

THE CLAP BACK

 BLACK INNOVATION ALLIANCE



The Right Side of History:

Talking Points to Combat Disinformation

INSIDE:

Black communities have been raising their voices for ages, yet they keep facing the same questions about race and equality. BIA's Talking Points to Combat Disinformation is our firm reply. It's thoughtfully put together to tackle these ongoing issues, providing readers with a deep dive into historical context and critical insights, so every discussion is approached with confidence and thorough understanding.

Why focus just on Black people? Isn't that reverse racism?

In the 70s, when activists launched the Save the Whales campaign, people understood that the whales were under attack. They were being killed off due to overexploitation by the whaling industry. No one asked, "why aren't you focusing on all the sea animals?" or "All Marine Life Matters".

The lives and rights of Black people are continually under threat. The legacy of racial injustice lives on in this country. Causes for racial justice have always been on the right side of history, and will continue to be.

Slavery was a long time ago? Why do Black people use slavery as an excuse?

TALKING POINT #1

We are always expected to believe that history matters when it is something Americans are proud of. No one says, "WWII is history...why do we need to talk about that?" Or "The Constitution is old news. It doesn't matter anymore". Only when it comes to things Americans don't want to talk about does history become irrelevant.

The history of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation are not irrelevant. Americans have inherited "distorted rules of engagement" that create a permanent caste system. And that's the reality that we face today.

TALKING POINT #2

It's not even been a generation since explicit racism was written out of law. Alabama had anti-interracial marriage laws on the books as recently as 2000. No current-day adult will be alive in 2111 when Black Americans will have been free for as long as we were enslaved. Slavery is not an excuse. Like any other historical phenomenon, it is a historical reality that has set the course for the present day.

We live in a meritocracy. If Black people are behind, it's because they are not working hard enough.

TALKING POINT #1

Thanks to the legacy of racism in this country, the average white child enters the world with 10X the inherited wealth as the average Black child. Wealth purchases access. Access to quality schools. Access to safe and resourceful neighborhoods. Access to specialty sports. Access to personalized tutoring. Access to all the things necessary to provide competitive advantage.

There is no meritocracy in a place with rampant wealth inequality. All Americans don't start from the same place, nor have the same wind to their back.

TALKING POINT #2

In the United States, approximately **50%** of a father's income position is inherited by his son. Where is the merit in inheritance? Sounds like aristocracy to me. Meritocracy is a myth..

What do you mean by systemic racism? How can racism live in a system? Isn't racism about the decisions individuals make?

No, systemic racism is not about individual decisions but rather how society has been hardwired to maintain and sustain the racial caste system over hundreds of years.

It operates through networks, policies, norms, and practices that reinforce the status quo in this country, which is one of white supremacy, where Blackness is stigmatized and Black people marginalized. This [article](#) provides 100 data-based examples of how systemic racism plays out every day.

Potential question: Why should my company/foundation still care about DEI?

Foremost, diversity presents a competitive advantage. Research has proven that firms with diverse practices outpace their counterparts who choose not to prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

What we are witnessing today with the attacks on DEI efforts represents an unfortunate yet reliable historical pattern of backlash to racial progress and the changing demographics of our country. America is increasingly becoming a more diverse nation in a more inclusive world. The companies who embrace this future are more likely to thrive in it.

[For more information, check out McKinsey & Company's report, Diversity Wins: Why Inclusion Matters.](#)

Why do we always have to focus on race?

Racial progress has always set the pace for the advancement of other groups, whether women, LGBTQ, the disabled, etc. The Civil Rights Movement for instance, served as the “tip of the spear”, making it easier for other causes coming behind it to achieve traction, too. Supporting racial progress doesn't only help people of color but builds the foundation for a more free and just society overall.

Why focus our support on Black people versus any other group?

While other groups, like women and other people of color, experience discrimination, Black people have a very specific experience in this country. Black people are the only group once considered property.

It was written into the Constitution and into our laws. This has cast a deep, dark shadow, which results in our racial caste system.

To this day, race is the #1 determinant of life outcomes, with Black people reliably falling to the bottom. Our responsibility is to ensure everyone has access to the opportunity they need to live fulfilling lives. When human potential is maximized, societies thrive. History has shown that when Black people do better, we all do better.

[Read Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Ingrid Wilkerson to learn more.](#)

Why do we need racial equity efforts? Isn't choosing to benefit one group over another just a form of prejudice?

Despite common belief, we have never lived in a color-blind or race-neutral society. In her book Caste, Isabel Wilkerson describes American society as a play where everyone is assigned a role at birth.

She describes, “For generations, everyone has known who is center stage in the lead. Everyone knows who the hero is, who the supporting characters are, who is the sidekick good for laughs, and who is in the shadow, the undifferentiated chorus with no lines to speak, no voice to sing, but necessary for the production to work.”

Equal treatment in an unequal society freezes inequality in place. Racial equity efforts acknowledge the basic math that helping people catch up means directing additional energy and effort to those who have been left behind.

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Key Resources:

The Ever Growing Gap, Prosperity Now ([Link](#))

Big Takeaway: Definitive article on the current state of the racial wealth gap.

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents, Isabel Wilkerson ([Link](#))

Big takeaway: Nails language that clearly articulates the racial caste system in America.

Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ([Link](#))

Big takeaway: Dr. King offers some of his most

explosive language articulating the quintessential challenges driving racial injustice.

Building supportive ecosystems for Black-owned US businesses, McKinsey & Company ([Link](#))

Big takeaway: Makes a strong case for the importance of the work done by organizations like Black Innovation Alliance and the necessity of our ecosystem.

Stand up to injustice.