



## THE ASSOCIATION OF BLACK STUDENTS

*Educate Elevate*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF BLACK STUDENTS ON THE 2025 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION | PART I

#### INTRODUCTION

We share the fear of many of our members as we enter into this new presidential administration. The current climate in our nation is one of extreme polarization, where a flood of information has created an environment of suspicion and eroded our collective ability to discern truth from falsehood. This year, we've boldly embraced the theme "Educate, Elevate." *We aim to provide access to clear and concise education for everyone, acknowledging that our understanding is constantly evolving.* In these critical times, we urge everyone to stay informed about the decisions being made by our government. *This statement is not intended to be a pessimistic alarm, but rather to offer a constructive and truthful perspective. Most importantly, we want to empower each other to be agents of change, critical thinkers, support systems for one another, and prioritize self-care.*

We can all take pride and gratitude that we have come a long way from the evils of America's past. Strides in diversity, equity, and inclusion have been made, and we have made a strong fight for many civil rights that for so long we have been denied. The reality is, our society is not post-racial, and narratives of colorblindness have simply enacted new forms of racism through the neglect of simple truths.

The recent presidential election is a manifestation of our realities. It's an objective truth that race and gender played a role in the outcomes of the election. On both sides of the aisle, it affected voter turnout, support/opposition to policies, and overall political communications. The outcome of the election is simple: Donald J. Trump won the plurality of the votes and the sentiments of his supporters are reflected through the policies that will be enacted over the next four years. Kamala Harris' historical candidacy as a woman of color and her decorated political career should be acknowledged as a testament to how far America has come in its evolution of race and gender relations. Seventy-Five million Americans voted for a Black and Asian woman, and that alone, despite the election results, is something to be proud of. With this being said, as we progress into this new era of national executive leadership, it is important for us as a sociopolitical organization that upholds the needs and sentiments of Black Americans, to give our members a comprehensive analysis of prospective federal government policies which we believe will be salient in their lives.

*We cannot possibly list the effect of every executive order proposed/signed into law, every piece of political rhetoric, or every plan of action that this administration intends to enact. The words below are simply the first part of a two part series looking over the issues that we believe have the highest likelihood of being the most relevant in the daily lives of Black/marginalized communities.* We also would like to acknowledge that every policy issue stated below has been fact-checked including quotations by primary sources. These are objective truths in the current American sociopolitical context.

## POLITICAL EFFECTS ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY | PART I

**Mass Deportation** - By far one of the most harmful and significant aspect of the President's campaign has been the promise of the mass deportation of 20 million immigrants and their children. On *January 20, 2025 the President signed an executive order titled "Securing Our Borders"* which defines the last four years as a "large scale invasion at an unprecedented level." *This order and the orders that are to come are designed to weaponize the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security giving them the ability to "take all appropriate action to supplement available personnel to...enforce the immigration laws" of the administration (Section 4 - Deployment of Personnel).* The effects of such a draconian policy will have a major impact on Black and non-Black immigrant communities alike. Black immigrants from parts of Africa and the Caribbean in particular would be under the threat of their families being violently torn apart from these mass deportations.

**Birthright Citizenship** - *On January 20, 2025, The President signed an executive order titled "Protecting The Meaning and Value of American Citizenship" which reinterprets Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment:* "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." *The President's executive order intends to create new legal precedent that those whose parents are not legal citizens at their birth become void of birthright citizenship. This goes against the entire premise of the Fourteenth Amendment, created to overturn Dred Scott v. Sandford, which decided that enslaved people were not United States Citizens.* The executive order states that "the Fourteenth Amendment has never been interpreted to extend citizenship universally to everyone born within the United States," but that was indeed its original intent to protect all enslaved peoples born in the United States. If someone comes into this nation to seek asylum from persecution/poor socioeconomic conditions, then they at least have the right for their children to be naturalized.

**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion** - The President's attack on the American public education system subsequently includes a war on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion programs including, but not limited to schools and workplaces (private and federal). *On January 21, 2025, The President signed an executive order titled "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit Based Opportunity" revoking executive order 11246 enacted in 1965 which mandated equal employment opportunity.* The President signed this order under the facade of promoting colorblind meritocracy when it actually ends anti-discrimination practices in federal employment contracting and subcontracting. *The President also signed an executive order the day before on January 20, 2025 titled "Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing" which wages war on government DEI programs overturning the previous administration's executive order 13985 titled "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government." Section Two calls to terminate, to the maximum extent allowed by law, all DEI, DEIA, and "environmental justice" offices and positions.* These attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion will not go unnoticed and will lead to less diversity at all levels of federal government as its intent.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT OURSELVES

**Timely Care:** TimelyCare is a 24/7, virtual care service for full-time students to address common concerns that can be safely diagnosed and treated remotely.

**24/7:** Hotline The Lifeline provides 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States. 1-800-273-8255

**Let's Talk:** "Let's Talk" is a program that provides students with easy access to free, brief, informal, and confidential consultations with counselors from Mental Health Services (MHS). This service is open to all currently enrolled, full-time Washington University students.

## CLOSING WITH HOPE

Article 1 of The Association of Black Students Constitution, titled "Purpose," states the following: ***"The Association of Black Students, hereafter referred to as ABS, is a political, educational, cultural, and social organization. It is our mission to give voice and power to, address the needs of, and supplement the experience of Black students at Washington University."*** This article of our beloved constitution states who we are, who we serve, and how we serve them. It is due to this purpose as explicitly stated in our constitution that we are providing this post-inaugural statement. The Association of Black Students is a political organization. ABS has both the prerogative and duty to express the political sentiments of Black Americans regardless of the federal executive leadership/presidential administration. As long as race is a salient issue in the American sociopolitical context, ABS will continue to advocate for the political initiatives which are to the utmost benefit of who we serve: Black students, faculty, and persons at WashU and beyond.

The rights of Black people and women were not explicitly stated in the original United States constitution, but were later recognized following years of hard work, dissent, and sociopolitical conflict. Just as our civil rights were gained, they can be restricted, and decimated if we do not remain cognizant enough to ***educate*** ourselves and ***elevate*** those around us.

*"What is striking is the role legal principles have played throughout America's history in determining the condition of Negroes. They were enslaved by law, emancipated by the law, disenfranchised and segregated by law; and finally, they have begun to win equality by the law. Along the way new constitutional principles have emerged to meet the challenges of a changing society. **The progress has been dramatic, and it will continue**"*

- The Honorable Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall -

Sincerely,

The Association of Black Students Executive Board