

OVERVIEW OF COMMISSION

Background

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (Joint Center) has launched a new effort to engage the African American community on the issue of climate change with funding from the Bipartisan Policy Center and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Specifically, the Joint Center will hire a senior research associate to lead this effort within the current Health Policy Institute. The Institute will continue the Joint Center's long tradition of encouraging black participation in public affairs and otherwise enhancing knowledge of policy issues in the African American community.

In addition, the Joint Center has formed a distinguished national commission to broaden efforts to inform and mobilize the African American community on the issue of climate change. The Commission is co-chaired by Ralph B. Everett, Esq., President and CEO of the Joint Center and Texas State Senator Rodney Ellis and is represented by a diversity of scientists, activists, policymakers, labor, entrepreneurs, educators, religious and business leaders.

Goals of the Commission

1. *Build* a broad and geographically diverse coalition of scientists, activists, policy makers, labor, entrepreneurs, educators, religious leaders and business people committed to engaging the African American community on the issue of climate change.
2. *Inform* the Joint Center's efforts to:
 - ascertain black public opinion and knowledge of global warming;
 - ascertain how global warming will impact black communities in the U.S. and people of color around the world;
 - assess efforts that can be undertaken to engage black communities in the global warming debate, and empower black elected officials who seek to ameliorate the problems associated with global warming in the U.S. and worldwide; and
 - engage black youth and students to become part of the coalition of people who are fighting global warming.
3. *Participate* in activities to educate and engage black youth and students, the media, voters, civil rights groups, black churches, and black elected officials at the federal, state and local levels to be more involved with the political debate over climate change.
4. *Provide* support for research, policy, partnerships and outreach activities.
5. *Develop and Implement* strategies to involve the black community, specifically businesses and entrepreneurs, in the economic opportunities unleashed by the "green economy."
6. *Reframe* the debate on climate change in terms that both resonate with the African American community and express the concerns and needs of the community.



JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES

1090 VERMONT AVE NW / SUITE 1100 / WASHINGTON, DC / 20005-4928 / 202-789-3500 / JOINTCENTER.ORG

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