

## MEMO

To: Dean Holley Walker  
From: Justin Hansford, Executive Director, Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center  
Date: October 13, 2020  
Re: End of Year Report on the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center

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Following is the end-of-year report for the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center (“Center”). This report addresses the activities of the Center over the 2019/2020 academic year while (1) responding to the Howard University School of Law Strategic Plan (“Strategic Plan”); (2) highlighting the advocacy, organizing and scholarship goals of the Center’s strategic plan; (3) where appropriate, outlining the challenges faced by the Center; and (4) highlighting the Center’s goals for the upcoming year.

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I. Howard University School of Law Strategic Plan

The TMCRC activities are relevant to the following priorities and goals:

**a. Priority 1, Goal #2: Enhancing the overall curriculum in the area of experiential learning**

**Clinic Activities**<sup>1</sup>. The Human and Civil Rights Clinic taught 12 new students in HRC I and 8 returning students in HRC II over the 2019/2020 academic year. The clinic focused on exposing students to various forms of legal advocacy through both civil rights and human rights lenses.

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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed account of the clinic cases will be reported in the 2019-2020 Clinical Law Center Report

This year, cases included issues of police brutality, racial justice, rights of protestors, human rights, movement lawyering, and First Amendment rights. Student advocacy work included:

1. Submitting an Amicus brief to the Supreme Court – the Brief focused on how the Fifth Circuit’s negligent protesting theory is at odds with well-established First Amendment precedent. We addressed how the Fifth Circuit’s decision will be disproportionately weaponized against Black protesters.
2. Discussions and teachings on practical strategies regarding Movement Lawyering and what our commitment as a social engineer
3. Creating presentations on civil and human rights issues

Students work with HCR faculty in classroom-seminar and clinical-practice settings to review the trial court records, prepare memoranda, consult with clients, research and write the briefs, memoranda, and human rights reports, and prepare and conduct oral argument and testimony when applicable. The pedagogical goal of the Clinic is for students and faculty to critically examine the analytical and linguistic challenges of effective advocacy, the legal and strategic considerations of lawyering in support of social movements in the civil and human rights context, the ethical and professional obligations of client representation, and the social and political implications of advocacy for civil and human rights.

The Center also teamed up with the Clinical Law Center to host a workshops covering topics like client-centered lawyering, creating client boundaries, and imposter syndrome.

Further, when Clinic began Fall 2019, students were doing intake hours at the Clinical Center. This consisted of frequently answering phone calls as well as attending to walk in appointments of folks needing legal assistance. However, in February 2020, students then transitioned from having intake hour at the Clinical Center to doing it at the Center. The work that students did at the Thurgood Marshall Center varied each week, but mainly focused on answering phone calls from prospective clients, organizing guest speakers in the field of Human rights and politics to come speak at Howard.

#### **b. Priority 2, Goal #2: Enhance the Overall Student Experience**

A goal of the Center is to remain student-centered in its programming. The Center space is organized to encourage students to use the space as a meeting place and to interact with the Center staff. Following are specific initiatives that the Center undertook to enhance the overall student experience at Howard Law:

- I. Student Work.** In the Spring semester, the Center had students conduct their intake hours at the Center. Further, recruited a student assistant and a few summer research interns to work on projects for the Center. The Center has been working tirelessly to engage and train law students and attorneys to be effective racial justice advocates and join the movement. This is natural to us--as Howard University’s flagship

institutional setting for the study and practice of civil rights, human rights, and racial justice law and advocacy, our mission to is obtain racial justice by using a human rights framework and a social movement centered approach.

The Center's work has been true to its mission. For example, over the past few weeks, our team has:

- 1) Filed a temporary injunction against unconstitutionally imposed curfews in DC and New York (both curfews were lifted after filing the motions);
- 2) Testified before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights about police brutality in the wake of George Floyd (the commission has now publicly condemned the police brutality in this case);
- 3) Provided analysis in the *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, and other media outlets,
- 4) Hosted legal observer training for over 200 lawyers/students to support protesters;
- 5) Responded to a call for volunteers to pick up protesters after they were released from jail;
- 6) Provided support for students seeking to contact their local city council in an effort to create meaningful change; and
- 7) Produced a detailed white-paper on the unequal impact of Covid-19 on policing, as well as other issues in the Black community.
- 8) The Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center at Howard University School of Law, Law for Black Lives- DC, and the Criminal Justice Policy Program at Harvard Law School are urging U.S. lawmakers to do more to address structural racism in the next coronavirus relief package.
- 9) Harvard Law School's Systemic Justice Project and Howard University School of Law's Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center Launch 'The Justice Initiative'<sup>2</sup>.

- II. Meet and Greet.** The Center participated in a meet and greet for the students of the HCR Law Review and HCR Clinic. The purpose of this event was to bring students together to meet each other, learn more about the mission and goals of the Center and explore future collaborative efforts among the three organizations. Consistent with the Center's goal of advocacy informed by scholarship, the Center is exploring ways to make sure that the work of the Law Review, Clinic and Organizing Collaborative students are integrated into the work of the Center, that students feel a sense of belonging to the Center and are inspired to explore ways of working together.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://today.law.harvard.edu/harvard-law-schools-systemic-justice-project-and-howard-university-school-of-laws-thurgood-marshall-civil-rights-center-launch-the-justice-initiative/>

**III. Social Justice Projects, Programs, and Events.** Throughout the year, the Center hosted a number of social justice focused events and programs. The Center has made consistent efforts to establish itself as a thought leader on civil rights and human rights issues. The Center staff has produced scholarship, articles, and op-eds, spoken at conferences, and made media appearances over the past year.

There were many events that took place during the course of the Spring 2020 Human and Civil Rights Clinic duration that both the Clinic and the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights center hand a hand in. To name one, we had the 33rd Annual Damon J. Keith Soul Food Luncheon, which was held on Valentine's Day on the Law school campus. Not wanting to break from tradition, the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center, partnered several of Judge Keith's former law clerks, to continue this tradition of a Soul Food Luncheon in honor of Judge Keith and his legacy. This event was in conjunction with the renaming the moot court room in honor of Judge Keith. In the 150 years of the law school's existence, the moot court room has never been named after an individual alum. However, Judge Keith embodied the ideals of Howard University to such a degree that he is deserving of this high honor, and this event was in order to recognize that. For this event, a lot of intake hour work went into it, from curating the guest lists to creating the flyer for advertisement purposes. We had to call different Judge chambers to invite them to this event.

Another monumental event was the Rising Majority Town Hall Event #SquadUp. This was a space for a robust conversation between grassroots organizers and progressive U.S Congress Representatives, including Reps. Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, Ayanna Pressley, and Rashida Tlaib. The focus of the conversation was on examining the critical issues of 2020 and participating in necessary dialogue together about how we can change the course of the country. We explored the current political climate and discuss why it's so important to have organized communities in this crucial 2020 moment, as war, wealth disparity, racism, xenophobia and the burning climate crisis all threaten our future and survival. This was an interactive forum with House of Representatives as well as other activist groups doing important work in order to push for liberation of all communities everywhere.

Further, we learned a lot about Movement Lawyering. We were given hypos and we would discuss in class what we would individually do in those situations and explain how in our reasoning our decision would be helping the movement propel forward. These hypos allowed us to grapple with situations where it might be the easy route to not choose what is best for the movement or to not take short term wins if it will negatively impact the movement in the long run – thinking and using legal strategy is something that we aren't learning how to do in our regular doctrinal classes

These efforts have served to raise the Center's profile as a leader a trusted source for ideas and opinions and a go-to space for human and civil rights-focused events and programs.

The Center partnered with the Summer Systems Institute at Harvard Law School, and the Systemic Lawyering Corps to train a cohort of future lawyers to impact systemic change. Further, Filed a motion on behalf of a grandfather locked in federal prison for compassionate release in light of his pre-existing condition in the age of COVID-19. We partnered with Columbia University to create the United States African America Redress Network to support reparations movements across the nation. We participated in testified before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights about police brutality in the wake of the killing of George Floyd. Additionally, we provided analysis in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, *Vox*, *Nation*, *The Athletic*, *C-Span*, and *Reuters* on our core issues. Moreover, we partnered with Law4BlackLives and The Harvard Law School Criminal Justice Policy Program to complete a white paper called *The Contradiction of Colorblind COVID-19 Relief: Black America in the Age of Pandemic*. The report focuses on Health, Economics, Domestic violence, Policing, and Mass Incarceration. The Clinic submitted an Amicus Brief to the Supreme Court of the United States in support of the First Amendment Rights of Black Lives Matter protester, DeRay McKesson.

Further, in 2019, the Center has been instrumental in providing analysis of the Black Lives Matter Movement in *The New York Times*. We hosted United Nations Decade for People of African Descent Mid Decade Summit in partnership with the US Human Rights Network and The Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights (IDPAD 2015-2024). Specifically, we completed a report on the Banning of Books in Prisons - "Banning the Caged Bird" over the course of several semesters of the human and civil rights clinic, in conjunction with local prison education organizers. Hosted a Movement Lawyering Conference where students were able to attend training with lawyers and advocates from across the United States in partnership with the Advancement Project. Partnered the ReEntry Network's Ready for Work with students who compiled relevant research on employers who illegally refuse to hire people with criminal records. We convened a thematic hearing at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Testified before the United Nations on Reparations. We hosted the release of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights report on Police Violence against Afro-Descendants in the United States. Our mission is to help build a world where human rights are enjoyed by everyone, everywhere.

**IV. Priority 3, Goals #1 to #4: Support teaching excellence and innovation that prepares students to be effective and ethical lawyers, foster the production of high-quality scholarship that reaches a wide audience and promotes the public good, foster a vibrant and engaged community of teachers, scholars, and social**

**justice community servants, and foster the production of social justice projects that promote the public good.**

**a. Teaching Fellows**

A special feature of the Center is the teaching fellowship for young attorneys who want to teach and support social justice scholarship and projects. This fellowship is currently held by two aspiring law professors who, under the guidance of Professor Justin Hanford, engage in teaching, scholarship, and Center-based service. Following is an account of how the Fellow, Tasnim Motala, contributed in each of these categories:

1. **Teaching.** Consistent with the law school's strategic goal of supporting teaching efforts that maximize students' efficacy as lawyers-in-training, Tasnim Motala began in October 2018 and immediately began assisting with the clinic students. Tasnim guided and advised students in their research, writing and client interactions for the Clinic and assisted with in-class meetings and projects. Most notably, Tasnim directly supervised the student effort on the Center's book banning report, which will be released in early Fall, and also directly supervised the Amicus Brief written by the clinic students in Spring 2020. Tasnim mentored students (at the law school and across campus) and helped them across a number of dimensions, including as it relates to job interview preparation and writing letters of recommendation for opportunities in the social justice space.
2. **Scholarship.** Consistent with the goal of producing high-quality scholarship that reaches a wide audience, Tasnim published articles on social justice issues and presented at scholarly workshops. Tasnim published an article about crimes against humanity and genocide in the *Quinnipiac Law Review* and is finalizing an article on tort for racial insults for submission in the August cycle. She also drafted an op-ed on the *Gamble* decision to complement the Center's amicus brief in that case and make two media appearances to discuss current legal issues. Tasnim presented her work at the National People of Color Conference in March and led a workshop at the International Human Rights Clinicians Conference at the University of Pennsylvania in April 2018. Tasnim has also been named on the *Fortune Magazine* 40 under 40 2020 list for Government and Politics.
3. **Service.** Consistent with the goal of producing social justice projects that promote the public good, the teaching fellows actively contributed to the Center's programming. Tasnim was instrumental in the coordination of events like the Spying Dissent Webinar, the IACHR Report Release and the Trauma-Informed Lawyering Workshop. Tasnim brought multiple scholars, practitioners, and movement-lawyers to campus to share their knowledge and experience with their students. Since its inception when we officially launched in the fall semester of 2019 during the 150th Anniversary of the law school, the Center has hosted events, conducted trainings, drafted reports, submitted testimony, brought

lawsuits, and collaborated with other organizations in order to participate in the growing movement for racial justice for Black Americans. From reconstruction to the civil rights movement to the present-day era of Black Lives Matter, Howard University has always been a sparkplug for social change and a thought leader in the movement for racial justice. The Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center is extending that legacy.

b. Executive Director, Justin Hansford

While serving as the executive director of the Center and supervising attorney for the HCR Clinic, Professor Justin Hansford set the priorities for the Center, spearheaded its activities and initiatives and supervised the educational experience for affiliated students. Professor Hansford set the pace for establishing the Center as a thought leader in civil and human rights. Throughout the year he did several speaking engagements, media interviews, and op-eds that served to elevate the Center's profile. Professor Hansford had a segment on The Root<sup>3</sup> speaking about Reparation efforts.

Media:

- Op-Ed on reopening the Michael Brown investigation in the Washington Post<sup>4</sup>
- Quoted in the media on:
  - Banning Bump Stocks<sup>5</sup>
  - Racial Discrimination in Corporate Investment<sup>6</sup>
  - FBI's "Black Identity Extremist" Movement<sup>7</sup>
  - Reopening the Michael Brown Case<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theroot.com/police-reforms-must-include-reparations-for-those-livin-1844529314>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/reopen-the-michael-brown-investigation/2018/08/10/37c28e80-9bee-11e8-843b-36e177f3081c\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.f87d6f61fd34](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/reopen-the-michael-brown-investigation/2018/08/10/37c28e80-9bee-11e8-843b-36e177f3081c_story.html?utm_term=.f87d6f61fd34)

<sup>5</sup> <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/politics/2019/05/02/making-sense-of-the-bump-stock-ban->

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/business/is-racial-discrimination-influencing-corporate-investment-in-ferguson/?utm\\_term=.dcb429ac7fca](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/business/is-racial-discrimination-influencing-corporate-investment-in-ferguson/?utm_term=.dcb429ac7fca)

<sup>7</sup> <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/black-identity-extremist-fbi-domestic-terrorism/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://fox2now.com/2018/08/10/civil-rights-leader-wants-ferguson-case-reopened/>

- The passing of Judge Damon Keith<sup>9</sup>

#### **Priority 4, goal #3: Enhance our J.D. students' exposure to International Law**

A core goal of the Center is to use both civil rights and human rights frameworks to address racial harms. Students in the HCR clinic were exposed to the international human rights law as a tool for addressing structural racism and their work reflects this perspective. For example, in preparing their memos and Amicus Brief, students addressed possible violations from both a First Amendment and international human rights perspective. Students were also provided an opportunity to visit the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in Washington, DC.

#### II. The Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center Strategic Plan

The TMCRC Strategic Plan was approved by the Howard Law faculty and has been guiding us in since 2018. The goals of the Center's strategic framework are to serve the community through advocacy and public engagement and inspire new knowledge with intellectual engagement. To achieve its goals, the Center launched several significant initiatives in 2019/20:

##### 1. Advocacy

- Clinic.** Most of the Center's advocacy work through policy intervention and litigation support was accomplished in the Human and Civil Rights Clinic discussed in section I.a.
- Amicus Brief.** Collaborated with clinic members to write an Amicus Brief that was submitted to the Supreme Court. The Amicus Brief was surrounding the *Doe v. McKesson* case, which if decided against McKesson, would hold protest organizers liable for actions of a third party during a protest. We argued how such a broad liability framework stifles the rights of all protesters. Discussed strategies of movement lawyering. Presented on human and civil rights issues.
- Projects.** The Center has many initiatives going on currently. The joint Justice Initiative with

##### 2. Public Engagement

- Events.** The Center accomplished a significant number of events over the past year that were designed to engage the Howard community and

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/judge-and-civil-rights-icon-damon-j-keith-dies-at-age-96>



public with pressing civil and human rights issues. See Appendix A for a list of the Center's events.

- b. **Reports.** The Center published hosted the release of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights report on Police Violence against Afro-Descendants in the United States. We partnered with Law4BlackLives and The Harvard Law School Criminal Justice Policy Program to complete a white paper called *The Contradiction of Colorblind COVID-19 Relief: Black America in the Age of Pandemic*. The report focuses on Health, Economics, Domestic violence, Policing, and Mass Incarceration.
- c. **Law and Organizing Collaborative.** The Center staff made efforts to engage with undergraduate students through speaking engagements, co-sponsored events, and event participation. Part of the goal of these efforts was to recruit students for its Law and Organizing Collaborative. The purpose of this group is to engage the wider Howard student body with the Center's community organizing efforts. The collaborative will organize community-focused events, like town hall meetings and work on civil rights campaigns with local organizations. This year, the Center took steps to create a student organization on the Howard campus and recruited an executive board. Now that the organization has been established, it will focus on training its members in community organizing and planning town hall meetings.
- d. **Media.** The Center staff did over 7 media interviews on civil and human rights issues this year and produced 3 op-eds. The Center has op-eds on issues involving police violence, reparations, and book banning.

To facilitate its media outreach, the Center began work with a public relations firm that specializes in supporting organizations that are working for social change. The firm is providing invaluable support, advice, and training for the Center's staff. The Center has also developed a productive working relationship with the Howard University Communications departments.

- e. **Community Outreach.** The Center co-hosted events that saw significant participation from community members and activists.
  - i. The Systemic Justice Project at Harvard Law School and the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center at Howard University School of Law will launch a year-long pilot project called "The Justice Initiative" with the first of 10, three-hour programming sessions. Dozens of lawyers from around the country and more than 200 law students from more than 50 U.S. law schools are already scheduled to participate in Saturday's online event. The Justice Initiative is a community of social justice-oriented law students, lawyers, law-school faculty, legal organizations,

organizers, and activists devoted to thinking creatively about the role lawyers can play in reimagining, dismantling, and remaking unjust systems, working to repair longstanding injustices, assisting law students hoping to pursue justice-oriented careers, and providing opportunities for further study, engagement, advising, organizing, and collaboration among its members.

- ii. The U.S. African American Redress Network was created when the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center at Howard University and the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University teamed up to spotlight the numerous local reparations initiatives across the nation and be a resource in support of such efforts.
- iii. Howard University law professor Justin Hansford serves as the executive director of the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center and he spearheaded the Redress Network along with Dr. Linda Mann, who spearheaded the project on behalf of the Institute for the Study of Human Rights.

### 3. Intellectual Engagement

- a. **HCR Law Review.** Under the guidance of Center staff, the Law Review had many accomplishments this year. Most notably, the Ferguson Symposium, which was well attended and attracted prominent politicians and activists. The Law Review's alumni brunch was also notable, reconnecting past members of the law review and its predecessor journal with current and prospective members for reflection on social engineering in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These events not only reaffirmed the school's commitment to fostering a community of scholars and advocates committed to advancing social justice causes, but it also elevated the law review's, and by extension, the law school's, profile as a leading body for the study of social justice and the law. Law Review's upcoming publication volume, which features a number of scholarly articles engaging critically with frontier issues at the intersection of human and civil rights, continues this momentum to a reach wider audience. During the Clyde C. Ferguson Symposium, HCR invited everyone to join in a summer reading challenge on **reparations**. Reparations was the topic of the symposium with many leading civil rights giants coming to Howard to speak on the topic. Reparations have been an ongoing political and social debate since the end of the Civil War. Today, reparations have become a "hot ticket item" as a result of the 2020 U.S. Presidential Race. Especially amongst Democratic candidates fighting to connect with Black voters by spewing rhetoric that they think "we" want to hear.
- b. **Collaborations.** The US Human Rights Network, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Political Rights, and the Thurgood Marshall Civil

Rights Center for a Mid-Decade Summit on the International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD). Black leaders from Europe, the Americas and across the diaspora are meeting to mark the halfway point of the United Nations proclamation of the IDPAD and discuss the Decade's themes of recognition, justice, and development. The Summit was a chance for Black leaders, academics, and activists to discuss the issues that impact People of African Descent, develop mechanisms for engaging member states in the United Nations on implementation of policies and laws that combat the effects of racial injustice, and address the work that needs to be done to meet the Decade's stated objectives.

In light of one of the most present crisis, however, we would like to apply for a \$10,000 grant to support our work in support of fair and equitable coronavirus relief. This past summer, The Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center co-authored a report *With Law for Black Lives- DC*, and the Criminal Justice Policy Program at Harvard Law School urging U.S. lawmakers to do more to address structural racism in the next coronavirus relief package. We produced new report by the center titled [\*The Contradiction of Colorblind COVID-19 Relief: Black America in the Age of Pandemic\*](#) which finds that federal coronavirus relief efforts up to this point have taken a colorblind approach, failing to acknowledge and adequately address the disproportionate impact the coronavirus has had on the Black community. The report includes legal research from scholars of color, data collection obtained by human rights activist, and research assistance provided by Howard University School of Law students.

The report found that, as the pandemic persists, the impact of lawmakers' failure to address structural inequalities and racial discrimination in health care, financing, employment, policing, and mass incarceration has become even more clear, True justice looks like recognizing the need for more relief for Black people as opposed to those who are not facing the same level of systemic harm. The report highlights five issues that have been aggravated by the pandemic, including health, economics, domestic violence, policing, and mass incarceration and cites policy solutions proposed by researchers, advocates, activists, and organizations.

Recommendations include:

- Expanding access to testing in Black neighborhoods and making healthcare universal
- Dedicating funds to minority-owned businesses and the creation of a Minority Business Development Agency

- Provide support for Black-led nonprofit organizations, shelters and advocacy groups that combat domestic violence
- Divest from police, shift resources to Black communities and create a fund for victims of police brutality
- Expand compassionate release during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond

According to the report, the rate of death from the coronavirus is highest among Black Americans. While the coronavirus itself infects people without regard to race, political failure to address systemic inequality in healthcare delivery, economic access, and other areas has caused Black Americans to be more than twice as likely to die from the virus compared to other groups. Black Americans are more likely to experience discrimination in health care, and are placed in more impoverished environments, which leads to health conditions such as “hypertension and other chronic diseases.” Discrimination in unemployment has also led Black Americans to be hit harder economically during the pandemic.

Studies have found that more than 80% of Black workers perform jobs that cannot be done remotely and are overrepresented in frontline positions. Black workers comprise 37.7% of jobs in the essential services industry. This includes the healthcare and social assistance workforce where Black workers are approximately 50% more likely to work than White workers. Despite risking their lives to ensure that all Americans have access to food, healthcare, and transportation, Black workers are undercompensated and more likely to be the first fired during economic downturns, a pattern which is already reflected in coronavirus unemployment numbers. A study cited in the report finds that 21% of Black Americans have lost their jobs compared to 15% of White Americans.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the nation and cities across the world have contended with the abuses perpetuated against Black communities, particularly those involving police violence. The brutal murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery cast a new light on aggressive policing that targets Black communities. Government responses to the pandemic have aggravated the disproportionate targeting of Black Americans in a variety of ways. In Brooklyn, New York, the district attorney announced that out of 40 people arrested for social distancing violations from March 17 to May 4, 35 were Black. NYPD also released data showing that 81% of the summonses issued related to social distancing were issued to Black and Latino residents. Concerns about heightened surveillance during the pandemic continue to increase as governments consider the use of artificial intelligence to track pedestrians and monitor if they are adhering to social distancing guidelines. Heightened surveillance poses a high risk for Black communities who are often deemed suspicious based on racialized

perceptions. Policies that should be helping to keep communities safe during the pandemic are being used to target Black and low-income communities.

The report also finds that mass incarceration overwhelmingly impacts Black and Latino communities. Those in jails and prisons are more vulnerable to infection and death from COVID-19. With 40% of incarcerated people having at least one chronic health issue, the brutal conditions of confinement including overcrowding, violence, sexual victimization, use of solitary confinement, and lower standards of medical care, leave incarcerated populations with little to no protection from the virus. The report argues that comprehensive response is necessary to address the multitude of existing systemic problems in the criminal legal system which have worsened because of the virus.

### III. Center Administration

To successfully launch and develop its strategic initiatives, the Center focused on three goals - to build the Center's infrastructure, deepen partnerships internally and externally and ensure the financial sustainability of the Center. Each individual goal listed below facilitates the success of the other goals:

1. **Building Center Infrastructure.** Apart from completing the strategic planning process, the Center scheduled mid-year and end of year retreats to assess its progress and plan for the upcoming year. Building this culture of planning and evaluation has given the Center a strong start and a good foundation of work to build on. During the year, the Center also focused on creating a space that reflected the student-centered goal of the Center and on facilitating the operations of the department. By the end of the semester, the Center space was transformed into one that is functional and student friendly. The Center also launched its webpage and is currently working on exploring ways to make the page more dynamic, user-friendly and accessible to key stakeholders. The Center continues to experience some challenges that are described in Section IV. below.
2. **Deepening Partnerships.** A key goal for the Center this year was to begin building partnerships with other organizations and entities that are interested and engaged in human and civil rights work. These partnerships will increase the Center's visibility and reach, provide opportunities for collaborative work and provide funding opportunities. The Center was successful in building many relationships to support projects and host events. Following is a list of organizations that the Center worked with during the past year:
  - a. American Civil Liberties Union
  - b. Center for Constitutional Rights
  - c. RFK Center on Human Rights
  - d. Law 4 Black Lives

- e. Inter-American Commissions on Human Rights
- f. Bunche Center
- g. Clinical Law Center
- h. Race and Equity
- i. Defending Rights and Dissent
- j. The Center for Media Justice
- k. National Lawyer's Guild
- l. Other law schools – Harvard Law, Columbia Law, HBCUs, and

DMV law schools.

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In addition, the Center is also currently planning programs and projects with other organizations like the Advancement Project.

3. **Ensuring financial sustainability.** The Center made efforts to begin the fundraising process during the past year. By building a webpage and producing a newsletter, the Center began to engage internal and external constituents with its work. Now that the Center has built a significant body of work, established its identity and promoted itself as a thought-leader in human and civil rights, it will leverage its success to build financial support. The Center will work closely with Dean Holley-Walker on its fundraising efforts. The goal is to produce a case statement and fundraising plan by the end of the summer. The Center staff will also work on building a list of potential donors and matching these donors with opportunities to support the Center. The Center will also focus on building relationships with charitable foundations and grant writing.

We compiled a list of the top 100 Fortune Companies and the top 50 law firms in the DMV area for fundraising purposes about the Thurgood Marshall Center.

contact information of these individuals into an excel sheet in order for an email to be sent out to them discussing the mission and goals of the Thurgood Marshall center.

#### IV. Challenges

Although the Center experienced great success over the past year, the following items, remain a significant challenge to the operations and continued growth of the Center:

1. **Support.** The Center functions without administrative support and as a result, the managing director spends an inordinate amount of time on administrative tasks. As the Center prepares to focus more on its fundraising plan, it would benefit from some administrative support. The Center is in the process of hiring a student worker; however, a part-time or shared administrative position would be helpful in addition to a student worker.
2. **Space.** The Center's space remains a challenge as its professional staff who do not have their offices. The current office arrangement allows for an accessible space for meetings, but one that is not conducive and often disruptive to individual or independent work. As a possible solution, The Center would benefit from either expanding on the first

floor of Notre Dame Hall or moving its operations to the mostly unused offices on the ground floor of the Clinical Law Center.

3. **Financial Affairs.** As the center takes a more active role in fundraising, it will need more access and control over its financial affairs. Financial transparency will be integral to gaining the trust of our donors. Added to this, the constant delays in processing payments create a significant burden when dealing with vendors and guests for events. Fundraising will demand regular activity, including more frequent travel and more routine expenses, and there is concern that the current process will not be sustainable in the more fundraising centric environment.

#### V. Goals for Next Year

At its end of year meeting, the Center staff outlined a list of priorities for next year that will serve to:

1. Further improve a strategic fundraising plan;
2. Further integrate students into the work of the Center and provide them with opportunities for enhanced educational outcomes;
3. Focus on a limited number of high-impact events that serve to further raise the Center's profile and establish its identity; and
4. Continue promoting the development of law teaching fellows.

#### Vi. Conclusion

Guided by its strategic plan the Center has produced a remarkable set of accomplishments in one year. The Center has transformed its physical space, provided unique educational and professional opportunities for students and is building its identity, reputation, and leadership in the human and civil rights arena. These achievements provide a strong foundation for the Center for the upcoming year.