

Media Advisory

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On Monday, January 16th, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, United for a Fair Economy is releasing the fourteenth annual State of the Dream report, titled “**State of the Dream 2017: Mourning in America.**” This report features reflections from leaders and advocates that are fighting inequalities every day, and contains a short, accessible snapshot of where we are as nation on the topics of wages, wealth, health, housing, immigration, and LGBT inclusion.

The third week in January is bookended by a holiday for the most prominent racial justice organizer in the nation, and an inauguration ceremony of the 45th president, one who used racial scapegoating as an election tactic. This report makes the connection between the two: that the election of this administration is indicative of a larger social problem – the fact that we have hardly had meaningful conversations about race in this country. Economics is an underlying cause of racism and racial tensions. We need to address both economics and race in order to effectively move forward as a nation.

Key Findings and Selected Quotes

Chapter 1: The Story of Wealth in the United States

- The overall wealth gap in the United States has widened significantly in the past 30 years and Donald Trump’s election will most certainly nourish the historical roots of the racial economic divide that reach into our era.

Chapter 2: Wealth and Assets

- “The toxic levels of wealth inequity we see today matter because wealth represents economic security – the freedom to thrive, the peace of mind to live today and plan for the future without always worrying about economic hardship nipping at your heels.” – Anne Price, Insight Center for Community Economic Development p. 13
- In 2013, the most recent year available, the median net worth of households headed by whites was roughly 13 times that of black households (\$144,200 for whites compared with \$11,200 for blacks). p. 14

Chapter 3: Housing

- The total growth of renters between 2013 and 2023 will be between 4 and 4.7 million households from 43 million to over 47 million. The clear majority of the net increase in renters over the next decade will be people of color, with Latinos alone accounting for more than half of the total. And while wages remain stagnant, rent continues to climb. p.17

Chapter 4: Immigration

- “Key economic sectors such as agriculture, the service industry, and construction would suffer greatly if extreme measures, like deporting foreign nationals residing in the U.S. without authorization, were to be taken by the incoming Trump Administration.” – Oscar Chacón, Alianza Americas p. 19
- Total U.S. population 321,418,820 in 2015; Undocumented population 11.1 million in 2014; Unauthorized Immigrants in the Labor Force in 2012: 7.9 million. p. 20

Chapter 5: Wages

- Priscilla Evans, a low wage fast food worker and a mom from Virginia and her partner who works in the food service industry live paycheck to paycheck. They struggle to afford things they really need like stable housing and medical care for themselves and their new baby. They are just one family, in one city, in the United States. Millions of people deal with these same issues. p. 22
- Currently, the federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour and was last raised in 2009. If inflation is factored in, a person with a minimum wage job in 2014 would make 24% LESS MONEY than the same worker in 1968. p. 24

Chapter 6: Education

- “Inadequate resources for training, implementation, and enforcement, combined with implicit bias against students of color and students with disabilities, and older cultural attitudes have made the switch to less a punitive school discipline regime slow going.” – Nia Evans and Matt Cregor p.26
- An African American child is six times as likely as a white child to have or have had an incarcerated parent. Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to: drop out of school, misbehave in school, and suffer a variety of negative health effects. p.28

Chapter 7: LGBT + Inclusion

- “We’re in a time of political and cultural change regarding gender and sexuality and the explosion of mass consciousness regarding state violence and the legacy of structural racism. There are, however, divides in our culture across regions, race, class, gender and sexuality. Our hope lies in advancing and deepening political unity work that bridges those divides daily and relentlessly” – Paulina Helm-Hernandez, Southerners on New Ground
- LGBT people are four times more likely to have a household income of less than \$10,000 per year than the general population.

Chapter 8: The Strategy Going Forward

- “From Standing Rock, North Dakota to Ferguson, Missouri; from San Juan, Puerto Rico to Oakland, California and across the globe; together, and taking the time to build genuine connection and solidarity, we can build sustainable coalitions that will not only resist empire but also continue working towards creating a better world.” – Eroc Arroyo-Montaño, United for a Fair Economy

Copies are available under embargo until January 16, 2016. Please email mleyba@faireconomy.org or call (562) 266-3247 to request your copy. Authors of this report will be available for interview upon request.