
REIMAGINING POLICY: *In Pursuit of*
**BLACK
REPRODUCTIVE
JUSTICE**



VOTING RIGHTS • BODILY AUTONOMY • CONTRACEPTION • FAMILY • HEALTH EQUITY, CARE, AND ACCESS • SOCIAL JUSTICE, COMMUNITY JUSTICE, AND SAFETY
REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE • BLACK WOMEN, GIRLS, AND GENDER EXPANSIVE PEOPLE • EQUITY • INTERSECTIONALITY • SOCIAL JUSTICE

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In 2021, more than 30 Black Reproductive Justice (RJ) organizations came together to create the first-ever Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda—a strategic and honest compilation of key issues and policy recommendations that represent our collective vision. Today, we offer a timely update of this agenda, because our work is far from over and because we continue to call on policymakers to utilize an RJ framework to reimagine policy, with the communities most impacted right at the center.

Here’s what we know: Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people are dynamic leaders in every part of this country; they are often the backbone of our families, our movements, our economy, our democracy. They rise up in moments of crisis, organize, and pave the way towards racial, gender, and Reproductive Justice. But two truths can exist.

At the very same time, Black women, girls and gender-expansive people face continued and perpetual state, local, and federal attacks on their civil and human rights. Just last year, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* that struck a devastating blow against women’s civil and human rights. And, since the decision, bodily autonomy has continued to be under attack—in states, where extreme legislators have worked to introduce harmful restrictions and bans; and in the courts, where unaccountable judges have ruled to attempt to make a safe and highly effective drug used for medication abortion care inaccessible in every state in this country. This new landscape is volatile, untenable, and disastrous to Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people.

And at the same time, our maternal health crisis continues to disproportionately impact Black women and birthing people. We have failed to move meaningful legislation on voting rights, police violence, criminal justice reform, or gun safety. And, Black parents across the country are grappling with efforts to ban books from schools that tell the story of who they are. Black communities continue to endure hate-fueled and state-sanctioned violence, and the dual impact of systemic homophobia and racism—coupled with blatant attacks on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) rights, particularly on youth—continue to impede the ability of Black, queer folks to live freely. And, years after the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on Black communities, we continue to see its lingering health and economic impacts.

As we assess the threats to the livelihood, safety, and joy of Black women and girls, there is one thing we're clear on: our path forward hinges on an unwavering commitment to Reproductive Justice. Now more than ever, we need to employ a collective framework grounded in human rights and Black Feminist theory. One that centers the intersectional impact of race and gender in the ability to live free from oppression, and appreciates the interconnectedness of identity and issues. An approach that makes clear that we can't leave any piece behind: not the right to health care, to dignified birth, or to access abortion; not equity in housing or education; not fair employment or school discipline practices; not clean water or lead-free schools; not any of the social, economic, political, or cultural supports needed for Black families to thrive.

This Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda—updated to meet this moment—will continue to be a guidepost for policy in this country. The change we envision needs to be boldly reimagined. So that Black women, girls and gender-expansive people—in the multitude of ways they show up—can thrive.

In Solidarity,

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INTRODUCTION:

a **REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE LENS** *on* **POLICY CHANGE**

As foremothers of the movement, Black women coined the phrase “Reproductive Justice (RJ)” from the concepts of reproductive rights, social justice, and human rights as a way of centering the specific lived experiences of Black women.

Reproductive Justice theory is grounded in the human rights framework and Black feminist theory and affirms the following four human rights values: 1) the right to not have a child; 2) the right to have a child; 3) the right to the social and economic supports to parent the child(ren) one already has, free from varying forms of interpersonal, community, and/or state-based violence; and 4) the right to sexual expression and sexual pleasure. These four values also lay out the obligations of governments and society to ensure that conditions exist for each individual to realize these RJ values.

In 2021, **In Our Own Voice: National Black Women’s Reproductive Justice Agenda (In Our Own Voice)**, **Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Justice**, and

SisterLove, Inc., worked together to release a *Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda*—an innovative, proactive policy agenda created in collaboration with more than 30 Black women’s organizations and Reproductive Justice activists. For the very first time, the *Agenda* presented comprehensive proactive policy solutions grounded in a human rights and Black feminist theory framework that reflects the experiences of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals in the United States (U.S.).

In this current moment of health, socio-economic, and political crisis, Black women are again affirming our human rights and calling upon U.S. policymakers to implement pol-

icies that enable us to achieve and maintain optimum mental, physical, and economic health for ourselves, our families, and our communities. The *2023 Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda* is a guide for policymakers who want to work with us now and in the years to come to improve outcomes for Black women, girls and gender-expansive people. It offers concrete policy solutions that will directly change our communities for the better in areas described below.

In this current moment of health, socio-economic, and political crisis, Black women are again affirming our human rights and calling upon U.S. policymakers to implement policies that enable us to achieve and maintain optimum mental, physical, and economic health for ourselves, our families, and our communities.



HEALTH EQUITY, CARE, AND ACCESS

Reproductive Justice is a fundamental human right that supports all women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals, in all their identities, and allows them to make and direct their own sexual and reproductive health decisions.

To ensure this right, policymakers must recognize and remedy the transgenerational racism, inhumanity, and inequality of access to information, services, and support that has historically endangered—and continues to affect—marginalized women.



More than two decades after the founding of the Reproductive Justice movement, Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals in the U.S. still bear the brunt of health disparities and economic inequality, and face unacceptable health disparities and challenges in accessing vital health care services. Below, we identify the most critical of these issues and provide policy recommendations for Congress and legislative officials.

Maternal Health and Pregnancy Care

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals can experience pregnancy and childbirth without endangering our lives. Yet, Black birthing people have unacceptably poor outcomes in the U.S—including staggering rates of death related to pregnancy and childbirth. At the heart of America’s maternal health crisis is a woefully fragmented health care system that perpetuates vast racial disparities in maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.

Reducing racial/ethnic disparities in maternal and infant health requires multi-faceted, comprehensive, and holistic solutions to address the root causes of structural racism and gender oppression. Policy solutions to the maternal and infant mortality crisis must be grounded in an awareness of racism’s impact, and in social justice frameworks that are intentionally designed to address these power imbalances.

- Establish a Federal Office of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Wellbeing.
- Increase funding for doula and midwifery care in federal health care programs.
- Support and fund an epidemiological infrastructure that accurately tabulates morbidity and mortality across all states and U.S. territories.
- Require states to extend comprehensive, holistic maternity and newborn care for a minimum of one-year postpartum.
- Implement monthly financial supplements or universal incomes for low-income pregnant people.

- Remove cost-sharing for pre-conception care; labor, delivery, and pregnancy-related labs; mental health; and postpartum visits.
- End coercive, non-consensual drug testing and criminalization of substance use for patients, including pregnant people.
- Pass the *Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act*.

Maternal Health Care for Incarcerated Black People

Reproductive Justice includes the right to access high-quality health care, including maternal health care for pregnant people who are incarcerated. Although the U.S. spends more on health care than any other country, our maternal health outcomes are among the worst on the planet. But not all women in America face the same risks: Black women face greater dangers. For incarcerated Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals the dangers are even more dire.

This section examines key health issues that impact the overall well-being of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals, including maternal health and pregnancy care, reproductive health care for Black incarcerated individuals, access to abortion care, comprehensive sexual health education, contraceptive equity, chronic health conditions, reproductive cancers, behavioral and mental health, assisted reproductive technology and fertility care, and scientific research.

The federal government has fallen short in setting and enforcing comprehensive, trauma-informed standards of care and treatment for pregnant, incarcerated people. Changes must be implemented and coordinated at all levels of criminal justice systems that impact the lives of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals. Congress needs to take seriously the urgent need to protect the lives of those who are incarcerated including the full spectrum of reproductive health care for those within the carceral system.

- Establish trauma- and Reproductive Justice-informed federally mandated health care services in public and private jails and prisons.
- Allow funding for incarceration infrastructure to be invested in diversion initiatives and workforce development programs.
- Pass legislation to set federal standards for the treatment of incarcerated individuals.
- Pass a federal law, such as the *Pregnant Women in Custody Act*, banning the shackling of pregnant incarcerated people.

Access to Abortion Care

Reproductive Justice centers individuals' right to make fundamental decisions about how, when, and whether they have children and expand their family. Unrestricted access to abortion care services is a part of basic primary health care, and health care is a human right. For this reason, access to abortion care is inextricable from Reproductive Justice.

Abortion is a safe, legal, time-sensitive medical option. We must trust Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals to make the health care decisions that are best for themselves and their families, including whether or not to have an abortion. Yet, they currently face the consequences of a conservative, activist U.S. Supreme Court overturning the constitutional right to abortion and are forced to battle abortion bans across dozens of states. Our politicians have dictated that in the U.S, there is no human right to abortion care—but politicians have no place in our health care decisions. Congress, the Biden-Harris Administration, and other policymakers must act to ensure that right is fully available to all people through authorizations, appropriations, and Executive Action.

- Pass the *Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH) Act*, *Women's Health Protection Act*, and *Abortion is Health Care Everywhere Act*.
- Pass legislation modeled on Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, requiring federal preclearance provisions for states and local governments with a history of restrictive reproductive policies that are medically unnecessary and/or create undue burdens.
- Remove all cost-sharing for abortion care services.
- Eliminate funding for crisis pregnancy centers.
- Allow trained and licensed advanced practice medical professionals to provide early abortion care.
- Prohibit the abuse of “religious freedom” to restrict and/or ban access to abortion care.

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals have the economic, social and political power, and resources to make important personal decisions about whether, and when, to have children, including the sexual health education they need to make positive and informed decisions about their lives and activities. Yet, throughout the nation's history, Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals' sexuality has been stolen, denied, objectified, and over-sexualized in unhealthy and toxic ways. Comprehensive sexual health education is a catalyst to the information and empowerment needed to navigate if, when, and how to engage in safe, consensual, and pleasurable sexual activity.

- Increase appropriations for comprehensive sex education.
- Prevent “religious freedom” from blocking access to comprehensive sexual health education.
- Increase funding for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program from \$150 million per fiscal year to \$300 million per fiscal year.
- Expand funding for sexual and reproductive health education for vulnerable populations.
- Pass legislation to support and require comprehensive sexual health education, like the *Real Education for Healthy Youth Act*.
- Protect access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Contraceptive Equity

Reproductive Justice relies on equitable access to effective contraception, which improves health and wellbeing and reduces unintended pregnancies, high-risk pregnancies, and maternal and infant deaths. Contraception can also address fibroids, minimize endometriosis-related pain, and prevent ovarian cysts—resulting in numerous benefits for Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals’ personal health, economic stability, and educational outcomes.

Still, we know reproductive oppression persists. From our nation’s founding, control and exploitation of Black women’s bodies propelled the institution of slavery through rape and forced childbearing. Efforts to control and exploit Black women continued through the eugenics movement and involuntary sterilization. Today, Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals continue to face provider bias about recommended family planning services, coercion about contraceptive choices and services, and inability to access the full range of contraceptives.

- Codify Title X family planning regulations.
- Provide prescription contraceptives at no cost.
- Expand Medicaid’s reimbursement for counseling about contraceptives.
- Fund Federally Qualified Health Centers and Title X to provide pregnancy, STI, and HIV testing.
- Improve comprehensive access to cost-free family planning drugs and devices for all individuals in the U.S, especially the millions who live in contraceptive deserts

- Fund programs that combat anti-Black racism and expand cultural competency training for health care professionals.

Chronic Health Conditions

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals do not experience disproportionate rates of chronic health conditions that adversely impact our lives and lead to early death. Chronic health conditions are influenced and/or driven by social determinants of health (SDoH), circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and the systems put in place to deal with illness. Systemic racism, persistent stress, and the resulting SDoH are literally killing Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals.

- Ensure universal, affordable access to health care for all people.
- Increase funding for programs and education for Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals about chronic conditions’ prevention, screening, and treatment.
- Stabilize costs for insulin and other medications to treat chronic conditions.
- Require insurance companies to provide reimbursement for 90-day rather than 30-day prescriptions, depending on the class of medication.
- Fund programs to address racism, diversity, and cultural competency for health care and medical professionals.
- Increase federal funding for the identification and amelioration of health disparities, including those caused by SDoH.

- Increase funding for investments in predominantly Black communities.
- Invest in programs to improve the health care workforce’s diversity through low-interest grants, loan repayment programs, scholarships and fellowships.
- Pass legislation to address chronic reproductive health care issues.

Reproductive Cancers

The high-quality health care required by Reproductive Justice includes access to effective prevention and screening programs and timely treatment to prevent, identify, treat, and survive reproductive cancers. These cancers affect the breasts, cervix, and ovaries, and disproportionately impact Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals. Compared to women of other races/ethnicities, we are more likely to receive a cancer diagnosis at a later stage (when it is less treatable) and, as a result, have lower survival rates at each stage of diagnosis. There are also specific variations in the types of cancers that Black women are more likely to experience than women of other races/ethnicities.

- Increase funding for federal agencies engaged in cancer research specifically addressing racial inequities.
- Pass legislation to increase prevention and treatment of reproductive cancers that disproportionately impact Black people, including gynecological cancer, triple-negative breast cancer, and endometrial cancer.

Behavioral and Mental Health

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals can safeguard their mental health and get the help we need for mental illnesses and emotional distress. Given the issues that disproportionately impact the health and wellbeing of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals, our communities need mental health services now more than ever. We can no longer ignore the pandemic of mental, emotional, and behavioral needs of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals.

- Increase funding for racial- and gender-specific research on mental health and substance use.
- Expand, increase the diversity of, and ensure the cultural competency of, the mental health and substance use workforce.
- Expand access to mental health services and medications via telemedicine.
- Provide rehabilitative funding and support for drug-dependent pregnant people.
- Pass legislation to increase research into racial and gender inequities in mental health and substance use disorder (SUD).

Assisted Reproductive Technology and Fertility Care

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people have the rights, information, and opportunity to make and act upon their own decisions about whether and how to apply medical and technological advances to their lives. We must balance concerns about historic abuse and marginalization with addressing long-standing barriers to accessing medical and scientific advancements. Black and Brown communities have historically been used for harmful reproductive experimentation; at the same time, these communities are too often unable to financially afford scientific advancements and their potential benefits, such as assisted reproductive technology (ART).

- Create a Federal Advisory Committee within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to specifically address new biotechnologies and their bioethical implications, and to evaluate and monitor advancements in genetic engineering, use of synthetic biology, and other emerging technologies.
- Pass legislation that ensures equitable and ethical practices for ART and reduces disparities in access to fertility care.
- Increase federal funding to diversify the fertility care workforce.
- Expand ART's affordability to those with rare diseases.

Scientific Research

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals are represented fairly and equitably in scientific research that has the potential to improve their health. Achieving this goal is hampered by Black and Brown individuals' understandable suspicion of the medical system—and medical research in particular. Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals have been disregarded, overlooked, and undermined by the medical system. It is past time for their interests and needs to be prioritized in clinical trials and other forms of scientific research.

- Increase education, scholarships, and fellowships funding to recruit underrepresented communities to all science, technology, engineering, and medical fields.
- Ensure equitable representation of and ensure equitable compensation for Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people who participate in biomedical research and clinical research trials.
- Ensure that research protocols include partnerships with community-based organizations in order to improve the engagement of historically marginalized communities.
- Ensure that Black researchers are supported and funded.

SOCIAL JUSTICE, COMMUNITY JUSTICE, AND SAFETY

For Reproductive Justice to be fully realized, all members of our society—particularly Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals—must have equal access to the social and community factors that influence our lives. Social justice and community justice require that individuals have equitable access to resources, protections, and opportunities that foster autonomy, liberty, and wellbeing that allow Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals to reach our full potential.



These include the jobs where we work, the schools we attend, the food we eat, the neighborhoods where we live, and our access to the ballot box. Safety requires that Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals are free from community-based dangers that impair our ability to create and raise our families.

Voting Rights

Black women are the largest voting constituency in the American electorate. Every year, we register voters, organize our communities, and deliver the votes that give politicians their jobs. At In Our Own Voice, we are committed to increasing Black women's voter turnout in local, state, and federal elections, and have worked to strengthen voter participation through efforts such as the In Our Own Voice's I AM A REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE VOTER initiative.

- Eliminate the Electoral College and the filibuster.
- Pass the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*.
- Pass the *For the People Act*.

Police Violence

The government for which Black people place our lives on the line time and time again has shown us that Black lives have never mattered—as evidenced by the police killings of unarmed Black men, women, and gender-expansive people. Since our nation's supposed “racial reckoning” in response to the terror of 2020, our society appears to be shifting too easily back to the status quo of violence against Black bodies.

Policy change at the federal level is urgently needed to set more equitable federal standards on police use of force and protect Black communities from unjustified violence enacted by the state and the pain it causes for Black parents, children, and communities.

- Pass the *George Floyd Justice in Policing Act*.
- Pass the *BREATHE Act*.
- Establish federal standards for Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Programs.
- Pass legislation to address extreme use of force and militarization in local police forces.

Gender-Based Violence

For Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people, gender-based violence—including intimate partner violence (IPV), murder, rape, and sexual assault—is grounded in our country's legacy of objectifying and dehumanizing Black bodies, and upholding white supremacy. Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people are more likely to experience gender-based violence, compared to women of other races/ethnicities. Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people deserve to be free from community-based dangers, including gender-based violence, and to live in safe and healthy communities.

- Robustly fund the Sexual Assault Services Formula Grant Program.
- Support expanded funding for sexual assault research.
- Include sexual violence victims in paid leave reform.

- Reauthorize the *Family Violence Prevention and Services (FVPSA) Act* with critical improvements to center Black communities
- Center Black people and Reproductive Justice in federal implementation of the *Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act (VAWA) and Survivors' Access to Supportive Care Act (SASCA)*.

Economic Justice

Persistent wage disparities hold Black families back from financial security and the ability to generate wealth. Black women are paid only 62 cents for every dollar a white man is paid, compared to the 70 cents white women make. Black women are also disproportionately segregated into sectors that are the least likely to have access to paid leave and workplace protections. Aggressive federal efforts are needed to address these myriad and interconnected challenges and successfully reverse the systemic factors that drive the economic inequalities faced by Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals and begin to close the gap created by centuries of economic and racial oppression.

- Prioritize student debt relief.
- Make the 2021 child tax credits permanent.
- Reform eligibility for Medicare and Social Security programs.
- Provide funding to address systemic inequities that have prevented Black people from accumulating wealth.
- Establish a permanent, accessible national paid family and medical leave program.
- Establish a federal Commission to study and develop reparation proposals for Black Americans.

- Pass legislation to raise the minimum wage.
- Pass legislation to ensure equitable pay.
- Pass the *Domestic Workers Bill of Rights*.
- Ensure menstrual equity for all.
- Pass the *CROWN Act*.
- Protect the right to organize.
- Increase access to banking in Black communities.

Education Justice

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals have access to high-quality education that is free from discrimination. Yet, Black people face two distinct challenges when it comes to the U.S. educational system: lack of access to high-quality educational programs, and over-policing within schools. School districts have received unprecedented levels of funding through the Biden-Harris Administration’s pandemic response. This funding can and should be leveraged to ensure adequate and equal funding of all schools; prevent politicians from erasing Black history; and conduct robust oversight so that all students have equal access to educational resources. In addition, it should ensure that schools eliminate unevenly applied discipline that damages the mental health and development of school-aged Black girls, compounding the stresses of racism and gender discrimination both inside and outside the classroom.

- Establish a federal commission to study how to best provide oversight for existing programs that target inequalities in schools, including biased curricula.

- Ensure robust funding for the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights.
- Establish universal pre-kindergarten nationwide.
- Recognize and address the social and emotional needs of Black students by reducing over-policing and increasing mental health services.
- Restore Title IX protections for students and prioritize the amelioration of sexual assault on campuses.

LGBTQIA+ Liberation

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved by centering the needs and voices of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) folks. A complete and robust vision of Reproductive Justice includes and prioritizes the unique needs and vulnerabilities of Black LGBTQIA+ women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals. This includes reproductive health care that explicitly responds to LGBTQIA+ needs, unrestricted access to gender affirming care, freedom for full gender expression, and elimination of homophobia from the public classroom. As a baseline, LGBTQIA+ people need provisions that explicitly prohibit exclusion and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity.

- Pass the *Equality Act*.
- Require insurance companies to cover assisted reproductive technologies for all individuals, including those who are LGBTQIA+.
- Establish a grant program for medical students who wish to pursue a career in gender-affirmative health care.

- Pass legislation to ensure child welfare agencies are prohibited from discriminating against LGBTQIA+ foster or adoptive families, and are fully prepared and equipped to support LGBTQIA+ youth.
- Pass legislation to improve national data collection on sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations in sex characteristics.

Environmental Justice

Reproductive Justice includes the human right to live, thrive, and raise families in healthy, safe, and sustainable communities that are free from the harmful effects of climate change. Reproductive Justice also includes the right to live and raise families free from the health risks posed by exposure to dangerous chemicals, including toxins and poisons. These rights are consistently threatened by environmental racism, which encompasses the deliberate targeting of communities of color for disposal of hazardous pollutants, lethal chemicals, and toxic industrial waste. Black communities are not only disproportionately exposed to air and water pollution, but also to dangerous chemicals in our personal care products, like makeup and hair relaxers.

- Fully implement and enforce Justice40.
- Establish new, standardized funding sources and associated protocols to ensure swift clean-up and remedial compensation to Black communities impacted by water contamination crises and their subsequent health risks.
- Pass the *Environmental Justice For All Act*.
- Pass legislation that specifically addresses the risks Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals face from climate change.

- Pass legislation to make drinking water safer for Black communities.
- Fully implement comprehensive modernization of federal regulation of cosmetics and personal care products.
- Pass the *Safer Beauty Bill Package*.
- Establish financial incentives for the production and sale of safe cosmetic products and disincentivize the sale of dangerous products.

Food Justice

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals have ample access to healthy and nutritious food. Food insecurity contributes to a number of reproductive and overall health disparities for Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals, including overweight, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Barriers to healthy, affordable food in the Black community were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis. Despite the pandemic's toll, we must not forget that Black food insecurity is rooted in systemic racism, including racial discrimination against Black farmers.

- Address food insecurity resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Sustain and expand school-based nutrition education programs and school-based emergency food services.
- Invest in expanding access to healthy food in food deserts nationwide.
- Strengthen protection against racial discrimination in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs and dedicate funding to supporting, training, and restoring Black farmers and ranchers.

Housing Justice

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals have a safe place to live with dignity and without fear of exploitation. This requires a significant evaluation and reform of the policies and practices that both directly and indirectly segregate and disenfranchise Black communities. Legislators must work harder to overcome the long history of racism and housing discrimination that continue to affect communities of color.

- Invest more than \$150 billion in affordable housing.
- Take active steps to address punitive and carceral logic that has penalized Black tenants.
- Increase fair housing enforcement capacity.
- Enforce housing laws and protections.
- Ensure that “religious freedom” is not used as a tool for housing discrimination.
- Examine the distribution and redistribution of housing resources.

Immigrant Justice

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when efforts to address the needs of immigrants to the U.S. recognize that Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals are among this population. While the national debate about immigration reform usually focuses on Hispanic immigrants from Central and South America, millions of Black immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America live in the U.S. Once in the country, Black immigrants face numerous challenges, including an inability to access the health care system, being shut out of educational and employment opportunities, and harmful interactions with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). They also must contend with structural and everyday racism that comes with being Black in the U.S. Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals also face misogynoir that presents additional challenges.

- Prioritize comprehensive immigration reform and dismantle inhumane detention programs, including the prohibition of sterilization and invasions of reproductive health privacy for individuals in federal detention.

Safety requires that Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals are free from community-based dangers that impair our ability to create and raise our families.

- Expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and offer a path to citizenship for adults.
- Investigate the relationship between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Custom and Border Protection (CBP), and local law enforcement.
- Pass the *Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) Act for Immigrant Women and Families*.

Elder Justice

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved by addressing the fact that Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals' health needs and experiences change with age. Black women's reproductive health needs evolve over time, including during and after the menopausal transition. Black people are often biologically older than whites of the same chronological age due to the cumulative impact of repeated social and environmental stressors: "weathering" that is caused by systemic racism and socioeconomic inequities. In addition to health, economic security is critical to Black women's wellbeing as we age. The average Black woman must work until she is 85 years old before she makes the same amount as the average white man who retires at age 65.

- Fund intersectional research about Black women's sexual and reproductive health before, during, and after the menopausal transition.
- Expand and protect funding for home health care services and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs that support aging in place.
- Invest \$400 billion to expand access to Medicaid home- and community-based services (HCBS) for older Americans and people with disabilities, strengthen the direct

care workforce, and ensure cultural competency in training and care.

- Pass legislation related to improving long-term facilities for residents and protecting long-term care workers, who are predominantly Black and Brown women.
- Pass legislation to protect older workers against employment discrimination.

Black Parents Who Have A Disability

Reproductive Justice includes the right to decide whether and when to have children—a right that is not exclusive to those who do not have disabilities. Black parents who have a disability must be able to freely make their own personal decisions about whether, how, and when to have children, and how best to parent their children. Further, Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people with a disability are often uniquely victimized by our country's toxic combination of racism, sexism, misogynoir, and ableism.

- Create a Congressional Task Force on the Rights of Black Parents and Children with Disabilities.
- Fund implicit bias and cultural training for current and future medical personnel.

Sex Work

Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women and gender-expansive individuals who engage in voluntary, consensual sex work have the same rights and protections as other participants in the labor force. Due to systemic racism and its economic impact, Black women and gender-expansive individuals are often forced to rely on informal economies, like sex work, to support themselves and their families. Sex work is work—and policies should be approached with that reality in mind. The government has aided in sex workers' stigmatization and helped push the industry underground; it must now take an active role to ensure the human and civil rights of those who choose to engage in sex work.

- Support state efforts to decriminalize sex work.
- Remove sex work from the ineligible businesses list at the Small Business Administration (SBA).
- Closely examine existing federal regulations around online sex trafficking.

RELIGION AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

The Reproductive Justice movement, while not religion-centered, does encompass ancestral and Protestant theories of autonomy, dignity, ethics, self-determination, equity, leadership, and liberation.

Black women and other women of color of faith and spirituality have always been present in the RJ movement, although intentionally centering this intersection is a newer, although necessary, concept. Many Black women and LGBTQIA+ individuals who identify as people of faith have applied womanist liberation epistemologies to expand their belief in spirituality and the vital intersection of Reproductive Justice and faith.

Efforts to control the reproduction and sexuality of Black women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals run counter to the concepts of free-will and moral authority upon which most religious traditions rest. Decisions about sexual activity, same-gender loving relationships, and autonomy over whether and when to have a child must rest squarely in the hands of the individual—not the government nor the church.

UNTIL REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE *is a* FULL REALITY...

Since the initial release of the *Policy Agenda* in June 2021, inequities, challenges, and attacks continue to prevent Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people from achieving Reproductive Justice. Reproductive Justice calls us to work towards a world where we can live and thrive in safe and sustainable communities; with ample support; and access to resources that are free from violence, shame, and stigma.

While the *Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda* covers numerous topics and issue areas, it is not complete. We will continue to expand the list of issues and policy solutions that are needed to actualize complete liberation in our lives. We offer this policy agenda and the accompanying solutions as starting points so that policymakers can work with our communities to make Reproductive Justice a full reality.

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