

Helen Butler Leads Black Women In Call For Legislative Action & Accountability At GA Capitol



Credit: Jeanean Lockett, Jus4LovePhotos

ATLANTA – Georgia Black Women’s Roundtable (GA BWR), a women’s initiative of the Georgia Coalition for the People’s Agenda (People’s Agenda), convened over 200 Black women from diverse organizations and communities at the Georgia Capitol for BLACK WOMEN U3: UNITED. UNAPOLOGETIC. UNSTOPPABLE, an event focused on leveraging their collective power to shape the legislative agenda and drive accountability from lawmakers. It began with a live broadcast of WAOK’s morning show, “The Wake Up with Dee,” followed by a press conference unveiling the Georgia Black Women’s Agenda, a report

addressing critical challenges facing Black families across Georgia, and concluding with a luncheon featuring a lively discussion.

Helen Butler, convener of GA BWR and executive director of the People's Agenda, notes that it's fitting that the women assembled during Atlanta's week-long celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth to send a message that Black women will stay laser-focused on justice and equity for Black families. Butler said, "Black women across Georgia are standing together, making it clear to legislators and stakeholders that we are united, unapologetic, and unstoppable. We intend to shape the policy agenda by raising the visibility of issues important to Black women, building political power, and driving accountability from lawmakers."

Host of "The Wake Up Call with Dee," Dr. Dee Dawkins-Haigler proclaims, "God has assembled us together at this state capitol for such a time as this. We are here on the very first day of session to let everyone know that Black women are concerned about things that are important to us." The former state representative adds, "Today you are on notice that Black women are here to stay. Our time is now."

GA BWR convened women in Macon in 2024 to create a comprehensive agenda for Black women, focusing on the issues most crucial to the Black community coupled with actionable solutions to drive meaningful change. After extensive planning sessions and surveys, the women crafted the GA Black Women's Agenda, outlining the key issues they are advocating for at the Georgia Capitol today.

Highlighting the alignment of these issues with the mission of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), Dr. A. Lois Keith, national chair of NCNW, stated, "We are pleased to be a part of this historic event to address things such as education, health and wellness, women's rights, and human trafficking."

Darlene McGhee Whittington, national president of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., added, "Jack and Jill of America is proud to stand in solidarity with our sisters."

The GA Black Women's Agenda prioritizes critical areas such as economic development, entrepreneurship, and education. The white paper calls for increased investment in education, particularly in underserved areas, to address Georgia's below-average student funding.

In public and mental health, systemic inequalities that disproportionately impact Black women, including alarming disparities in maternal mortality rates and reproductive rights, are emphasized. The agenda also raises concerns about Project 2025, which threatens economic stability, restricts access to essential services, and weakens healthcare and civil rights protections. Additionally, it warns of the exacerbation of environmental injustices due to the rollback of climate action, increasing pollution, and disproportionately harming Black communities.

Voting rights remain a crucial focus, with ongoing efforts to combat voter suppression and safeguard democratic participation. The agenda underscores the pivotal role of Black women in the electoral process and calls for stronger protections to ensure their voices are heard. With the inauguration of a new president approaching, Andrea Young, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, reminded the audience of the importance of elections, stating, "What we do matters. We've got to start working now to make sure our folks understand the consequences. Voting has consequences."

GA BWR is an initiative of the People's Agenda and the Georgia affiliate of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation's Black Women's Roundtable. In March 2025, the organization will take a Georgia delegation to the 14th Annual BWR National Conference in Washington, D.C., where they will

present the GA Black Women's Agenda to national representatives. The People's Agenda is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization focused on year-round voter registration, education, and mobilization in Black communities throughout Georgia.

Oprah Winfrey to Speak With Helen Butler, Stacey Abrams, Crystal Fox, and Rep. Nikema Williams About Voting in Georgia Special Election



ATLANTA — Helen Butler, executive director of the Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda, Stacey Abrams, founder of Fair Fight, Actress Crystal Fox, and Congresswoman Nikema Williams will be among the speakers at a virtual town hall Oprah Winfrey will host live Monday January 4 at 8 PM, ET. The event is part of OWN's continued OWN YOUR VOTE nonpartisan get-out-the-vote initiative intended to encourage, inspire and support voters ahead of Georgia's Special Election. The town hall is free and open to the public and presented in partnership with Open Society Foundations and Kapor Center.

Registration is available in advance at zoomwithoprah.com.

Oprah will speak with local voters from throughout the state of Georgia to ensure as many as possible are prepared with

resources, information and inspiration ahead of the Special Election. Those joining the town hall will include local voters, along with national thought leaders, voting rights experts and those who can provide resources and information for voters.Â

Representatives from women's organizations will also participate including:Â Dr. Glenda GloverÂ (Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated);Â Beverly E SmithÂ (Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated);Â Melanie CampbellÂ (Black Women's Roundtable);Â Glynda CarrÂ (Higher Heights Leadership Fund);Â Dr. Johnetta Betsch ColeÂ (NCNW);Â Dr. Kimberly Leonard(The Links, Incorporated);Â Rasheeda S. Liberty(Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated);Â Valerie Hollingsworth BakerÂ (Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated). A closing prayer will be offered byÂ Rev. Toni Belin Ingram,Â Presiding Elder, AME Church.

This is the second town hall Oprah Winfrey will host for the Georgia Senate and Public Service commission runoffs. During the general election she hosted virtual town halls engaging with voters in Wisconsin, North Carolina, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania and South Carolina.Â

OWN Your Vote Partner Organizations include:

Advancement Project National Office

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated

AME Church Social Action Commission

Color of Change

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

Fair Fight Action

Higher Heights Leadership Fund

Joseph and Evelyn Lowery Institute for Justice and Human Rights

The Kapor Center

The King Center (Martin Luther King, Jr.Â Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc.)

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

The Links, Incorporated

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
National Council of Negro Women
National Urban League
Power Rising
Power to the Polls
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated
Sistahs in Business Expo
Vote Run Lead
Vote.org
VoteAsIf.org
When We All Vote
Woke Vote
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated