

OBAMA

ADMINISTRATION SCORECARD



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National
Urban League

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Throughout our history, the National Urban League has taken seriously our responsibility to hold the President of the United States accountable to the needs of urban America and communities of color. During the Great Depression, Executive Secretary Eugene Kinkle Jones served on President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet." Lester Granger, who headed the League during World War II, is among those credited with persuading President Harry Truman to desegregate the Armed Forces. Whitney M. Young advised presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and was instrumental in the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act. Urban League Presidents Vernon Jordan, John Jacob and Hugh Price continued our engagement with the Presidents with whom they served to further the work of civil rights and secure support for Urban League programs.

The National Urban League has regarded the first African American Presidency with special significance, not simply because of its trailblazing status, but also because of the unique conditions under which President Barack Obama took office and served his two terms. He inherited the worst economy since the Great Depression, and was faced with Congressional opposition unprecedented in its intensity and sinister nature. Both his accomplishments and his failures must be evaluated against those conditions.

In creating this scorecard, the National Urban League harkened back to the famous question Ronald Reagan asked the nation during his sole debate against President Jimmy Carter: "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" In this instance, the question is, "Is the nation better off than it was eight years ago?" And, "Is Black America better off than it was eight years ago?" The answer to both questions is, unequivocally, yes.

President Obama is leaving office with an approval rating even higher than Reagan's, exceeded only by Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and Bill Clinton. During Obama's presidency, the economy has added 15 million new jobs, and the jobless rate has dropped from 7.6% to 4.7% - and from 12.7% to 7.8% for African Americans. The high school graduation rate for African Americans has increased from 66.1% to 85%. There are 614,000 fewer long-term unemployed. Wages are up 3.4%. More than 16 million Americans who were uninsured now have health care coverage, with the uninsured rate for African Americans cut by more than half. Barack Obama's passion and steady hand made a huge difference in charting a progressive course and positively impacted the lives of ordinary Americans. Black Americans felt both the pride of his accomplishments and the pain when it was clear his opponents sought to diminish a great American. I am confident the long arc of history will judge him favorably.

While we scored many of the administration's achievements with our highest rating, "Superior," President Obama's tenure as a whole had shortcomings due to some notable missed opportunities and outright failures, such as the economic development of urban centers, gun violence and the foreclosure rate and bank closure rate in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. On these and other issues, we rated the Obama administration "Fair" or "Poor." Our evaluation springs from a consideration of his accomplishments balanced against the conditions under which he served. **The National Urban League has given the Obama Administration an overall rating of "Excellent," our second-highest rating.**

Sincerely,

Marc H. Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

Successes

Economic Growth

SUPERIOR

In eight years, America has gone from losing hundreds of thousands of jobs per month to an unprecedented 80+ consecutive months of job growth.

During President Obama's term, the private sector added 15 million new jobs, and the Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act is widely credited with protecting the nation from a second Great Depression.

The overall unemployment rate is below 5% for the first time in eight years.

In Jan 2009, the Black unemployment rate was 12.7% vs. whites at 7.1%; and as of December 2016, the Black rate stands at 7.8% vs. the white rate at 4.3%.

Reductions in African American Poverty Rate

EXCELLENT

The poverty rate for African Americans fell faster in 2015 than in any year since 1999.

While the poverty rate fell across all racial and ethnic groups this year, it fell 2.1 percentage points for African Americans, resulting in 700,000 fewer African Americans in poverty.

African American children also made large gains in 2015, with the poverty rate falling 4.2 percentage points and 400,000 fewer children in poverty.

In the first effort in 40 years to bring Labor Department regulations on overtime in line with inflation, President Obama doubled the salary level at which hourly workers must be paid extra for overtime pay, from \$23,660 to \$47,476.

Support for Youth and Mature Workers

SUPERIOR

Since 2011, President Obama's administration has provided vital support to transform the National Urban League's education and employment program for out-of-school youth from a demonstration program begun under the previous administration, to a signature program for court-involved youth and young adults, ages 14 to 24 known as the Urban Youth Empowerment Program (UYEP).

Under the UYEP model, the National Urban League (NUL) and its partnering affiliates serve about 2,000 youths living in high-poverty, high-crime urban areas across the nation and have placed the vast majority of these youths into jobs that pay a living wage.

The Administration has been supportive of NUL's more than 30 years of expertise in serving the needs of unemployed older citizens through its support for NUL's signature Urban Seniors Job Program (Mature Workers Program) that provides subsidized service-based training for low-income persons 55-years of age or older who are unemployed and committed to finding employment opportunities.

Failures

Economic
Development of Urban
Centers

FAIR

The Obama Administration did not advance a comprehensive urban policy to strategically target federal resources to address urban economic distress, which is most often reflected in inequality in employment, income, wealth, housing and most other measures of social well-being.

With the advocacy of the National Urban League and the Congressional Black Caucus, the initial American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (otherwise known as “the stimulus”) included a limited set of targeted initiatives aimed at urban communities hardest hit by the Great Recession. At our urging and assistance, the President introduced in 2011 the American Jobs Act, which would have extended and expanded those targeted initiatives, but he did not aggressively advocate for its passage after introducing it as part of a joint session of Congress. [Note: The President did have many initiatives that did target populations such as My Brother’s Keeper, expanding apprenticeships, private sector summer jobs, Promise Zones, but they were fragmented and were not supported by federal funding which the President could have included in his budget requests.]

Missed Opportunities

Rep. Jim Clyburn’s
10-20-30 Plan for Rural
Development

FAIR

While initially applying Rep. Jim Clyburn’s 10-20-30 plan to three rural development investment programs in the Recovery Act in 2009, the President missed a key opportunity to take advantage of bipartisan support for this concept to improve upon the plan, so that it would target more federal resources to communities grappling with persistent poverty in urban as well as rural communities, rather than only counties.

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

CIVIL RIGHTS AND JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

Successes

Protection of Civil Rights

SUPERIOR

Appointments of the first and second African American U.S. Attorney Generals.

The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division has protected the civil rights of individuals in housing, lending, employment, voting, education, and disability rights, and through hate crimes and law enforcement misconduct prosecutions and law enforcement pattern and practice cases. The Offices of Civil Rights at the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Education also pursued the protection of the civil rights of individuals in an assertive and systematic fashion.

Enactment of the Lilly Ledbetter Act to restore protections against pay discrimination.

Diversifying the Federal Bench and Cabinet

SUPERIOR

President Obama has made 62 lifetime appointments of African Americans to serve on the federal bench. This includes nine African American circuit court judges. It also includes the appointment of 53 African American district court judges—including 26 African American women appointed to the federal court, which is more African-American women appointed by any President in history. President Obama's second-term cabinet was more diverse than any in American history.

Relationship with the Civil Rights Community

SUPERIOR

President Obama and his team established an ongoing direct relationship and dialogue with leaders of the African American civil rights community and often consulted these groups on public policy.

These leaders included Marc H. Morial of the National Urban League, Ben Jealous and Cornell William Brooks of the NAACP, the Rev. Al Sharpton of the National Action Network, Melanie Campbell of the National Coalition for Black Civic Participation and Black Women's Roundtable, Wade Henderson of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Sherrilyn Ifill of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and Kristen Clarke Of the National Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

Restoration of the Voting Rights Act

GOOD

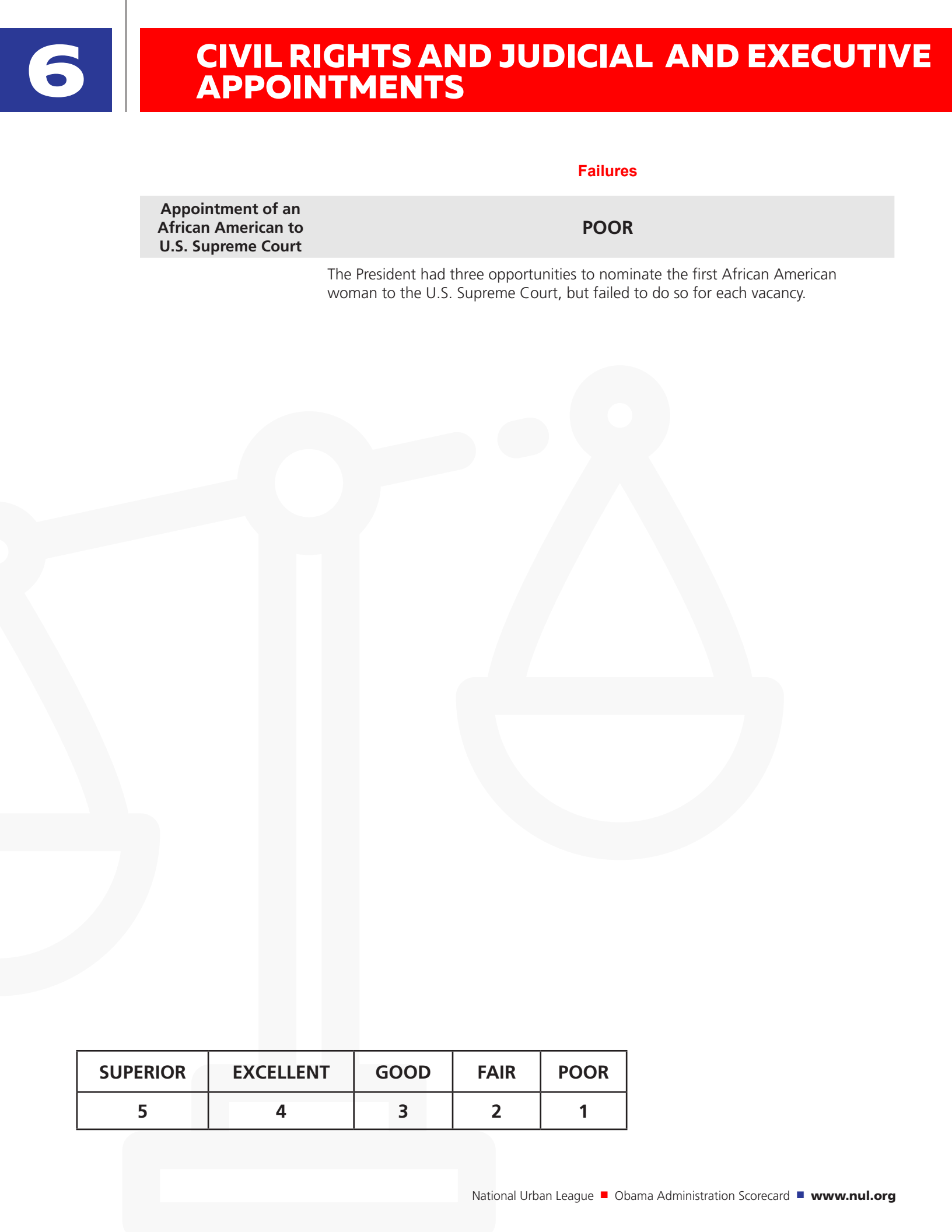
The administration filed lawsuits against Texas and North Carolina to invalidate voter suppression laws passed by those states' legislatures and aggressively pursued enforcement of remaining provisions of the voting rights after the Supreme Court's *Shelby v. Holder* decision. We do believe the President and his administration should have deployed the power and prestige of the bully pulpit to speak more forcefully against voter suppression and in support of restoring the Voting Rights Act.

Failures

Appointment of an African American to U.S. Supreme Court

POOR

The President had three opportunities to nominate the first African American woman to the U.S. Supreme Court, but failed to do so for each vacancy.



SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

Successes

**Policing and
Community Relations****SUPERIOR**

The Department of Justice Civil Rights Division responded to the calls of urban communities by launching investigations into police departments following the shootings of unarmed African Americans.

The Justice Department also mandated department-wide training for all of its law enforcement agents and prosecutors to recognize and address implicit bias as part of its regular training curricula.

Since taking office, the Administration has worked to enhance fairness and efficiency at many levels of the criminal justice system, including the President signing the Fair Sentencing Act, the Department of Justice launching the Smart on Crime Initiative, and the creation of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

Clemency and Pardons**SUPERIOR**

The President has granted a historic number of pardons and commutations to individuals imprisoned under harsh and outdated sentencing laws. Of the acts of clemency, 1,176 were commutations (including 395 life sentences) and 148 were pardons. This is more than the previous 11 presidents combined.

**Criminal Justice
Reform****GOOD**

The President worked closely with the civil rights community on efforts to pass a bipartisan sentencing reform bill that would have significantly reduced mandatory minimums and reversed the policies of mass incarceration. While the legislation did not pass, it provides an important starting point for the next administration and Congress if they are serious about addressing the acute need for criminal justice reform.

Missed Opportunities

**Addressing Urban Gun
Violence****FAIR**

While the President took his own actions to address gun violence announced in an impassioned January 5, 2016 speech, he did not advance a federal response to the fatal gun violence in Chicago. It was a missed opportunity to use his platform on this most critical issue that has implications for all urban communities.

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

Successes

Education Reform

EXCELLENT

The agenda infused millions of needed dollars into the public education system via the Race to the Top program, which encouraged states to adopt Common Core and share the same high-level standards.

This focus drove high school graduation rates to their highest levels to 83.2%, which included increasing graduation rates for African American students from 66.1% in 2009 to 85% in 2016.

Investment in Pell Grants Scholarships and Total Pell Funding

EXCELLENT

Under the Obama Administration, Pell Grants were increased by more than \$1,000 on average per student and total aid available under the Pell Grant program was increased by 70%. Additionally, Pell Grant funding for Historically Black College and University students increased significantly between 2007 and 2014, growing from \$523 million to \$824 million.

Investments in Equity and Student Rights

SUPERIOR

The Department of Education Office of Civil Rights issued guidance and regulations to protect the civil rights and safety of students.

Investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

EXCELLENT

Over the past seven years, the Obama Administration has invested more than \$4 billion in HBCUs.

Federal funding to HBCUs has grown each year since 2009. Through the Higher Education Act, HBCUs received a \$17 million funding increase this year—the largest increase for the federal Strengthening HBCUs program in six years.

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

Failures

Management of Parent Plus Loans**FAIR**

The Administration poorly managed Parent Plus Loans and failed to work with Historically Black Colleges and Universities to ensure that students who depended on these loans had other funding options to continue their higher education.

Missed Opportunities

Expansion of a Higher Education Agenda**FAIR**

The Administration missed opportunities to drive a more expansive higher education agenda that creates a wholistic approach to college access, affordability and completion for both traditional and non-traditional students.

Support for Youth Programs Managed by African American Organizations**FAIR**

While the administration opened the door for the participation of African American organizations in Department of Justice youth mentoring programs for the first time, its efforts in this regard could have and should have been more aggressive and assertive, given the challenges of violence and poverty among American youth.

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

Successes

**Passage of the
Affordable Care Act
(ACA)**
EXCELLENT

ACA now provides 29.8 million Americans who were either uninsured or underinsured with health coverage and increased the quality of care received.

This has resulted in measurable changes for the African American community, including over 2.3 million African Americans (ages 18-64) gaining health insurance coverage, which lowered the uninsured rate among African Americans by 6.8 percentage points.

The ACA helped to reduce health disparities by providing access to preventive services like mammograms or flu shots with no co-pay or deductible.

The President deserves credit for doing what many Presidents have tried since Theodore Roosevelt first proposed a national health corps in the early 1900s. It required political courage in the midst of a raging recession to advance the Affordable Care Act. While the National Urban League's agenda for health reform may have gone further than the ACA, we can never make perfect the enemy of good.

Failure

Rollout of ACA
FAIR

The rollout and subsequent messaging for the Affordable Care Act hobbled its ability to be even more impactful. Most Americans still do not understand the key reforms of the health care bill and how it benefits them.

Missed Opportunities

**Funding Community
Health Workers and
Health Navigators**
FAIR

Within the Affordable Care Act, the Administration missed an opportunity to pursue a more aggressive strategy to increase funding to community health workers and Health Navigators thereby improving health equity at a faster rate.

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

Successes

Issuance of a First-time Homebuyers Tax Credit**SUPERIOR**

Allowed first-time homebuyers to receive a tax credit (\$7,500 - \$8,000) on the purchase of their homes, from 2008 – 2010.

The credit encouraged and incentivized prospective borrowers to become first-time homebuyers.

Housing Counseling Services and Financial Reforms**EXCELLENT**

President Obama increased funding for housing counseling, and supported numerous rounds of foreclosure mitigation funding.

The White House worked closely with advocates on housing finance reform including the National Urban League--convening meetings with senior staff from the Department of Treasury, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the White House National Economic Council.

As a result, the National Urban League and affiliates dramatically expanded our work to provide housing counseling and foreclosure mitigation counseling to hundreds of thousands across the nation.

Growth in Number of Minority-Owned Small Businesses**SUPERIOR**

The number of African American small businesses increased from 1.9 million to 2.6 million, between 2007 and 2012.

This is important because African American small business owners are more likely to hire African Americans than other employers.

Diversifying the Financial Services Industry**SUPERIOR**

The passage of Section 342 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act mandated that each covered governmental agency establish an Office of Minority and Women Inclusion (OMWI) to increase diversity throughout the financial services industry.

President Obama made diverse appointments in selecting Mel Watt as Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), Julian Castro as Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Janet Yellen as Chairwoman of the Federal Reserve Board.

Failures

**Rate of Foreclosures
and Underwater
Homes in Communities
of Color**

FAIR

African Americans were more likely to foreclose on their homes than any other race. African Americans accounted for approximately 80% of the foreclosures that occurred during the crisis. A 2014 study illustrated that the top 5 cities for underwater homes were in the cities where at least 80% or more of the residents were people of color.

The African American homeownership rate has declined from nearly 50% a decade ago to around 40%. The decline represents an extreme loss of wealth that had been accumulated over a 40-year period.

**Rate of Bank Closures
in Low Income
Neighborhoods**

FAIR

More than 98% of the banks that closed during the crisis were in low-income neighborhoods.

Missed Opportunities

**Relief for Underwater
and Seriously
Delinquent
Homeowners**

POOR

Underwater and seriously delinquent homeowners were not given opportunities of principal forgiveness.

Over 5 million homeowners lost their homes during the foreclosure crisis. That number would have been much lower if distressed homeowners had the opportunity for principal forgiveness.

**Number of SBA-backed
Loans and Minority
Business Inclusion**

POOR

African American small business owners only received less than 2% of the loans backed by SBA, since FY 2013.

Further, the President and administration did not use the power and prestige of the presidency to advocate for minority business inclusion in a systematic manner.

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

Successes

Expanded Science, Technology, and Innovation Capacity

SUPERIOR

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Administration promoted the development and adoption of broadband throughout the United States, particularly in unserved and underserved areas through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

The Recovery Act also included \$18.3 billion in research and development funding, which was part of the largest annual increase in research and development funding in America's history.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reformed the Lifeline program, a \$1.5 billion per year Reagan-era phone subsidy program to turn it into a 21st Century national broadband subsidy to help low-income Americans get online.

Boosted Science, Technology, and Innovation Talent Across the Administration

SUPERIOR

More than 450 engineers, designers, data scientists, and product managers have signed on for a tour of duty to serve in over 25 agencies through the U.S. Digital Service, "18F" at the General Services Administration (GSA), and the Presidential Innovation Fellows program.

The administration launched the first-ever Social and Behavioral Sciences Team (SBST) by Executive Order in September 2015 to help Federal Government programs better serve the Nation while saving taxpayer dollars.

Investments in STEM Education and Equity

SUPERIOR

The President's Educate to Innovate campaign, launched in November 2009, has resulted in more than \$1 billion in private investment for improving K-12 STEM education.

The K-12 STEM teacher corps was strengthened. The nation is on track to meet the President's January 2011 State of the Union goal to put 100,000 additional teachers in the classroom.

Millions of students were supported with ConnectedED. The Nation is on track to meet the President's June 2013 commitment to connect 99% of students to high-speed internet through schools and libraries by 2018.

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

Failures

Expansion of Affordable, Robust Broadband Service	FAIR
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Ten percent of all Americans—roughly 34 million people—still lack access to broadband speeds of 25 Mbps, speeds necessary for households to stream high-quality video, use multiple devices over the connection, and generally enjoy the full value the internet has to offer.

Missed Opportunities

Launch of ConnectALL	POOR
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This initiative to help Americans from across the country, at every income level, to get online and have the tools to take full advantage of the Internet was done without insight from organizations that work with the communities that are most affected by the digital divide.

Creation of a Pipeline for Well-Paying Tech Jobs	FAIR
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The President launched the TechHire Initiative in March 2015 to equip people from all backgrounds with the skills they need to fill the more than 600,000 open tech jobs. Minorities—particularly African American and Latinos-- remain woefully underrepresented in the tech industry.

SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
5	4	3	2	1

**Civil Liberties And
Human Rights**

Reversed the military's "Don't Ask Don't Tell" ban

Successfully litigated the unconstitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act

Supported and advocated for marriage equality, which led to the Supreme Court's Obergefell v. Hodges decision

Historic Achievements

Made history by becoming the first African American President and Commander in Chief

Scandal-free Administration

Special thanks to the National Urban League Washington Bureau, under the leadership of Don Cravins, Jr., and the Department of Marketing and Communications, under the leadership of Rhonda Spears Bell, for their work and contributions in creating this scorecard.



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