

Exclusive Preview: U.S. Chamber Launches National Initiative on Inequality of Opportunity

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce tomorrow will announce a national townhall on June 25th as part of an ongoing initiative to address inequality of opportunity through education, employment, entrepreneurship, and criminal justice reform.

“The senseless death of George Floyd has called renewed attention to the inequality and injustice in America. We stand in solidarity against racism and advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in our society and economy,” said Suzanne Clark, President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “As a nation, we must address this issue with a robust plan of action.”

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world’s largest organization representing businesses of all sizes across every sector of the economy, will fully leverage its federation of trade associations and state and local chambers by continuing this dialogue in local communities, and across industry sectors. Inspired by its mission to create jobs and grow the economy, the Chamber will announce initiative partners who, in addition to participating in the national townhall, will be hosting their own local and industry dialogues.

A national steering committee on this initiative is in development and initially represents leaders across industries and geographies, including:

- Glenn Hamer, President and CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- John Harmon, Founder, President, and CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey;
- Susan Neely, President and CEO of the American Council of Life Insurers;
- Vincent B. Orange, Sr., President and CEO of the DC Chamber of Commerce;
- Carlos Phillips, President and CEO of the Greenville (South Carolina) Chamber of Commerce; and
- Matt Shay, President and CEO of the National Retail Federation.

These steps will build on many of the Chamber’s recent efforts including support of the First Step Act, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s [Talent Pipeline Management Initiative](#), our partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation on the [Business Case for Racial Equity](#) and how best to achieve it, and our [collaboration](#) with historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

The unemployment rate is historically about twice as high for Black Americans as for white Americans. The combined impacts of the pandemic and economic crises have disproportionately hit disadvantaged communities, making this problem worse. The business community must work together on these challenges.

Clark continued, “The Chamber believes that the moral case for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace is indisputable, and there’s overwhelming evidence that greater diversity benefits the American economy, businesses, communities and employees. At the Chamber, we know what a job means to a family and to a community. We will leverage our expertise and relationships to help develop solutions that will enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in our economic system.”

Clark concluded, “We call on all business leaders to join us in creating equality in opportunity for all Americans.”