

March on Washington Anniversary Inspires Actions to Shrink Inequality Gaps

Fifty-seven years ago, 250,000 Americans came to Washington, D.C. for the March on Washington, led by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rick Wade, the Chamber's vice president of strategic alliances and outreach, writes in *The Hill* about an overlooked purpose for the march in 1963: [Reducing inequality of economic opportunity](#).

Big picture: “The opportunity to obtain an education, secure a job, start a business, or provide for your family remains stubbornly determined by the color of your skin,” writes Wade. “For decades, Black unemployment rates have been consistently twice as high as white unemployment rates. Black students are twice as likely to attend high-poverty schools than their white peers, and Black business owners struggle to access capital for their ventures. Additionally, Black Americans are more likely than whites to be arrested, convicted and sentenced, making it more difficult, and sometimes impossible, to re-enter the job market and build a new and better life.”

Why it matters: Minority-owned small businesses are disproportionately affected by the pandemic, according to a [MetLife & U.S. Chamber report](#).

- They're more likely than non-minority owners to report difficulty obtaining loans (13% vs. 8%)
- More likely to express fears about permanently closing (66% vs. 57%)
- More likely to see declining revenue in the coming year (24% vs. 17%)

What we're doing: One way the Chamber is tackling these issues is by advancing smart legislation. “The U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently endorsed — and thus will score members of Congress on — [a package of bipartisan bills](#) that propose tangible solutions to start addressing injustices,” Wade notes.

ICYMI: Chamber CEO Tom Donohue joined the heads of four leading Black business associations in calling on America's leaders to take action in closing the opportunity gaps for Black Americans. Read the entire statement [here](#).