



**JOINT CENTER**  
FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES



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**JOINT CENTER PANEL TELLS CONGRESS HOW REFORMS IN HEALTH, SOCIAL  
POLICY CAN EXPAND LIFE OPTIONS FOR YOUNG MEN OF COLOR**

WASHINGTON—A distinguished panel, led by Oakland Mayor and former Congressman Ronald V. Dellums, on Friday called for changes in health, education, juvenile justice and criminal justice policies that they said could make a significant difference in improving the life opportunities of young African American men and other young men of color.

The recommendations were made at a congressional briefing, entitled “Creating Life Options for Young Men of Color,” sponsored by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Health Policy Institute in conjunction with the Office of House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn. The briefing was held in the Rayburn House Office Building.

“For too long, the needs of young men of color have been neglected, and their life opportunities damaged by policies in areas such as criminal justice, education, and health,” said Dr. Brian D. Smedley, Vice President and Director of the Joint Center Health Policy Institute. “As Congress considers major legislation to reform health care, education, criminal justice, and other issues, they can remove barriers to opportunity and treat young men of color as valued members of our society, rather than problems to be managed.”

Mayor Dellums urged more than 150 educators and community activists at the standing-room-only hearing to “challenge this nation to a higher order of responsibility to this population. We need to go forth from here with the message that young men of color still count and that we embrace them.”

He noted that the hundreds of millions of dollars in federal stimulus money that will flow into communities around the nation over the next few months present an unparalleled opportunity to funnel resources into programs, services and jobs that can make a difference.

“If this is not the moment, I don’t think we are ever going to find one,” Mayor Dellums said. “Seize the time and seize the moment.”

Besides Mayor Dellums, panelists included Dr. Shaun R. Harper, of the University of Pennsylvania, Nancy Gannon Hornberger, of the National Coalition for Juvenile Justice, and Terri Johnson, of Jane Addams Hull House.

Mayor Dellums was chairman of a 17-member team that assessed the needs of young American men of color in 2006. The Dellums Commission report they produced laid a foundation for the recommendations that the panel discussed on Friday.

*The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is one of the nation's leading research and public policy institutions and the only one whose work focuses primarily on issues of particular concern to African Americans and other people of color. For more information, go to [www.jointcenter.org/hpi](http://www.jointcenter.org/hpi).*