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 **MGM RESORTS**
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Economic Empowerment Web Series:
Pt.1: Resiliency and Resurgence Amidst COVID-19

Partners:



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Featured Speaker:

Rick Wade – VP, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Rick C. Wade is vice president of Strategic Alliances and Outreach at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Wade develops and implements programs and initiatives to help the Chamber create new business relationships and partnerships across diverse audiences. He also provides counsel on policy issues and leads special projects. Wade's wealth of knowledge and experience in both the public and private sectors enable him to give a megaphone to the voice of business across the country and share the positive impacts of the free enterprise system.





U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**EQUALITY OF
OPPORTUNITY
INITIATIVE**

Equality of Opportunity Initiative

The Chamber launched the **Equality of Opportunity Initiative** to develop and advance data-driven business and policy solutions to bridge opportunity gaps and ensure that Black Americans and people of color have greater opportunities to succeed.

"As our nation undertakes a necessary conversation about systemic racism, we will listen thoughtfully and lead solutions to help ensure Black Americans and people of color have greater opportunities to succeed in the American enterprise system."

Suzanne Clark
President, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Local Voices

Our first step was to **listen and learn** – and we did that **on both a national and local level**. More **than 500 state and local chambers of commerce and associations** have stepped up to formally join the Equality of Opportunity Initiative. The Chamber and partners are powering a nationwide effort to advance economic inclusion across our society through business leadership.

Steering committee members include:

- Glenn Hamer, President and CEO, Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- John Harmon, Founder, President and CEO, African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey
- Susan Neely, President and CEO, American Council of Life Insurers
- Vincent B. Orange, Sr. President and CEO, DC Chamber of Commerce
- Carlos Phillips, President and CEO, Greenville (SC) Chamber of Commerce
- Matt Shay, President and CEO, National Retail Federation
- Geoff Freeman, President and CEO, Consumer Brands Association
- Bill Miller, President and CEO, American Gaming Association
- Jim Rooney, President and CEO, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
- Maria Salinas, President and CEO, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

Nationwide partners include:

- National Black Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Black Chambers, Inc., the National Business League, the Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship, the U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation (USPAACC)

National Conversation

On June 25, 2020, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted the **National Summit on Equality of Opportunity**, and convened leaders from across the private and public sectors discuss solutions to some of the underlying challenges driving inequality of opportunity for Black Americans.

Key speakers included:

- U.S. Chamber CEO Thomas J. Donohue
- U.S. Chamber President Suzanne P. Clark
- AT&T Chairman and CEO Randall Stephenson
- Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., MBA, President, Howard University
- Joel Wittenberg, Vice President and Chief Investment Officer, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Kareem Abdul Jabbar
- And many others



Research and Findings

Research and data were instrumental in building the Chamber's initial Equality of Opportunity Agenda. As part of our commitment to listen and learn we **built upon robust and exhaustive research to truly power our data-driven recommendations.**

Findings included:

- Black students are **twice as likely** to attend high-poverty schools than their white peers.
- Black Americans represent **12%** of the American workforce but only **9%** of workers in “high earning management and professional” positions.
- Black Americans represent **12%** of the labor force but only **9.4%** of business owners.
- Black Americans represent **27%** of arrests and **40%** of the incarcerated population, more than double and triple their proportion of the American population (13%), respectively.

The Agenda

Driven by data and informed by conversations with business, government, academic, and civic leaders, we developed this initial Equality of Opportunity Agenda to advance private sector solutions and best practices, scale impactful programs, and drive policy action at the federal, state, and local level to help close race-based gaps in four areas:

education, employment, entrepreneurship, and criminal justice.

THE AGENDA | CLOSING AMERICA'S EDUCATION GAP

Education Solutions

- Support More Equitable Educational Funding, Including Student-Based Approaches
- Improve K-12 Education Accountability
- Expand K-12 School Choice Options
- Promote Career and College Readiness
- Promote the “Soft-Skills” Necessary for Employment
- Close the Digital Education Divide
- Expand “Earn & Learn” and Credentialing Programs
- Improve Secondary Education Transparency

THE AGENDA | CLOSING AMERICA'S EMPLOYMENT GAP

Employment Solutions

- Promote Diversity in Corporate Leadership
- Utilize Data to Improve Workforce Diversity
- Target Federal Support to Persistently Impoverished Communities
- Promote Investment in Opportunity Zones
- Expand Tax Incentives for Employment in Opportunity Zones
- Support Pay-for-Performance Job Training Programs in Areas with High Unemployment
- Expand Talent Pipeline Management to Underserved Communities
- Expand Availability of Quality, Affordable Childcare
- Improve Minority Networks through Internships and Apprenticeships

THE AGENDA | CLOSING AMERICA'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP GAP

Entrepreneurship Solutions

- Increase Supply Chain Diversity
- Patronize Black-Owned Businesses
- Improve the Process for Minority Business Certifications
- Eliminate Unnecessary Occupational Licenses
- Support the Efforts of Minority Business Development Agency
- Improve Access to Capital
- Launch Pitch Competitions
- Entrepreneurial Education and SBA Assistance for Returning Citizens

THE AGENDA | ADDRESSING INEQUALITY IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Criminal Justice Solutions

- Improve Educational Opportunities for the Incarcerated
- Reform Occupational Licensing Restrictions
- Fair Chance Hiring
- Second Chance Hiring
- Reform Penalties for Unpaid Fines
- Clean State Reforms
- Restore Voting Rights

What's Next

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce this week will formally endorse — and thus, score members of Congress on — **a package of bipartisan bills** that would:

- Expand the availability of quality, affordable childcare
- Improve the process for minority business certifications
- Support the efforts of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)
- Improve access to capital
- Improve educational opportunities for the incarcerated
- Restore voting rights for convicted felons
- And more

More to Come

As we continue discussions on ways to bridge the opportunity gaps, the Chamber will work with its partners, members and coalitions to determine or enact:

- State policy recommendations
- Private sector solutions, programs, and best practices
- Future summits and events convening public and private sector leaders
- Additional efforts

Get Involved

Together, we can—and we must—turn national dialogue into nationwide action. We are committed to reclaiming and reaffirming the American promise of equal opportunity for all.

Please reach out to Rick Wade at Rwade@uschamber.com with any questions.

Visit USChamber.com/Equality-Initiative for more information.

Conversation Host:

Ken Evans – President, Urban Chamber of Commerce Las Vegas

Ken Evans is the President of the Urban Chamber of Commerce in Las Vegas, NV. He has over 35 years of varied technical, managerial and leadership experience plus has been a small business owner himself in several different business ventures. Since joining the Urban Chamber, he has forged new strategic alliances and better positioned small, diverse businesses to pursue procurement opportunities in new, emerging and existing global markets. Ken, a retired Lieutenant Colonel, also served as a Commander for Air Force engineering organizations in both Iraq and Afghanistan.



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 **MGM RESORTS**
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Economic Empowerment Web Series:
Pt. 2: Resiliency and Resurgence Amidst COVID-19
Tuesday, September 15: Farad Ali, CEO, Asociar