

## NAACP PRESIDENT & CEO INTRODUCES PRESIDENT JOE R. BIDEN, JR. : FULL TRANSCRIPT

Good afternoon, and thank you to all who have joined us today for the historic, 70th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education.

I'd like to take a moment of personal privilege to acknowledge those who are with us today.

To the families of Brown litigants, whose ancestors are a shining example of patriotism and ultimate sacrifice. We at the NAACP are eternally grateful to your families for persevering through the threats of physical violence, economic erosion, and mental weight of leading this effort to integrate our nation's schools.

To the members of the Little Rock Nine who are in the room, it is an honor to share space with you. The educational advancements we have seen over the past seven decades would not be possible without your bravery and determination.

The NAACP has a long history of bringing our causes to the courthouse. In 1954, we litigated Brown v. Board of Education at the Supreme Court to challenge the idea that 'separate' could also be equal. Today, we litigate in states like Arkansas to ensure that our stories, our history, the same history we are celebrating today, is not eradicated from books and banished from classrooms.

But the Black community is well aware that progress is not possible without expending every resource at our disposal. So yes, we litigate. But we also advocate. We agitate. We show up in the halls of power echoing the rallying cries of our community. For far too long, those cries have fallen on deaf ears. We haven't felt seen, and we haven't felt heard.

Nearly four years ago, a new Presidential Administration took their seats in the White House. An Administration that includes the first, but not the last, Black female Vice President. An Administration that has centered the Black community, and Black culture from day one.

An Administration that has opened its doors to Black America, inviting us into conversations about the state of Black education,

acknowledging our long history of being left out of progress, and left behind in opportunity. An Administration that has committed themselves to advancing racial equity.

We told them that Black education is severely underfunded. That the promise of landmark decisions like Brown has yet to be fulfilled. That we are facing a dire Black teacher shortage, our graduates are suffering from a student debt crisis, and our HBCUs are not getting the funding they need and deserve.

And for the first time, in a very long time, we have been seen, and we have been heard.

In the past four years, this Administration has canceled more than \$150 billion in student debt for more than 4 million Americans. Some are even starting to call President Biden the 'cancel student debt President.' And not only has that debt been canceled, but programs like Public Loan Service Forgiveness have been improved in ways that will maximize their impact for years to come.

And just this morning, I woke up to news that the Administration has provided our HBCUs with \$16 billion in funding over the last three years.

It doesn't stop there. Because we know that in our community, the obstacles to education don't simply exist in the classroom. They permeate throughout our everyday lives. If we are too busy working three jobs to put food on the table and clothes on our childrens' backs, how can we be expected to sit down and do homework with them every night? We need real solutions to the real problems we face on a day to day basis.

And then we saw the passage of the American Rescue Plan, and the creation of nearly 3 million jobs for Black workers, and a Child Tax Credit expansion that has cut Black child poverty in half, and provided some breathing room to 9 million Black families.

We know that there is much more to be done. But boy, does it feel nice to be seen, and to be heard.

Boy, is it nice when our elected officials at the highest levels of government show up, for our culture, and our community.

And with that being said, it is my distinct honor to welcome the 46th President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden Jr.