



# The Color of Unemployment: How Policy and Prejudice Push Black Women Out of the Workforce

By Morgan Collins

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The unemployment rate and the economy have become pressing topics due to the ever-changing economic landscape since the beginning of the second Trump administration. The policies implemented during this time have impeded progress and contributed to a trend in which Black women are being pushed out of their jobs due to misconceptions about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I.) and other incentives designed to provide opportunities for minorities. This brief will discuss how these practices promote job discrimination, leading to serious repercussions and a further increase in the unemployment rate.

current administration views as unnecessary or misaligned with its ideals. Additionally, there has been social and political opposition to diversity, equity, and inclusion D.E.I. initiatives within these agencies.

These circumstances have not only expanded the pool of unemployed workers but have also increased the number of Black female employees. The intention behind certain incentives is to "end illegal discrimination and wasteful spending across the federal government." However, this approach has mistakenly targeted qualified Black professionals, perpetuating the belief that their positions were awarded not based on merit and achievement, but rather as a result of preferential treatment.

## II. OVERVIEW

As of August, the unemployment rate is at 4.3%, which represents a 0.7% increase from the previous year. The Federal Reserve aims to bring unemployment down to its historical average of 4%. However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the U.S. lost 32,000 jobs in September, significantly fewer than the estimated increase of 50,000 jobs in the job market. These statistics are likely to continue to decline due to the ongoing government shutdown, as well as various attacks on federal agencies that the

## III. HISTORY

Black women have faced the impacts of misogynoir ( The combined force of anti-black racism and misogyny directed towards black women ) while navigating the world. As a result, they must contend with unrealistic expectations from various parts of life, leading to social notions such as "Last one hired, first one fired" and "You have to be 10 times better than all of your counterparts." These mantras contribute to the idea that Black professionals, especially Black women, must

demonstrate their value and capability both as workers and as individuals compared to their non-black counterparts. There are also ideologies related to job security, with ideas like “ Last One Hired, First One Fired ” ( A concept originating from the 1930s, when African Americans were the first to experience cuts in hours and jobs, faced the highest unemployment rates, and had fewer financial resources ), and dealing with workplace harassment and hostility, which create an unequitable environment for Black professionals, particularly Black women.

#### IV. POLICY PROBLEM

##### *A. Stakeholders*

This issue affects not only Black professionals who are being laid off in large numbers due to the role of the Department of Government Efficiency ( D.O.G.E. ) in identifying and eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse, but also other non-white American workers. The removal of D.E.I. corporate programs by private businesses results in fewer protections for applicants and employees, making it difficult to alleviate workplace hostility and discrimination.

Moreover, consumers and recipients of services are likely to encounter similar challenges. With fewer or no provisions in place to educate employees and upper management on these crucial topics, a culture of willful ignorance prevails.

##### *B. Risks of Indifference*

The risks of indifference are significant because American society is not prepared to engage in an honest and constructive conversation about race and its connections to various systems within our society. The current administration and many corporations have repeatedly demonstrated a lack of interest in becoming more inclusive and ensuring equity for all Americans, including both citizens and undocumented individuals.

Addressing job security and equity in the job application process, as well as in workplace environments, would greatly benefit all entities. However, for this to happen, the government must first recognize it as a problem, which, due to its history, it often fails to do..

##### *C. Nonpartisan Reasoning*

Because of racial relations, it doesn't just affect selected groups of people or just in certain situations; it affects all communities and groupings within society. There must be a nonpartisan intervention that takes place, and there are extreme benefits to taking this type of action.

- 1) Economic Growth: According to the Selig Center for Economic Growth, it is estimated that Black buying power—defined as the collective purchasing power within the Black community — will reach approximately \$1.98 trillion by 2025, up from \$1.6 trillion in 2024. Given this statistic and the fact that Black women are the most educated demographic in the U.S., implementing economic and job security policies tailored to minority communities could foster significant economic growth.

This would not only increase the circulation of money within the economy but also encourage investments, land purchases, and the establishment of businesses within these communities, ultimately creating more jobs.

2.) Authentic Congressional Representation:

The largest percentage of Black residents in the United States is found in the southern states, where they make up 56% of the population. However, as of August 2025, the percentage of Black residents experiencing job losses in this region is at 3.8%. This figure is lower than the national average, but it is steadily increasing with each report. To effectively represent these minority populations, especially during times of rising unemployment, it is crucial to create job security measures, connect individuals to new opportunities that align with their skill sets, and develop policies that can provide support during this economic downturn.

- 3) Driving Innovation: If we invest in expanding racial equity practices within the job market, we can explore new ideas and solutions to problems that may currently be overlooked. This approach will allow us to engage with diverse audiences and stakeholders who are often excluded from the conversation. Ultimately, it opens the door to innovation and optimization, which are essential for creating improved opportunities and fostering a more equitable society for everyone.

## V. TRIED POLICY

There have been national efforts to address discriminatory practices within the job sector, primarily through the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ( E.E.O.C. ). This federal agency is dedicated to ensuring that employers do not discriminate against applicants based on race, color, religion, sex ( including pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions, transgender status, and sexual orientation ), national origin, age ( 40 or older ), disability, or genetic information.

Additionally, there have been important Supreme Court cases such as “ Regents of the University of California v. Bakke ” and “ Grutter v. Bollinger ”, which ruled that race could be considered in college applications while prohibiting racial quotas. However, these rulings were overturned in 2023 by “ Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College ”.

Other significant legislation includes the Fair Housing Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, both of which contribute to the protection against discrimination in various areas.

## POLICY OPTIONS

### **Strengthening / Implementing Anti – Discrimination practices**

Updating the Civil Rights Act to address modern issues is essential. This includes adding provisions to better protect Black individuals and other people of color ( P.O.C. ) from discriminatory

actions they may face. Additionally, creating legislation and committees within the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ( E.E.O.C. ) would help address practices in businesses that actively exclude Black individuals and other minority groups from employment opportunities.

### **Implementing Transparent Practices**

Various loopholes enable discrimination in the workplace, such as pay disparities, job application discrimination, unemployment inequity, and denial of job advancement. To address these issues, we must focus on providing transparency in how companies report their employee data annually, conducting audits of current compensation practices, and establishing clear policies to combat pay disparities. Additionally, we should create support systems for individuals who are unexpectedly unemployed and develop guidelines for inclusive hiring practices. All of these measures aim to foster a more equitable work environment.

### **Implementing Affirmative Action Programs**

Action programs on a national scale would help diversify the labor pool. The goal of Affirmative Action is to create opportunities for underrepresented groups in education and employment, allowing them to enhance and develop their skills for the workforce. By investing in these programs nationwide and expanding opportunities across the country, we can build a more skilled workforce and address retention issues for positions that have high turnover rates.

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS**

In my paper, I provide a thorough explanation of how the trend of unemployment, particularly among Black individuals and specifically Black women, is a significant issue that deserves attention. This issue impacts all Americans and requires a variety of solutions, particularly government intervention. One of the most promising approaches is strengthening and implementing more robust anti – discrimination practices within businesses.

America is often described as a " melting pot ", embodying the belief that "anyone can make it if they just work hard." These ideals should hold for all, but the reality is that this matter extends beyond just protecting one community. It addresses the long history of systemic discrimination and the existing loopholes that perpetuate inequality. Moreover, it creates difficult situations for individuals who must navigate a lack of protection in the workplace.

This issue concerns all Americans, from the most disrespected to the most respected.

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