

President Obama signs "My Brother's Keeper" initiative

NNPA Freddie Allen



Task force launched

Washington - No one had seen President Barack Obama more emotional than last week when he announced "My Brother's Keeper", a new initiative aimed at helping young black men. He spoke from the heart, recounting the pain of not having his father in the home and not always putting his best foot forward.

The details of the initiative have not all been worked out, but a memorandum, the president signed launching, "My Brother's Keeper Task Force" chaired by Broderick Johnson the cabinet secretary and assistant to the president, provides a closer look into how the president plans to move forward.

According to the whitehouse the task force is designed to:

- * Assess the impact of federal policies, regulations and programs of general applicability on boys and young men of color, so as to develop proposals that will enhance positive outcomes and eliminate or reduce negative ones.

- * Work with external stakeholders to highlight the opportunities, challenges, and efforts affecting boys and young men of color.

- * Reccomment to the president means of ensuring sustained efforts within the federal government and continued partnership with the private sector and philanthropic community as set forth in the presendential memorandum

- Create an administration-wide "What Works" online portal to disseminate successful programs and practices that improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.

- * Reccomend, where appropriate, incentives for the broad adoption by national, state, and local public and private decision makers of effective

and innovative strategies and practices for improving outcomes for boys and young men of color.

Flanked by students from "Being A Man" a chicago-based program that teaches discipline, conflict resolution and offers mentoring, the president shared details of his life that all too-often mirror the experiences of young men of color. "I didn't have a dad in the house", he said. I was angry about it, even though I didn't realize it at the time. I made bad choices. I got high without always thinking about the harm that I could do. I didn't always take school as seriously as I should have. I made excuses. sometimes I sold myself short."

The president shared that he "grew up in an enviroment that was a little bit more forgiving", and that he relied on a support network of family, teachers and community leaders that many young Black men don't have access to.

The president called on dozens of business leaders, nonprofit

organizations and corporations to invest in and offer support for the initiative. The foundations pledged to invest \$200. million over the next five years to liftup programs that are proven to work.

President Obama was joined by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Atlantic Philanthopies, Bloomberg Philanthopies, The California Endowmwnt, The Ford Foundation, The John and James L. Knight Foundation, The Open Society Fondations, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The W. K. Kellog Foundation and the Kapor Center Social Impact.

From the White House the President has been able to shine a light on issues that some of us have been working to address doe decades, "said Shawn Dove, the manager for the Campaign for Black Male Achievement at the Open Societies Institute. "It's a clarion call for collaboration and to handle some of America's unfinished business."



Margarett Perkins, Laura Perkins, James I. Perkins and Dr. L. Michael Metke President of Tyler Junior College enter into agreement making possible the Rusk TJC Citizens Promise. The James I Perkins Family Foundation and Tyler Junior College established this scholarship program for Rusk High School graduates. The top fifty-percent/qualifying students will have \$8000. scholarships to TJC beginning with the class of 2014.

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