



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Source: The History Channel

### 70 Years Since Brown vs. The Board of Education

There are few instances throughout one's life when you remember where you were and what you were doing when something historic happened. For so many of a certain generation, it was nearly 70 years ago on May 17, 1954, when the Supreme Court handed down its unanimous decision of Brown vs. The Board of Education stating that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

As we commemorate 70 years since the Brown decision, it has been a remarkable 175-year journey since the first documented fight for racial equity in school occurred in 1849 in Roberts vs. City of Boston, Massachusetts. In fact, Brown vs. The Board of Education was the culmination of 105 years of parents advocating for their children, decades of work by the NAACP and multiple court cases challenging segregation in public education.

This seminal moment in history was a catalyst launching the modern Civil Rights Movement and paved the way for integration in schools across the country after declaring that racial segregation laws were in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Though it took more than three years for the Little Rock Nine to become iconic symbols as the first African American students to attend Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, the legacy of the landmark 1954 decision endures today throughout America's classrooms and conversations related to racial studies, education policy, constitutional theory and Supreme Court reform.

Yet, according to a May 2023 report by the U.S. Department of Education, public schools are still segregated, and segregation seems to have increased over the past three decades as enrollment of students of color in public schools grows while the number of white students decline. Brown also decimated the Black educator pipeline, which still persists today.

Bringing about change since Brown continues to prove difficult. Modern education is incredibly politicized, and the very crux of this landmark case is under attack as race continues to impact educational experiences and opportunities for millions of students across the country. The sheer boldness of legislators determined to fight diversity initiatives, ban books and relegate Black Americans as second-class citizens threatens the constitutional freedoms of liberty and equal opportunity guaranteed to all Americans that so many—including more than 2 million Black people—have fought to protect.

Brown was a good first step, but it can't be the only. There is so much more work to do to be done to ensure parity in education.



#### THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Representative Laura Hall (AL)*

As a lifelong educator, I am thrilled to share this edition of our newsletter as our nation celebrates the 70th Anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education.

I was 11 years old when the Supreme Court's decision was announced on May 17, 1954. It sent shockwaves through communities across the country. For many, it was a moment of hope and triumph, a symbol of progress towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

This decision changed education as I knew it then, and years later, it helped to guide my career as an educator in Alabama, a state deeply entrenched in the pervasive shadows of racism and inequality.

I invite you to explore this issue and join us for a facebook live conversation on March 17th as we discuss this pivotal moment in history.



## LEGISLATION IN PROGRESS

### Maryland Educator Shortage Act of 2023

As the national teacher shortage continues to grip the nation, Maryland's [Educator Shortage Act of 2023](#) is one of many efforts that states are taking to retain and hire more teachers.

As outlined in [Maryland Matters](#), the state's Act is not an exhaustive nor a perfect solution, but it aims to nurture passion for becoming a teacher by providing stipends, including a \$20,000 stipend for those who commit to working in high-needs schools as well as initial and internship stipends for those who struggle to gain experience but are not compensated for their time. The Act also changes educator eligibility requirements and requires more diversity throughout Maryland's 24 public school systems.

In addition, Maryland's Act requires Higher Education Commission's Office of Student Financial Assistance to publicize the financial incentives at the state's four HBCUs (Bowie State, Morgan State, Coppin State and University of Maryland Eastern Shore) and to other students of color who are underrepresented in the teaching profession.

As states continue to identify ways attract and incentivize educators, legislators are encouraged to track and model successful legislation to improve opportunities for generations to come.

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NEWS WITH US**



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## FEATURE STORY

### May is National Mental Health Month: Boosting Black Well-Being by Prioritizing Mental Health

Mental health has long been a taboo topic in the Black community. Perceived to be a sign of weakness, the stigma around mental health can be more crippling than the illness itself. So much so that only about 1 in 4 Black adults (39%) with mental illness receive treatment, according to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#).

Unfortunately, the data on Black youth isn't comforting either. A [Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions analysis of CDC data](#) reveals that between 2007 and 2020, the suicide rate among Black youth ages 10-17 increased by 144%, creating the fastest growing suicide rate compared to their peers of other racial and ethnic groups. Contributing factors include racial trauma due to high levels of community and police violence involving firearms.

While mental health does not discriminate, the discrimination Black people experience absolutely influences their mental health. Overall, Black people face increased rates of mental health risk factors, including racism, financial insecurity and health disparities, and these same risk factors also make it difficult to attain timely, high-quality mental health care. While the barriers to accessing mental health support are many, every Black American needs to understand they're not only worthy of receiving help, but there's also no shame in seeking it.

May is National Mental Health Month, and the National Black Caucus of State Legislators encourages members to help reduce the stigma around mental health and take steps to address the socioeconomic and environmental factors that negatively contribute to mental health conditions within the Black community.

Recognizing the profound impact of mental health stigma and the disparities faced by the Black community, Rep. Vivian Flowers (AR) and Rep. Ajay Pittman (OK) co-authored resolution [HHS-24-24](#) addressing mental health in the workplace.

"Workplaces should be spaces where individuals feel valued, supported, and empowered to prioritize their mental well-being without fear of judgment or discrimination," says Rep. Vivian Flowers (AR). "By championing this resolution, we are not just shaping policies; we are shaping cultures of compassion and understanding that recognize the inherent worth and dignity of every employee."

Due to popular demand, NBCSL created a toolkit to help all members raise awareness of mental health in your communities. In the toolkit, members will find supporting communications to add to your efforts to spread the word, share on social, post and distribute, and create and share.

Prioritizing mental health is not a sign of weakness—it's an act of strength.



**Mental  
Health  
Awareness  
Legislator  
Toolkit**

[Download  
Here](#)



## FEATURE STORY

### Demand for Disaggregated Data

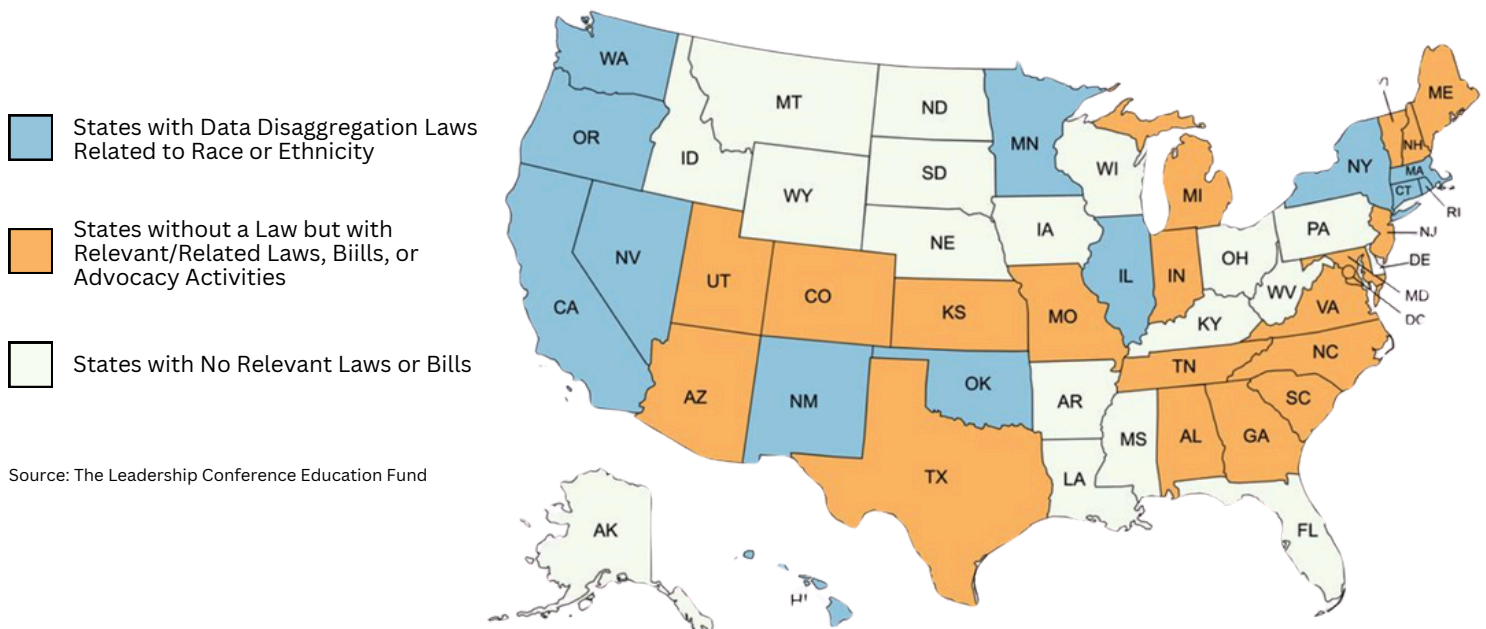
On March 28, 2024, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [published revisions](#)—the first since 1997—to Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity with the goal to improve the quality and usefulness of federal race and ethnicity data.

Detailed or disaggregated data on race and ethnicity are necessary for identifying population trends that make up the fabric of America, such as family, health, education, work, income and the criminal justice system. In addition, the data are used to help ensure nondiscrimination as well as address inequities and structural racism that persist throughout America's systems despite needing to serve a diverse country.

While the new updates address the minimum federal law, states have the power to detailed data on subgroups of populations so long as the data can roll up into the federal government's standard categories. As of September 2023, the [Disaggregation Nation](#) report identified 13 states with at least one law that requires disaggregation of race or ethnicity data beyond the current OMB requirements; 21 states without a law but have relevant/related laws, bills or advocacy activities; and 17 states with no relevant laws or bills.

Disaggregated data are essential to creating appropriate, efficient and equitable programs that serve all Americans. NBCSL recently endorsed comprehensive racial and ethnic data in our resolution titled, "[Ensuring Equitable Health Outcomes](#)", in which we affirm that, "the quality of life assigned to populations with various conditions used in value assessment methodologies is based on large surveys of the general public that are typically majority White and thus minimizes the value of medicines for non-majority racial/ethnic populations, who face various conditions at larger rates than the general population", and further conclude that, "NBCSL should discourage use of any discriminatory metrics, and work to ensure that all metrics take into account full racial and ethnic data".

[How is your state](#) working to understand disparities and achieve racial equity?





## FEATURE STORY

### The Need for Black Nurses and Teachers

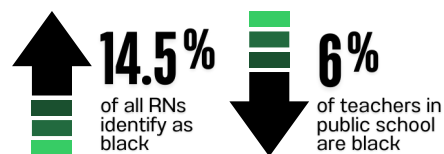
Every May, Nurses Week and Teacher Appreciation week collide in the U.S. with a burst of pride among the 4.7 million nurses and 4 million teachers who bring compassion, empathy and dedication to their critical work helping to create a functional society in which people live easier, more fulfilling lives.

Research in both professions has shown that race-matching—when a nurse and a patient, or a teacher and a student are the same race—improves outcomes.

According to a [Nurse Journal](#) article, when race-matching occurs, there is more effective communication, a more holistic understanding of a patient's history, and more respect and communication. An [Education Next](#) article analysis reveals positive and statistically significant effects on test scores, reductions in absenteeism and disciplinary incidents, and gains in educational attainment for students.

In 2022, there were an estimated 47.9 million people who self-identified as Black, up about a third (32%) from 2000, according to the [Pew Research Center](#). Despite making up 13.6% of the overall population, Black representation among registered nurses reached its highest point with 14.5% of all RNs identifying as Black in 2022. In fact, [Nurse Journal](#) reports that “Black nurses make up the largest percentage of LPNs, RNs, and NPs from underrepresented groups every year since 2003.” While this overrepresentation is good news for Black Americans—who are more likely to receive culturally competent care as a result—the numbers aren't as positive in education.

According to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#), only 6% of teachers and 10% of principals in public schools are Black, yet Black people represent 15% of the K-12 public school student population.



Scholars can trace this underrepresentation back 70 years to the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, whose unintended consequences include the [decimation of the Black educator pipeline](#). Education Week reporter Madeline Will says “prior to *Brown*, Black principals and teachers comprised 35-50% of the educator workforce in the 17 states with segregated school systems.”

Rebuilding the Black educator pipeline is critical to our nation's future. Reducing barriers to becoming a teacher such as lowering costs, and preparing principals to create inclusive school cultures can attract and retain more Black teachers. HBCUs can also play a vital role, says Stanford University student Lavar Edmonds whose [working paper](#) shows that “both Black and White HBCU-trained teachers are more effective with Black students than their same-race, non-HBCU peers.”

Nurses and educators have big hearts, and there are big opportunities for legislators to continue supporting them. Have you introduced legislation in your state to support Black nurses and educators? Let us know at [policy@nbcsl.org](mailto:policy@nbcsl.org).



### LEGISLATOR SPOTLIGHT Rep. Felicia Simone Robinson

Representative Felicia Simone Robinson is a member of the Florida House of Representatives representing District 104. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Florida Legislative Black Caucus, a democratic ranking member of the Child, Families & Seniors Subcommittee and the State Administration & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee.

For the past 29 years, she has been an educator with the Miami Dade County Public School system as a math teacher, department chair, math instructional coach, and Assistant Principal.

Rep. Robinson chairs NBCSL's education committee, serves as Financial Secretary for NOBEL Women and as Board Chair for the Center for Family & Child Enrichment, Inc. She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Dade County Alumnae Chapter, and also a member of the Miami Biscayne Bay Links Incorporated.

In her spare time she enjoys cooking, event planning, jet ski, boating and travel.

We salute you Representative Felicia Simone Robinson.



## FROM THE CHAIR

*LaKeitha Anderson, Brownstein*

With great enthusiasm, I am thrilled to extend to you an invitation to actively participate in shaping the future of our community.

Featuring 13 committees spanning various crucial areas such as Agriculture, Business, Financial Services, and Insurance, Education, Emergency Preparedness/Homeland Security, Energy, Transportation, and Environment, Health and Human Services, Gaming, Sports and Entertainment, Housing, International Affairs, Labor, Military, and Veteran Affairs, Law, Justice, and Ethics, Telecommunications, Science, and Technology and Youth. NBCSL offers a comprehensive platform tackling issues impacting our community.

Your participation in these committees is instrumental to the effectiveness of NBCSL and the developing of important policies and discussions around best practices and pathways to better our community. We ask that you be ready to engage in high-impact discussions, collaborate on policy initiatives, and shape legislative agendas that resonate with your organization's values. Your expertise holds the key to driving meaningful change within our communities.

I invite you to join us in these important discussions. [Click here](#) to explore further details about each committee and choose one that aligns with your interests and expertise. Let's work together to make a difference.



**To become a member, please call:**  
LaKimba DeSadier, CEO  
(202) 624-5457

## MEMBER PROFILE



## The AFT: A Partner in Racial Equity and Justice



At the AFT, a 1.7 million-member union representing educators, healthcare workers and public employees, we believe education is the key to equity. Provide every child with a high-quality learning environment in a school where they feel safe and welcome, and they will have the tools to become successful adults.

But we need resources to do that. We need elected leaders who understand the importance of great public schools for every child, in every neighborhood. That's why we have a deep history with our state legislators, and in particular NBCSL. You not only know your communities inside and out, you know what it takes to meet their needs.

Of course this union fights for good pay and benefits for our members, who do the crucial work of education. But that's only part of what we do. Racial justice is another, and it's in our DNA.

As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, the landmark decision desegregating schools, we remember that the AFT was the only education organization that filed an amicus brief in favor of Brown. We were among the first trade unions to welcome Black members, and we showed up—with our budgets, our feet and our voices raised for justice—at key moments, from the March on Washington to the Freedom Rides. We stood up for the civil rights legislation of the 1960s.

We continue that tradition today. As state legislators face a raft of anti-education, anti-equity bills, we are working hard to educate voters and advocate for something better. We partner with organizations like the NAACP and the African American Policy Forum, and we will fight beside you to battle laws that would eliminate DEI work, crush academic freedom and erase Black history. Instead of banning books, we give them away—we've distributed nearly 10 million free books and counting. We believe everyone should have access to college without the burden of student debt, and we've worked with policymakers to achieve student debt relief for millions of borrowers.

The AFT stands with elected leaders like you who champion a more just and accessible system. Unionists know, "We are stronger together." We look forward to the work ahead.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT ... WATCH AND LISTEN



### BET's America in Black Episode Featuring TSU and NBCSL's President-Elect Representative Harold Love, Jr. (TN)

We are thrilled to share that BET's America in Black is airing a special episode that delves into the historic underfunding of American's Land grant institutions, specifically, HBCUS and singularly a spotlight on Tennessee State University. This episode will feature insights from NBCSL's own Representative Harold Love, Jr. (TN).

Tune in to BET's America in Black to gain valuable insights, celebrate the resilience of HBCUs, and learn about ongoing efforts to ensure equitable education for all. (<https://www.bet.com/video-clips/rw2r81/america-in-black-america-in-black-all-new-episode-trailer>)

Don't miss this informative and inspiring episode! Check your local listings for airtimes.



### New Alabama law pushes back against DEI curriculum

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey [signed a new law](#) that restricts public institutions from endorsing or mandating DEI programs in its curriculum. In an effort to repeal the law that goes into effect October 1, Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin is calling on Black and minority athletes to boycott playing sports at colleges and universities in Alabama and beyond that promote anti-DEI legislation. "Legislators, they have to reckon with themselves of the unintended consequences of creating this stupid law and infringes upon not just Black people, but every other group you can think of," said Woodfin.

[LISTEN TO THE ENTIRE STORY ON MARKETPLACE \(4 MINUTES\)](#)

### The Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map in Action

A new video — Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map in Action: Making an Impact in Communities — showcases seven communities implementing the Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) Road Map. [Watch the video](#) to learn more about the HBI Road Map and the work being done by state agencies in Georgia, Washington, Mississippi, Kentucky, Vermont, the tribes represented by the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board and Cameron County, Texas.

[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT HERE](#)



## NBCSL SURVEYS

### Legislator Contact Form

To be completed by NBCSL Legislator Members Only

To better serve and support you, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) is implementing a new contact form to ensure seamless communication channels both during and outside of session. We ask that you fill out the form below to ensure that you receive all pertinent NBCSL information and updates promptly and without interruptions. We thank you for your continued partnership! [Legislator Contact Form](#)

### NBCSL Media Survey

To be completed by NBCSL Legislator Members Only

Your feedback will help us tailor our communication strategies and initiatives to better serve your needs and enhance the visibility and impact of NBCSL in the public sphere. This survey provides us with valuable insights into how we can effectively leverage media and social media to advance our mission and goals. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

[NBCSL Media Survey](#)

### Corporate Round Table Surveys

To be completed by NBCSL Corporate Round Table Partners Only

As a member-centric organization, we want to hear from you about how we are doing and how we can improve to ensure we continue to deliver on our promise to our corporate partners and assist NBCSL members in fostering productive partnerships with the private sector. Click here to access the [Corporate Roundtable Partner Survey](#).

NBCSL has 13 policy committees composed of NBCSL members and legislative staff. These committees meet to exchange ideas, network, and find solutions to issues facing all Americans. The policy committees also serve an important function in the policy resolution process. Legislators deliberate and vote on resolutions, which must pass out of policy committees before they can be ratified by the full membership body at the Annual Legislative Conference. Committees are also responsible for submitting model legislation for NBCSL members. [Corporate Roundtable Policy Committees](#)



THE LEGISLATOR  
MAGAZINE  
NEW DEADLINE:  
MAY 10TH

The deadline to submit articles for the upcoming edition of "The Legislator" magazine is fast approaching. Don't miss your chance to share your insights and perspectives. Submit your articles by May 10th to be considered for publication and join us in shaping the conversation. To submit your article, please send to [thelegislator@nbcsl.org](mailto:thelegislator@nbcsl.org). Please review the guidance prior to submission.

## EVENTS CALENDAR



**AUGUST 5-7**

**NBCSL Executive Committee and CRT Quarterly Meeting**

@ NCSL Legislative Summit  
Louisville, Kentucky



**AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 1**

**NBCSL Regional Meeting (TBD)**



**SEPTEMBER 11-15**

**NBCSL Executive Committee and CRT Quarterly Meeting**

@ CBCF 53rd ALC  
Washington, D.C.



**December 2-7**

**48th Annual Legislative Conference**  
Washington, D.C.