JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
RANKING DEMOCRAT CAROLYN B. MALONEY
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The American Dream on Hold

Economic Challenges in the African American Community

NATIONAL FACT SHEET

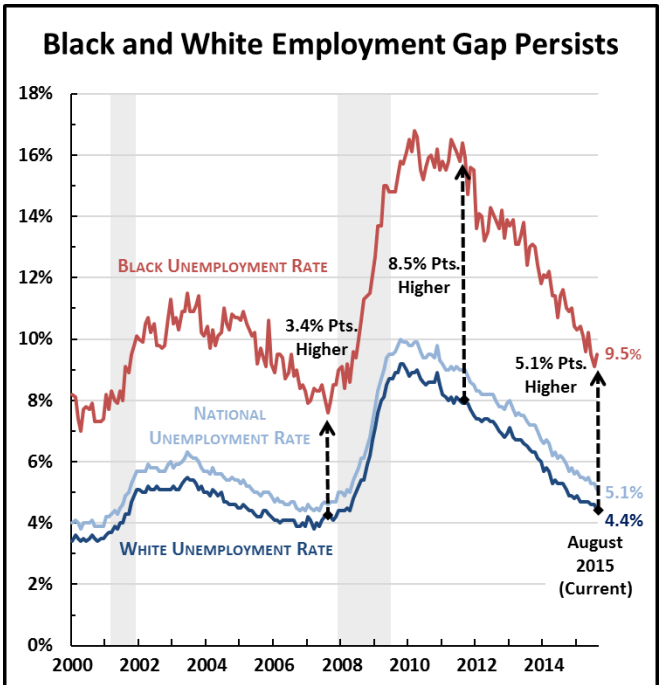
African Americans have made significant social and economic progress since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, the black community continues to face enormous challenges. By many of the most important measures of economic well-being, black Americans lag far behind white Americans.

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 **9.5 percent**, the current unemployment rate for black Americans is **more than double** the 4.4 percent rate for white Americans (*see Figure*).

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



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (updates next on October 2, 2015)

Notes: Grey areas represent periods of recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research; gaps denote the smallest difference on record, largest difference since 1986 and current difference in black and white unemployment rates

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**).

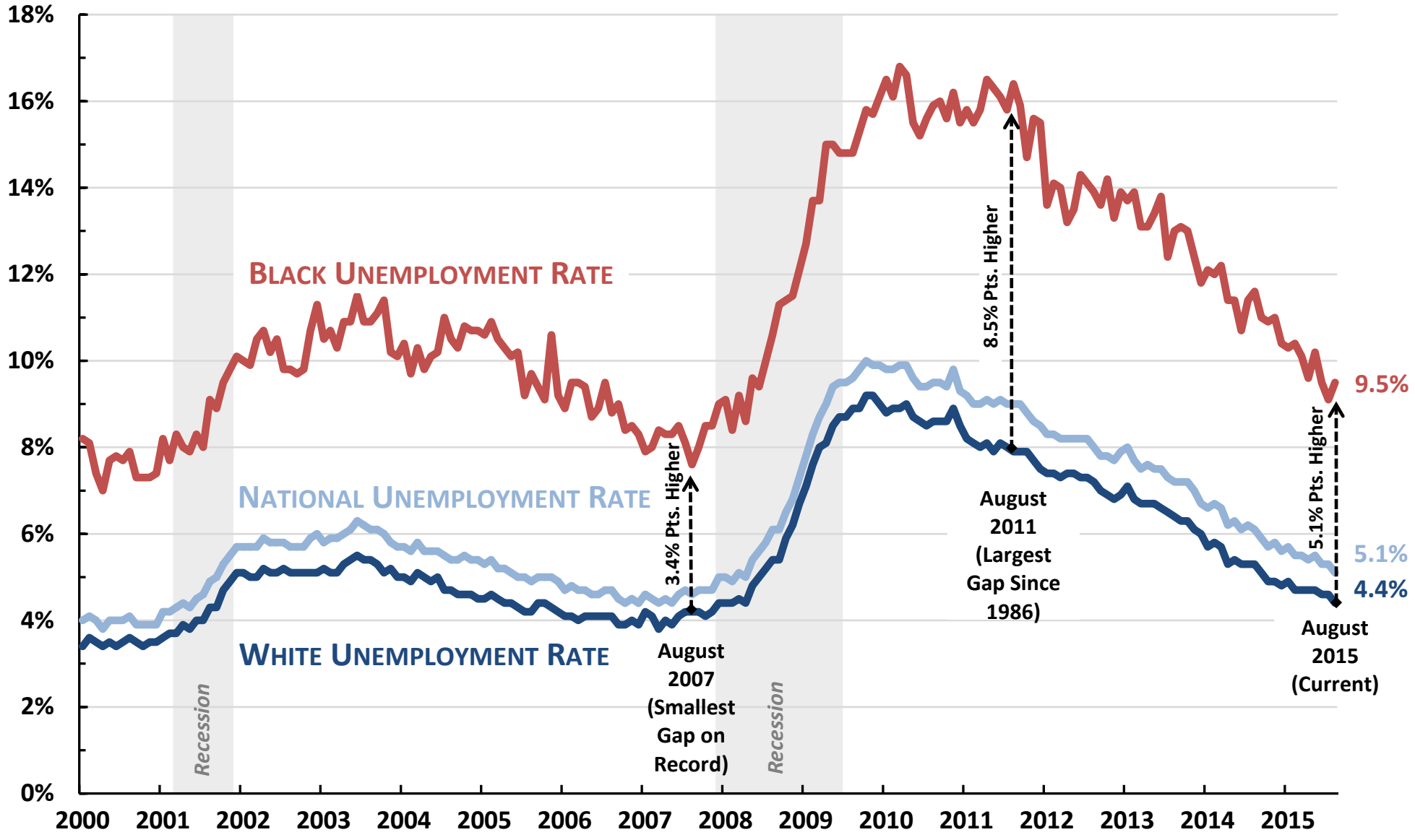
Poverty

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).

Black vs. White Unemployment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (updates next on October 2, 2015)

Notes: Grey areas represent periods of recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research; gaps denote the narrowest, widest and current differences in black and white unemployment rates

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