



The American Dream on Hold Economic Challenges in the African American Community

NATIONAL FACT SHEET

African Americans have made significant social and economic progress since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, the black community continues to face enormous challenges. By many of the most important measures of economic well-being, black Americans lag far behind white Americans.

This fact sheet updates key facts from a [recent report](#) by the Joint Economic Committee Democrats and includes a state-by-state map showing the gap between black and white unemployment rates.

Unemployment

At **10.2 percent**, the current unemployment rate for black Americans is **more than double** the 4.7 percent rate for white Americans (*see Figure*).

African Americans today face an unemployment rate that is **a full percentage point higher** than the highest unemployment rate experienced by white Americans (9.2 percent) during the recent recession.

Income

The median income of African American households is \$34,600—**nearly \$24,000 less** than the median income of white households (\$58,300).

Wealth

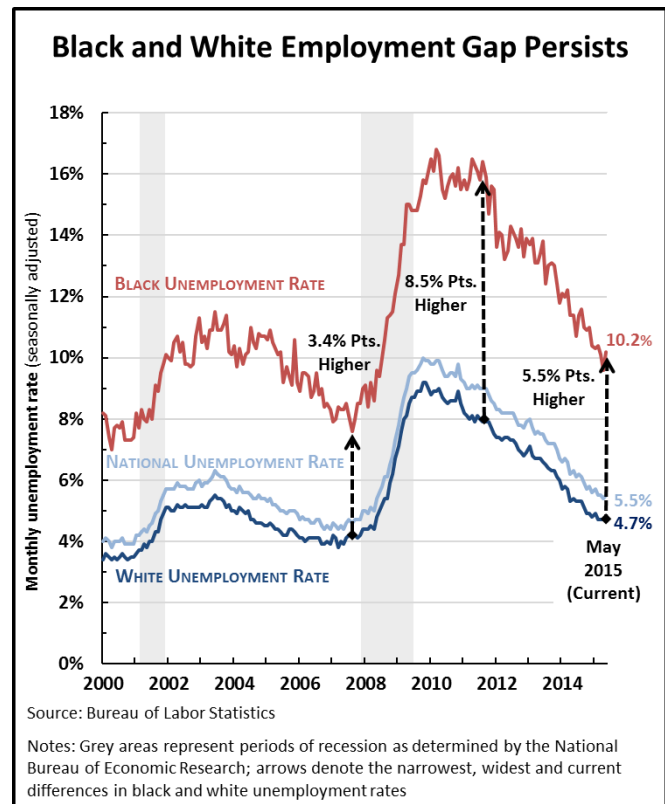
The median net worth of white households is **13 times greater** than black households (\$142,000 vs. **\$11,000**).

Poverty

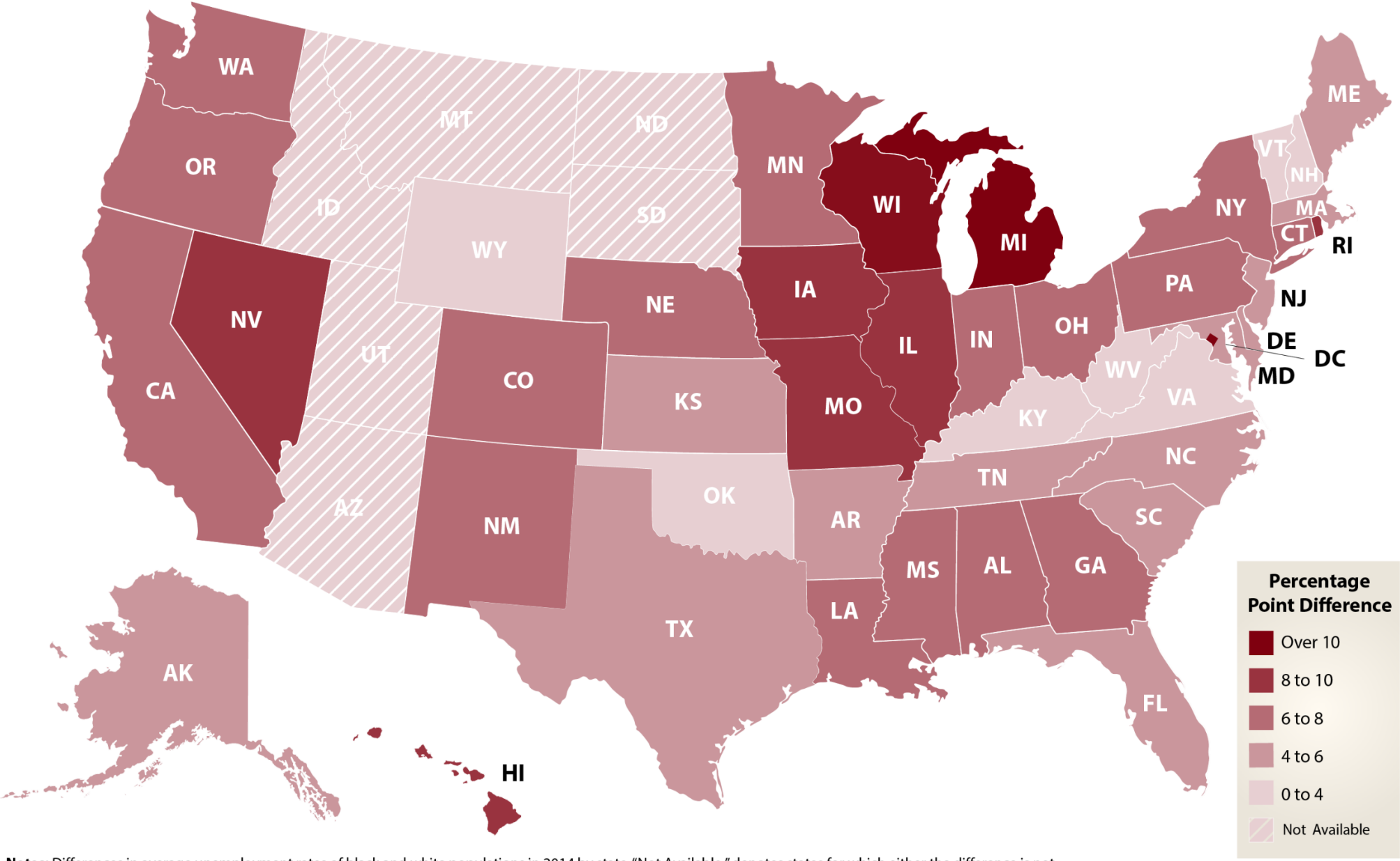
More than one in four African Americans live in poverty (27.2 percent)—**almost triple** the rate for whites (9.6 percent).

Education

Among 25- to 29-year-olds, whites are **almost twice as likely** as African Americans the same age to have a 4-year college degree (41 percent vs. 21 percent).



Gap Between Black and White Unemployment Rates



Notes: Differences in average unemployment rates of black and white populations in 2014 by state. "Not Available" denotes states for which either the difference is not statistically significant or the sample sizes are too small for publication. "Black" includes black alone or in combination with other races and/or Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: JEC Democratic staff calculations using data from the 2014 Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor