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Achieving Change Together

ClassACTions April Bulletin

As usual, April in the Northeast brings the promise of spring flowers often with cold rain and late snow storms. This month also brings the promise of the pandemic's abatement with, once again, concerns over increasing cases and variants. ClassACT sends best wishes to you and your family and friends for good health and increased safe opportunities to come together.

CLASSACT'S WIDELY ACCLAIMED ZOOM FORUMS CONTINUE

Racism and the Criminal System: Communities Fight for Justice



Sylvester Monroe '73
Moderator
Author, Journalist
@sylvestermonroe



Gina Clayton-Johnson
Executive Director & Founder
Essie Justice Group
@essie4justice



Rick Jones
Executive Director and
a founding member of the
Neighborhood Defender Service (NDS).
@NeighborhoodDef



Christy E. Lopez
Professor from Practice at Georgetown Law and
co-leads the Innovative Policing Program (IPP)
at Georgetown Law
@Christy_E_Lopez



Jason Williams
District Attorney of New Orleans
@orleansparishda
@runwithjason

[Click here to watch the forum and read forum resources](#)

On March 25 our forum was attended by more than 300 from throughout the United States. Our classmate **Sylvester Monroe '73**, award winning

journalist and former Washington Post Assistant Foreign Editor, lead a group of extraordinary panelists in a powerful discussion about the roots and the impact of racism on policing, prosecution and the prison system. The participants called for a reimagined system that does not continue to serve its historical function of controlling Black and brown people but instead realizes the promise of “equal justice under law.” Each offered specific “calls to action” that will help further the cause.

The panelists included **Gina Clayton-Johnson**, Executive Director and Founder of the Essie Justice Group; **Rick Jones**, Executive Director and a founding member of the Neighborhood Defender Services; **Christy E. Lopez**, Georgetown Law School Professor and Co-Director of the Innovative Policing Program; and **Jason Williams**, District Attorney of New Orleans.

There are on-going dramatic and traumatic events at the interface of some police departments, some individual officers, and the public. Too much violence emphasizes the need for continued conversations and concerted measures to improve policing and the equitable application of our laws. If you are interested in educating yourself on racism in the criminal system, please take a look at the links resources and calls to action we provide above.

SAVE THE DATE!!

Health Disparities and the COVID-19 Vaccine

May 20, 2021, 7-8:30PM ET



from bbc.com

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the historical healthcare disparities in our country and around the world. It has also starkly revealed new concerns. This forum will focus on how pharmaceutical companies and advocates for underserved communities are addressing disparities through their approach to vaccine development and testing. Panelists will also address

the vaccine roll-out as it continues and the changing patterns of infection and disease.

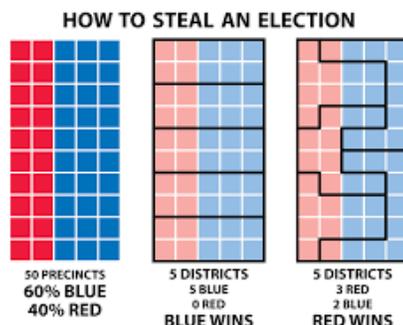
Two previous ClassACT forums held in 2020 focused on the [differential impacts of COVID-19 on international populations](#) as well as on different [racial, economic and geographical populations](#) in the United States.

The May 20 line up includes moderators **Dr. Johnson Lightfoote '73** and **Dr. Deborah Winn '73**, and panelists **Dr. Kenneth Chien '73**, Co-Founder at Moderna and Director at the Karolinska Institute; **Dr. Uché Blackstock '99, HMS '05**, Founder of [Advancing Health Equity](#); and **Nina Schwalbe '88**, Principal at [Spark Street Advisors Advisors](#).

Registration information will be available and sent out soon. Please feel free to invite co-workers, friends and family to register. Our forums are free and open to the public.

GERRYMANDERING: OUR DEMOCRACY AT RISK

Announcing the ClassACT Gerrymandering Primer and June 10 #ClassACTForum



Our classmates in the ClassACT [Justice & Civic Engagement Initiative](#) have been hard at work creating the ClassACT layperson's guide to gerrymandering titled "[Gerrymandering: Our Democracy at Risk--a Primer on How to Fight for Fair Elections.](#)" Classmates **Ryan O'Connell** and **Jim Harbison** are the authors. Their editor was classmate and former ClassACT HR73 board member **Sallie Gouverneur**. In it you will find recent trends, possible solutions, and how you can help fight this growing threat to our democracy. The announcement of the primer should have arrived in your inbox a few days ago. If you missed the announcement, click the button below to access this important work.

Please share the link to this important document with your communities, schools, etc. If you have questions for the authors, contact classmate [Ryan O'Connell](#).

[Click here for the gerrymandering primer](#)

On June 10, ClassACT will host a companion forum on gerrymandering. The panel will be moderated by **Ryan O'Connell '73** with panelists **Alicia Bannon**, Managing Director, Brennan Center for Justice, New York University; **Brian Cannon**, Director of Campaigns at the Institute for Political Innovation and former Executive Director of OneVirginia2021; **Jim Harbison, '73**; and **Michael Li**, Senior Counsel, Brennan Center for Justice.

An invitation to register for this event will appear in your inboxes in May.

BRIDGE PROGRAMS AND SUSTAINED COLLABORATIONS NEWS

JUSTICEAID

We are proud of our collaboration with [JusticeAid](#) which, through education and the arts, continues to make a profound national impact on the cause of social and economic justice. JusticeAid has two exciting events planned for May. They are open to the public and should provide thought-provoking ideas and (oh yes!) great music!

JusticeAid and Riverside Church Public Forum: Safety for Whom? Racist Policing in Communities and Schools

Sunday, May 2nd @4pm ET, [Riverside Church YouTube Channel](#)



Photography by [sheilapreebright.com](#)

[Click here for more information](#)

Join JusticeAid, in partnership with The Riverside Church of New York, for a free public forum on one of the most pressing issues of our time: racist policing.

A nationally known keynote speaker (to be announced soon) will begin the program. Following the keynote, a panel discussion will explore how we can reverse our nation's legacy of racist policing, the impact of over-policing on Black and Brown youth and the steps we can take together to reduce the presence of police in our schools and the use of excessive force altogether. What could real justice look like?

The panel is moderated by **Angela J. Davis**, Distinguished Professor of Law, American University Washington College of Law; and panelists include **Rick Jones**, Executive Director NDS PACE; **Kristin Nicole Henning**, Professor of Law and Director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic and Juvenile Justice Initiative at Georgetown Law; and **Sally Lee**, CEO and Founder, Teachers Unite.

In addition there will be special music performances by the Resistance Revival Chorus and jazz pianist **Matthew Whitaker**, with his personal rendition of *What's Going On/Inner City Blues*.

ROCKIN' FOR JUSTICE!

JusticeAid Spring Concert featuring Robert Glasper

Thursday, May 27th @8pm ET, [JusticeAid YouTube Channel](#)



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Mark your calendars for an evening of music and celebration with four-time Grammy Award-winning jazz pianist **Robert Glasper**, in a concert to benefit JusticeAid's 2021 grantee partner [NDS PACE](#).

The Texas-born and internationally acclaimed Glasper “seems to melt the discrete notes of a keyboard into a seamless stream, and transform the sound of every piano he plays” explains The Guardian, in reviewing a Glasper concert, and goes on to describe Glasper as “a jazz virtuoso who cannily disguises it, a hip-hop artist who rarely hits anything hard and an improviser with a classical pianist’s care for the weighting of every sound, Glasper is both disciplined and a freethinking genre-bender to rival the elder statesman of those virtues, Herbie Hancock.”

Interested in helping ClassACT?

ClassACT is built on classmate participation and we are interested in having every classmate as a member of our ClassACT community. If you are interested in learning more about ClassACT and how you can be involved, please visit our [website](#) or send us an [email](#).

While encouraging the sharing of time and willingness to work together, ClassACT also welcomes financial support. To support our work in this way you can donate below.

[Donate Here](#)

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