

STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

SPECIAL MEETING, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2024

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Meeting, Thursday, November 7, 2024, with nine members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; Burns, Commissioner Second District (left the meeting at 6:40 p.m.); Ramirez, Commissioner Third District (arrived at 5:50 p.m.); Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Lopez, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District and Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District and Mayor Pro Tem; presiding. Hill, Commissioner Fourth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO, were absent. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrator; Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Counsel; Daniel Soptic, Sheriff; Irene Caudillo, Chief of Staff in Mayor's Office; and Monica L. Sparks, Unified Government Clerk.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said before I call the meeting to order I want to announce that we have individuals attending remotely as well as on-site. All participants joining by phone should please mute their phones when not speaking to avoid background noise. During the meeting, please make sure you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak so the public that is participating knows who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants and current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General's Office and please be sure to speak directly into the microphone to ensure your comments are heard and an accurate record can be made of this meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs called the meeting to order.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format on Thursday, November 7, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the fifth floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building for an Executive Session related to the security of a public body or agency, public building or facility, or the information system of a public body or agency. Immediately following will be a presentation in open session by the

Urban League of Greater Kansas City, entitled State of Black Kansas City. Roll call was taken and there were eight “Ayes,” Townsend, Burns, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs.

CONSENT TO MEETING of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said tonight our first order of business will be going into Executive Session as previously announced. At the conclusion of the Executive Session we will reconvene in Special Session to hear a presentation from the Urban League of Greater Kansas City entitled State of Black Kansas City.

At this time the Commission will go into Executive Session regarding security. Do we have a motion for Executive Session?

Commissioner Bynum made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Burns, to go into Executive Session until 5:35 p.m. to discuss confidentially so as not to jeopardize the integrity of security practices and procedures intended to protect public officials and buildings as justified under security measures exception in the Kansas Open Meetings Act; and Sheriff Soptic, David Johnston, County Administrator; Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrator; Angela Lawson, Acting Chief Counsel; be present to participate in the discussion and that we reconvene in open session at 5:35 p.m. in the fifth floor conference room. Roll call was taken and there were seven “Ayes,” Townsend, Burns, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Present for the Executive Session: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; Burns, Commissioner Second District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Lopez, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Burroughs, Mayor Pro Tem; presiding. **Staff present:** David Johnston, County Administrator; Daniel Soptic, Sheriff; Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrator; and Angela Lawson, Acting Chief Counsel.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs reconvened back into Special Meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Commissioner Bynum made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Burns, to extend the Executive Session until 5:50 p.m. Roll call was taken and there were eight “Ayes,” Townsend, Burns, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs. Commissioner Ramirez arrived at the end of the Executive Session.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs reconvened into Special Session at 5:50 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said at this time in our Special Session the next order on the agenda I would like to introduce Irene Caudillo, Chief of Staff in Mayor’s Office, for introduction to the speakers and presentation.

Irene Caudillo, Chief of Staff in Mayor’s Office, said on behalf of Mayor Garner I open this session with a reminder to the Commission. The presentation tonight is really a continuation of the work that our Health Department who spent the last year gathering information, feedback and support to prioritize equity and dismantle systematic racism through their racism as a public health crisis initiative. Our Health Department focused their efforts first on the African American community in Wyandotte County.

The Urban League of Greater Kansas City’s mission is to enable African Americans and other disadvantaged persons to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights. Their State of Black Kansas City is a biannual report that includes a collection of articles and op-eds and summary of statistics from the Black and White, and Hispanic and White equality indexes spotlighting gaps in education, economics, health, social justice and civic engagement.

Gwen Grant, the President and CEO, is here this evening. She’s the first female CEO in the affiliates 105 years history. Gwen is a strong and passionate advocate for social justice, civil rights, and economic empowerment for African Americans and women. Ms. Grant provides leadership and direction for advancing all Urban League programs and its mission.

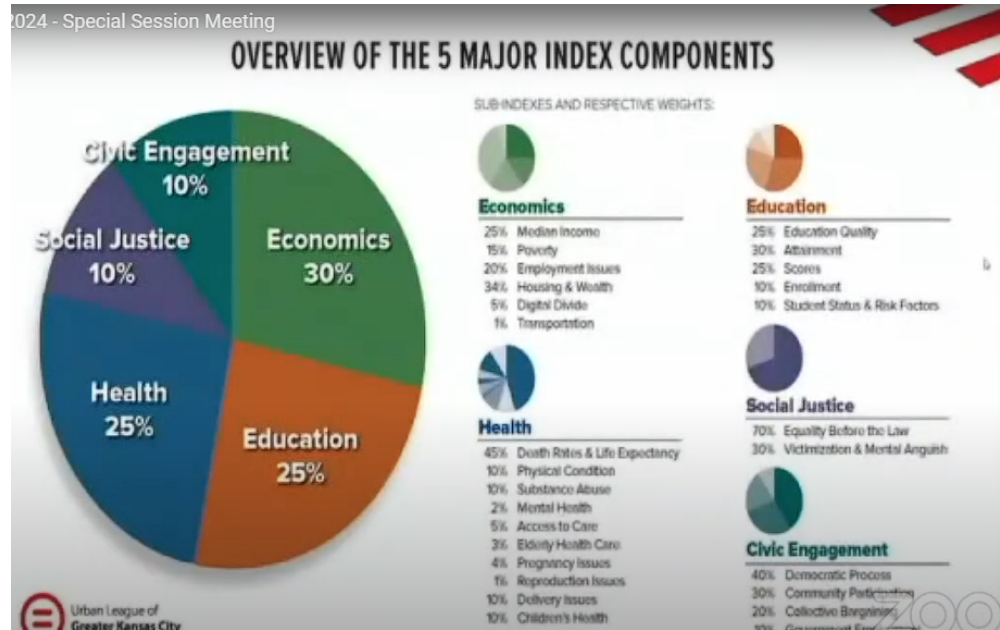
At Mayor Garner’s request, Ms. Grant joins us today to share the information from the 2023 State of Black Kansas City report. Please welcome Ms. Grant.

Gwen Grant, President/CEO Urban League of Greater Kansas City, said thank you for having me to share this information. I will quickly share some slides to highlight the findings of our 2022 Black/White and Hispanic/White equality indexes. I'll give you a little bit of background on that and then you also have copies of the book so that you can take a deeper dive into this information at your leisure. I think you'll find some of the information really quite educational as well as the essays that are included, a variety of perspectives on the challenges we face in our African American and Hispanic communities in the greater Kansas City area.

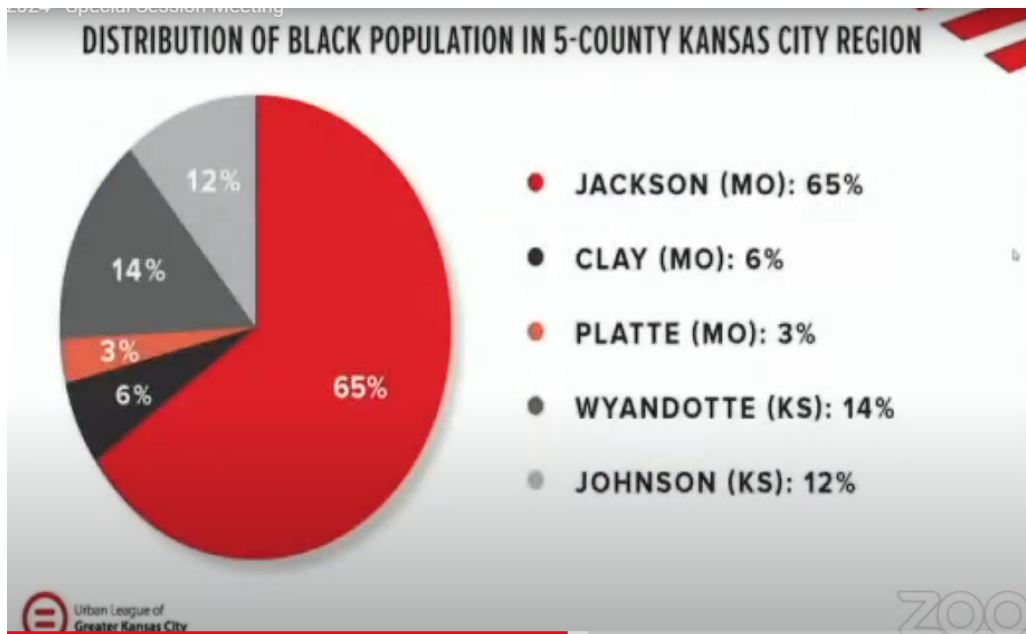
I'll start by just giving—**Monica Sparks, Unified Government Clerk**, said we're not able to hear you online, so I just want to check and make sure our sounds good. If you could pull the mic a little closer.



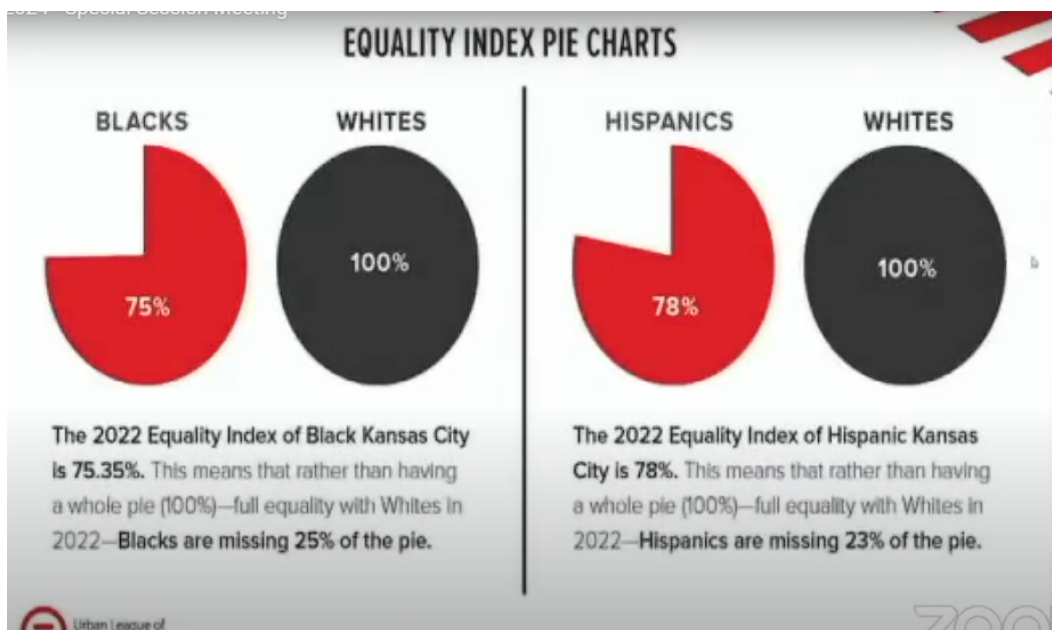
Ms. Grant said the screen is kind of blurry, but just to give a little bit of background, the research that we publish every two years is compiled by the Economics Department at UMKC, University of Missouri at Kansas City, and so these are the names of the principal investigators and researchers for this project. We do not gather the data, we do not crunch the numbers, we publish the information.



We base our study on looking at five key areas which form the platform on which the Urban League, both nationally and locally. We base our work on this, our civil rights advocacy agendas based on these five areas, Economics, Education, Health, Social Justice, and Civic Engagement. This slide provides a breakdown of what we're looking at, what we're measuring to arrive to complete this index. These numbers, the methodology was all designed by the National Urban League. We follow the same methodology on our local report and this just gives you an indication of how the sub-indices are parts out.



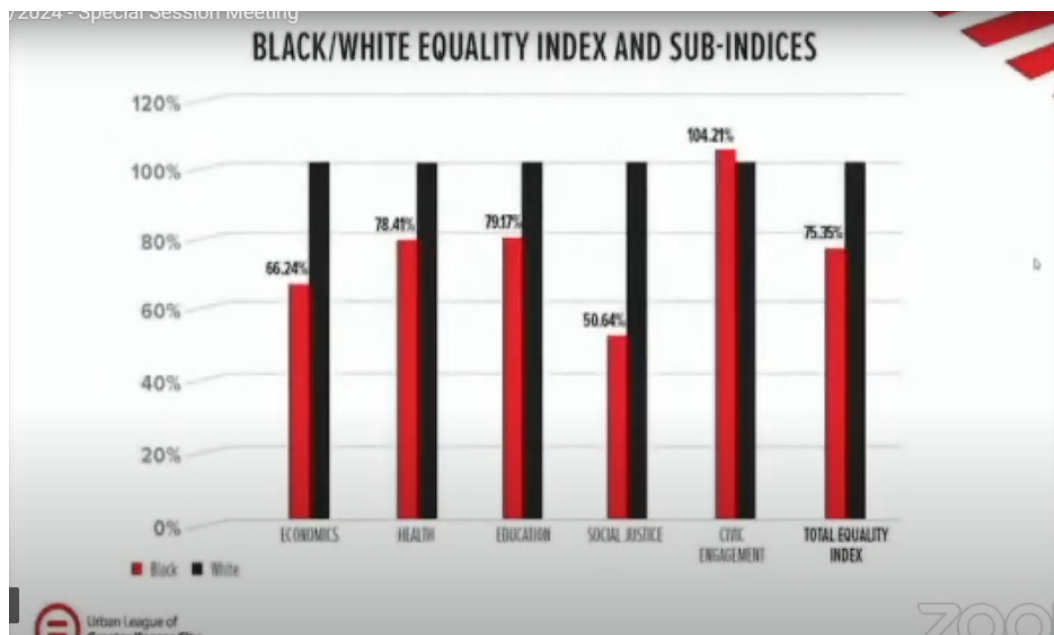
The Urban League serves a five county area. We serve Jackson, Clay and Platte Counties in Missouri and Wyandotte and Johnson Counties in Kansas. These numbers are reflective of the population that we serve in the five county area.



When we started this study back—actually I think it was 2005, shortly after Marc Morial took the helm as President and CEO of the National Urban League and one of the things that he established under his leadership was that as a civil rights organization and we talk—we want to talk about

progress. We wanted to have empirical evidence to track and measure how much progress we've made in comparison to Whites since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, so that was considered as the starting line. So how can we say oh, we've come a long way. Well, we want to know empirically just what does that mean. So, when you look at this to think about the index in relationship to a pie chart and you have a whole pie, how much of that pie do we as African Americans in comparison to Whites, how much of that pie do we have.

So the results of the 2022 Equality Index shows that we have 75.35% basically. Whites have a whole pie. White is a control group starting with a whole pie. By comparison we are at 75%. By comparison Hispanics in the region are at 78%, so Hispanics are doing a little bit better than African Americans in all of these key areas.



You can see here when we look at the comparison on a national—on a local level, we are at around 66%, with Economics 78%, Health 79%, Education, Social Justice very low at 50+%, and we outpace Whites in the area of Civic Engagement. Civic Engagement includes voting, it includes volunteerism, primarily those areas, Union Memberships, things of that nature. We often look at that as a false positive because it includes enlisting in the military and oftentimes people of color who are economically disadvantaged will opt for the military as a default because they can't afford college. This is another pathway to a career and so the total index at 75. When you look at the

numbers for the Hispanic community, I stated they're at around 78% overall, but these are the sub-indicators and you can see how they are doing across the board as well.

A comparison of the Equality Index of Black Kansas City for previous years with the 2022 Index illustrates that progress has been static in all categories, and progression is slowest in Economics and Social Justice.

EQUALITY INDEX OF BLACK KANSAS CITY*

YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2010	2015	2019	2020	2022
BLACK/WHITE INDEX	73%	75%	75%	74%	72%	73%	72%	75%
ECONOMICS	54%	57%	58%	53%	57%	61%	62%	66%
HEALTH	80%	82%	83%	78%	77%	75%	76%	78%
EDUCATION	78%	79%	78%	85%**	78%	77%	75%	79%
SOCIAL JUSTICE	65%	62%	67%	58%	52%	55%	58%	51%
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	109%	114%	108%	109%	107%	109%	100%	104%

*Index (averages) are rounded to the nearest value

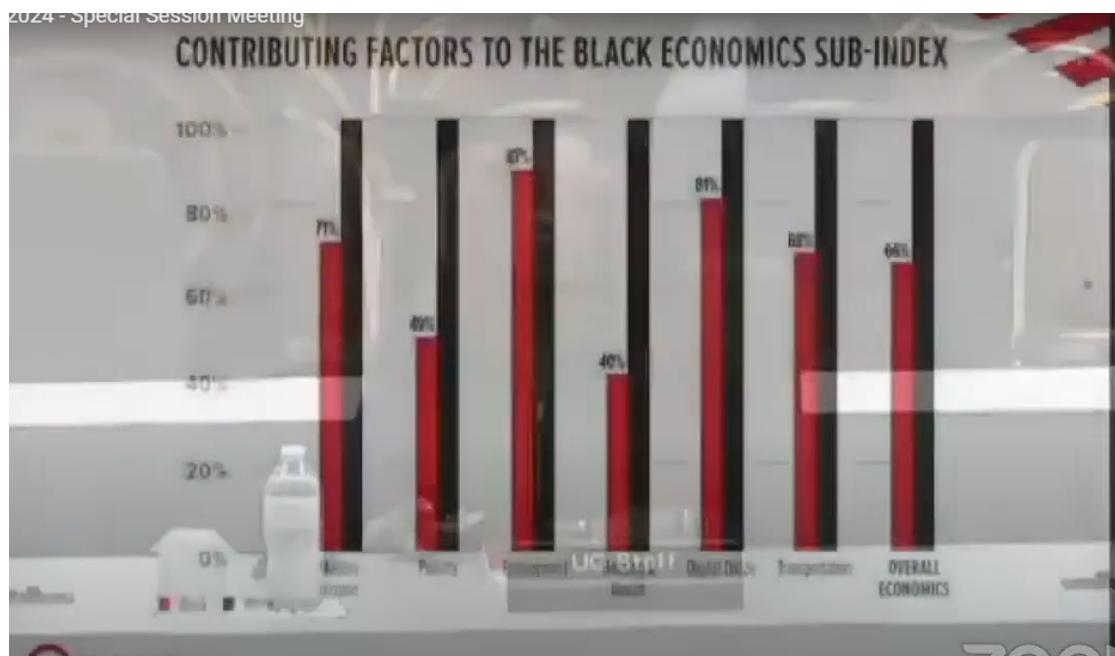
**The measurable increase in education in 2010 was due in large part to significant changes in weights of the sub-indicators in education as determined by the National Urban League and its partners. If we had used the exact weights for the sub-indicators in 2010 that were used in 2006, the education index would have increased from 78% to 79%, an increase of only 1.3%.

I want to talk a little bit about this because when Irene talked about the fact that you're looking at racism as a public health challenge, it's really important to understand the data in that context to understand that each of these things here listed, Economics, Health, Education, all of these things really tie into the social determinant of health. And that really reflects the healthiness or the ability of a community for people to achieve equity, have equal access to all that the economy, the economic mainstream has to offer. So, when we look at this and we look at how this has spread over since we started collecting the data, National Urban League started in 2005, we started in 2006, so if you look at it from a longitudinal perspective, you see that the years of progress for African Americans has been somewhat static in some of these areas. But Economics and Social Justice are the two areas where we've made the least amount of progress. You see Economics and now we're only at 66%. We were at 54% in 2006 and there's that static progress, the ebbing and flowing back and forth with our progress there.

The other takeaway from this is if you look at Education and oftentimes when we're talking about economic disparities and social disparities, people say if people of color, if Blacks could just get more training and more education, then we're going to be better off. If that were true, if it felt that really held together from an empirical perspective, then we'd achieved 79% at Education yet

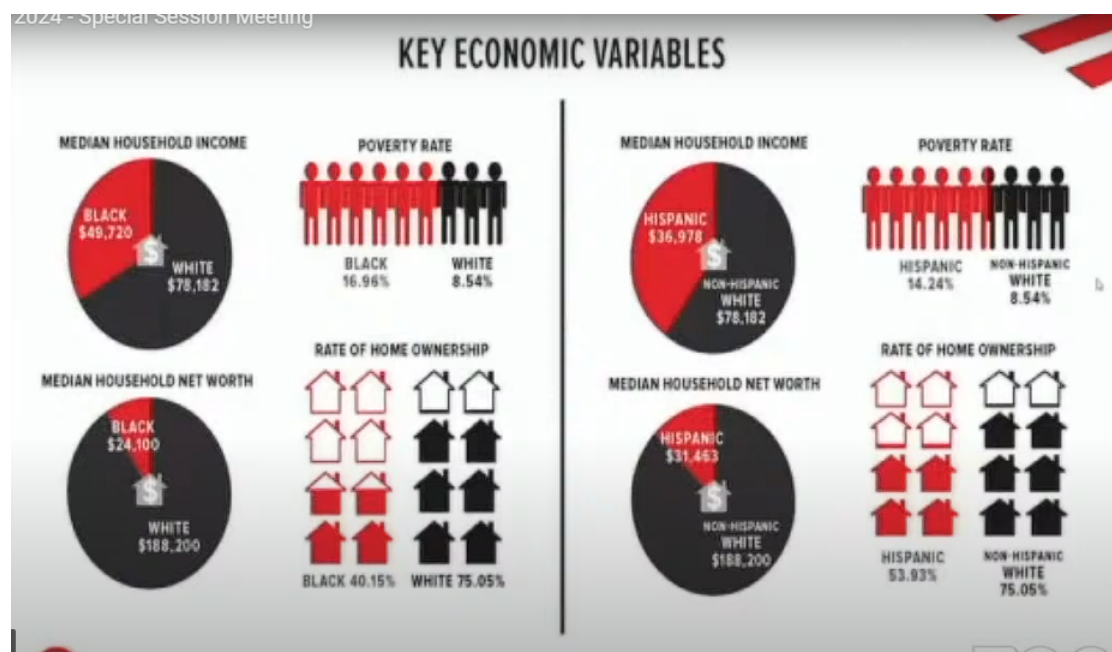
our Economic progress is only at 66%. So, education is not the great equalizing. Education and training all those things are important, all of those things have impact on an individual's ability to achieve economic mobility, but education alone will not solve the problem. Training alone will not solve the problem. It requires a number of changes relative to policies and to understand how deeply rooted those policies and practices are and the overall impact that they have over time.

Also, think about it in terms of, as I stated earlier, that we're looking at progress since the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, so the starting line is different. So, to expect that you had an advantage in a race and to expect that we did not have that same advantage that we should somehow be able to catch up by just getting a little bit more education and training or better handling our resources that we could achieve economic parity, it takes a whole lot more work in terms of policies. It's kind of like triage when you go into an emergency room, you arrive at the emergency room and the doctors and the emergency team you're not going to apply the same medical strategy and practice to everyone equally. You're going to have a triage equitable approach. That means if I present with a broken arm and you present in cardiac arrest, I think you're going to get a lot more attention than the person with the broken arm. That's the way you kind of have to look at how do we address disparities in all of these areas.



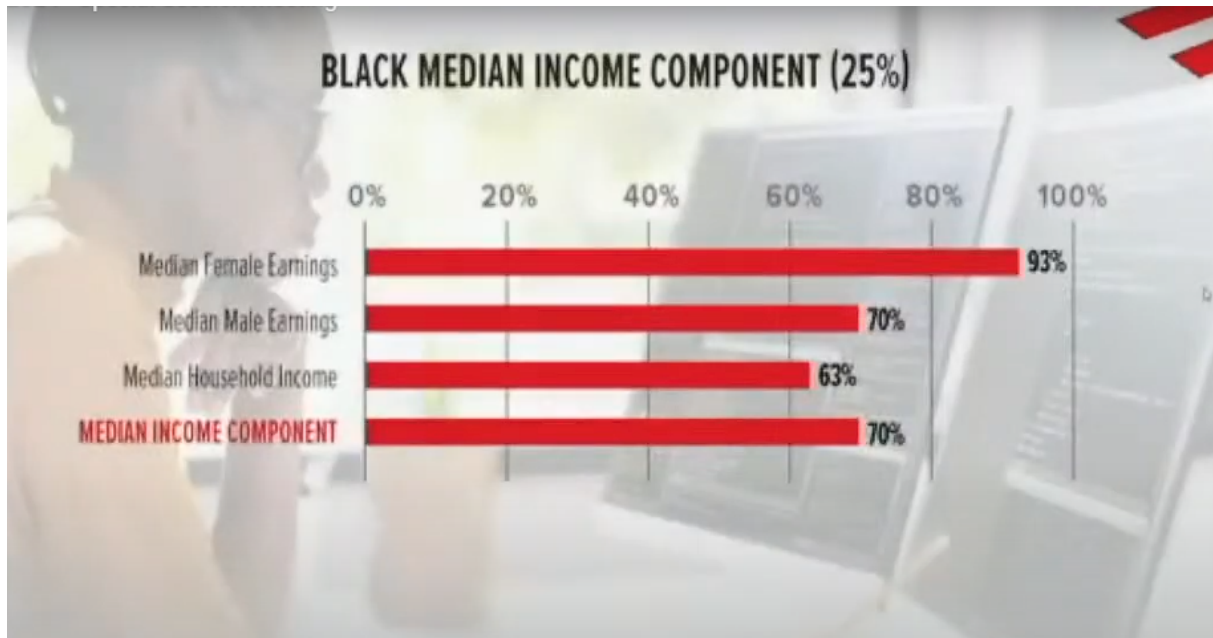
When we talk about economics you know these are the contributing factors and sub-indicators that generate the overall economic impact and so we look at Median Income, Poverty levels,

Employment, Housing, Home Ownership, Wealth Creation, the Digital Divide and Transportation. You can see the overall outcomes there. We have them in the book. I'm not going to read them all.

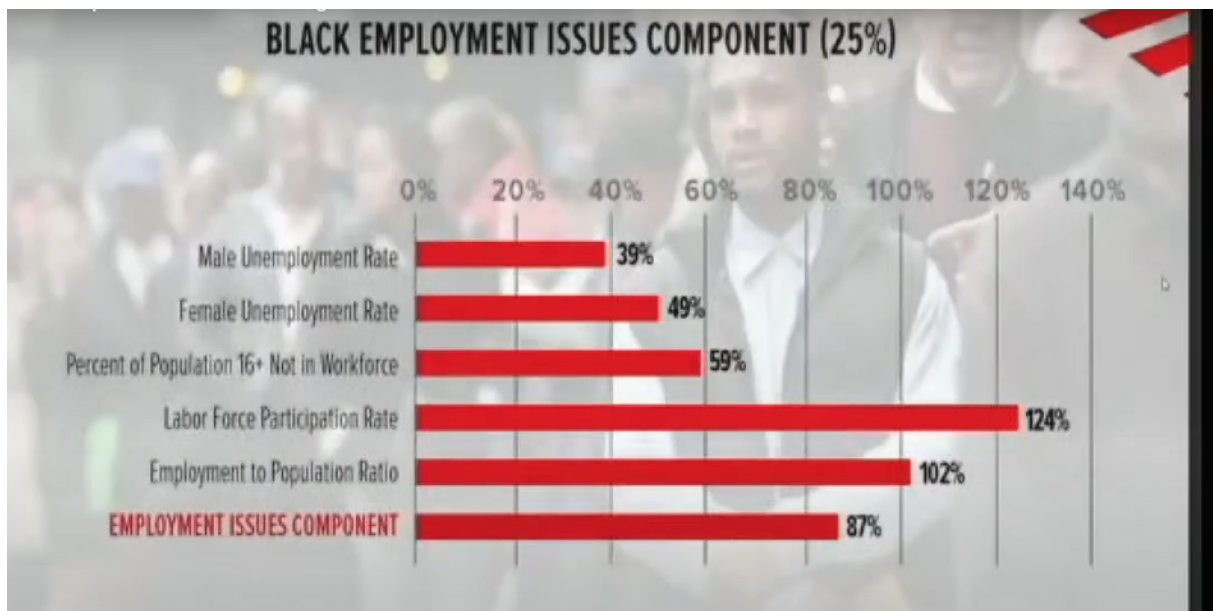


Here are the key things to look at. If you look at the median household income for African Americans compared to median household income of Whites, you look at the difference in the poverty rates. You look at the same across for the Hispanic community and look at median household net worth, so this is systemic economic barriers for centuries have created this outcome of Black median household net worth of \$24,100 compared to White median household net worth at \$188,200. That should provide some basic context and clarity and understanding when we talk about the wealth divide in this country and home ownership is a pathway to wealth building. Then if you'd understand the history of redlining in our communities and how African Americans were denied access to home ownership, even veterans serving in the war were not denied access to the benefits of the GI Bill to purchase a home. There's so much about the history and the impact that it has on our systems and policies and practices that create the conditions that we are enduring today and the disparities.

So the media net worth here, you see that the Hispanic community is doing slightly better, but the challenges pretty much are the same overall for both African Americans and Hispanics in the greater Kansas City area.

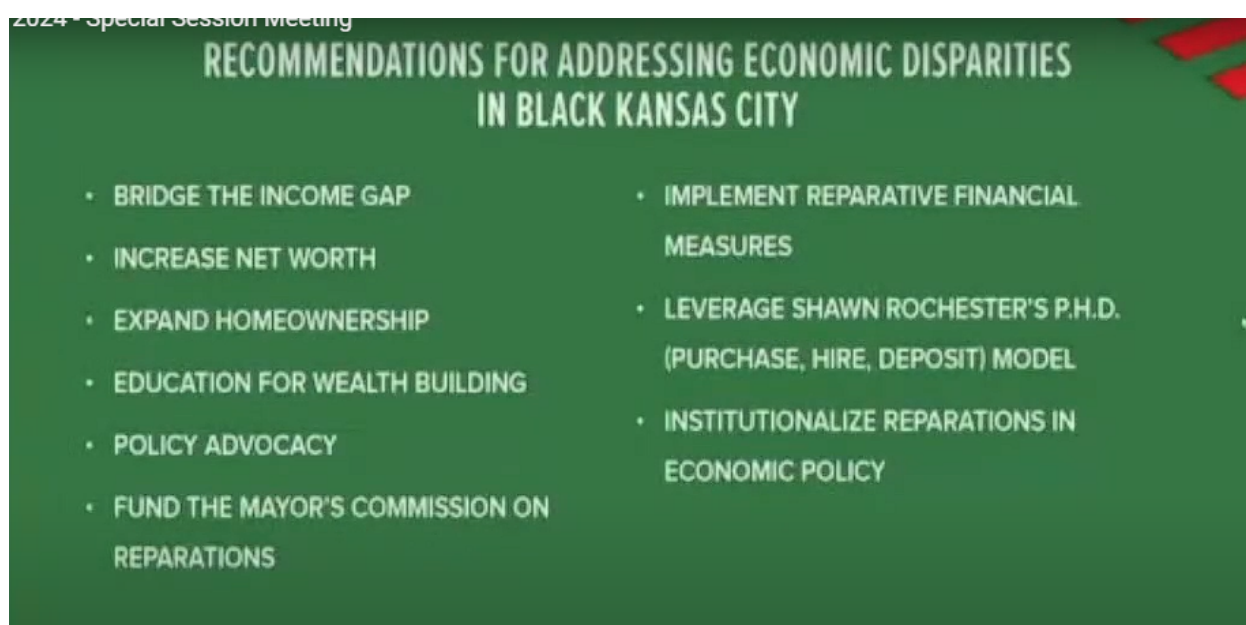


Then we look, you know, these are just some of the other sub-indicators you can see that contribute to the overall economic well-being or lack thereof of African Americans in this region. We look at the median—the earnings and household income. The poverty component as well, how many households are in poverty in the greater Kansas City area, extreme poverty. The poverty component is really quite challenging.

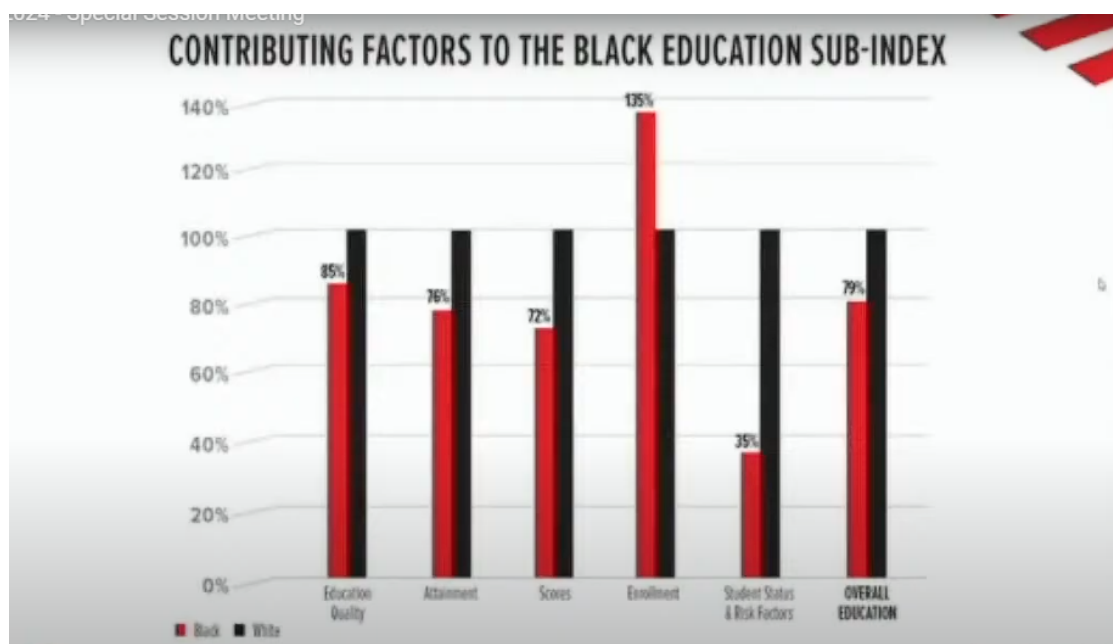


These are all in the book so you can kind of—I'm just kind of breezing along. Then, home ownership, access to employment, livable wage employment, life changing or transformative type

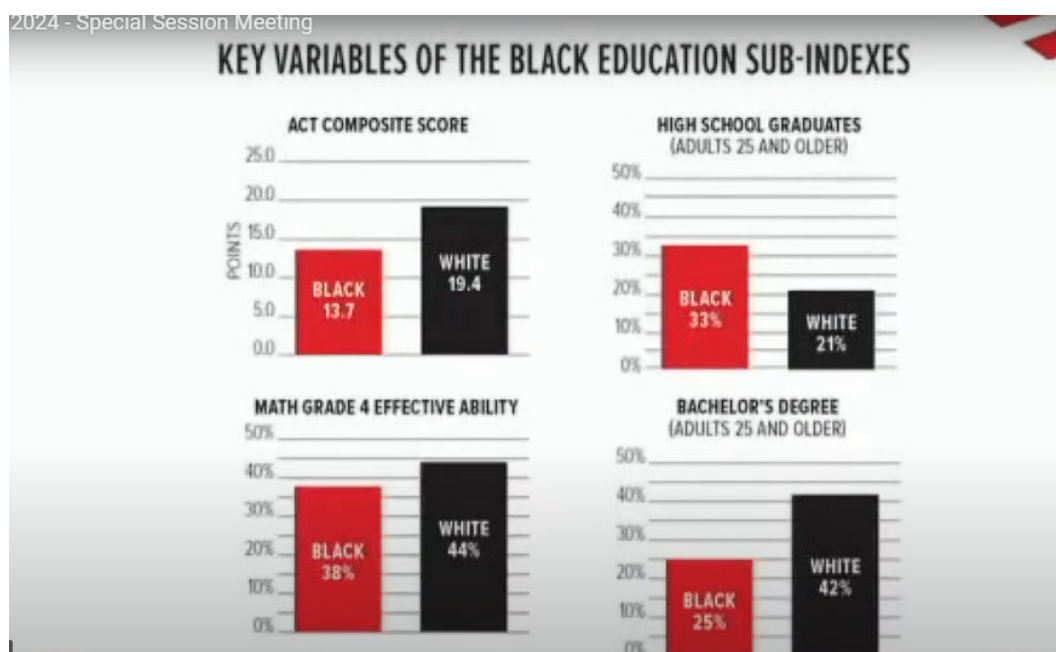
of employment opportunities. You see here the numbers of male unemployment rates and female unemployment rates of people of color and then, of course, youth unemployment. Those even—I think the key takeaway or learning thing here that I’ve seen over the years as we’ve done this work is that African Americans no matter what the state of the economy is, even in a full employment economy, we tend to be one to two times and during an inflationary period when we went through the great recession, we were three to four times more unemployed than our White counterparts. The full employment economy that we’ve been experiencing here for the past few years has been one to one and a half times more unemployment rate by comparison.



When we publish this we like to share recommendations when we’re spotlighting outcomes. We also like to talk about what are some of the things that we can do to mitigate these challenges. Here we list—these are like bullet points here, but the full recommendations you will find at the end of Economics, that section in the book. You’ll see the more detailed recommendations on how to address the economic disparities in Black Kansas City.



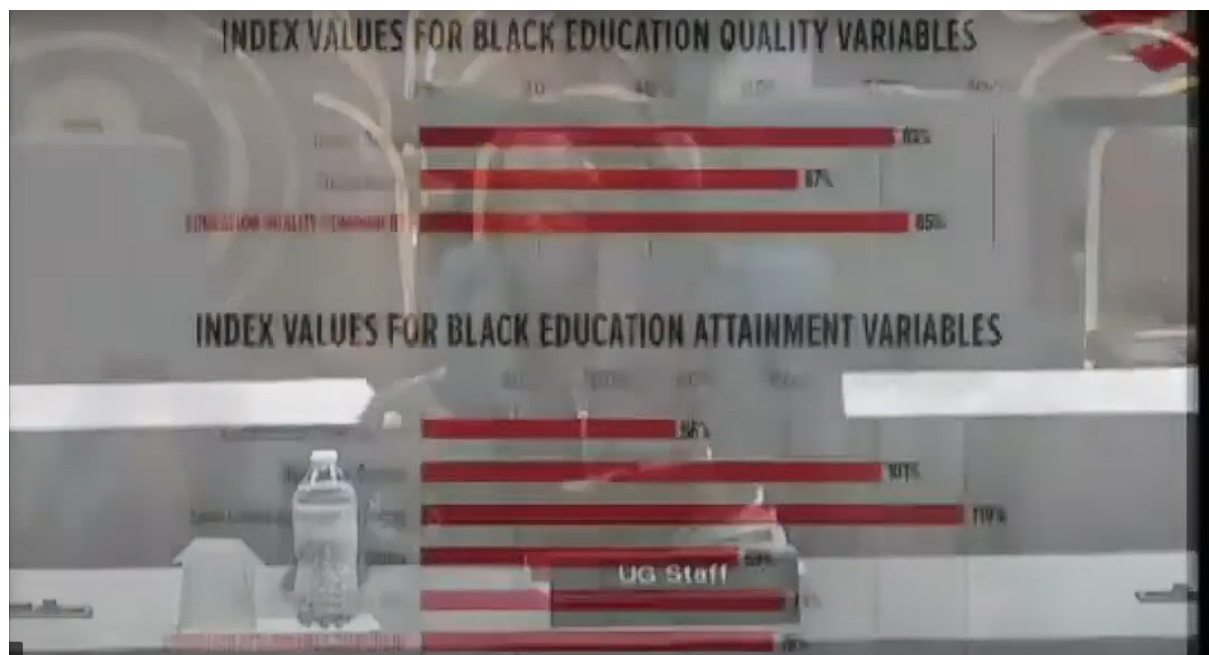
Then we'll move on to Education. We look at education quality in terms of teacher quality. Attainment is the ability—the rate at which African Americans persist through college, test scores, ACT test scores and the enrollment so we have high enrollment and then we look at student status and risk factors.



When we look at the ACT test, which in general has been in the past, prior to the pandemic most colleges and universities required an ACT test to determine college eligibility or admission to

college. The average score that is required or was when they stopped requiring it during the pandemic, they're no longer—many of them no longer now require an ACT score, but you still need one if you want to get access to scholarships. We try to encourage our students to take it anyway because it's also a good predictor of a student's ability to successfully matriculate college. These numbers are appalling and you know that the average ACT score for African Americans is 13.7 and it's 19.4 for Whites. Now, that's not a good score for Black or White. The basic number should be the—22 is the score that colleges and universities used to determine if you were eligible for full admission and a student presenting or applying with an ACT score lower than 22 could most likely be provisionally admitted to college and, therefore, required to take remedial courses. So, pretty much, you get out of high school, unprepared academically, you get accepted to college, but you're actually now paying college tuition for (inaudible) to complete your high school education for at least a semester or two, so the economic impact of this is also significant.

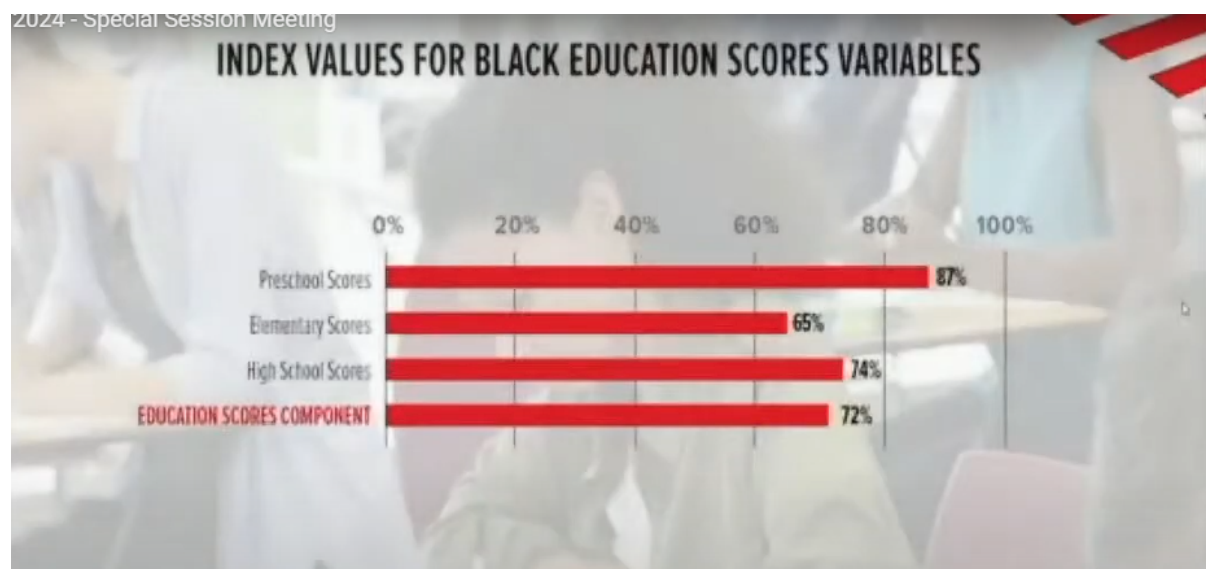
Then, you look at, you know, we do well in graduation rates from high school but we see a much lower rate when we talk about persisting through college for adults 25 and older. Then, this math grade for Grade 4, those numbers are also low. In the education section I encourage you to read that if that's an interest for you. There are several essays there that speak to the fact that for all students in the greater Kansas City area, and we did a study in our previous publication, we really—the theme focused more on education so we did a deeper dive there. The overall performance for kids in the greater Kansas City area be they in public school, be they in publicly funded charter schools is our academic outcomes are not good for any of them, but African American children are at the bottom of the academic well. We need to do a whole lot of work on education and we need to also address those disparity gaps in education at the same time. Everybody's education needs to be improved. We're in a global economy, a high-tech economy and our kids are not getting the best education irrespective of race, it's just we get the worst of that.



When you look at this one of the—you know we look at areas such as teacher quality as much as student attending school in a urban district. Public schools tend to have more teachers teaching who lack the credentials in the subject areas that they're teaching. That's one of the teacher quality indicators and far too often that occurs in public schools and especially schools that are highly populated with children of color and low income students. So those are some of the areas there. Of course quality is important. Students who are taught by well-trained, highly educated teachers who are certified to teach in the subject matter that they're teaching, who hold students accountable to high expectations and high standards who do not dumb down the curriculum, who teach to hold the bar high and expect students to reach it, the outcomes for those children academically are much better. What tends to happen in our schools is the dumbing down of the curriculum because somehow people believe that there's a correlation between poverty and the brain's ability to function, which is so not true.

There are data's that show that students, and particularly African American students, who are taught under these conditions equal or exceed the performance of their White counterparts. They have to have good teachers, good curriculum, rigorous coursework and that needs to be embedded in all schools. All children need to be taught in that manner so it's important to understand these things so that as in your role as public servants that you can be strong advocates for getting better education outcomes out of our public schools.

If you look at the education attainment that we talked about in terms of the number of students—people, I’m sorry, of color with high school diploma’s and that Associates Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, those numbers that are all tied to the attainment information that I mentioned previously.



These preschool scores, elementary, high school; we’re lagging in those areas and so early education is also another variable that is really important to improving the overall outcomes for children. We need to do a whole lot more pre-K work in our education systems and so we’re really strong advocates for that. We operate a tutoring program at the Urban League every Wednesday, free tutoring, for students K-12. We do baseline assessments when the kiddos come in to begin their tutoring with us and post the pandemic we’ve been just really devastated by the fact that so many of our kids are arriving for tutoring three and four years behind grade level. The pandemic had a major negative impact on the academic achievement of our kids, so if there’s anything you can do here at the Unified Government to invest in programming that supports tutoring in the community because the schools or some are overburdened. We do need to provide that support where we can, so we do that and we have large turnout engaged parents wanting their kids to improve and we need those community inputs to help with that.

These factors here, the number of people—children living in poverty and the high school dropout rates, all these things we consider them to be risk factors. These are things that when you talk about poverty and how that can impact a household. You have a single parent or two parent

households with folks who would fall in the working poor category. What we find at the Urban League is oftentimes there's this assumption that people are not wanting to work, but we provide a lot of support for people that we consider to be working poor. They're underemployed. They're not earning livable wage income, they're struggling to make ends meet, but they're working. Then, because they're working more than one job, they're not able to be at home to provide the other supports that the children need to help with homework and all of those things. All of these risk factors impact the overall education outcomes, but poverty is a key indicator in that challenge.

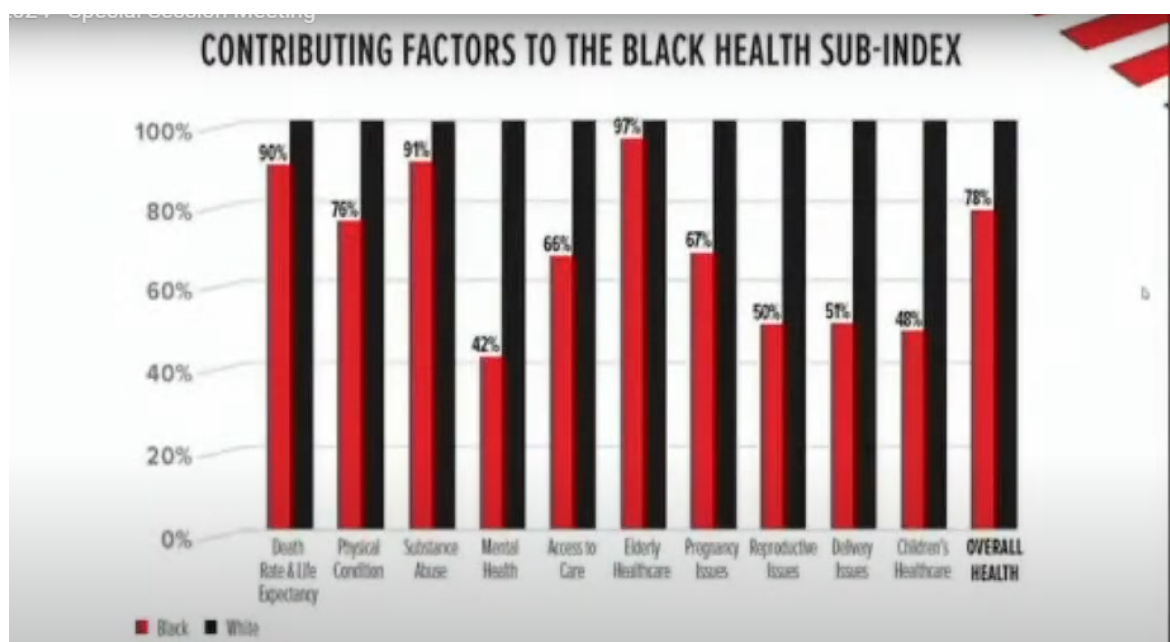
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING EDUCATION DISPARITIES IN BLACK KANSAS CITY

- Develop an equity policy that will guide the work of the school district and hold all staff accountable.
- Adopt staff evaluation tools which include equity standards and metrics.
- Develop an equity-centered curriculum resource evaluation tool to use when selecting, reviewing, or adopting instructional resources.
- Develop a district-wide equity evaluation tool that will address the following:
 - Assess the extent to which educational equity aspects are evident within your school district.
 - Evaluate the presence and effectiveness of educational equity measures within the school district.
 - Identify opportunities and areas for potential growth in advancing educational equity.
- Eliminate subjective discipline infractions from the school district's code of student behavior.
- Cultivate a data-sharing culture within the school district, disaggregating student attendance, behavior, and academic data by subgroups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING EDUCATION DISPARITIES IN BLACK KANSAS CITY (CONTINUED)

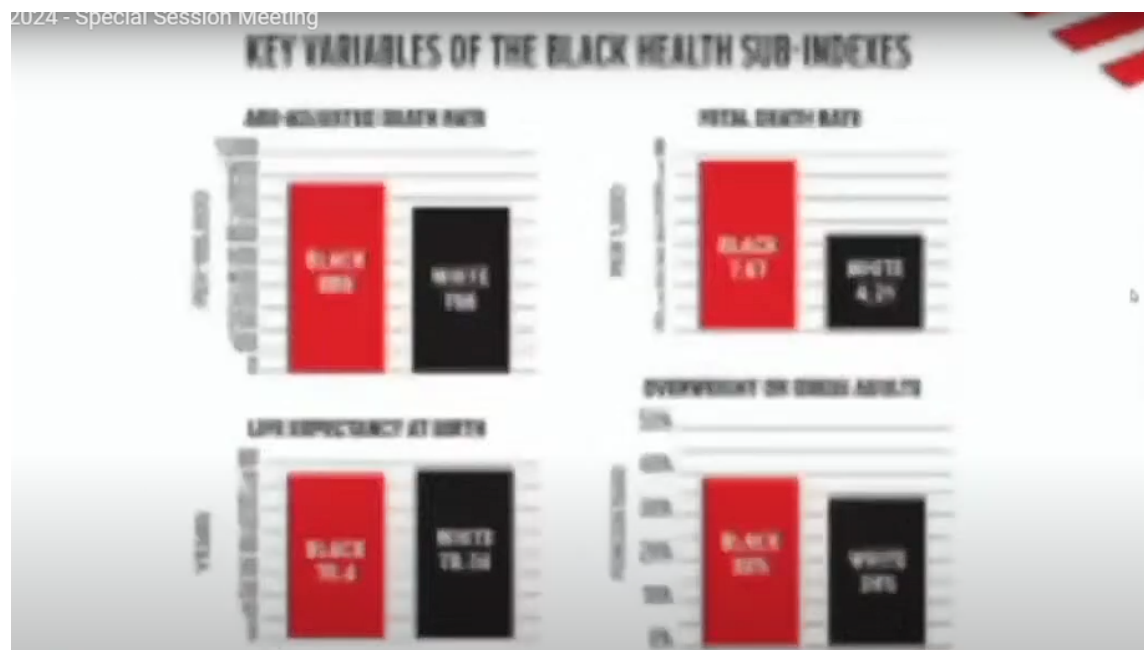
- Diversify the teacher workforce.
- Districts should establish policies that promote and safeguard diversity among students, educators, and staff.
- Promote the expansion of Grow Your Own (GYO) programs statewide, offering incentives to GYO program graduates who choose to teach in "hard-to-staff" schools.
- Grant flexibility to student teaching programs to accommodate non-traditional students who must balance work commitments with their student-teaching responsibilities.
- Develop initiatives that incentivize the recruitment and hiring of educators residing and working within the neighborhoods where they will teach.

We have numerous recommendations for addressing education disparities. We have a couple pages of those, so take a look at those at your leisure. This would be great reading before bedtime especially if you have insomnia. I find it fascinating, but it would probably put some of you to sleep.

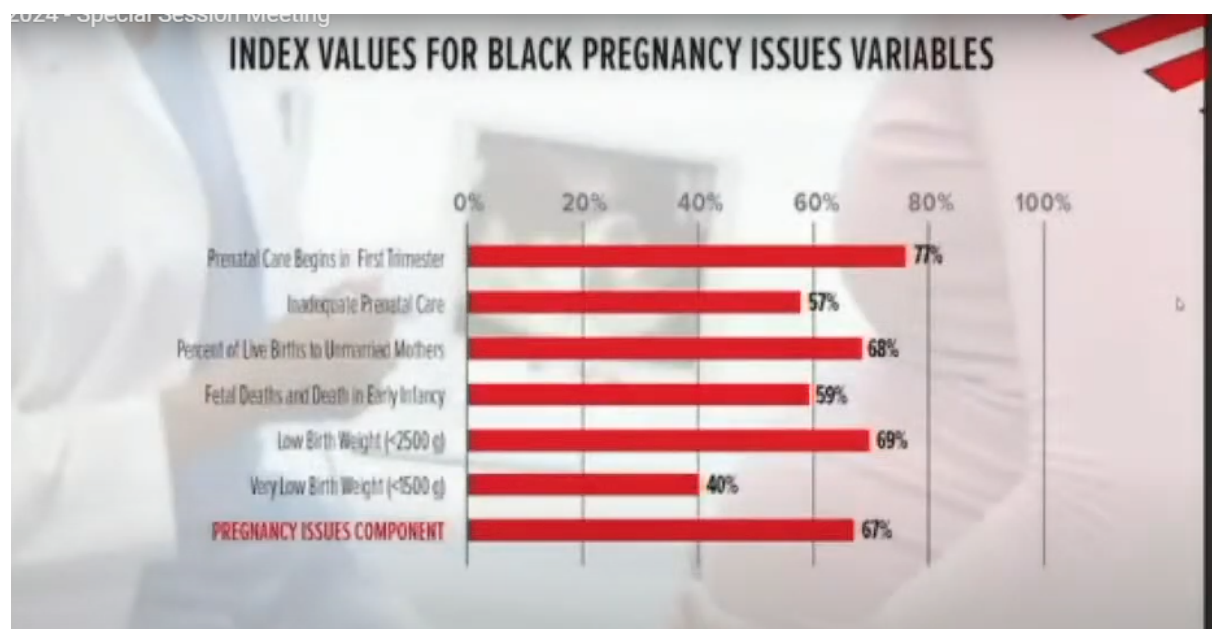


If we move on to Health, these are the contributing factors for the Health Sub-Index. There are a number of them there. We'll just take a quick look here. The same for the Hispanic community.

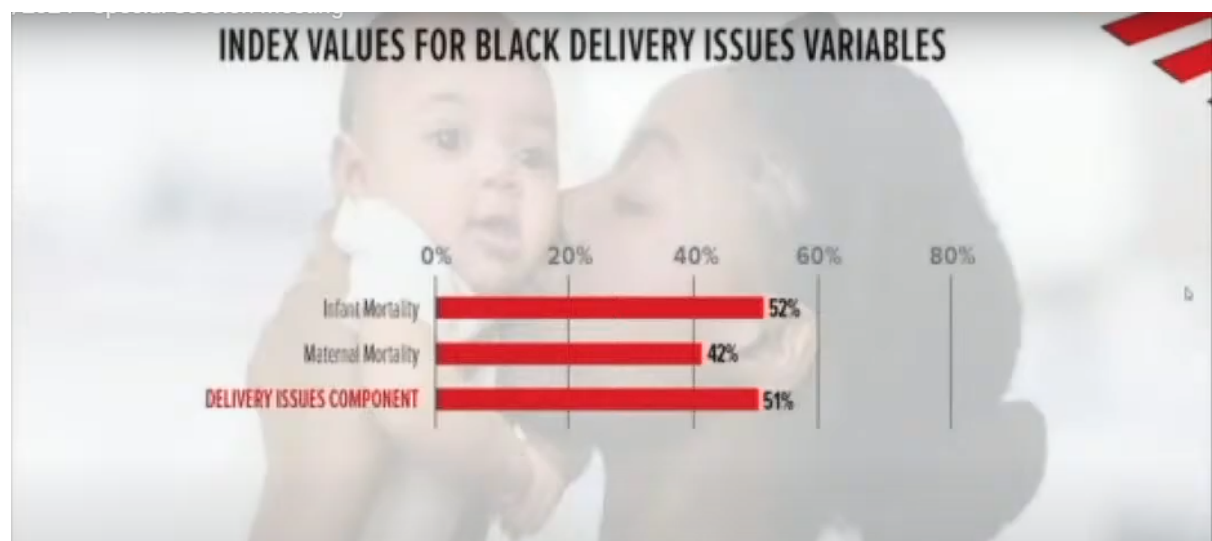
This is one area where overall health, the Hispanic community, outperforms Whites and Blacks in all these key areas.



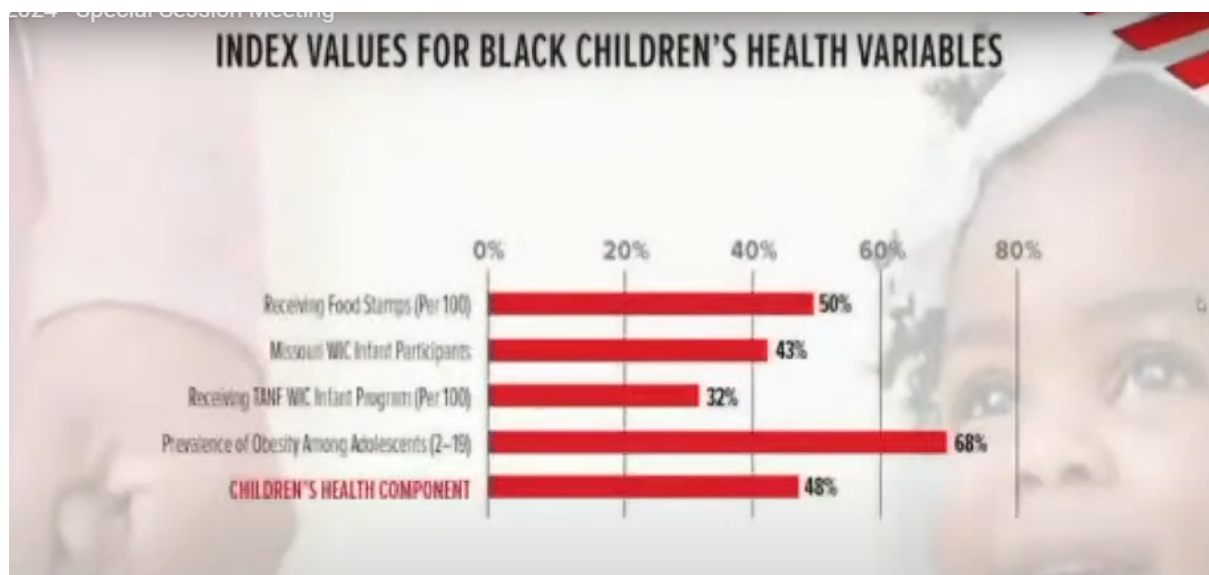
Some of the key variables we're looking at is the death rate, the fetal death rate, Black maternal health issues are a major concern for us and the fetal death rates we're looking to put a lot more emphasis on that to see how we can provide more support to assist Black moms so that we can address especially the maternal health issues. There's a lot of disparities in terms of Black women dealing with maternal health and a lot of it has been tied from research by the National Institute of Health that there is a correlation between poverty living in distressed communities, racism and all these things that contribute to the outcomes that Black women experience relative to health.



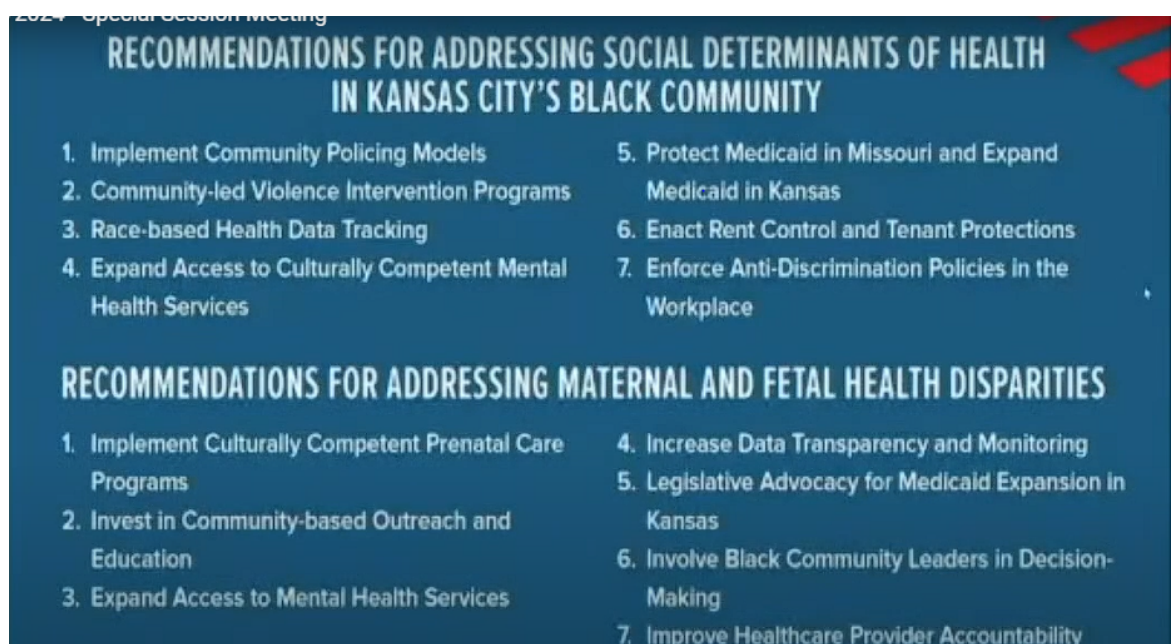
This looks at the Black Pregnancy Issues, inadequate prenatal care, low birth weights, all of those things. We need to do a lot more work there.



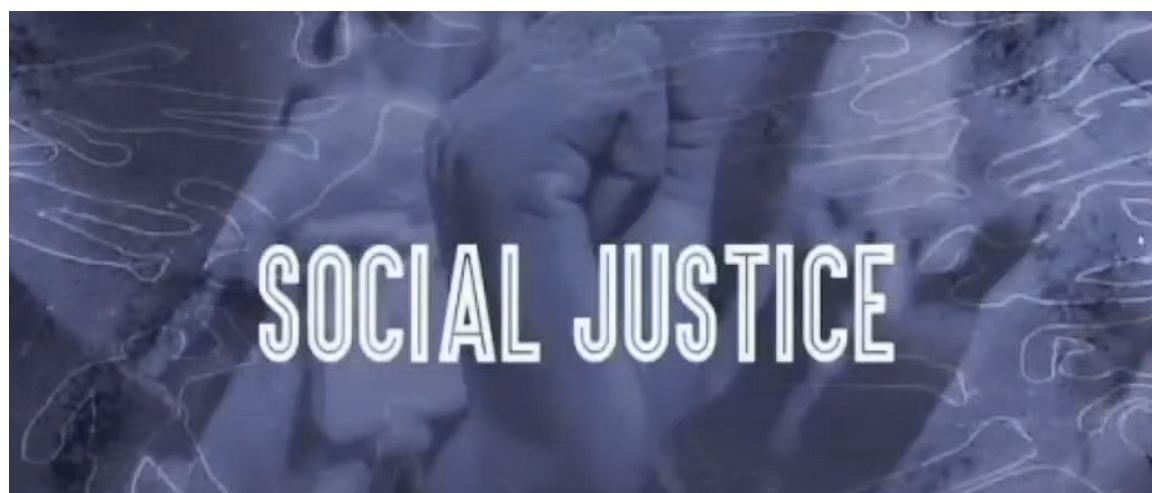
Delivery issues, the maternal mortality rate and the infant mortality rate.

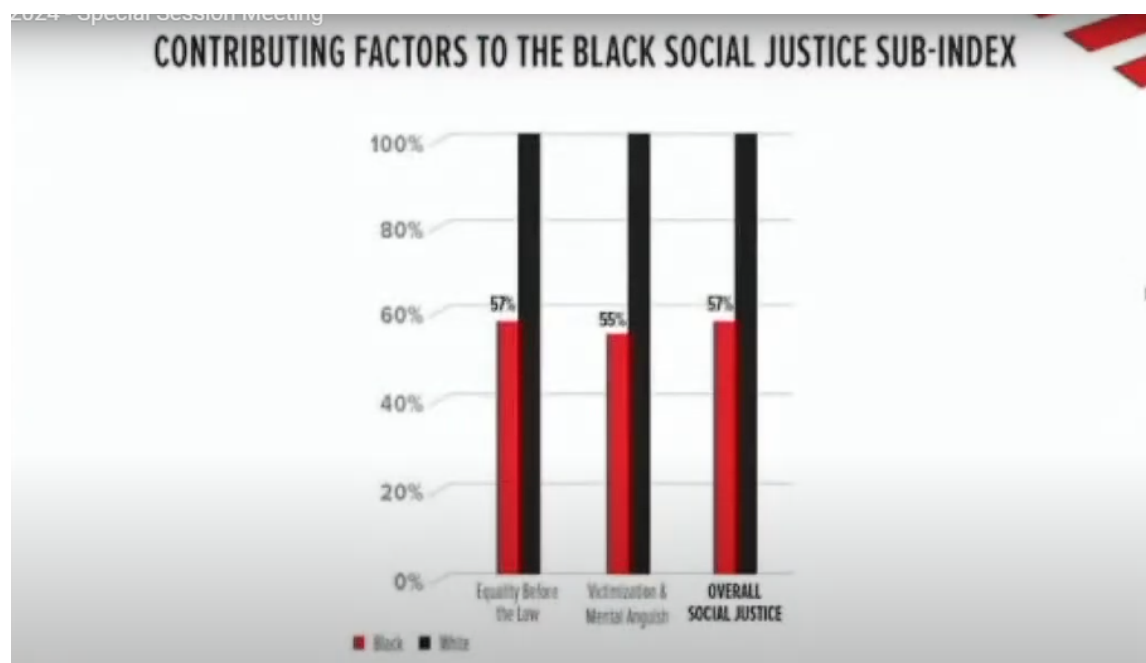


Our health for our Black children, the number of children here—you know receiving food stamps, it still gets to be economics and when I was sharing that longitudinal chart earlier and talking about how the least progress has been made in economics, well you know, in my view economics is the great indicator. When we achieve economic growth, then when you have financial means, when you have financial resources at your disposal then you can make choices, you have options, you have economic mobility. You can choose a better school, you can purchase a home, you can live in a better community. All those things are tied to economic growth, but neither of these economics and education are all—like can stand alone, but we need to make a whole lot more economic growth to catch up and to close this gap and it impacts everything else in terms of quality of life.

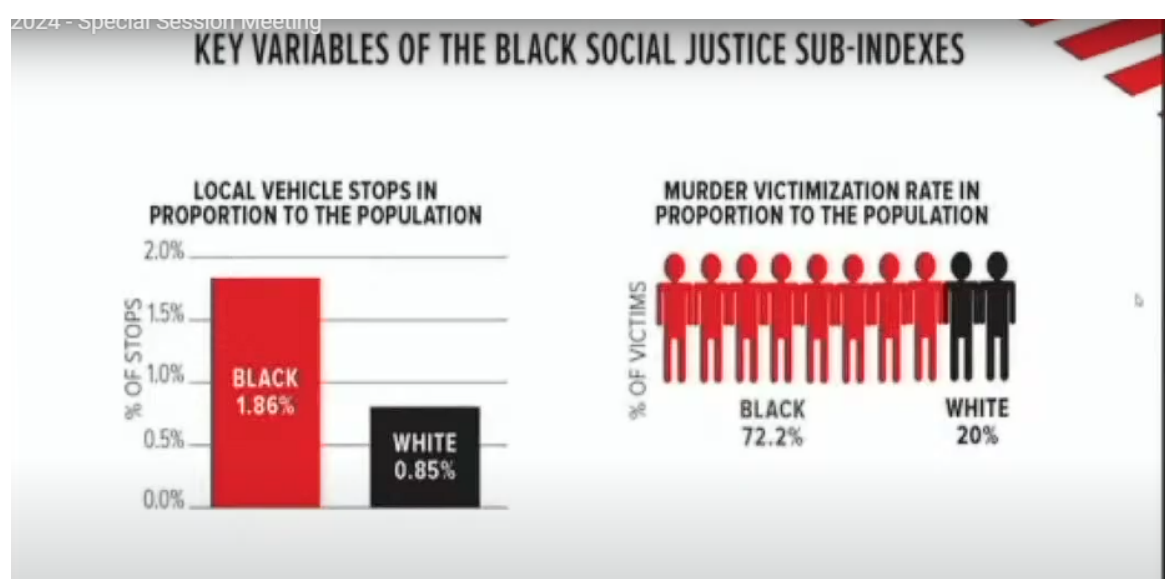


Here we have numerous recommendations around health and even specifically maternal and fetal health disparities.



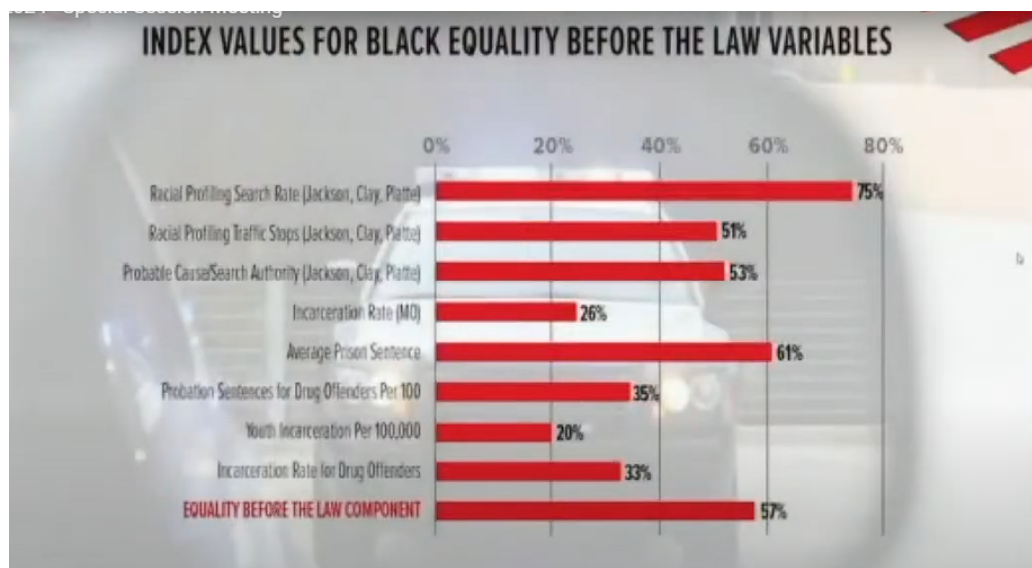


Then Social Justice, that's the other area where we have made the least amount of progress and we have seen a lot of regression and, quite frankly, when we've been doing this study locally since 2006 we did see, you know, after George Floyd and other issues, that situation did not improve when we completed this study for 2023. We look at two primary things here, equality before the law and victimization and mental health and that's the overall social justice factor.



The theme of this book is from redlining to chalk lines. The cost of economic injustice—one of the reasons that we took that approach that we went this route was because of the high rates of

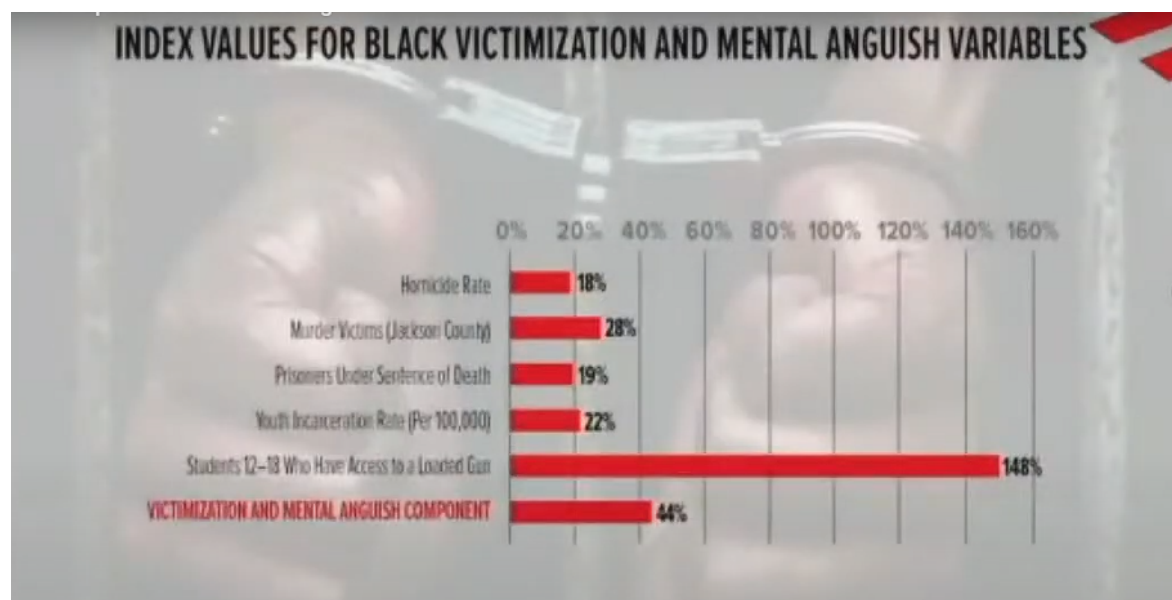
urban violence. We talk about from redlining to chalk lines to show the relationship between the economic challenges and the violent outcomes. I strongly encourage you to read about that because it'll certainly put that in context for you. Black people are not inherently violent. We're not born inherently violent. In fact you will read in here—there's an essay in here that speaks about a study that was done that shows that under the very same conditions, White people, the outcomes will be the same. When you lock people into enclaves of poverty and hypersegregation without opportunities to get out, then these are the outcomes of that. It's not something that's tied to Black people or those people. It applies to anyone who was trapped into adult situations, that's the outcome you'll get. It's important to still come back to how are we dealing with the outcomes of redlining and the policies that's been in place in this country for years.



Then we look at local vehicle stops, which is your racial profiling, but this murder victimization rate, you know, like you know people talk about there's so much Black on Black crime, well you know there's Black on Black crime in Black neighborhoods and White on White crime in White neighborhoods. It's not like Black on Black crime is something that's totally locked in with White people. It's about reading this and understanding history, understanding policies, understanding why we get that outcomes that we're getting.

When you look at this racial profiling rate, we're two-thirds, two to three times more likely to be stopped while driving. Traffic stops, the searching, the incarceration rates, is we're disproportionately incarcerated in both Missouri and Kansas. Disproportionately meaning that

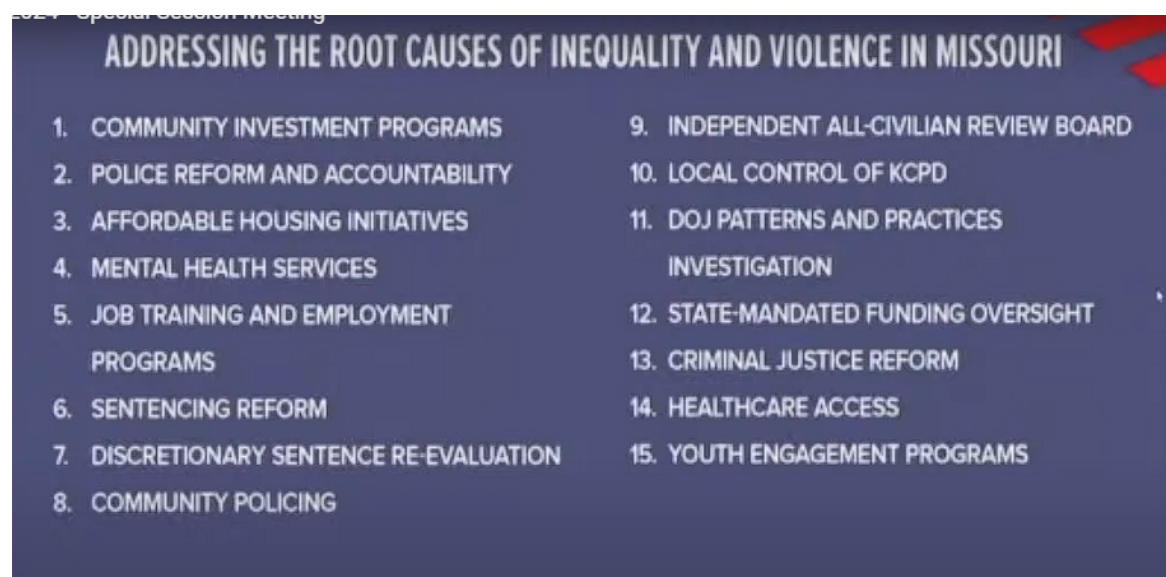
we're incarcerated at rates that exceed our share of the population. These numbers are just, you know, we've got a lot of work to do here in the justice and law area.



The homicide rates, the one that is most troubling, I don't know, do you all have concealed carry. I mean what are your gun laws because our gun laws in Missouri are just totally ridiculous. So, a juvenile can legally conceal and carry a gun in Missouri. **Someone** was inaudible. **Ms. Grant** said same here in Kansas. Some outcomes we're seeing with the gun violence in our community a lot of it is taking place—these are young people. These are a lot of juveniles carrying guns, assault weapons and they can legally carry them. **Someone** was inaudible. **Ms. Grant** said a rifle, okay, well according to our—the way I understand it, the juveniles can carry. They're carrying weapons and under 18 they can carry a gun that might not be an assault weapon. Is that the same over here? **Someone** was inaudible. **Ms. Grant** said same over here. **Ms. Grant** said the juveniles can carry. **Commissioner Lopez** said I believe the juveniles are carrying any weapon. I think you had to be 18 to purchase a shotgun or a rifle and 21 to purchase a pistol and I believe you've got to be 18 even to buy ammo. **Ms. Grant** said students 12 to 18 who have access to a loaded gun, now they're carrying them, they've got access to them whether they can legally carry them or not, this number right here ought to scare the pants off of everybody because you got folks whose brains are not fully developed, who cannot make sound judgment or decisions with weapons and you know can take a life. We've got to do something about that and it's a challenge because

the law in Missouri and Kansas does not—you know like the folks don't get the fact that in the urban communities we don't need all these guns.

Our legislatures though are pro-gun. I'm not an anti-gun ownership. I just think that we got to have—we don't need everyone walking around with assault weapons and on these clips that can fire off several rounds before you even know what happened. The young men that were involved in the shooting at the Chief's celebration, these triggers on these things like the guy was so sorry he didn't realize, but just the hair trigger and boom so many rounds have been fired. Now his life is ruined, lives have been taken, people have sustained injuries, it's just we've got to do something to control in that area.



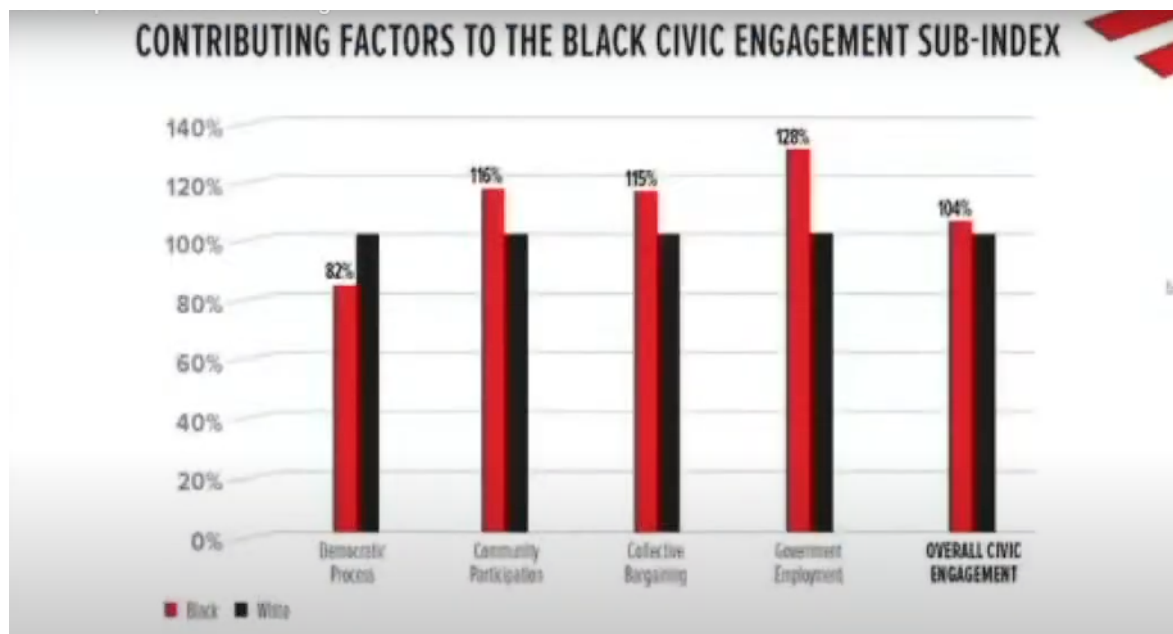
One of the things that we've talked about at the Urban League, it's not on here as a recommendation, but one that we're going to be digging into as we go forward is that we're not going to bury our heads in the sand and think that folks are going to stop this love affair they have with their guns. We certainly do want to do a better job of educating people about gun ownership, and the safety factors, and to lock up your weapons, keep them out of the hands of children as that previous stat shows, like they have access to them. So, how do we address that. We're going to give out gun locks and put them in backpacks and just make sure that they go home and that we're not showing judgment. We just want to get people to do better and to be safer if they own them.

We also learned that a lot of folks own guns and they think they're storing them safely and then you find out when you probe a little bit deeper, they're really not. They think, oh no, my gun

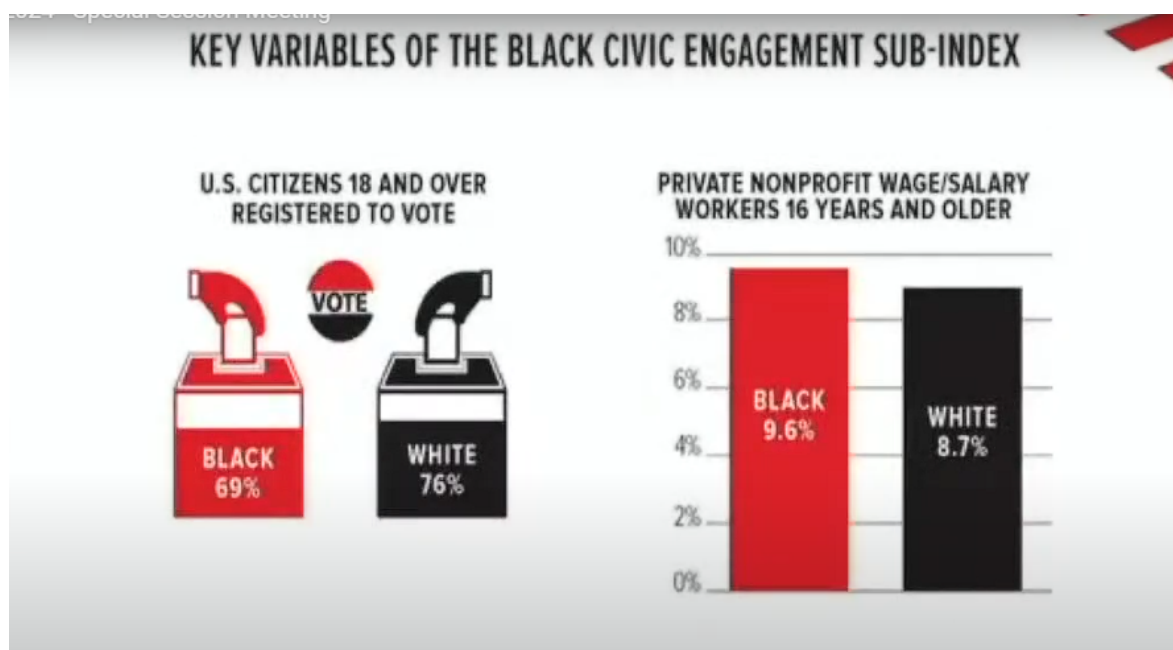
is safe and then you ask where do you keep it, then when they tell you where they keep it, you're like and so you really think that, that's not safe. It needs to have a gun lock on it and it needs to be put in something that is locked up and then it needs to be out of the reach of children. So, all of those things and a lot of folks don't go that far so we want to do a little bit more educating around that.

These are some of the recommendations we have to address violence and to get to violence reduction you got to get to root causes and that's investing in stronger education, health, access, all of those other indicators addressing having livable wage jobs and ways for people to get out of poverty without feeling like they have to break the law to do that to earn a good living. There are a number of things, mental health support, all of those things here to address the root causes of violence and crime.





With Civic Engagement we look at participation in the democratic process, collective bargaining and government employment. Overall we tend to excel in these areas.



We look at the difference in terms of who's voting and then non-profits, wage earners, and we tend to be more likely people of color or employed in non-profit and government jobs, which as a whole pays less than corporate jobs.



These are our Civic Engagement recommendations and I think that wraps it up. We have the book. Any questions or comments?

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said, Ms. Grant, thank you for the presentation. It's very informative. At this time I'll open it for questions.

Commissioner Ramirez said thank you for the presentation. A lot of good information. It's good information for us to have so that when—for me specifically, as I go through and we make these decisions I can make them through a lens of equity, through an equity lens, so it's good to have this information.

There's two pieces that I want to touch on. One is education and that's my field, that's my career, what I do every day. The student population I teach are students with learning disabilities, specifically language-based learning disabilities. Most of our students have dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyscalculia and we know students with the learning disabilities are already underrepresented within our education system, but when you throw in being part of a minority group, I'm sure it is much higher. So, my question is—you know one of the things on the presentation about students who have disability and then education, but how do you believe that the minorities that go untested for learning disabilities is much higher. **Ms. Grant** said sorry, say that again. **Commissioner Ramirez** said the students who are part of a minority group and do you believe that a high percentage of those who go untested without getting diagnosed with a learning disability? **Ms. Grant** said yes. I don't have—I can't give you numbers, but I can tell you that we formed a

program—we have what we call a Parent Education and Empowerment Center at the Urban League. Our focus in that is to support parents with children with special needs and oftentimes we have to be the advocate with those parents to get the schools to actually assess the children and then to also challenge them relative to if they are on an IEP Plan or 504 Plan to evaluate that plan to make sure that child is getting the testing and the support that they need.

What we find is that—what I feel that the number of students who are being tracked, special ed like there's disparities there that maybe they don't all need to be tracked as special ed, but there's also certainly a challenge relative to those students who do have special needs actually getting equitably the attention and the support that they need.

Commissioner Ramirez said you also brought up another point to that. Not just in students or minorities going untested, but also those who are also under diagnosed and it happens. It's not just a minority, it happens to all racial groups, but it's shows because—I'll speak for my culture being a Latino. It's kind of when it comes to learning disabilities or mental health we kind of just push it to the side. We just say do your best, you can do it. We don't really take the time to take our children to go get tested from health or tested for learning disabilities because, again, it goes back to the societal and economic times that we're in and we're put in as minority groups. I just wanted to pick your brain on that because that's just me. That's my world, that's what I live with and work with every day and I'm very passionate about it.

The other point that I wanted to ask about and maybe Irene can help because I know her past and her work in our Hispanic group or community. Why was it that net worth was higher for Hispanics than it was for our African Americans. What is it in the metro where that percentage is higher and where the Hispanic community may be doing better in the net worth than African Americans. Is there reasons? **Ms. Grant** said I don't know. I think the data comes from both that they're looking at the exact same data sources are the same for both populations, so I don't know. I guess we'd have to go back and look a little bit closer and maybe compare what's happening, but it's probably in the home ownership areas where that's determined in wealth and economics. I'd have to ask the researchers to maybe—who could maybe unpack that a little bit deeper, but even on—like we have these outcomes from the national level, so even our outcomes tend to mirror so it's not just exclusive to Kansas City or the greater Kansas City area. It's on a national level as well that Hispanics are slightly outpacing Blacks in terms of overall wellbeing, but which one, I don't know for sure.

Commissioner Townsend said I look forward to reading the book. I had questions about how these statistics were derived and are they—is the methodology, not the numbers, but is the methodology the same that they use in the Kansas City area, the Urban League as you would use anywhere, Philadelphia, Texas, San Francisco? **Ms. Grant** said so, I'm sorry, I'll let you finish. **Commissioner Townsend** said you can start with that. Say some of the early stats, they were sharing disparities in housing, education, jobs. Where do those numbers come from? **Ms. Grant** said you can go to our website and we published the entire—for people who want to get down into the weeds and numbers. We stopped putting all of that in here because it costs a lot to do that, but all of the data that is condensed into this executive summary is available on our website, so can go in and it lists all the data sources. A lot comes from the census and other sources. As I stated early on in the presentation, the National Urban League worked with, I think, the company way back then was Global Insights or somebody. I'm not sure, you know, but they came up with the methodology and established a methodology for us to do the Black, White Index. The university—the research teams that we use locally use the exact same methodology. As they change awaiting at the national level, then our researchers change the way in here, but it's all done by economists folks with PhD's in their field and experienced researchers. We don't do the research. I don't do the research. We have those educators and economists and those people do the research and all the data, but we make it available publicly and so if you want to go to our site and if you Google—I mean if you go to our website and you click on this page, the index, the entire index should be there, so it'll show you every number across every category in the data source. **Commissioner Townsend** said okay. I think I will look into that. That's just interesting.

One of the last slides that you showed made reference to the gun violence and I just jotted down very quickly the 12 to 18 year old category access to guns and it showed 148%. What does that mean? **Ms. Grant** said here again that's what I'm saying that you go to the data sources on the index. It will show you everything that's tied into that to address that. But, basically, if it's 148 that means that over in our Black community those kids—that the percentage of folks with access to guns. What I generally do with the disclaimers—like I'm not an economist so I don't do the data. I don't do the research and I can certainly tie you to those people who can answer those research type questions for you. **Commissioner Townsend** said well, it wasn't so much about the source, but just what the information meant, 148% of what. I mean they're sad statistics, but what

they mean. **Ms. Grant** said I can't recall it, but in that thing like there's a—it's written up what it is and I just can't pull it up for you right now. **Commissioner Townsend** said thank you.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said last question so we can get to the Chambers.

Commissioner Davis said thank you for coming over and for this presentation. It was very insightful. I was looking through you all's website and I was just kind of curious because I would hope that this wouldn't be the last time that we see the Urban League kind of active in our community. I know you all offer a variety of programs of various initiatives. Do you all offer any current programming in Wyandotte County or do you have Wyandotte County residents that are partaking in the programs that you offer? **Ms. Grant** said yeah, we have several students who attend Wyandotte County schools, attend KCK schools who come to our tutoring program. We have folks who come to the Urban League for employment assistance who live in Wyandotte County and we certainly—we have a young man on our staff who was involved in some of the community organizations because we're wanting to increase our presence in Wyandotte County. We can't afford to have a satellite operation here, but we do want to increase our outreach to get folks involved in some of the programs that we have particularly those—our employment programming and our education programming. The support we have for students and for parents. Our Workforce Development Program is very robust in getting folks employed. We focus on livable wage jobs. Missouri just passed the \$15 minimum wage bill the other day in the election, but we have been focused on \$15 as a minimum wage or livable wage so we do not refer people to jobs that don't have livable wage (inaudible). Our average wage displacement is like \$19.60 some odd cents per hour. We have a Construction Workforce Program that we're trying to increase the numbers of African Americans employed in the construction industry getting them access to apprenticeship, getting them into the trades because those are high paying jobs and breaking down some of those barriers that have existed for years relative to getting into the construction industry and getting into the trades. It's been a big (inaudible). **Commissioner Davis** said that's great. **Ms. Grant** said we're trying to overcome those barriers.

Commissioner Davis said the last thing I'll say is we—a lot of my colleagues and myself have talked a lot about the importance of supporting minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, locally-owned businesses here, Black businesses and so I know we are going through

a study. I don't know where we are in that study to kind of see how we can right size all of those requirements, particularly as we do business as Unified Government, but then for economic development projects, but please do send those folks our way because we would love to continue to contribute and expand our economy particularly when it comes to those communities in need. **Ms. Grant** said we did a Making Black Businesses Better initiative for three years starting with the pandemic and the primary purpose was to prevent or to help keep these Black businesses from having to shut their doors during the pandemic. We provided services and support and micro grants for them for that period and I know there's at least one or two that are based here in Wyandotte County that have been in that program and that we have supported for several years even during that time. So, yeah, we do continue to do that as well. The brochure that you have just gives you the highlights of our programs, of all the programs that we offer and we certainly would look forward to an opportunity to partner with you to address the challenges that we face as it relates to equitable outcomes, how to get to equitable outcomes.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said thank you Ms. Grant. We sincerely appreciate the presentation. I know if we had more time, it—I would ask if you have any questions, please reach out. Ms. Grant, if you have a card or a contact number, please leave it and make sure that the commissioners that have an interest are able to reach you.

That brings us to the end of our presentation this evening. With no further business to come before the governing body, I will adjourn this special meeting. Do I have a motion?

Action: Commissioner Bynum made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to adjourn. Roll call was taken and there were seven "Ayes," Townsend, Ramirez, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

**MAYOR PRO TEM BURROUGHS AJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 6:48 p.m.**

Monica L. Sparks
Unified Government Clerk

dt

November 7, 2024