

THE
ACTION
ADVOCATE

INAUGURAL ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 2025



Forging Tomorrow's Leaders

UNITED IN PURPOSE

The Divine Nine Speaks
on Black Men and America's Future



OMEGA
NETWORK
FOR ACTION

RECLAIMING THE FUTURE
A 2025 ACTION PLAN
FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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LIFTING OUR
VOICE BEYOND
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INAUGURAL ISSUE

DAVID MARION, PhD

President and Chair
Omega Network for Action



It is with great pride and excitement that I welcome you to the inaugural issue of *The Action Advocate*. This publication is more than a magazine—it is a platform to shine light on the pressing challenges facing our communities and to share the solutions that inspire hope and progress. At a time when issues of inequality and injustice weigh heavily on the nation, ONFA stands committed to advancing change through action, empowerment, and collective impact.

Our work is rooted in a holistic approach—blending advocacy, job training, economic empowerment, and entrepreneurship to create opportunities where they are needed most. Through these efforts, we aim not only to address systemic disparities but to provide our readers with a roadmap for meaningful engagement and transformation in their own communities.

Leadership development is at the heart of this mission. By preparing the next generation to run for office, influence policy, and champion equity, we are building leaders who will not only participate in the political process but also shape it. In this issue, you will see how grassroots efforts ripple outward to create national impact, proving that local action and leadership truly matter.

Most importantly, *The Action Advocate* is designed to inspire. Inside these pages, you will find stories of resilience and triumph—neighbors and communities moving from hardship to self-reliance—as well as resources to equip you with tools for your own journey of advocacy.

Together, we can write a new chapter of progress. Thank you for joining us as we launch this first edition, and for walking with us on the path toward justice, opportunity, and empowerment for all.

LIFTING OUR VOICE BEYOND ELECTION DAY

By Harold M. Love, Jr, PhD
State Representative District 58.
TN House of Representatives

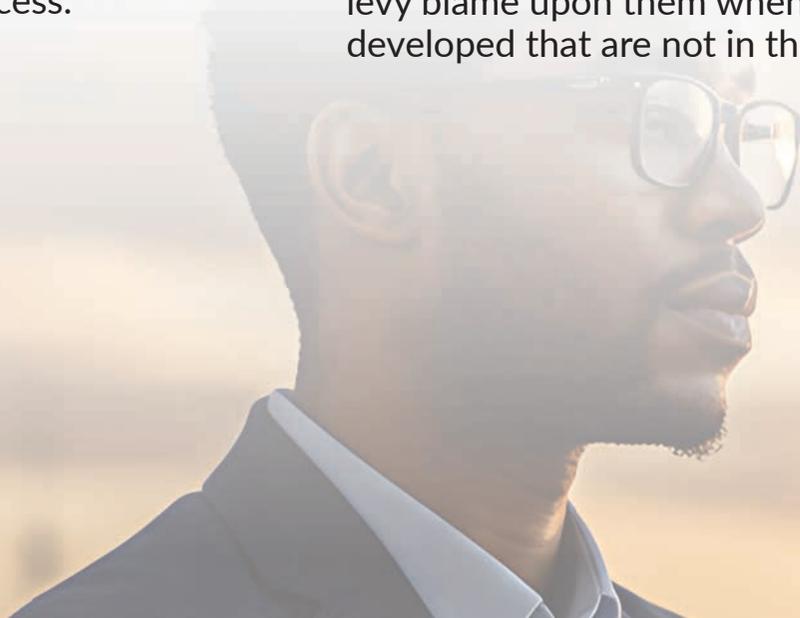
Citizen Participation is crucial to the process of governing. There are many forms and models of Citizen Participation that can range from citizens only voting for representation to citizens being included in the process of forming policy. Much of what will determine the level at which citizens participate depends on defining what it means to be a citizen.

Adherence to a legal definition in the constitution would limit most to what is written down but the broader view has to include participation in governing, this is important because some American Citizens are not registered to vote and some don't have their rights to vote fully restored but that should not deny them the opportunity to help the governing process.

What we often see is that once the elections are over and the citizen has fulfilled their obligation there is no other participation until the next election. In this particular form of participation there is a gap between participation cycles and this can lead to apathy about the role of citizens in governing.

Another model of citizen participation leans heavily upon the belief that it is the role of the citizen to ensure that those who have been elected do not trample upon the rights of those who elected them. Citizen participation is designed to also hold the citizen accountable.

It is easy to elect representatives and levy blame upon them when policies are developed that are not in the best interest





of the citizenry. To be a citizen is to ensure that the structures of government are operating based on the values of the citizens. Citizens are not mere consumers of the products of government without any recourse if the product is not pleasing to them.

Citizens have a legitimate interest in the policies that government produces because there is a direct affect upon their lives. There are checks and balances in government to ensure that there is a balance of power, but there is no check for the system itself if citizens are not engaged.

Citizens have to not only believe that their participation is part of the governance model but they also have to believe that it can benefit their community. For many citizens the normal process has been to elect representatives and to express their desires to the elected representatives in hopes of change occurring. In other instances, the citizen has expressed their desires to department and agency administrators with hopes of change occurring.

When citizens are involved in the decision-making process of the policies that will affect them there is a greater chance that the intended results of the policy will be achieved. The objective of policies and programs should be to improve the lives of those who will be affected by the initiatives. If indeed the goal is to improve their lives it would seem to be the case that they would know best what is needed.

If we want to see democracy in its full implementation we must engage beyond election day.



Harold M. Love, Jr, PhD
James E. Clyburn Leadership Institute
Fellow, Inaugural Cohort 2023-2024

Omega Network for Action, Inc. (ONFA)

WHO WE ARE

Omega Network for Action, Inc. (ONFA) is a 501(c)(4) organization dedicated to advancing social parity, economic self-reliance, and civil rights in African American and underserved communities. Through education, advocacy, and action, ONFA empowers leaders, builds coalitions, and provides practical tools to create lasting change.

Our flagship program, the James E. Clyburn Leadership Institute (JECLI), prepares the next generation of public servants and advocates with training in campaign financing, organizing, and coalition building. From voter mobilization to leadership development, ONFA is committed to reclaiming the future for our communities.

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UNITED IN PURPOSE: THE DIVINE NINE SPEAKS ON BLACK MEN AND AMERICA'S FUTURE

By Quinest Bishop



The room was full, but the urgency made it feel even fuller. On that morning, as the nation ticked closer to November 5, 2024, the men of the Divine Nine political action committees—joined by Groove Phi Groove Social Fellowship—took the stage not to reminisce, but to sound the alarm. Their message was unambiguous: Black men are not invisible, not divided, not apathetic. They are united, mobilized, and determined to defend democracy.

At the podium, Dr. David Marion, president of Omega Network for Action, did not waste words. “This is about Black men united,” he reminded the audience. No matter the letters stitched on one’s chest, no matter the colors worn with pride, the stakes of this election are shared.

The stakes, as speaker after speaker declared, are monumental.

Education on the Line

Walter Fields spoke first, his voice steady but urgent. He warned that one candidate’s promise to dismantle the Department of Education would devastate Black communities. He listed the cold facts: disproportionate suspensions of Black boys, over representation in special education, exclusion from advanced courses, and the absence of Black male teachers in classrooms. “Education is on life support right now,” he said. “If public education is eliminated, it will be a death knell for the Black community.”

Higher Education Under Siege

Dr. Everett Ward, former HBCU president,

pressed further. He called the right-wing assault on higher education a direct attack on opportunity itself. “Any candidates who are proposing to end diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in higher education must be defeated,” Ward said, repeating the point for emphasis. His call was not just about funding; it was about preserving the nation’s intellectual future and honoring the \$16 billion in support that HBCUs have received in recent years.

Criminal Justice and the Right to Vote

Martin Raston, chair of Crimson PAC, delivered sobering statistics: one in 81 Black adults currently serving state prison sentences; 53% of wrongful convictions borne by Black people despite comprising only 14% of the population. His conclusion was simple: “Voting is a God-given right to all adult citizens of the United States.” To deny that right to returning citizens, he argued, is to deny democracy itself.

Work, Wages, and Dignity

Jersey McLendon of the Brown and Gold PAC laid bare the workforce disparities. Black men, he noted, face an eight-point employment gap compared to white men. Wages for Black men, once 80% of the national median, have slipped further since the 1970s. He called for raising the minimum wage, protecting unions, and ending occupational segregation. “The problems of Black men in the workforce are deep,” McLendon said, “but not impossible.”

Health Disparities as Injustice

When Dr. Marion returned to speak on health, his words landed with particular

weight. Quoting Dr. King—“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and the most inhuman”—he traced the history of mistrust born of Tuskegee and alive in today’s inequities. From diabetes to strokes, cancer to lack of coverage, Black men bear a disproportionate burden. “They may not see us,” Marion concluded, “but we see them. And in November, we will vote for those who see Black men’s health as a priority.”

Democracy Itself

Frederick Bell of Sigma PAC carried the torch of history, invoking the march of John Lewis across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The right to vote, he reminded the audience, is under renewed attack through voter purges, ID laws, and gerrymandering. “Democracy is not a spectator sport,” Bell said. “We must organize, educate, and mobilize—because the future of our nation depends on it.”

Hope Versus Hopelessness

Throughout the panel, one theme persisted: the struggle against despair. Too often, Black men are told their votes don’t matter, their voices are muted, their futures foreclosed. But as Dr. Marion reminded the audience, hopelessness is itself a weapon of suppression. “There’s going to be no makeup exam on November 6th,” he warned. “We get one shot. If we fail this test, we will suffer.”

The Collective Charge

What emerged from the session was not just a list of grievances, but a master plan. Use the chapters, the PACs, the churches, the barbershops, the social media networks. Use every contact point. Make voting a family conversation, not just a civic duty. Treat

turnout as both resistance and renewal.

The unity on display was historic: five fraternities, one fellowship, one mission. They closed not with nostalgia, but with resolve. “America is already great,” Dr. Ward said. “We just want to ensure that she becomes greater by addressing the issues we have identified here today as a collective power of men united in purpose.”

A Foundation of a Deeper Mobilization

When the ballots were counted and Donald Trump was declared President-Elect, the moment called for more than relief—it called for resolve. For minority communities, and Black men in particular, a new chapter of uncertainty has begun. Hard-won progress in education, criminal justice reform, healthcare equity, voting rights, and workforce inclusion now stands on unstable ground.

Yet, what took root during this campaign—relationships built, local leadership strengthened, and voter infrastructure established—can be transformed into tools for resistance, resilience, and renewal.

Our task is clear: to turn November’s effort into November’s legacy, and to ensure this moment is not a retreat, but the foundation for a deeper mobilization in the fight for justice.

SCAN TO WATCH ON C-SPAN



FEDERAL BROADBAND AND HEALTH CUTS

Threaten to Widen Racial Disparities in Georgia

A sudden federal decision to cancel millions in grant funding is poised to deepen systemic inequality across Georgia—particularly for its African American communities. On May 9, a \$22 million federal grant aimed at bridging Georgia’s digital divide was rescinded, part of a sweeping rollback under the Trump administration targeting programs framed around “digital equity” and “inclusion.”

The grant was designed to connect underserved populations—rural residents, low-income families, veterans, and ethnic minorities—to reliable broadband access. This is particularly



critical in areas like McIntosh County, where one-third of residents are Black and the median income is \$25,000 below the state average. For many families in such areas, a lack of internet access means limited educational opportunities, job prospects, and healthcare access.

African American Georgians disproportionately reside in communities where broadband infrastructure is weakest. The canceled grant would have helped provide devices, training, and access to services like telehealth and online job resources—lifelines for families already struggling with economic hardship.

But the damage doesn't stop there. Additional federal cuts are threatening programs that support public health, labor systems, and mental health care—services African American communities often rely on more heavily due to generational health and wealth disparities.

Georgia's Department of Public Health recently lost \$334 million in funding from the CDC, including resources for HIV/AIDS prevention—a disease that continues to affect Black Georgians at much higher rates than white residents. Also affected were disease surveillance programs and lab courier systems essential to managing outbreaks in under served neighborhoods. This comes as the CDC shuts programs like its Office of Smoking and Health, which funded anti-smoking efforts in predominantly Black communities.

Unemployment services are also at risk. Georgia's Department of Labor is grappling with the loss of an \$18 million grant that would have modernized a 43-year-old benefits system. With Black workers more likely to face economic insecurity, delays or failures in these systems will hit them hardest.

Mental health and disability programs were not spared. Over 30 initiatives under Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health lost \$10 million in grants. While the agency has pledged to backfill with state funds, staff shortages and years long service wait lists disproportionately burden Black families trying to access support.

Despite these far-reaching impacts, Georgia's leadership has offered little response. Unlike other states, Georgia has not joined lawsuits challenging these cuts or committed state funds to fully replace them. Governor Brian Kemp's office declined to comment in detail, only noting that they are "monitoring" the situation.

State Rep. Marvin Lim (D-Norcross) criticized the lack of planning, warning that communities of color could be left behind once again. "At some point we will fill that gap," he said. "But we would do a much better job if we started figuring that out now."

For Black Georgians, the stakes are high. Whether it's broadband, healthcare, or jobs, the rollback of federal support threatens to widen racial disparities that years of community advocacy and policy had only begun to address.

WHILE REPUBLICANS BICKER, COMMUNITIES PAY THE PRICE

Editorial, By Norman Senior

As Elon Musk rages online about Republicans selling out their base, it's worth pausing to look at what this political chaos actually means for everyday Americans—especially the most vulnerable.

On Monday, Musk lit up his own social media platform with outrage over the so-called “One Big Beautiful Bill,” a sweeping \$5 trillion package of tax breaks and spending shifts passed largely along Republican lines. Musk, once a darling of the far-right, now threatens to start his own political

party over what he calls “debt slavery” and pork-barrel spending. He accused the Freedom Caucus—long self-proclaimed guardians of fiscal restraint—of betrayal for backing what he sees as the largest debt ceiling hike in U.S. history.

While Musk is busy publicly scorning Republicans like Reps. Chip Roy and Andy Harris, who supported or hedged on the bill, Democrats are focused on a much bigger question: Who actually gets left behind when political gamesmanship overshadows governance?



Let's be clear. This legislation was passed in the name of "efficiency," yet it gutted critical funding for healthcare, digital equity, unemployment systems, and public health infrastructure. Those aren't abstract line items—they're lifelines, especially for Black, rural, and low-income communities across Georgia and beyond.

What's truly galling is that this bill was sold to the public as a win for fiscal conservatism. But the reality is that it preserves massive tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy—while pulling the rug out from under working families. In Georgia alone, funding for digital broadband equity was slashed. Grants to modernize the state's unemployment system—cut. Millions for HIV prevention and epidemiology—

HIS SO-CALLED 'ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL' WAS SOLD AS FISCAL CONSERVATISM, BUT IN REALITY IT GUTS HEALTHCARE, DIGITAL EQUITY, AND UNEMPLOYMENT SUPPORT WHILE PROTECTING TAX BREAKS FOR THE WEALTHY. EVERYDAY AMERICANS—ESPECIALLY BLACK, RURAL, AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES—ARE LEFT TO PAY THE PRICE WHILE POLITICIANS POSTURE AND BILLIONAIRES THROW TANTRUMS.

gone. And with them go the tools Black communities need to bridge the digital divide, access timely healthcare, or secure jobless benefits in times of crisis.

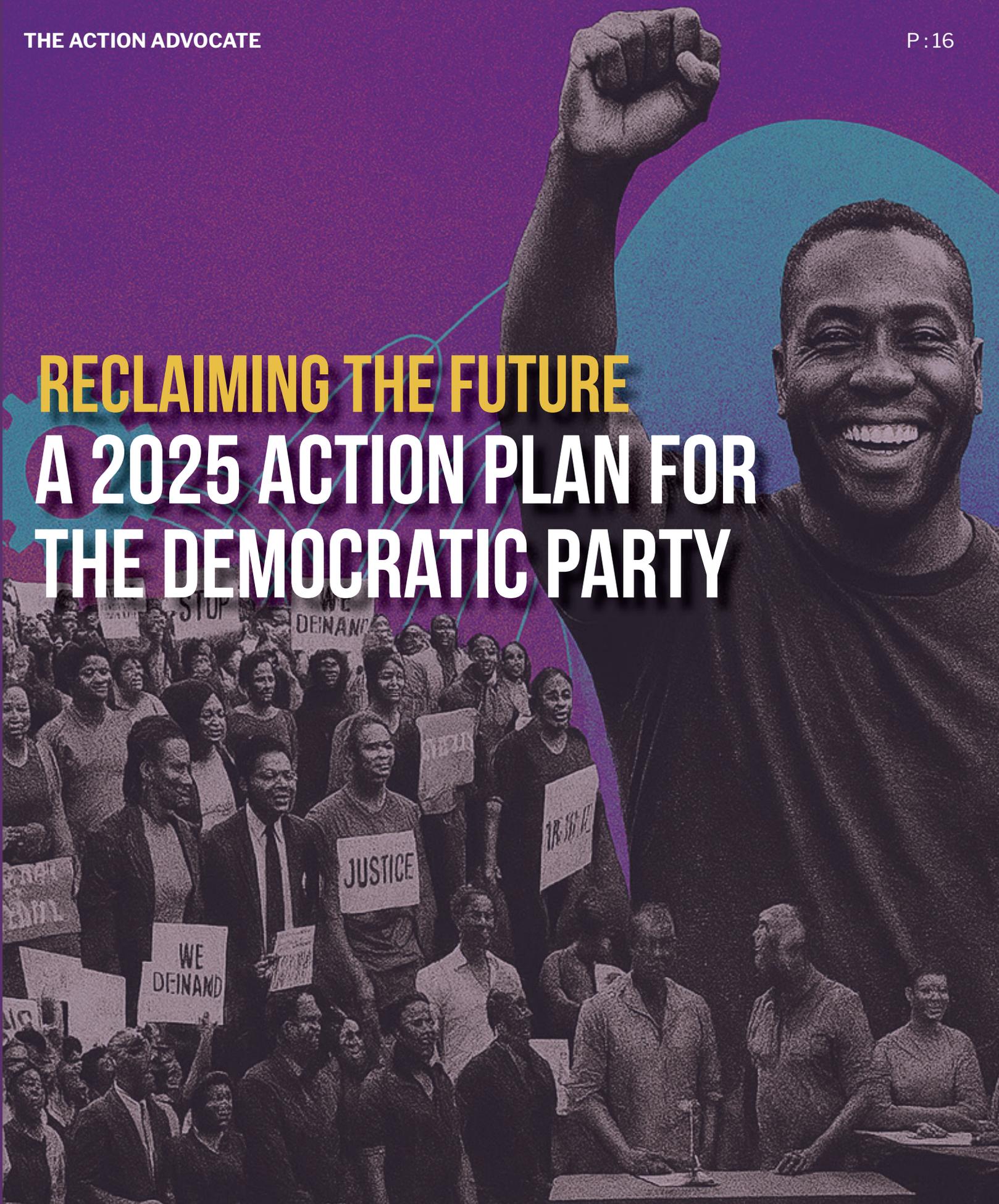
Democrats warned this would happen. When Republicans pretend cutting government spending is synonymous with cutting waste, it's often code for cutting programs that help people they don't prioritize. The irony is rich: the very same "small government" conservatives who championed this bill are now facing backlash from their own base and threats from their tech mogul benefactors.

Let Musk throw tantrums and threaten to bankroll primary challenges. Democrats don't need to form a new party to stay consistent—we've always believed in using government to serve the people, not hollow it out in the name of ideological purity.

It's time to stop letting billionaires and backroom deals dictate the direction of national policy. If Republicans are going to fracture over whether they believe in their own talking points, so be it. But let's not forget who's paying the price while they fight: everyday Americans whose needs have once again been sidelined in favor of political theater.



RECLAIMING THE FUTURE A 2025 ACTION PLAN FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY





The Democratic Party faces a critical juncture. While some of the most influential leaders on the left—like President Biden, Senators Sanders and Warren, and Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Jamie Raskin—have managed to carve out a path in the wilderness, it’s clear that a unified, strategic movement remains elusive. Instead, what we have seen in recent years is a cacophony of voices, each calling for something different, with no clear, collective plan for moving forward. Meanwhile, the forces of conservative extremism, amplified by the MAGA movement, continue to pose a dangerous and sustained threat to the soul of the nation.

If the Democrats are going to counteract this, they need to do far more than simply react to the opposition. They need a well-defined, proactive strategy that not only ensures an administration like the one we are currently witnessing never happens again, but that guarantees a robust, flourishing democracy for generations to come.

Reclaiming the Future: A 2025 Action Plan for the Democratic Party Continued

Here's a comprehensive 2025 action plan for the Democratic Party to reclaim its relevance, energy, and power:

1. A Unified Vision for 2025: Defining the Future of America

Democrats have long prided themselves on being the party of inclusivity, but that inclusivity must extend to a clearer vision of what the future of America looks like. It's not enough to just oppose the status quo. Democrats must:

Present a coherent policy agenda that directly addresses the anxieties of working-class Americans, the youth vote, and the concerns around climate change and economic inequality. This is where the message of social justice, climate action, and economic opportunity must converge.

Define their vision for democracy in the face of authoritarian threats. A commitment to voting rights, the protection of the judiciary from partisan influence, and expanding the democratic franchise will be key.

Propose bold economic reforms that center around both growth and equity. This includes a living wage, universal healthcare, expanded access to education, and a more robust social safety net. Democrats need to loudly proclaim their agenda for revitalizing the middle class and those left behind by the so-called "trickle-down" policies of the past decades.



2. Mobilizing the Grassroots: Energizing the Left

The Democratic Party must rebuild from the ground up, creating a national movement that energizes the masses—especially younger voters, whose political engagement has been fluctuating in recent years. In order to do this, the Democrats need to:

Strengthen ties with community organizations: Create local coalitions to build long-term, sustainable support in both urban and rural areas, focusing on issues that resonate with everyday people: healthcare, jobs, affordable housing, and education.

Expand voter turnout efforts: In every election cycle, one of the biggest problems is voter turnout, especially among young voters and working-class minorities. The Democrats should push hard for reforms that make voting easier—such as automatic voter registration and expanded early voting.

Embrace new forms of activism: By using digital platforms and grassroots organizing techniques, the Democratic Party can energize activists in ways that Republicans have done successfully with social media. The rise of “direct action” politics must be a tool Democrats use more effectively, organizing protests, petitions, and rallies as part of the political fabric.



Reclaiming the Future: A 2025 Action Plan for the Democratic Party Continued

3. Institutional Reform: Rebuilding Democracy from the Inside

The American system of government is deeply flawed. The influence of money in politics, gerrymandering, and voter suppression are just the tip of the iceberg. Democrats must take action to address these systemic issues head-on, with the goal of ensuring a more representative and functional government. A Democratic agenda must include:

Expanding and protecting voting rights: Passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act should be a top priority to protect voters from suppression and gerrymandering, as well as fighting for statehood for D.C. and Puerto Rico to ensure greater political representation.

Ending the filibuster: The Senate filibuster is an outdated mechanism used primarily to block progressive policies. Eliminating the filibuster would allow the Senate to pass meaningful legislation with a simple majority, making it easier to implement the party's agenda.

Reforming the Electoral College: While this will be a long-term project, moving towards a system that accurately reflects the popular will is essential for long-term democratic integrity.



4. Restoring Trust: Rebuilding a Transparent and Ethical Government

One of the biggest challenges the Democrats face is restoring public trust in government. In the age of disinformation and conspiracy theories, a commitment to transparency and accountability will be crucial. The Democrats must:

Push for ethics reform: This includes strengthening campaign finance laws to reduce the influence of dark money and ensuring that government officials are held to the highest ethical standards.

Tackle corruption: In an age where corruption has become rampant on both sides of the aisle, Democrats should propose stronger laws and rules for political donations, lobbying, and transparency in government spending.

Ensure media literacy: The role of misinformation in undermining public trust cannot be underestimated. The Democratic Party should partner with educators, media organizations, and tech companies to push for public campaigns aimed at improving media literacy.

5. Climate Change as a National Security Issue

The climate crisis is already upon us, and inaction will only make it worse. Democrats need to treat climate change as the national security threat it is. To this end, the following should be priorities:

Ambitious green policies: A Green New Deal that centers on job creation in renewable energy, massive investments in green infrastructure, and an aggressive push to reduce emissions must be on the table.

International leadership on climate: America must reassert itself as a leader in the fight against climate change, both diplomatically and through global partnerships to curb emissions worldwide.

Environmental justice: Climate policies must center on addressing the disproportionate impacts on communities of color and working-class Americans who are most vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation.

Reclaiming the Future: A 2025 Action Plan for the Democratic Party Continued

6. Reform the Party: Internal Party Unity and Expansion

Democrats must do the hard work of reforming the party from within, creating a truly united front that balances the interests of moderates, progressives, and the working class.

End the corporate influence: A key issue for progressives is that the party is too influenced by corporate donors. Democrats must work to reduce the influence of money in their campaigns by advocating for public financing of elections.

Foster a culture of open dialogue: A clear divide has grown between moderate and progressive factions of the party, but rather than ignore it, this should be addressed head-on through open discussions, party-wide debates, and a commitment to finding common ground.

Rebuild trust in leadership: If the party is to overcome the current sense of inertia, it must foster new leadership, bring in young voices, and build a pipeline for future leaders who are not just “political insiders.”



Conclusion: A Party Ready for the Future

The time to act is now. The next few years will define not only the future of the Democratic Party but also the future of American democracy itself. With a unified, bold vision and an emphasis on grassroots power, institutional reform, and accountability, the Democrats can create the political movement needed to defeat the growing forces of authoritarianism. It is time to stop reacting to the extreme right and start shaping the future.

The country needs a party that not only knows what it stands for but also has the will to fight for it.



THE 6-POINT CHALLENGE

A CALL TO BROTHERHOOD, SERVICE, AND EXCELLENCE

by Kevin Ford, Jr.

“What do I owe to my times, to my country, to my neighbors, to my friends? Such are the questions which a virtuous man ought often ask himself.” – Johann Casper Lavater

As Brothers of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., we are called to take heed to our purpose, as articulated in our constitution and bylaws, which challenges us to live up to our highest potential and make a positive impact on the world around us.

“The purpose of the Fraternity shall be to bring about a union of college men of similar high ideals of scholarship and manhood in order to:

- (a) Stimulate the attainment of ideals and ambitions of its members;
- (b) Disseminate and inculcate those ideals among those with whom its member come in contact;
- (c) Cooperate with the schools where its chapters may be located in fostering these ideals;
- (d) Occupy a progressive, helpful and constructive place in the civic and political life, domestically, and internationally;

(e) Prepare its members for greater usefulness in causes of humanity, freedom, and dignity of the individual; and,

(f) Aid down-trodden humanity in its effort to achieve higher social, economic, and intellectual status.”

First, we are challenged to make a commitment to stimulate the attainment of each other’s ideals and ambitions. This challenge calls us to support each other’s personal and professional growth by encouraging and motivating one another to pursue and achieve our goals and aspirations. We all carry a responsibility to provide mentorship, guidance, and support to help each other reach our highest potential. By committing to this challenge, we will continue to build upon our historical culture of excellence within our Fraternity.

Secondly, we are challenged to share the ideals and principles of our Fraternity with those around us. This challenge is more urgent now than ever before considering the vast amount of negative press and stereotypes our fraternity is faced with today. In today’s digital age, we must recognize the power of social media and other online platforms in shaping our public perception. It’s imperative that we combat negative perceptions and stereotypes by portraying positive images that represent



the values of our Fraternity. By actively sharing our successes, promoting our initiatives, and showcasing the positive impact that Omega Men have in our communities, we will counteract negative narratives and ensure that the world sees us for who we truly are – a group of stalwart men committed to the advancement of, and our belief in, the Negro.

The third challenge, which is to cooperate with the schools where our chapters may be located in fostering our ideals, has become even more critical in a time when conservative politicians seek to erase black history from curricula. By working to promote academic excellence and preserve our rich cultural heritage, Omega will ensure that future generations have a sense of pride and appreciation for their culture, allowing our Brothers to not only benefit individual students but the community at large by creating a more educated and engaged citizenry.

Fourth, we are challenged to occupy a progressive, helpful and constructive place in civic and political life, domestically and internationally. As Omega Men, we have a responsibility to use our collective voice and influence to advocate for social justice, equality, and the betterment of our communities. As we take on this challenge, we must remember that progress cannot be made in a silo and actively seek opportunities to collaborate with other organizations and communities in our fight for social justice and equality. By engaging with diverse perspectives and experiences, we can broaden our understanding of the issues and work together to create meaningful change. Together, as a community, we can make a difference and create a brighter future for all.

Next, we are challenged to prepare our members for greater usefulness in the causes of humanity, freedom, and dignity. By instilling values of empathy, compassion, and social responsibility, we will foster a sense of community among our Brothers and encourage them to engage with diverse perspectives and experiences. By doing so, we will create a culture of understanding and inclusivity, which is critical to addressing the complex social and political challenges of our time. When we prioritize these values and initiatives, we will be more effective advocates, both within and beyond the boundaries of our Fraternity.

The last challenge is to aid down-trodden humanity in its effort to achieve higher

social, economic, and intellectual status. As Omega Men, we have a responsibility to advocate for social justice and equality and to work towards creating a more just and equitable society. Our collective resources, skills, and talents must be put into action to uplift and empower those who have been marginalized or disadvantaged by systemic inequalities. Whether through community service, advocacy, or other initiatives, it is essential that we elevate our contribution to the ongoing struggle for a more fair and just world.

Ultimately, it's up to us, as individual Bruhz, to uphold the purpose and ensure that it remains at the forefront of our thoughts and actions. I understand, it can be easy to lose



sight of the purpose, especially when we get caught up in the day-to-day activities and challenges of life. However, it's important to remember that the purpose of Omega is not just a set of ideals or principles to aspire to – it's a call to action.

We have a duty to strive for excellence in all aspects of our lives and motivate other Bruhz to do the same. By committing to our Cardinal Principles and mottos, while using our strengths to make a positive impact in the world, we will honor the legacy of our Founders and inspire our future generations to do the same.

That virtuous man asks not what the aforementioned things, “can do for me”, but, “What can I do for them?”

Are you that virtuous man?



Kevin Ford, Jr.
James E. Clyburn Leadership Institute
Fellow, Inaugural Cohort 2023-2024



WHEN GOD ORDERS YOUR STEPS

by Traci Smith-Kimes

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated
Member, Orlando Alumnae Chapter



I will start off by saying, God knew what I needed and when I needed it. The opportunity to apply for the James E. Clyburn Leadership Institute Fellow program, was shared with me literally 48 hours before the application due date, with the comment, “you are perfect for this.” My first thought was, I have too much to do and will not be able to get the required materials for submission in 48 hours. I walked away from my computer. Later that evening, I

opened the application and told myself, it wouldn’t hurt to try, all I could do would be to gain knowledge in the experience. Here I am, a graduate of the JECLI, Inaugural Cohort!

The people I have met and been connected to, has shared my life already in a manner I could not have imagined. The experiences I have already encountered, again never imagined and will forever impact my present

“THE EDUCATION WE HAVE RECEIVED TO DATE FROM CONGRESSMAN CLYBURN CAN’T BE FOUND IN ANY BOOK. THE HISTORY IS PURE AND NATURAL, PASSED DOWN BY ONE WHO HAS LIVED IT AND WALKED THE JOURNEY.”

and future. The knowledge that has been gained to this point, and the knowledge still to come, can be measured and could not have been received through any other venue. The brainchild of this, is to be commended for the vision and creativity in developing and enhancing our leaders of the future.

The most humbling and impacting experience to this point, meeting, sitting, and gleaming nuggets from THE Congressman James E. Clyburn. The historical experience during my Cohort, has not only given me a look as to where we are, and how we got here; but has also allowed me to share and teach others, so that the history can be passed on. In some cases, Congressman Clyburn has prepared us to make sure history DOES NOT repeat itself. The education we have received to date from the Congressman, can’t be found in any book. The history is pure and natural, as our ancestors have passed it down, sitting and listening to one who has lived it and walked the journey. I have to admit, I shed tears during some of the times I have heard him speak and share his journey to and within his leadership.

I can’t continue without mentioning and acknowledging the ONFA Board, under the leadership of Dr. Marion. The collective group knew the assignment, and selected those they believed would carry it out. They have shared and guided us to people, resources, networking, and opportunities for a lifetime. I KNOW that the success

of the JECLI, under their leadership, will only become stronger, more visible, more influential, and more impacting for future local, State, and National leadership.

Finally, I have to share the impact my Fellow Brothers and Sisters have been. I’m a part of a Sisterhood, and have a close relationship with my Omega Brothers. However, the bond that has been developed with my JECLI Fellow Brothers and Sisters....I don’t even know where to begin. The support, empowerment, embrace, and camaraderie we have already developed with each other over the past year, will continue through our lifetime.

A HUGE Thank You to Congressman Clyburn for allowing and instituting the JECLI. As a graduate, especially of the Inaugural Cohort, I will ALWAYS support, participate and foster the program.



Traci Smith-Kimes

James E. Clyburn Leadership Institute
Fellow, Inaugural Cohort 2023-2024

**“THE LORD BLESS THEE, AND KEEP THEE.”
-NUMBERS 6:24**

BLUEPRINT TO 2028

WINNING THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION IN THE AGE OF THE DIVINE NINE

By Norman Senior

The 2028 Democratic primary is not just wide open—it's wide awake. With the old guard fading and a new wave of contenders rising, the path to the nomination requires more than charisma and money. Victory will hinge on coalitions, culture, and a ground game rooted in trusted networks like the Divine Nine.

This contest won't be decided by TV ads or clever soundbites. It will be won in church basements, on HBCU campuses, in fraternity halls, and in the digital spaces where younger voters live.

The Contenders

Kamala Harris: The Symbolic Frontrunner. Still the best-known name in the field, Harris polls strongest with Black voters, women, and older Democrats. As a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, she has a natural advantage with Divine Nine networks. But she struggles to inspire younger progressives and risks being seen as yesterday's candidate. Her survival depends on locking down South Carolina and energizing Black church and Greek life turnout in the South.

Gavin Newsom: The Showman Centrist. Media-savvy and donor-rich, Newsom has surged into second place. His appeal lies with suburban moderates in swing states, but he underperforms with Black voters. To compete, he must broaden his coalition beyond "anti-MAGA" messaging and show

cultural fluency in states like Georgia and North Carolina.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: The Progressive Powerhouse. Beloved by Gen Z and Millennials, AOC brings unmatched online reach and grassroots energy. But she risks alienating moderates wary of her leftward tilt. If she runs, her playbook is digital-first organizing in Iowa, youth mobilization in Georgia and Arizona, and expanding her progressive donor network.

The Dark Horses: Buttigieg, Moore, Shapiro, Whitmer. Each brings regional strength—Moore in the Mid-Atlantic, Shapiro in Pennsylvania, Whitmer in the Midwest—but none yet have national traction. Their strategy is simple: score a home-state win and become everyone's second choice.

Key Voters

Black Voters: Success requires long-term partnership with Divine Nine organizations, real investment in HBCUs, and policy credibility beyond election season.

Gen Z & Millennials: By 2028, they'll represent nearly half the electorate. They demand urgency on climate, debt relief, housing, and justice. Speak their language—or lose them.

Suburban Women: Deciders in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Arizona. They want clarity

on reproductive rights, education, and gun reform.

Latino Voters: Essential in Nevada, Arizona, Texas, and Florida. Campaigns must invest in Spanish-language ads, faith outreach, and immigration credibility.

White Working Class: Still pivotal in the Midwest and South. They want jobs, wages, and union respect—not just symbolic appeals.

The Battleground Map

The road to the nomination runs through a changing primary calendar.

- » **South Carolina:** Harris must dominate here to hold her status. Divine Nine and church networks will make or break turnout.
- » **Nevada:** A proving ground for Latino outreach and union strength.
- » **Michigan & Pennsylvania:** Industrial powerhouses where urban progressives and suburban moderates collide.
- » **Georgia:** The new South battleground. Divine Nine influence is unmatched here. Whoever activates these networks can tilt the race.
- » **Super Tuesday:** Texas, California, and North Carolina will determine who survives.

The Divine Nine

“You cannot win the soul of the Democratic Party without going through the Divine Nine.”

This network of Black fraternities and sororities has deep roots in HBCUs, churches, and civic life. Nearly 70% of Congressional Black Caucus members are Divine Nine alumni, a testament to their reach and

influence.

Winning requires more than photo ops. Candidates must co-host policy forums with chapters, invest in scholarships, champion student loan reform, and show up at major conventions. Performative gestures won’t cut it—authentic investment will.

The Strategic Phases

Phase 1: Early Momentum

Secure Divine Nine and faith leader endorsements in South Carolina and Georgia. Launch digital campaigns targeting youth, and begin bilingual field organizing in Nevada.

Phase 2: National Surge

Deliver viral debate moments, expand operations in Pennsylvania and Michigan, and co-brand events with Divine Nine chapters.

Phase 3: Party Consolidation

Unite progressives and moderates by selecting a complementary running mate. Lock down battlegrounds with tailored policies and relentless ground presence.

The Bottom Line

The 2028 Democratic nomination will not be won by television buys or billionaire donors. It will be forged in the spaces where trust still matters—community halls, HBCUs, Greek-letter meetings, and *WhatsApp* threads.

The candidate who masters coalition politics, honors the Divine Nine, and energizes both tradition and transformation will not just capture the nomination—they will shape the Democratic Party for a generation.



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