

# JUNE TEENTH FREEDOM DAY

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## Health and Wealth Devastations

### Economic Progress has stalled for Black Americans since the Civil Rights era:

The typical Black American family is virtually no closer to equal footing with its White peers in terms of income and wealth than it was 50 years ago, when Civil Rights-era reforms were enacted to expand opportunity and limit outright racial discrimination.

Like the protests in the 1960s, the recent waves of rallies following Black Americans' deaths at the hands of police have renewed attention to the long-standing racial divide in the US.

"Over the last half century, I would say that for many indicators, things have stagnated," said Ellora Derenoncourt, assistant professor of economics and public policy at University of California, Berkeley. "The wealth gap, the income gap, the earnings gap."

The typical Black household has less than one-tenth the wealth of the typical White family -- almost the exact same ratio as existed in the 1960s, according to an analysis by Moritz Kuhn, an economics professor at the University of Bonn in Germany.

The widening racial wealth gap disadvantages black families, individuals, and communities and limits black citizens' economic power and prospects, and the effects are cyclical. Such a gap contributes to intergenerational economic precariousness: almost 70 percent of middle-class black children are likely to fall out of the middle class as adults.<sup>2</sup> Other than its obvious negative impact on human development for black individuals and communities, the racial wealth gap also constrains the US economy as a whole. It is estimated that its dampening effect on consumption and investment will cost the US economy between \$1 trillion and \$1.5 trillion between 2019 and 2028—4 to 6 percent of the projected GDP in 2028

### Racism and Health

Racism is a system consisting of structures, policies, practices, and norms—that assigns value and determines opportunity based on the way people look or the color of their skin. This results in conditions that unfairly advantage some and disadvantage others throughout society.

Racism—both interpersonal and structural—negatively affects the mental and physical health of millions of people, preventing them from attaining their highest level of health, and consequently, affecting the health of our nation.

A growing body of research shows that centuries of racism in this country has had a profound and negative impact on communities of color. The impact is pervasive and deeply embedded in our society—affecting where one lives, learns, works, worships and plays and creating inequities in access to a range of social and economic benefits—such as housing, education, wealth, and employment. These conditions—often referred to as social determinants of health—are key drivers of health inequities within communities of color, placing those within these populations at greater risk for poor health outcomes.

The data show that racial and ethnic minority groups, throughout the United States, experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease, when compared to their White counterparts. Additionally, the life expectancy of non-Hispanic/Black Americans is four years lower than that of White Americans. The COVID-19 pandemic, and its disproportionate impact among racial and ethnic minority populations is another stark example of these enduring health disparities.

Racism also deprives our nation and the scientific and medical community of the full breadth of talent, expertise, and perspectives.pdf icon[1.5 MB, 208 Pages]external icon needed to best address racial and ethnic health disparities.

To build a healthier America for all, we must confront the systems and policies that have resulted in the generational injustice that has given rise to racial and ethnic health inequities. We at CDC want to lead in this effort—both in the work we do on behalf of the nation's health and the work we do internally as an organization.

[Learn more about the Impact of Racism on our Nation's Health >>](#)

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# JUNETEENTH

## The Systematic Destruction of The Rondo Neighborhood

From the beginning, Rondo was a haven for people of color and immigrants. Its namesake, Joseph Rondeau, moved there in the late 1850s from a site close to Fort Snelling, where he had faced discrimination due to his wife's mixed white and indigenous heritage. French Canadian immigrants followed Rondeau to the area in the late nineteenth century; later, German, Russian, Irish, and Jewish families found homes there.

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The Rondo neighborhood, once home to 80 percent of St. Paul's Black residents, consisted of a working-class community, supported by social clubs, religious organizations, community centers and a thriving business community. It was home to doctors and lawyers, barbers and maids, civil rights leaders and Pullman porters.

But as the neighborhood thrived, Minnesota legislators began plans for a new highway system. In 1956, when the Federal Aid Highway Act was passed, St. Paul officials felt the pressure to start building. Concerns voiced by residents and city planners were almost entirely ignored as construction began on what would in 1968 become Interstate 94. Any debate over possible routes centered mostly on the concerns of (white) business owners, in their efforts to boost stagnating sales.

When the route through the historic Rondo neighborhood was finalized, the city demanded that residents sell their homes to the city for dirt-cheap prices — often only a fraction of the actual property value. People that refused to vacate their homes and businesses were met by police with sledgehammers — destroying walls, smashing windows and even tearing apart the plumbing. A lush and vibrant neighborhood was effectively sliced in half, displacing nearly 600 families, 300 businesses and forcing thousands of African-Americans to seek alternative housing in a highly segregated city.

While the construction of I-94 radically changed the landscape of the neighborhood, the community of Rondo still exists, and its persistence and growth are celebrated through events like Rondo Days in July and the Selby Avenue Jazz Festival.

In 2016 a formal apology was given formally by Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Charlie Zelle and then St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman. The Rondo Commemorative Plaza was then installed in to commemorate the Rondo community.

Recently, a group called Reconnect Rondo has a plan to right a wrong and make up for some of the racial injustices of the past.

Their plan calls for a cap over a portion of I-94 and build a land bridge several blocks-long with affordable housing, green space, a museum and a marketplace that would re-link both sides of the neighborhood cut in half by the freeway and restore a community destroyed 60 years ago.

To learn more, here are some additional resources:

[St. Paul's Past: Rondo, St. Paul's African-American Community \(video\)](#)

[Why Is There Always A Winner and a Loser?: A Place-Based Study of Gentrification and Housing Resiliency for ReConnectRondo](#)

[Jim Crow of the North \(video\)](#)

**"I came home that day and saw the big moving truck and saw police cars. I was looking around wondering what was going on. I knew that my grandpa didn't want to move. I asked, 'where's my grandpa?' When I walked in I saw they were tearing stuff up to make sure he didn't come back in there. One of the officers said, 'I'll take you where your grandparents are.'" - Nathaniel Khaliq**



*Nathaniel Khaliq, known by many as Nick Khaliq or Nick Davis, has served as head of the St. Paul NAACP, was a firefighter and interim St. Paul City Councilmember.*

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## Additional Resources :

### Helpful Resources:

- [Rondo Neighborhood, sliced through by Interstate 94](#)
- [Police Killings of Unarmed Black Americans Affect Mental Health of Black Community. First Study to Show Mental Health “Spillover Effects” from Deaths of Unarmed Black Americans](#)
- [Internalized Oppression: We Need to Stop Hating Ourselves. New book highlights the universality of internalized oppression across groups](#)
- [Unequal treatment of Black patients in health care settings](#)
- [Redlining in the Twin Cities timeline and map:](#)

### Books and Podcasts

- [Code Switch](#)
- [About Race](#)
- [Seeing White](#)
- [Between the World and Me](#)
- [Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America](#)
- [White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide](#)

### Resources for Parents and Kids :

- [How To Talk To Kids About Racism & Racial Violence](#)
- [Book: Juneteenth for Mazie](#)
- [Juneteenth by PBS Kids](#)
- [The Meaning Behind Juneteenth](#)

