



HIP HOP CAUCUS

HIP HOP CAUCUS POSITION STATEMENT ON THE ECONOMY

Statement:

Cash rules everything around me CREAM get the money, dolla dolla bills y'all. With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 25.3 trillion, The United States of America is the richest nation on Earth. It is the most technologically advanced and most innovative economy in the world with the American Dollar being the de facto world currency for international transactions. In good times the American economy has created vastly more wealth and stability for its people than any nation in history. But as the saying goes, when the American economy has a cold the Black community has the flu. The original wealth of this nation cannot be overlooked as it was built off the backs of enslaved African people on the land stolen from Native Indigenous peoples. Even after slavery was ended Jim Crow Racism across the South and systemic economic and housing barriers were erected to break and enforce a financial burden onto the Black community.

As a response, Black Americans in segregated areas created their own businesses to support their communities, which were commonly known as Black Wall Streets. These economic centers were not given the freedom to thrive uninterrupted. The most well known example of this is the Tulsa Race Massacre in 1921, where a wave of racial violence that left 35 city blocks burned, hundreds dead, and thousands of Black community members homeless. Before Dr. King was assassinated; his chief priority had moved from political and social integration to economic integration with his poor people's campaign. He urged the people of Memphis, Tennessee to move their money from downtown banks to Tri-State, a Black-owned bank in Memphis, to start building a greater economic base in the Black community. Dr. King demonstrated the power of financial choice and the change we can create through strengthening local institutions. Hip Hop itself was born from the economic strife of the Black community in New York City.

Today the U.S. economy is booming and busting at the same time. Nearly 10 million jobs have been created since the beginning of the new administration. The economy has been growing great at a clip beyond on average about 5%. Even wages have begun to grow faster than in the previous decade. The problem though is that inflation has taken off at a rate not seen since the

early 1980's causing everything to skyrocket in price around the globe which on top of that thanks to the ongoing war in the Ukraine taking a direct hit at food and gas prices which have also skyrocketed to an all time high reaching \$5 a gallon nationally despite oil companies in the US having more permits to drill than ever before. Now with the Federal Reserve raising interest rates to turn down the heat on this overheated economy we run the risk of a smaller recession again or worse stagflation from the 1970's.

The Hip Hop Caucus believes in a strong stable economy that reaches the worst impacted first and foremost. That builds from the working and middle class rather than the top 1% is a much more sustainable and dynamic economy. An economy that is not just extractive but regenerative of its assets. An economy where homelessness is ended and food deserts are no more. Where the minimum wage affords you a life that actually allows you to live and thrive, not just barely drown depending what state you live in.

The cost of housing is not affordable for the average young adult getting started. Be it rental prices or buying their first home. You cannot buy a starter home when your student loan payments are more than your mortgage payment would be. We have to lower and stabilize housing costs to get more people into the market which has been shown to bring more people out of poverty. The United States is meeting up with the rest of the world in its placement of its people as Gentrification has taken advantage of the market in our nation. Around the world the rich live in the city centers while the working and lower classes live in the suburbs and rural areas of the major cities. But because of racist policies and redlining banished Black and Brown communities to the inner city core. Those neighborhoods that were once left blighted during "White Flight" are now the hot new places to move to for white young people.

The Hip Hop Caucus believes that no one should be homeless in America and that no one should be forced from their family homes because of higher property taxes from people suddenly Columboing grandma's house. Policies need to be put in place to push back against gentrification globally but especially in the United States and solutions that help mitigate the problems of rising property taxes for neighborhoods who can not afford to remain in place. The Hip Hop Caucus supports currently proposed legislation to allow you a renewable tax credit for those paying more than 30% of their income on rent.

We need to prepare the workforce of the future for the workforce of the future. We need to produce more doctors and nurses than ever before as the population of the country gets older. We need more engineers and scientists to create the future society we will have and we need to make sure that those jobs include EVERYONE equitably. We need to turn those pipelines of imprisonment into pipelines for employment, Entrepreneurship and opportunity. Bringing Apprenticeship programs into schools, getting students and the families engaged in learning so that as the market transitions into the jobs of tomorrow everyone will be trained for it today.

At A Glance:

Hip Hop Caucus Bold Policy Positions:

- Create a program of Reparations for the Black community
- Increase Social Security payments by removing the income cap on who pays into Social Security
- [Empower](#) the USPS to provide basic financial services
- [Expand](#) Social Security

Hip Hop Caucus Pragmatic/Incremental Positions:

- Pass [H.R.40 - Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act](#)
- [H.R.41 - RESCUE Act for Black and Community Banks](#)
- Help [stabilize and grow](#) Black community banks
- Create a plan to build and develop a housing plan that brings communities together not keep them apart.
- Center affordable housing as the first priority of every housing plan.
- Create a National [Earn and Learn](#) Program
- [Provide](#) Renters with a Renewable Tax Credit if their Rent exceeds their income
- [Guarantee](#) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion into our Financial System
- Job training programs that prepare people for next generation jobs
- Increase the Minimum Wage and fix it to inflation
- Change overtime rules and fix to inflation
- [Crackdown](#) on Payday Lenders
- [Expand](#) the 10-20-30 Designation to directly tackle poverty in rural and urban areas
- [Allow](#) financial institutions the ability to handle money from marijuana sales

Hip Hop Caucus Opposition positions we don't support:

- Trickle Down Economics cutting taxes for the rich in hopes that they'll share with the poor
- Privatization of Social Security

Hip Hop Caucus False Solutions we don't supports:

- Block Grants

Deep Dive:

Student Loan Debt

America's current college financing system is a mess. At \$1.7 trillion dollars, the amount student loan debt is the largest debt out running even credit card debt. That amount of debt especially on Black and Brown people already suffering from a heavier financial burden of not having the financial resources of their White counterparts. But to make matters worse, this situation was created because the government stepped in and banned the ability to declare bankruptcy on student loans, permanently locking millions of students into financial debt that they can not afford to pay or even use legal remedies to resolve it. Since this was a government caused problem, it should be a government solved problem. The federal government needs to step in and do its job and cancel student loan debts both public and private. A nation worth \$25 trillion dollars and that spends nearly \$1 trillion dollars alone on its defense budget can afford to clear that debt.

Housing

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The Hip Hop Caucus also supports the nationwide ending of property taxes on the elderly. It has been shown time and again that Senior Americans do so much better in their known space than going to nursing homes or other medical facilities. This would also push back on gentrification since grandma would be able to afford to stay in her own home and hand it forward to the next generation.

Wages

The national minimum wage hasn't risen since 2009. It's been stuck at \$7.25 an hour. Many states have raised the minimum wage but it's time the federal government finally pass legislation providing a living wage. The minimum wage should be raised to \$15 an hour nationwide. The Hip Hop Caucus also supports fixing the minimum wage to inflation so that it raises automatically rather than having to be manually increased by the Congress of the day. When the minimum wage is raised overtime hours need to be overhauled as well and the current cap at \$35,000 should be increased. We also need to remember that Women are not paid the same as Men.

Unions

Now more than ever during this time of our current economic situation do we need to turn to the economic stabilizers. The Hip Hop Caucus supports Unions and encourages the recent growth and expansion of unionization across the country. Union Labor has been the hallmark of the middle class in America especially in the Industrial Midwest and Great Lakes area of the country. An area heavily affected by industrialization which has caused millions of displaced workers to lose family sustaining union wage jobs with nowhere to turn as factories across the nation shut down, packed up and moved overseas for cheaper labor. It's time we turn that around. We still need a manufacturing sector in our economy. We can and should still be making things in America, we still can. The Hip Hop Caucus supports easing the burdens of unionization. Hip Hop Caucus supports the continued diversification of Unions which have historically been a very White male focused and lead entity. The Hip Hop Caucus applauds and supports Unionization movements from Amazon to Starbucks as unions are growing at the rate unlike any point in the 21st century as demand for higher wages and fair employment practices are needed.

Black Banking

We need to reinvigorate our Black Banking system. There are fewer than 25 Black owned banks remaining in our country, this is a drastic drop from 50 Black owned banks in 2001. The decline has been due to the fact that these institutions have been under capitalized and under supported. Black banks have not benefited from the same level of capital investment that the more well known banks have, nor have they benefited from the same level of support from private and governmental sectors. Black Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs) have significantly fewer resources to pull from to support the communities they serve and beyond, yet have provided more support to Black communities. Access to capital is necessary.

Reparations

We also have to talk about America's start up loan, Slavery.

Without the enslavement of millions of Black people to start building America it wouldn't be the Superpower that it is today. America owes the Black community Reparations for its years of service and abuse. The Hip Hop Caucus supports the passage of Reparations for the Black community. The Hip Hop Caucus also supports the passage of H.R. 40 to study what Reparations could potentially look like for the Black community. Handing a blank check to the Black community will not absolve the nation of its original sin, but not rebalancing the system more equitably will only continue the damage that has been levied against the Black community.

Social Security

Having an income stream for elderly retirees like anyone can literally mean the difference between life and death. As Hip Hop actually prepares to turn 50 next year we must consider what it will look like when the Hip Hop generation begins to take senior status and move toward retirement if at all possible. The Hip Hop Caucus believes that Social Security should be expanded and strengthened. The Hip Hop Caucus supports the full removal of the Social Security income tax cap and subject all income above \$250,000 to the Social Security Payroll tax. This would allow the program to stand on stronger ground and allow for enhanced benefits that will provide a stronger safety net for our elders and help keep grandma's house in her hands.

One big misconception around Social Security is that it only affects Senior Americans. Those unable to work also rely upon Social Security benefits as well and they are usually unable to work.