Unjust Public Policies Drive the Massive Racial Wealth Gap in America: Study

From the re-segregation of schools to the redlining of home ownership, rise in disparities is no accident

by Sarah Lazare, staff writer
The yawning racial wealth gap in the United States is no accident, but rather, driven by unjust public policy decisions—from the re-segregation of education to the redlining of home ownership to poverty wages, according to a new analysis by Brandeis University and the public policy organization Demos.

Inequalities are vast, note the researchers. For example, Census data shows that, in 2011, median white households in the U.S. held $111,146 in wealth, compared to a mere $7,113 for Black homes and $8,348 for Latino ones.

These disparities emerge from historical choices on the political and policy levels, the researchers note.

"The racial wealth gap is large because we instituted it in public policy historically and continue to make public policies that exacerbate the problems," said report coauthor Catherine Ruetschlin, a senior policy analyst at Demos, in a press statement. Therefore, it is vital "to find new opportunities to address the way that we’re constantly perpetuating this disparity between black, white and Latino families," Ruetschlin continued.
Researchers offer a series of solutions aimed at reversing these trends, from equalizing home ownership to racially integrating schools at all levels. In addition, the study calls for a significant boost to the minimum wage, as well as "making it easier for workers to form and join unions."

The researchers' focus on poverty pay echoes the growing call from low-wage workers for society to address the role of poverty wages in driving racial inequality.

"Black and Latino workers are disproportionately likely to be employed in positions that pay the minimum wage or just above and would benefit the most from an increase in the federal minimum wage," the report states.

The researchers continue, "With new research indicating that minimum wage increases have not reduced employment, a hike in the federal minimum wage from its current low rate of $7.25 would boost the incomes of many of the lowest paid Black and Latino workers and have the potential to decrease the racial wealth gap."

---

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License

Share This Article

91  128

Related Articles
Ezell Ford's Shooting
Death Shines Light on LAPD Brutality

More in: Economy, Rights, U.S., Race, Inequality, Politics, Education, Poverty

Top Comments

ccerr
Mar 11 2015
Wealth corrupts. Absolute/monopoly wealth corrupts absolutely. De regulation kills Privatization is theft of commons. Voodoo economics and its witch doctors are criminals. The real terrorists are on Wall Street. The MIC and fascism are the reality we are. If a god created all this, then god is Frankenstein.

View / Reply

1 of 5 Comments

(Click to see more comments or to join the conversation)

Further

Surprise! All the White People Who Started the McKinney Debacle Are Thugs and Creeps

It seems lunatic now-resigned cop Eric Casebolt isn't the only bizarro player with a tawdry history in the McKinney pool party story. The guy who called 911, hurled racial epithets and praised the police response is Sean Toon, who served time for maiming and killing farm animals, and for assault. The
woman who attacked a black teenage girl is a possibly racist loan officer who has been put on leave. And social media - including a deft SeanToon911 hashtag - is all over them. Read More...