



## RXI BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT



JUNE 3, 2013



The Civil Rights Movement for African Americans and the Equal Rights Movement for women have always impacted one another. In fact, at the first women's rights convention in 1948 held in Seneca Falls, New York, none other than Frederick Douglass stood at the podium beside women's rights activist and abolitionist Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The resolutions and objectives that were agreed upon at that convention were reportedly passed in large measure because of the attendance and support of Douglass. And, with regard to the Civil Rights Movement, it was the Women's Political Council, founded in Montgomery, Alabama, by Jo Ann Robinson and other African American females who were the first group to officially call for a boycott of the bus system in December 1955. It was this woman's group that helped organize communications to get it started, as well as to support it, including giving boycotters rides to work. So, efforts to protect women's rights and the rights of African Americans have traditionally benefitted from one another.

That fact came to mind recently when I read President Obama's May 10, 2013 Memorandum to Executive Agencies and Departments in which he called for a review of federal pay and promotion policies and practices in an effort to further advance gender pay equality. Specifically, the memorandum required agencies and departments to gather information with respect to their individual pay and promotion policies and practices and submit that information to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) which is in turn required to develop a federal strategy to address any pay gaps.

After reflecting on the President's memorandum, I in turn wrote President Obama a letter (included herein on page 3) that expressed my personal appreciation for his continued attention to the issue of gender pay inequality in the federal government. I went on, however, to suggest to the President that the issue of pay inequality also needs to be studied with regard to African Americans, specifically with regard to how agency policies and practices affect us as well. And, this wasn't just a "what are you doing for us" moment, rather as I note in the letter there is evidence that agency policies and practices have in fact impacted our advancement up the government ladder.

I don't share this here to ask you to write letters to the President or to the Acting OPM Director as I also did. Whether you want to make your voices heard as taxpayers and voters is really up to you. But, what I do suggest here is that just as leaders within the Women's Rights Movement and the Civil Rights Movement partnered up and benefitted from each other's efforts, we too must look for ways to partner with like-minded affinity groups and employee organizations. As the saying goes, there's strength in numbers.

Shirley A. Jones, Esq.  
RXIC President

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### Donate Your BIG National Training Conference Logo Bags



Many of us have been going to the BIG National Training Conference for years and we have the conference bags with the BIG Logo on them to prove it! Well, how about donating those bags for our Region XI Council and chapters to use in our various youth programs? Feel free to bring your gently used BIG Logo Bags to our June 8, 2013 Council meeting (see notice of Council meeting below) or bring them with you to our June 14, 2013 White Party so that we can have them in time for our June 22, 2013 Youth Oratorical and STEM Competitions and otherwise distribute them to the chapters for their student projects. Thanks in advance!

#### June RXI Council Meeting

June 8, 2013

10:00 AM



Please join us on Sat., June 8, 2013, at the NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring, MD, as we continue our 3-part "One BIG, One Voice" training sponsored by our Marketing and Strategic Planning Committee. Jesse Sharpe and Nikke Ashe will discuss how to create a BIG webpage and the importance and use of social media to spread the word about BIG events and programs. Of course, this information can just as easily be applied to your individual business webpages and use of social media. We will also discuss other important matters before the Council such as our Region XI Distinguished Service Hall of Fame nominations as well as upcoming Region XI events like our 3rd Annual White Party fundraiser at the Elks Lodge in Temple Hills, MD, on Friday, June 14, 2013 which will support our mission-related activities including our Annual Youth Program on Saturday, June 22, 2013. We will also have a special presentation from our mission-partner, Karen Scott Mims, Esq. with Harbour Pointe Wealth Management, a professional entity for financial, tax and estate planning advisory services.

The address for NOAA is 1325 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room. As always, please bring your government identification for ease of entry into the building. All BIG members and prospective members are welcome to attend. Feel free to email the Council President using the "Ask the President" link at [www.bigrxi.org](http://www.bigrxi.org) with for more information about any of these events.

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## Region XI Regional Council

Blacks In Government

Post Office Box 2931 ♦ Washington, DC ♦ 20013-2931 ♦ [www.bigrx1.org](http://www.bigrx1.org)

May 29, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

As a dedicated public servant who happens to be a woman, I applaud your continuing efforts to address gender pay equality in the federal government. Your support for this important issue was clearly shown when you made the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 the first bill you signed into law as President. And, with another step in the right direction, your May 10, 2013 Presidential Memorandum directed the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to provide guidance to agencies on reviewing their pay and promotion policies and practices so that they can in turn provide important information to the Director of OPM to use in developing a government-wide strategy to address any gender pay gap in the Federal workforce.

As a dedicated public servant who also happens to be African American, I ask that you also direct OPM to consider how department and agency practices affect the compensation of African American men and women and develop a strategy to promote pay equality in that regard as well. The recent African American Study Group Report from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) makes it clear that obstacles remain in the federal workforce that hinder equal employment opportunities for African Americans. And, studies like the one conducted for one federal agency by the Ivy Planning Group, Inc., a management consulting and training group, determined that agency human capital processes and management practices were a primary factor.

Please know that I recognize your support for the federal worker and your dedication to creating a level playing field for all as you seek to eradicate inequalities across the board. My suggestion here is that your continued leadership is needed in this regard as well if our agencies are to truly be the model employers that I know you want them to be. Please also know that our BIG Region XI Council would be honored to have someone from the White House attend one of our meetings to address this topic. I can be reached by emailing [shirleyannjones@bigrx1.org](mailto:shirleyannjones@bigrx1.org) or by phone on (202) 465-5852.

Sincerely,

Shirley A. Jones, Esq.  
President

Thank You for Thinking BIG!

**Executive Committee**

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**M. Burt/ S. Norris**  
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**S. Ponds/ W. Lewis**  
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**Michael McCrimmon**  
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**Sandra Powell**  
*By-Laws and Resolutions*

**Ira Smallwood**  
*Audit*

**Theresa Wolfe**  
*Health and Wellness*

**Dr. Patrick Wilson**  
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**James Wood**  
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## The USDA/1890 National Scholars Program

The application **deadline** for the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program has been extended until **June 14, 2013**. If you or someone you know are interested in a scholarship opportunity and are majoring in an agriculture-related field, the applications for **high school** and **college students** can be downloaded at: <http://www.outreach.usda.gov/education/1890/index.htm>.

The USDA/1890 National Scholars Program is a partnership between of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the eighteen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Universities. The program awards scholarships to students attending one of the 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Universities, pursuing a bachelor's degree in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines. The eighteen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Universities are as follows:

- Alabama A&M University
- Alcorn State University, Mississippi
- Delaware State University
- Florida A&M University
- Fort Valley State University, Georgia
- Kentucky State University
- Langston University, Oklahoma
- Lincoln University, Missouri
- North Carolina A&T State University
- Prairie View A&M University, Texas
- South Carolina State University
- Southern University, Louisiana
- Tennessee State University
- Tuskegee University, Alabama
- University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- Virginia State University
- West Virginia State University

### The Award

Scholarships are awarded annually and must be used at one of the eighteen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions. Each award provides annual tuition, employment, employee benefits, and use of a laptop computer, printer and software while on scholarship, fees, books, room and board for each of the academic years the scholarship is awarded. Each annual scholarship renewal is contingent upon satisfactory performance and normal progress toward the bachelor's degree.

### General Eligibility

To be eligible for the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program a student must:

- Be a U.S. citizen
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better (on a 4.0 scale)
- Be interested in attending one of the eighteen 1890 Land-Grant Universities
- Intend to study agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or other related academic disciplines
- Demonstrate leadership and community service
- Submit an official transcript with the school seal and an authorized official's signature
- Submit a signed application (original signature only)

### Who Should Apply

The USDA/1890 National Scholars Program is available to high school seniors entering their freshman year of college and rising college sophomores and juniors.

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# PROTECTING



Karen Scott Mims, Esq.  
Founder and CEO

## what matters

At Harbour Pointe Wealth Management, we believe that your financial future is far too important to leave to chance. We view it as our responsibility to thoroughly understand your goals and dreams so that we can leverage our experience and expertise to help you realize them. Rather than approach your finances with an outdated transactional approach focused on products, we serve as your comprehensive financial solutions provider, forging a deeper relationship and creating a plan that can be adjusted as needed to help you reach your unique personal goals.

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# THE WHITE PARTY

**Blacks In Government (BIG) Region XI All White Affair  
At the Camp Springs Elks Lodge  
June 14, 2013**



9:00 pm – 1:00am

Tickets \$20 in advance; \$25 at the Door

7350 Temple Hills Road, Temple Hills, MD 20748

**Ticket information:**

Michael McCrimmon (202) 781-3690 (W) or (202) 427-3720 (C)

Shirley Jones (202) 465-5852

April Powers-Matthews (202) 231-0224



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## “Ask the Lawyer”

by Neil A.G. McPhie, Esq.

**Q. I always get yelled at for being late to work, but a few other co-workers who are of another race never get in trouble for their tardiness. Does this count as discrimination?**

**A.** Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it an unlawful employment practice for an employer to “fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual’s race, color, sex, or national origin.” Specifically, Title VII forbids discriminatory changes in the terms and conditions of employment due to a hostile work environment. In the situation you describe, your boss may be subjecting you to hostile work environment discrimination by yelling at you because of your race.

It is important to note that Title VII does not govern all workplace actions or conduct by agency supervisors. To win a hostile work environment claim, as noted in the Supreme Court case, *Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc.*, the workplace must be “permeated with ‘discriminatory intimidation, ridicule and insult,’ that is ‘sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the victim’s employment and create an abusive working environment.’” In *Harris*, the Supreme Court also noted that “[w]hether an environment is ‘hostile’ or ‘abusive’ can be determined only by looking at all the circumstances, which may include the frequency of the discriminatory conduct; its severity; whether it is physically threatening or humiliating, or a mere offensive utterance; and whether it unreasonably interferes with an employee’s work performance.”

Moreover, the Supreme Court, in *Faragher v. City of Boca Raton*, another notable hostile work environment case, found that simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents, unless extremely serious, will not amount to discriminatory changes in the terms and conditions of employment. Thus, isolated incidents of offensive conduct generally do not create an abusive environment. In your situation, the yelling would have to be offensive, quite severe, frequent, and interfere with your work performance to be considered as creating an abusive work environment. If the yelling incidents above met the aforementioned standard, then you may have a claim of hostile work environment discrimination, provided that you can also show that the yelling was based on your race.

Contact a federal employment law attorney if you believe you are being harshly treated by your supervisor or co-workers because of your race.

*Neil McPhie is the Virginia Managing Partner for Tully Rinckey PLLC and the former chairman of the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board. He concentrates his practice in federal sector employment and labor law and can be reached at [info@fedattorney.com](mailto:info@fedattorney.com). To speak with an attorney call 703-525-4700.*

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The comment period of the proposed changes in the Combined Federal Campaign ends next Friday, June 7th. As of today the Federal Register notes that approximately 260 responses have been received. We are told that this is a good number, but obviously more is better.

A member of the Save the CFC federation consortium wrote OPM earlier this week seeking an extension on the comment period, as many charities are just now understanding the implications of the proposed changes. Unfortunately, OPM immediately denied the extension. That means the June 7th deadline is inflexible.

We've also received advice from a former OPM senior executive who advises us to continue urging charities and individuals to respond right up until June 7. Of particular importance is putting into focus what the loss of donations would mean for those individuals, families or others that you serve. The more you can personalize, highlight and provide basic metrics on the impact these changes would have on those you serve the better. But the most important thing is to respond and ask others to respond as well.

### **ACTION NEEDED NOW!**

Between now and next Friday, June 7 here's what we need you to do:

- The new Director of OPM (assuming her nomination is approved) will be Katherine Archuleta who was national political director for President Obama's re-election campaign from 2011 to 2012. She was also the Obama campaign's primary liaison to the Latino community. If you know Ms. Archuleta or if you have contacts that might, please let us know immediately.
- If you haven't done so already, write a letter on behalf of your organization or as a concerned individual expressing your concerns with the proposed recommendations. Details for how to do that are on our Save the CFC site.
- Where appropriate, urge your affiliates/chapters to write as well, again ask them to focus on the impact on those they serve.
- Send copies of those responses to your Congressional representative and/or members of the oversight subcommittees noted on the Save the CFC site. If you have access, seek appointments with your Congressional Representatives or work with our office to do so.
- Send us copies of any and all letters and Federal Register responses that you generate or are aware of.

### **SUMMARY OF AMERICA'S CHARITIES ACTIONS SINCE APRIL 8, 2013:**

- Led a coalition of national federations and charities to oppose key aspects of the proposed CFC changes.
- Kept America's Charities members proactively informed and engaged with practical tools and steps to talk to effect positive change in the CFC
- Worked with reporters covering the issue to ensure our perspective is included in their coverage.
- Conducted briefings with nearly a dozen Congressional offices with help from member charities who have shared contacts and helped arrange meetings.
- Created the "Save the CFC" website generating significant new traffic to America's Charities, positioning us as a leader and advocate of philanthropy. Save the CFC is a prominent link on numerous other organizations' web sites including Independent Sector, Blue Avocado, The Center for Nonprofit Advancement, the Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington and Maryland Nonprofits.
- Crafted a strategy to reach other key influentials in the Federal Government who can voice their concern with OPM. This includes, but is not limited to, the new director of the Office of Management and Budget who is the former CEO of the Wal-Mart Foundation and former head of international philanthropy for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

This battle is far from over. While the responses to the Federal Register are important, OPM must then take time to review them and determine if the feedback is strong enough to force them to reconsider their plans and take into account the concerns of the service providers. Hopefully that will be the case. But we need to continue putting the pressure on them.

Right now, the next step to take is to generate more responses to the Federal Register PLEASE!!!

Sincerely,

Steve Delfin  
President & CEO, America's Charities

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You can search available civilian positions in the federal government through the [VA for Vets Job Search](#). Veterans are encouraged to apply to the opportunities below. Some positions may be eligible for Veterans' Preference or Special Hiring Authorities. Select the position title to view the entire job posting.

### **Budget Analyst**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration Charleston, SC

The Budget Analyst is responsible for tasks involved in accounts payable related to maintaining vendors, vendor inquiries, resolving interfaced invoice issues, inquiring into the status of invoices and payments, and generating selected reports.

**Closing Date: June 5, 2013**

### **Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Careers for Veterans**

Opportunities are available nationwide.

Current open positions include Transportation Security Specialist, Security Assistant, Logistics Management Specialist, Program Analyst, Budget Analyst, Human Resource Specialist, among others.

**Learn more: <https://tsajobs.tsa.dhs.gov>; Call 1-877-872-7990 or text 95495**

Take advantage of the [VA for Vets Career Center](#) tools to translate military skills, build your resume, search hundreds of open positions. We encourage Veterans to work with a *VA for Vets* career coach by calling 1-855-824-8387 (TTY: 1-855-824-8833) or [sending an email](#).

### ***Explore Your Career Options with this VA for Vets System Feature***

Did you know that you can match your role in the military with available federal opportunities? In the [Military Skills Translator](#), enter your service, pay grade and military job title. Select the "Search" button. At the bottom of the screen, select "Explore career options." You'll be redirected to the [Career Wall](#), where you can see which career options might be right for you. Select any of the highlighted job categories to generate a search of those jobs across the federal government. Choose any of the job summaries to learn more about those positions and apply.

**The Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO) oversees *VA for Vets*, a comprehensive career management program that enables Veterans to successfully join the civilian workforce. To learn more, visit [www.VAforVets.VA.gov](http://www.VAforVets.VA.gov).**

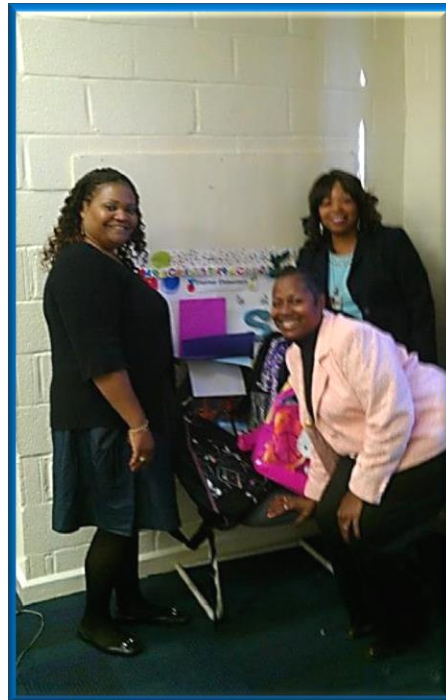
**Get the latest *VA for Vets* news by joining the conversation on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#). Sign up for the [VA Employment ListServ](#).**

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## DOE BIG Helping Our Children

Kudos to the Department of Energy BIG Chapter for their work with three schools, two in Southeast Washington, D.C.– Stanton and Anne Beers Elementary - and Magnolia Elementary in Lanham, MD. The Chapter also has \$2,000 in scholarships for High School and Workforce Continuing Adult Education. These pictures are from some of their community outreach projects with the schools.



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