



## BET founder Robert Johnson addresses wealth disparities on Capitol Hill

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BET Founder Bob Johnson attends the Allen & Company Sun Valley Conference in Sun Valley, Idaho. (Photo by Scott Olson/Getty Images)

BET founder and billionaire businessman Robert L. Johnson met with black conservatives on Capitol Hill to address the significant wealth disparities in the black community and the staggering economic decline of black wealth in America. According to a recent report released from Brandeis University, “the wealth gap between white and African-Americans has more than quadrupled over the course of a generation.

What Johnson found even more disturbing is that African-American gains in education have not lessened economic barriers that impede the black community from building wealth. “To change this reality, we have to increase access to capital,” Johnson explained.

In his report, ‘Economic Empowerment in the Black Community,’ Johnson presented a five point policy initiative that would encourage investment in black businesses, alleviate tax burdens for low and middle income families and stop abusive payday loan practices.

First, he proposed a tax certificate program that would defer taxes on economic gains for majority owned companies that invest in minority businesses. In addition, he recommended that Treasury-back, “securitize

short-term borrowing or emergency loans made by minority banks or other lending institutions to black families.”

Johnson also suggested that there be a tax relief plan for low and middle income families earning less than \$250,000. Johnson’s plan would allow these families to “defer federal income taxes, without interest, provided tax deferrals are placed into a 401(k) type savings account which can only be drawn out at retirement or upon death at which time the government would be reimbursed for the deferred taxes.”

Johnson believes that the hyper partisan nature of the budget battle in Washington has drawn Americans into class warfare, making it even more difficult for minorities to make the necessary gains to close the current wealth gap.

“Those in society who are generating wealth are beginning to look askance at supporting those who they deem to be nonproductive. So you have one group opposing transfer payments in the form of entitlements and another group arguing that we have to protect entitlements.”

To see video of Robert Johnson’s remarks click [here](#).

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