

ISSUES : TRENDING TOPICS

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BAN THE BOX

New York has joined Georgia, California, Rhode Island and 15 other states in "banning the box," that is, eliminating the question on federal job applications inquiring about a **prospective employee's criminal history**. What's more, President Obama has called on Congress to follow suit on these applications nationwide.

3 **NURTURING BLACK TECHIES**

Apple is taking a step in the right direction toward diversifying the racial makeup of Silicon Valley. As part of its \$40 million diversity initiative, the tech giant will team up with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (tmcf.org) and **award 30 HBCU students with one-year college scholarships and summer internships at the company.**



“It’s one thing to say that you have Black students or Asian students or Latino students, but it’s another thing to want them to be there and to do well in a positive, healthy learning environment.”

—University of Missouri senior Brianna Arps, who has participated in her school’s #BlackOnCampus protests, to ESSENCE.com.

5 **ACCOUNTABILITY NOW**

New data show that the number of police officers charged in fatal shootings has risen to a ten-year high. In 2015, **12 policemen were charged with either murder or manslaughter**, which is more than double the five charged, on average, every year since 2005.

6 **A TITAN IN THE ARTS**

Joining the ranks of creatives like Chinua Achebe and Spike Lee, *Topdog/Underdog* playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, 52, was presented with the prestigious Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize in November. The \$300,000 award is given to artists who continually push boundaries. Parks, who in 2002 became the first African-American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama, has racked up an impressive \$1 million in prizes and accolades since her first play was produced in 1984.



THE HBCU EFFECT

A recent Gallup poll found that Black HBCU alums reported a **higher sense of financial, social, physical and community well-being after graduation**, when compared with Blacks who graduate from primarily White institutions. Further, students who attended HBCUs had a deeper connection to their professors and campus mentors.

8 **PAYING IT FORWARD**

Howard University graduate student and Washington, D.C., native Yasmine Arrington knew what it was like to struggle financially during her college years: She lost her mother at a young age and had a father who was in and out of prison. To assist other students in similar situations, the 23-year-old founded ScholarCHIPS in 2010, a nonprofit that provides academic college scholarships to children whose parents are incarcerated. To date, Arrington has awarded **23 scholarships totaling \$80,000 to Black students** in the D.C. metro area. Last November, she won a \$175,000 grant to help fund future scholarships and push her initiative forward.



9 **INVESTING IN WOMEN OF COLOR**

The Obama administration announced a **\$118 million grant that will be used to improve the lives of women and girls of color**. Donated by various foundations, the money will help women and girls escape poverty by funding existing job training programs and providing affordable and quality child care options to working mothers. A portion of the funds will also be used to conduct studies and collect data on the various issues affecting women of color.

10 **GETTING TO HEALTHY**

Advancements in health care and better access to medical treatment are possible factors that have led to a **rise in the life expectancy of African-Americans**, according to a recent federal study. Worth noting: Researchers say that a decline in heart disease in Black women has greatly contributed to life expectancy rates among all Blacks increasing from 71 in 1999 to 75.5 in 2013. □

