white people.

Black Lives Matter. True, all lives matter, but that is meaningless until the systemic oppression facing Black people in every facet of their lives is eliminated so their lives can matter equally and justly as "all."

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