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**(SEG-  
MENT A)**

00:02:11

[B-ROLL. NO AUDIO.]

00:00:24

MR. ROLAND MARTIN: When it comes to healthcare, African-Americans are paying more, receiving less; and they have a hard time getting effective preventative care and quality treatment where they live. And whether it's kidney disease, cancer, strokes, diabetes, or many other illnesses, African-Americans are at the top of those most likely affected.

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MR. MARTIN: So, why have African-American voters been missing in action in this debate? And, is their silence making it harder to achieve healthcare reform?

Joining us today to discuss healthcare reform is Melody Barnes, President Obama's domestic policy advisor and the director of the Domestic Policy Council.

Melody, certainly welcome to "Washington Watch."

00:00:59

MS. MELODY BARNES: It's a pleasure to be here. Congratulations on your -

MR. MARTIN: Well -

MS. BARNES: -- show.

MR. MARTIN: -- thanks so much. I appreciate it.

00:01:02

MR. MARTIN: Uh, got a sense that healthcare is *the* number one agenda for the person runnin' the domestic policy office.

MS. BARNES: [Chuckles.] You picked u- -- picked that up. Absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: Right, right.

MS. BARNES: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: I just sorta had a *feeling* that was the case.

MS. BARNES: [Chuckles.]

00:01:13

MR. MARTIN: This week, we saw the Senate Finance Committee go through the whole issue with the public option, saying no to a couple amendments. Then all of a sudden, we hear [of?] this quasi[?] publi- -- public option. Then we hear folks - Democrats saying, "The President is going to have to lay down the law. It's in, or it's out."

What is he going to do?

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MS. BARNES: Well, the President laid it out, I think, when he went to the joint session with Congress a few weeks ago; and we

consistently are talking to members, both on the House side [and] on the Senate side.

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MS. BARNES: What the President has said is that he wants to make sure that there's security and stability for people who have insurance. He wants to make sure there're affordable options for people who don't have insurance, and we've got to bring down the cost - the high cost of healthcare insurance.

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MS. BARNES: The public option, he believes, is a - a tool to accomplish that, but his main goal is to make sure that we're bringing down cost, be- -- and increasing competition and choice in order to do that.

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MS. BARNES: He is looking at what all the committees are doing. We believe that we've made great progress, and the fact that we're about to head to the floor of the House and the Senate, and we're ready to go [sic]. 00:02:12

MR. MARTIN: So - but why not take a hard stance? I mean look at *The New York Times* poll. I'm sure you've already seen it. Sixty-five percent of all respondents say they favor a public

option. Forty-seven percent of *Republicans* say they favor it. Forty-two oppose. So, if you have the public on your side, why not say, "This is what I want. Get it in this bill, so I can sign it"?

00:02:33

MS. BARNES: Well, the President *has* said, "This is an" - "a very effective tool to accomplish the goal that I want to accomplish." Remember, our goal is to bring down cost, and we know that competition and choice are in- -- in- -- *incredibly* important to do that. You know, *think* about it. If you lived in a town that had one gas station, and you were driving all around and trying to find the cheapest gas around, one gas station wouldn't do it. Bringing more options into your marketplace will, in fact, drive down cost.

00:03:00

MS. BARNES: That's what the President says is important. Having a public option will help us acco- -- accomplish that, and I think he's made it clear to Congress what his goals are.

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00:03:08

MR. MARTIN: Bu - but how do you drive down those costs when the Republicans are saying this bill is going to tax people even more

so. Uh, they also suggest that this is the last thing we need, a larger government program. I think we saw Senator Mitch McConnell come out and say, "The bottom line is we're not going to support anything that's going to cost a trillion dollars, because it's - has an effect on the deficit."

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MS. BARNES: Well, the President has made a commitment not to raise taxes on those making \$250,000 or less. That's a commitment that's very important to him.

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MS. BARNES: What we push back on are comments like, you know, "An individual mandate is an increased tax on people."

Well, that's ridiculous. When we tell people, you've gotta helv [sic - phonetic] - have insurance for your car, no one's calling that an additional tax on people. That's making sure that people are appropriately covered.

00:03:55

MS. BARNES: Those are the things that the President has said i- -- is - are important to this bill. Those are the principles that he's moving forward on.

00:04:00

MR. MARTIN: Now, let's - let's look at - a- -- you know, the average person - African-Americans out there. Um, how are you enlisting -

MS. BARNES: Um-hum?

MR. MARTIN: -- all of those folks who were supporting this campaign? Because it seems as if the President's supporters have been missing in action. You look at the healthcare town hall debates. You see most of those who are in opposition. Uh, and so how are you rallying those individuals? Because, frankly, they're sitting on the sidelines while you guy are catchin' much hell.

00:04:26

MS. BARNES: [Chuckles.] Well, first of all, what we saw in terms of the town halls in August, you know, the media like to capture some of the - the tension that existed in some places.

MR. MARTIN: But it was *real*.

MS. BARNES: I - but I also talked to members of the CBC as recently as a week and-a-half ago, and they were talking about the very reasoned conversations they were having at town halls. So, I just want to put it out there that not all of them look like, you know, DDF.

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MS. BARNES: Um, at the same time, we know this is important to

the African-American community. You were touching on it in the very beginning. One in five African-Americans don't [sic] have healthcare. A quarter of African-Americans don't have a primary care physician. We know that we have chronic diseases at a - at a higher rate than the rest of the population, and we know that we're paying more for our healthcare than the rest of the population. So, we're paying more; we're getting less; and as a result, we also are - are more ill.

00:05:12

MS. BARNES: It's very important for people to join in this debate and realize what's at stake for them.

00:05:17

MR. MARTIN: But are we seeing anything in the House bill or the Senate bill that specifically targets closing these health gaps?

00:05:23

MS. BARNES: Absolutely. Absolutely. First of all, the fact that preventative care will be covered - we're talking about, um, being able to go to the doctor and have your eyes checked, be able to have your blood pressure checked - all those things to make sure that you're getting those chronic disease under control, or that you're not sliding into a c- -- a case of chronic disease. All of that is covered.

00:05:42

MS. BARNES: I - we know that people are concerned that your healthcare insurance is gonna throw you overboard when you get sick - that lack of se- -- security. The President has said that will be illegal - illegal when this law goes into place

We also are making sure that your lifetime coverage or your annual coverage, uh, won't be capped by a healthcare insurer. So, all of those things mixed together - and particularly the preventative care people - p- - provisions will make sure that people get the coverage that they -

MR. MARTIN: S- --

MS. BARNES: -- need.

00:06:10

MR. MARTIN: -- speaking of the people who lose their jobs - lose - lo- -- lose their healthcare when they lose their jobs -

MS. BARNES: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- in August 263,000 people - Americans lost their jobs -

MS. BARNES: Um-hum.

MR. MARTIN: -- more than was predicted. Um, what is this administration doing to - to stem that, but also increase jobs? The President and the Vice President talk a lot, with the stimulus bill, about growing the job sector. When is that going

to happen? Because right now, there stills [sic] to be - still seem to be there's a lack of confidence in jobs being created in this country.

00:06:39

MS. BARNES: Well, think about it. In the first quarter of this year, we lost 2.1 million jobs. So, what we've done is we've started to slow the hemorrhaging. The President's said that's not good enough, but we need to acknowledge that the stimulus bill is taking effect, and we're starting to see the results of it.

00:06:55

MS. BARNES: At the same time - and I was just in a meeting wi- - with the President yes- -- um, on, uh, Thursday -

MR. MARTIN: Um-hum.

MS. BARNES: -- and what he said is we have to now focus on job creation. We're seeing that through, um, the work that we're doing on energy and weatherization. Uh, we're seeing that through the education provisions that we've put in place. You know, more Head Start teachers, more, um, uh, individuals who are engaged in childcare, m- -- healthcare is also a growth industry. We're seeing job opportunities there. So, we're going to increase that.

00:07:23

MS. BARNES: We're also working very hard to make sure there's job training available for people, so that they can quickly up their skills and get back into the job market.

So, we're seeing the hemorrhaging start to slow down. The President and the Vice President are focused, using the Recovery Act and other provisions to move forward and create more jobs for people. 00:07:39

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MR. MARTIN: We're hearing lots, though, from Black-owned businesses.

MS. BARNES: Um-hum.

MR. MARTIN: Uh, we're hearing from individuals who're saying, "Look, we are being disproportionately affected." Uh, the inability to get credit lines, the inability to be able to access certain jobs. What specifically is the administration doing to ensure that when it comes to the stimulus bill, minority business owners are not being left on the sidelines -

MS. BARNES: Absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: -- in this si- -- in this s- -- frankly[?], in this recession?

00:08:05

MS. BARNES: Absolutely. I was just with Ambassador Kirk, the

head of the U.E- -- who - th- - our U.S. trade -

MR. MARTIN: Ron Kirk -

MS. BARNES: -- Representative.

MR. MARTIN: -- former mayor of Dallas.

MS. BARNES: Absolutely, um, talking about this, um, and, uh, officials from the Department of Commerce. And we were sitting and talking to, um, Black - uh, African-American business owners about this very fact.

00:08:21

MS. BARNES: One, we know that we're pushing out those stimulus dollars. In about a third of the amount of time, for the Recovery Act, we've pushed out about a third of the dollars. But we're very s- -- very specifically doing calls, meetings; um, working very closely with all entrepreneurs, but also in the African-American community, to make sure that people know where there're comp- -- competitive grant opportunities, [that] they know where to get those dollars.

00:08:42

MS. BARNES: Um, so we're focused on making sure that we're pushing into the - them into the community.

00:08:47

MS. BARNES: My office, the Domestic Policy Council, is doing

*hundreds* - literal- -- literally hundreds of calls - to make sure that people have access to this information.

00:08:55

MR. MARTIN: Now, I was recently in New Orleans -

MS. BARNES: Um-hum?

MR. MARTIN: -- -- and a lotta people are still complaining in that region about the red tape. Uh, the President will be visiting New Orleans soon - his first visit as President. Uh, some people 're s- -- saying, "A little late for him to come down."

He's made the point that, "Look. I've sent secretaries down there to get the issues resolved."

When it comes to housing and education, the building of new schools and hospitals, how are you assessing them? How are you tracking that to ensure the dollars are a- -- absolutely being used the right way, and we're not seeing taxpayer dollars wasted through corruption in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region?

00:09:30

MS. BARNES: Right. Well, the President's said - he said this on the campaign trail. "On my watch, New Orleans" - "what happened after Katrina will never happen again."

So, when we walked into the White House, we very quickly started working on the housing issues, making sure that people

were able to transition outta the temporary housing into more permanent housing, um, and trying to get that situation stabilized.

00:09:50

MS. BARNES: Also, the issues around healthcare, um, issues around schools. And I think if you look very carefully at our record, it's something that we believe is important. We've started to - to free up, but appropriately track, the - the - uh, large amounts of money that need to go into New Orleans for the purpose of rebuilding.

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MS. BARNES: The President has made sure that Secretary Donovan, the head of Housing and Urban Development; um, that Secretary Napolitano, the head of the Department of Homeland Security, have gone down repeatedly. As you've said, we'll be going down there in a couple of weeks to look at the work that's already been done.

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MS. BARNES: But I think the people who have the implementation responsibilities have been going to New Orleans to make sure that we get the right amount of money down there, but we do it in a way, as you pointed out, that isn't wasteful. So, we believe

we're doing the right things.

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MS. BARNES: Also, I - I wanna mention the arbitration process that we've put in place to make sure that decisions about how funding should be used are being made appropriately, and we're settling those claims - claims that 've been sitting and - on hold for years and years.

00:10:50

MR. MARTIN: Not sure if you seen the video of that vicious beating - the fatal beating in Chicago.

MS. BARNES: Um-hum.

MR. MARTIN: Um, talk all across the country on that. The President is sending out Attorney General Eric Holder; Secretary of Education Arne Duncan on Wednesday. But, really, what can the White House and the federal government do to stop things along those lines? I mean I - I - I personally - I juts don't see --

MS. BARNES: Um-hum?

MR. MARTIN: -- what a government can do to stop behavior of individuals.

00:11:17

MS. BARNES: Well, I think it's a collective process. And we believe that where the government has responsibilities, that we

should act on those, but we should also work in collaboration with local communities.

00:11:27

MS. BARNES: In addition to, uh, s- -- uh, Attorney General Holder and Secretary Donovan going and talking to officials in the schools and in the communities, even before this most recent incident took place, we had a meeting in the White House in August focused on gang violence and crime prevention. We brought together mayors; um, local, uh, crime prevention officials; and, uh, other local officials; and we sat down, and we talked about some of the good work that's going on already in places like High Point, in Chicago around Ceasefire, and ways that we can start to scale up and bring those resources and what people have learned who have been successful, and make sure that that's being ap- -- applied to all communities.

00:12:08

MS. BARNES: This is certainly a tragedy in Chicago, but it also reflects issues that we have to be concerned about around the country.

00:12:14

MR. MARTIN: Also, our[?] folks[?] also must stay in school, because the bottom line is these folks are throwing their lives

away. Uh, those folks are goin' to jail - pure and simple - and a young man, a[n] honor student, is dead.

00:12:22

MS. BARNES: Right. You're - you're exactly right. I've been on the board of a charter school here in Washington, D.C. Our per-- population specifically focuses on youth that [sic] have had a brush with the juvenile justice system. You're right. We watched that program turn their lives around. They're now going to college, as opposed to going into jail. 00:12:37

00:12:37

MR. MARTIN: All right. Melody Barnes, we certainly appreciate it. Look forward to having you back.

MS. BARNES: Great. It's my pleasure.

MR. MARTIN: All right. Thanks a bunch.

MS. BARNES: Thank you.

00:12:42

MR. MARTIN: Folks, still ahead, a look at this week's top stories with our "Washington Watch" panel: Hazel Trice Edney, of the Black Press of America; Robert Traynham, of the Comcast Network; and Karen Finney, commentator and Democratic strategist.

00:12:52

[OUT AT 00:13:00.]

(VIDEO  
FILE B)

00:02:11

[B-ROLL.]

00:00:16

MR. MARTIN: Hi, folks. We['ve] got a great "Washington Watch" panel ready to jump into a whole buncha issues we've already been talking about. Joining me today are Hazel Trice Edney, the editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service, also called the Black Press of America. Hazel, that's one hell of a long business card.

MS. HAZEL TRICE EDNEY: [Chuckles.] Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: Robert Traynham, the Comcast Network's Washington bureau chief and host of "Roll Call on the Comcast Network; and Karen Finney, political strategist and former Director of Communication for the Democratic National Committee.

00:00:40

MR. MARTIN: Folks, welcome to the show. Let's jump right into it. We just heard from Melody Barnes, talkin' about this whole issue of healthcare, movin' [?] it [?] forward [?], public option.

Karen, why won't the President just come out and say, "I want the public option in the bill that comes across my desk"?

00:00:54

MS. KAREN FINNEY: Yeah. I think he *has* actually said that

fairly consistently.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, but he's dancin' around it.

MS. FINNEY: No, I don't - I don't think so. And, actually, on Friday you heard Harry Reid, uh the leader in the Senate, say, "We're gonna have a public option." I think, actually, Senator Schumer and Rockefeller fought the good fight last week I the Finance Committee for a public option. And when we get to the floor, we're gonna have a public option.

00:01:14

MS. FINNEY: I think the President *has* come out 'n' say it - said it. I think he's actually done the work behind the scenes.

You know, the White House is still, though, also trying to suggest that they're tryin' to, you know, work with people. And like he said in his speech, "If you've got a better way that we can bring down costs and have competition I'm all ears."

Nobody came forward with a different idea, so we're - now we're movin' on with public option.

00:01:34

MR. MARTIN: Robert, do you have that same impression?

00:01:35

MR. ROBERT TRAYNHAM: No disrespect to my girl Karen, but what -

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

MS. FINNEY: Oh -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- what - but what

MS. FINNEY: -- that's not -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- but I just heard -

MS. FINNEY: -- a good start.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- what I just heard is - is Washington doubletalk, and the President did the same, exact thing back in July and August. He came out at a town hall meeting in the Midwest, and he said, "I want a public option." But as soon as we all saw those town hall meetings in August, he dialed back.

00:01:51

MR. TRAYNHAM: So, what is the President doing right now? He's keeping his cards close to the vest. And you know what he's saying? He's saying, "You know what? I want healthcare reform, but you know what? If, in fact, it" - it[?] - he's not said this, but this is what he's implying. "If, in fact, there's no public option, I'm fine with that."

00:02:02

MR. TRAYNHAM: And here's the reason why [sic]. It's because from a political standpoint he recognizes that he needs to have some type of healthcare proposal to pass, or he has failed.

00:02:12

MS. FINNEY: But - [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: Hazel, I -

MS. HAZEL TRICE EDNEY: You know, I - I agree -

MS. FINNEY: -- people want public option - [crosstalk].

MS. EDNEY: -- with Robert on that one.

00:02:15

MS. EDNEY: I saw the President when he stood before the joint houses, when he made the statement that he believes that the - the - that the public option is what the people need. However, he is ready to make -

MR. TRAYNHAM: Compromise?

MS. EDNEY: -- sure that there i- -- to compri- --

MS. FINNEY[?]: -- well -

MS. EDNEY: -- well, he didn't say - use the word "compromise."

He just n- -- he just said that there's another means to that end, and we need to be able to discuss those -

MS. FINNEY: But po- --

MS. EDNEY: -- other means to those ends.

00:02:38

MS. FINNEY: -- politically speak- -

MR. MARTIN: Why not -

MS. FINNEY: -- -ing -- but-

MR. MARTIN: -- be cl- --

MS. FINNEY: -- politically speaking -

MR. MARTIN: -- why not have clarity, Karen?

MS. FINNEY: -- because, politically speaking, let's look at what happened - right? Over the summer - you're right - there was some question about public option, and Republicans were tryin' to say, "People don't want it," "People don't want it."

[The] President goes out 'n' says, "I want a public option, but if you['ve] got a better idea" - polls go to 65 percent.

00:02:55

MS. FINNEY: Polls have stayed 70, 65 percent. A majority of the American people want a public option, and you have actually heard people in favor of the public option raise their volume.

[The] President can't do it all by himself. Congress has to step up and take some responsibility -

00:03:05

MR. MARTIN: But what -

MS. FINNEY: -- too -

MR. MARTIN: -- I -

MS. FINNEY: -- here.

MR. MARTIN: -- still don't understand - and, look. Whether you like it or not - I remember during - when President Bush was in office, there was a guy, a Black barber in Philadelphia. He said, "Look. I don't agree with *anything* this guy said, but one

thing I do know: when he says he's gonna do something, he does it."

00:03:20

MR. MARTIN: [A] lot of Democrats are also wanting this president to be more decisive. Is he playing a smart strategy by sort of allowing Congress to do their thing? Or, should he be more decisive and make it perfectly clear, "I want this, this and this, and don't even think about anything else"?

00:03:36

MR. TRAYNHAM: Legislatively speaking, he needs to lead. And the reason why [sic] he needs to lead is because he has the majorities of the House and the Senate; and if, in fact, he doesn't lead, he appears to be weak, Roland. Look. When the President came into office, everyone said, "This is Mr. Congeniality. This is someone who goes right down the middle. He wants to listen to both sides."

00:03:50

MR. TRAYNHAM: Tha- - -that's good, you know, but, in reality, when it comes to Washington, D.C., you have to lead -

MR. MARTIN: [Crosstalk] --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- 'cause if you don't lead -

MR. MARTIN: -- and Republicans - [crosstalk]- --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- if you don't --

MS. FINNEY: Okay, but wait a second. Wait -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- lead -

MS. FINNEY: -- a second. Wait a second.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- if you don't lead, you're gonna -

MS. FINNEY: [Crosstalk]- --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- get trampled.

MR. MARTIN: Go ahead. Go -

00:03:59

MS. FINNEY: -- but --

MR. MARTIN: -- ahead.

MS. FINNEY: -- the Republicans have absolutely abdicated their responsibility and hid[den] behind this whole whining of, "We don't control anything. We can't get anything done."

That does not mean that they're not responsible for coming to the table with good ideas. They have not come to the table with a *single idea*.

00:04:11

MR. TRAYNHAM: Oh, I don't -

MS. EDNEY: Okay. This is a -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- disagree with you.

MS. EDNEY: -- this is the pro- --

MS. FINNEY: So -

MS. EDNEY: -- the *Democrats* are not decisive - *period*. You have

-

MR. MARTIN: They're all over the place.

MS. EDNEY: You have --

MS. FINNEY: That's true.

MS. EDNEY: -- the blue dogs over here.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah.

MS. EDNEY: They're all over --

MS. FINNEY: That's true.

MR. MARTIN: I mean le- --

MS. EDNEY: -- the place. You have Boehner --

MS. FINNEY: That's true.

MS. EDNEY: -- saying one thing. He's against a public option.

You sa- -- you have Pelosi saying another thing. She's for the public option. If the *Democrats* are united, the House is divided against itself.

00:04:28

MR. TRAYNHAM: And that's the reason why [sic] the Republicans have said, "You know what? We're gonna step back and let these folks eat" -

MS. FINNEY: Well, that's -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- their own."

MS. FINNEY: -- true.

MR. TRAYNHAM: The reason -

[LAUGHTER.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- why - look. If the -

MS. FINNEY: I can't - I can't -- [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: You *can* say it, 'cause it's true!

MS. FINNEY: [Places her hand in front of her faces as if hiding her eyes.] Well, you know.

[CHUCKLING.]

00:04:36

MR. TRAYNHAM: Look. Look. Hey, look. Fourteen percent of the Americans out there believe that the Republicans have put out some type of alternative plan. The fact of the matter is the Republicans have put out diddley squat. And the reason why [sic], again, is because they don't have to. The Democrats are eating their own. Harry Reid is saying, "Look, I don't think I can pass a bill outta the Senate without a pu-" - "with" - "with a public option."

00:04:52

MR. TRAYNHAM: Nancy Pelosi is saying, "*Absolutely* this has gotta be in -

MS. FINNEY: Actually, as of Friday -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- there."

MS. FINNEY: -- he said there will be a public option -

MR. MARTIN: Well, he said -

MR. TRAYNHAM: [Crosstalk]- --

MR. MARTIN: -- it is --

MS. FINNEY: -- or[?] - [crosstalk] - no[?] bill.

MR. MARTIN: -- but Pelosi says, "I have to have one. "

Steny Hoyer comes right back and says there won't be one.

I'm goin' -

MS. FINNEY: Yeah, but that's a little something between Steny and -

MR. TRAYNHAM: Look.

MS. FINNEY: -- Pelosi. So, we're gonna get -

MR. MARTIN: Well, it's the Democratic -

MS. FINNEY: -- a public option.

MR. MARTIN: -- *leadership!*

MR. TRAYNHAM: Look.

MS. FINNEY: They're go- -- I know! I'm not sayin' - you know, look. We're gonna get a public option, because the people want it, and it's -

MR. MARTIN: Okay.

MS. FINNEY: -- the right thing to do.

00:05:11

MR. MARTIN: As somebody who ran the communications, teach them how -

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: -- to communicate.

MS. FINNEY: I know.

MR. MARTIN: 'Cause, clearly -

MS. FINNEY: Trust me. [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: -- clearly, there's a problem.

00:05:15

MR. MARTIN: I - I w- -- I wanna move on to another issue that's going on o- -- on Capitol Hill, Congressman Charlie Rangel.

Republicans were talkin' this week about offering a resolution, putting' pressure on Democrats to, frankly, support him [sic].

"Look. He's been there a long time. Waited a lo-o-ong time for this seat to be chair of [the] Ways and Means Committee.

But, Hazel, is he not making it difficult for Democrats who said they were gonna clean up the corruption, when there're so many questions surrounding his finances?

00:05:42

MS. EDNEY: We-e-ell, um Charlie -

MR. MARTIN: Stop dancin'!

MS. EDNEY: -- Rangel -

MR. MARTIN: Come on! *What? What? What?*

[CHUCKLING.]

MS. EDNEY: I'm not dancing. He is an outstanding congressman. He is a congressman who has had a longstanding record of, um - of integrity, and so I can understand how the Democrats would want

to give him a fair shot.

00:06:00

MR. MARTIN: But there're a lot of questions being raised in terms of his finances, in terms of - in terms of not reporting, uh, money. I mean - I mean should he step aside? Remember. Democrats were calling on Tom Delay, they were calling on D- -- uh, Republican members of Congress to step aside when there were some ethical issues.

Karen?

00:06:16

MS. FINNEY: [Crosstalk] - ready to get into it here.

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

MS. FINNEY: Look. I've talked to friends on Capitol Hill. There's a process going forward. The Sen- -- the House Ethics Committee is reviewing all the charges. While that process goes on - everybody knows that process is goin' on. Republicans had plenty of their own people goin' through that process, so they know that process is goin' on. So, to publicly try to ha- -- [static] - you know, put more pressure on him - that is a blatant, obvious political attack, basically trying to drive down his numbers and make him more unpopular an' make him a problem for the leader.

00:06:43

MS. FINNEY: Plenty of Republicans have gone through the process. Charlie Rangel should be able to go through the process. When we called for that with Tom Delay, he'd been *indicted*. So, there's a difference between being actually indicted and having ethics charges being reviewed.

MR. MARTIN: Robert -

MS. FINNEY: Those charges are -

MR. MARTIN: -- is it -

MS. FINNEY: -- being reviewed -

MR. MARTIN: -- politics? Or sh- -

MS. FINNEY: -- [crosstalk] - proven.

00:06:58

MR. TRAYNHAM: It's hypocritical. That's basically what it is - arrogance, scandal, tar and feather -

[INFORMAL COMMENTS RE A PRODUCTION ISSUE, ETC. BLACK.]

00:11:02

MR. MARTIN: All right. New topic. All right? Let's finish the rest of this stuff. Congressman Charlie Rangel. Republicans this week, they were talkin' about putting this resolution forward forcing the Democrats to vote on it to support him, or not. They sort of backed off on it.

Look. Is it a smart move for Republicans to make him the poster child of ethics in this Democratically controlled congress? Robert?

00:11:26

MR. TRAYNHAM: Absolutely. And the reason why is because [sic], look, he is the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the biggest - the - the *only* tax writing committee in the Congress. And as of right now - and, of course, you're innocent 'til proven guilty. He has pr- -- he's perceived that he is hiding on his taxes. So, if he can be the poster child of bad behavior, absolutely. Whether he's guilty or not - and I hope that he is, obviously innocent, because we live in a country where you're - you're innocent until proven guilty.

00:11:46

MR. TRAYNHAM: But the issue is -

MS. FINNEY: You[?] like[?] sayin' that, don't you?

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- the issue is, frankly -

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- the issue is, frankly - is that - I remember back in 2003 and 2004. Democrats called Tom Delay and some of the other folks that were not indicted at the time hypocritical; um, you know, arrogant and so forth. So, there is a little bit of a double standard here. Let's just-

00:12:02

MR. MARTIN: And Democrats were -

MS. FINNEY: [Crosstalk]- --

MR. MARTIN: -- not shy in going after Republicans -

MS. FINNEY: -- a- -- *absolutely*.

MR. MARTIN: -- with ethical issues.

MS. FINNEY: We - we called it a "culture of corruption," and there were people like Tom Delay, who were indicted. There were criminal charges pending.

00:12:12

MS. FINNEY: In this instance, you have - you know, I've talked to folks on the Hill. There is a process that the House Ethics Committee goes through. Charlie Rangel's, uh - the charges against him are going through that process. He, himself, doesn't even know where they are in that process, because that's part of the process.

00:12:27

MS. FINNEY: So, why is it that we won't let that process go through for *him*? We're gonna hold him to a different standard. Because when it was Republicans, that's what they said. So, if we're gonna play this game, then let's - let's make sure the rules are clear. If we're gonna play the game that -

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MS. FINNEY: -- says, you know, if we shouldn't have a resolution forcing Congressman Wilson to have to apologize on the floor, why do we have to have a resolution calling on Congressman Grayson to apologize on the floor?

00:12:49

MS. EDNEY: Charlie - [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: So, here's a guy who's -

MS. EDNEY: -- Charlie Rangel -

MR. MARTIN: -- pay- -- who's waited a lo-o-ong time for this - for this seat.

MS. EDNEY: Absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: And this is a very sensitive issue for members of the Congressional Black Caucus. They do *not want to see* him taken down.

00:13:00

MS. EDNEY: He is one of four major, uh, f- -- ma- -- one of four Black chairs of major committees of Congress. *Nobody* is gonna give up that kind of power that easily and that quickly, based on charges and charges alone. There've been no indictments.

00:13:14

MS. FINNEY: I mea- -- and, plus, you know, again, the process is

going forward. It - you know, we don't know what we don't know.

It may be that there were mistakes made that he was unaware of.

It may be that there was some negligence on his part. We don't yet know that.

So, until we have those facts, he *shouldn't* step down.

00:13:27

MS. FINNEY: And, again, the

MS. EDNEY: Absolutely.

MS. FINNEY: -- Republicans know that there is a process. They've had *plenty* of their own people go through the process. So, by callin' us out now, it is a blatant political -

MR. MARTIN: 'Kay.

MS. FINNEY: -- move - nothing else.

00:13:37

MR. MARTIN: Another big story this week, not in Washington; in Chicago. This videotape[d] beating of a 16-year-old honor student. Uh, folks, if you haven't seen it, we['ve] got some video of it. I mean it is absolutely disturbing.

[CUT TO VIDEO.]

MR. MARTIN: Let's go 'head 'n' play that.

[VIDEO CLIP PLAYS AS MR. MARTIN SPEAKS.]

MR. MARTIN: This is an amazing story, and what's interesting, uh, [is] I've been hearing - folks from Chicago and other parts

of the country have been saying, "Why won't the President do something about this?"

He's sending down Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and he's sending down Attorney General Eric Holder. But, really, what can Washington do about kids getting into a fight and beating to death another teen? What - what can government do?

00:14:16

MS. FINNEY: Well, look. I think this is part of wo- -- I mean there're a number of different things government can do. This is part of why we need to look at our educational system and make sure that these kids and other kids across the country - because it's not just in Chicago, or New York, or L.A. It's happening all over the -

MR. MARTIN: Bu- --

MS. FINNEY: -- country.

MR. MARTIN: -- but - but the problem -

MS. FINNEY: We just happened to -

MR. MARTIN: -- they - they kill an honor -

MS. FINNEY: -- get a camera.

MR. MARTIN: -- student. *He was doin' the right thing!*

00:14:31

MR. TRAYNHAM: Right. But you -

MS. FINNEY: I understand that. But tho- --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- what - [crosstalk] - Roland?

MS. FINNEY: -- but those other kids ne- -- weren't - weren't, necessarily. So, I think a lot - we have to look at a - you know, system-wide we have to look at, what are we doing to help our par- -- our parents be better parents? What are we doing to help our communities have more options for kids? What are we doing to ensure that these kids have places to go, so they're not just hangin' out after school, beatin' up on honor school kids?

MR. MARTIN: Right.

E: But you know -

00:14:50

MS. EDNEY: One of the major problems is silence. Silence in and of itself is helping to kill our children. When you have a -

MR. MARTIN: The who- --

MS. EDNEY: -- you - you h- --

MR. MARTIN: -- the -- no "snitching."

MS. EDNEY: -- you ha- -- no, no, no. Well, the no snitching -

MR. MARTIN: Th- -- tha- --

MS. EDNEY: -- also.

MR. MARTIN: -- that kinda silence? Because that's -

MS. EDNEY: But when you have -

MR. MARTIN: -- real, too.

MS. EDNEY: -- when - when you have members of Congress who are now running for public offices - and you rarely hear the word

"homicide" anymore. We now have our first Black President. This is the first time we've heard the word "homicide," or - or, um, the killings mentioned from the - I mean I'm - I'm sure they've talked about it behind closed doors, as Melody just said.

00:15:19

MS. EDNEY: But publicly, it has not been spoken to. So, it's almost as if across the board, even to Black people, the value of Black life has gone down. And the Black press has been *all over* this -

MS. FINNEY: Yeah.

MS. EDNEY: -- for *decades*.

And so it takes - it - it - it's so sad that it took a horrendous beating such as this for the national press to suddenly take it on, just because of the videotape.

00:15:41

MR. TRAYNHAM: I totally agree. A- -- first of all, it's absolutely disgusting that, obviously, this is happening. And I think the sad part about this - and with all due respect to you, Roland, I think the question should be, "What are our parents doing?"

MR. MARTIN: Um-hum.

MR. TRAYNHAM: Because, obviously, they're an integral part of this. Government has a role, but parents have an even more

important role. And I just hope -- I'm gonna go out on a limb here. I hope that the parents o- -- of these - of these kids that actually did the beating were good parents, that they were at home -

FEMALE VOICE: Right.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- that they were doin' the thing- --

00:16:03

MR. TRAYNHAM: But also, too, there's a slight fear there with their children -

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- that if, in fact, they were caught doing somethin' like that, they don't have to - they shouldn't be afraid of the cops. They should be afraid of their parents when they get home.

00:16:12

MR. MARTIN: He- -- here's what's interesting. I wa- -- I was at the Black mayors summit this week in Hampton, Virginia. And it also dealt with parenting, and so we - we talked about this issue. Bu I was debating also the issue of pro-life, a- -- and, granted, this is a di- -- different, little twist here. But when I hear people talking about people being "pro-life," I never see them come out speaking about this.

FEMALE VOICE: Um-hum.

MR. MARTIN: I - I - I - I never see them come out, saying, "We're going to align ourselves with community activists, because this is a pro"--

MS. FINNEY: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- "life issue."

I - I'm retur- -- I just wanna your g- -- you guys' thoughts on -

MS. FINNEY: I think -

MR. MARTIN: -- that -

MS. FINNEY: -- that's -

MR. MARTIN: -- why we only talk about the pro-life perspective only when it's before a child is born - an abortion - but not in this case.

00:16:48

MS. FINNEY: Well, look. And that is something that, as a society, we don't do enough to talk about. I wanna pick up on something that Hazel said. You know, the - the polling that we did when I was at the DNC in 2006, we started to see, in the Black and Hispanic communities, a rise in gang violence, a rise in this kind of violence. Nobody was talking about that on the national scene.

00:17:04

MS. FINNEY: Now, granted, we were talkin' about Iraq, and we

were talkin' about the Middle East and all -

MR. MARTIN: Gotcha.

MS. FINNEY: -- these other things. But we've gotta focus on this here at home, because you're exactly right. When we're gonna - if we're gonna say we're pro-life, we['ve] gotta be for the living, too.

00:17:14

MR. TRAYNHAM: Well, you're absolutely right.

MR. MARTIN: Robert.

MR. TRAYNHAM: It - it is - it's a culture of life that we have to respect. And not only is it in the womb, or[?], obviously, it's on the playground. That's the issue. And, again, it goes back to the whole family structure, and the lack thereof, in some communities.

00:17:24

MR. MARTIN: So, you know, Hazel, I'm - I really -

MS. EDNEY: You know -

MR. MARTIN: -- *would* like to see focus on the family - [the?] Family Research Council and other conservative groups join with liberal, progressive groups to say, "This - regardless of ideology, regardless of race - should not happen, and we're all gonna band together to make sure it stops."

00:17:38

MS. EDNEY: Roland, I wrote a story back in 2003 in which we had s- -- researched at NNPA and found out that 252,533 you- -- Black youth had been killed in city streets since the FBI started to count them in 1976. That was just in 2003.

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MS. EDNEY: Uh, Julianne Malveaux, one of NNPA columnists, recently estimated that 2,500 Black youth *per year* have been killed in city streets. So, that adds about 15,000 more than there were in Two Thousand -

MR. MARTIN: Stunning.

MS. FINNEY: And think -

MR. MARTIN: Stunning.

MS. FINNEY: -- that those kids could've been a President.

00:18:15

MR. TRAYNHAM: Well, the said par- --

MR. MARTIN: That was a great point. Great point.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- e- -- exactly.

MR. MARTIN: Ten seconds.

00:18:17

MR. TRAYNHAM: Well, the sad part about it is you have an African-American that looks like us - and them - in the White House, and you would think that those kids would say, "You know

what? I wanna live." You know, "I wanna go to school, and I wanna do the right thing, so that I can be a B-" - "a Barack or a Michelle Obama."

MR. MARTIN: I agree.

MS. EDNEY: Abso- --

MR. MARTIN: A grea- --

MS. EDNEY: -- -lutely.

MR. MARTIN: -- great conversation. We surely appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

00:18:30

MR. MARTIN: Folks, President Obama's push to bring the Olympics to Chicago pays off. Politico's Nia-Malika Henderson is on the "Obama Watch." Plus, we'll hear from Congresswoman Barbara Lee of California, head of the Black Caucus, about her efforts to curb the spread of HIV and AIDS in America and Africa.

These stories and much more are coming up on "Washington Watch."

[OUT AT 00:19:04.]

**(SEG-  
MENT C)**

[B-ROLL.]

00:00:13

MR. MARTIN: It's time now for a closer look at our President, Barack Obama, in our regular feature "Obama Watch." Joining us now is Politico.com's White House reporter Nia-Malika Henderson.

And, Nia, welcome to the show.

MS. NIA-MALIKA HENDERSON: Good to be here.

MR. MARTIN: Now, but story. Chicago, on Friday, bows out in the first round of voting for the 2016 Olympic Games. Suffice [it] to say everyone was *stunned* by this development.

00:00:40

MS. HENDERSON: Indeed. Probably, nobody more stunned than this contingent of superstars, uh, that they had gathered in Copenhagen there. Oprah Winfrey and then the dynamic duo, Barack Obama and his wife Michelle. They both made really impassioned pitches this week for - for the Olympics, but they - uh, you know, essentially got the smack-down. I mean you say they "bowed out." They were *kicked* out - [chuckles]. I mean, I think, in - in the first round and didn't get enough votes there.

00:01:06

MR. MARTIN: You know, I was talkin' to Christine Brennan about this, and she's with "USA Today," and she's been covering these votes for years. A- -- an' - an' an' she w- -- warned me beforehand. She said, "Roland, look," you know, "it's [sic] a good chance you can lose in the first round." Sh- -- she said, "Look. This is not a democratic kind of system. It's secret ballot. We have no idea how these things, uh, go down. And be- -- and, you know, frankly, uh, it's not a normal voting process.

And so," she said, "Don't be surprised if Chicago does not make the cut."

00:01:33

MS. HENDERSON: It's true. I mean the IOC is a fickle, funny and very political body. Of course, they have the secret balloting.

I think some people thought Chicago had the momentum in these last days. It was announced that President Ob- -- uh, Barack Obama would go, and they had all these other superstars. So, they were gaining momentm.

00:01:50

MS. HENDERSON: Michelle Obama was meeting with these IOC members in her hotel room there in Copenhagen, but it just didn't work in the end.

00:01:57

MS. HENDERSON: I think, you know, Rio was d- -- has always been the favorite. Uh, the - the thinking there was it hadn't been in South America, so that they were a strong contender., and - and, uh, Chicago, in the end, had some problems, I think, with their presentation. It wasn't a real strong narrative. Again -

MR. MARTIN: We als- --

MS. HENDERSON: -- the Obamas really came -

MR. MARTIN: -- but -

MS. HENDERSON: -- through.

MR. MARTIN: -- we also had Madrid. Of course, Juan Antonio Samaranch, and then you had Tokyo as well. So, um[?], again[?], you had four, strong bids there.

00:02:18

MR. MARTIN: But let's get right to the political side of it. How will people assess the President and not being able to - to deliver the goods?

00:02:28

MS. HENDERSON: Well, the argument that you heard from the right was that he shouldn't 've been over there in the first place, that he has so much on his plate, that why was he essentially wasting time making this pu- -- pitch that no other American President has made to the IOC, to get -

MR. MARTIN: A- -- an' - an' -

MS. HENDERSON: -- the Olympics -

MR. MARTIN: -- an' o[f] cour- --

MS. HENDERSON: -- so - [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: -- and, of course, Nia, the right didn't say a word when President Bush spent 977 days out -

MS. HENDERSON: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: -- at Camp David, or in Crawford, Texas. So, I mean

-

MS. HENDERSON: Yeah. Clearly -

MR. MARTIN: -- le- -- let's just -

MS. HENDERSON: -- [crosstalk] - there was --

MR. MARTIN: -- be real here.

MS. HENDERSON: -- a lotta - yeah. Yeah, there was a lot of brush to be cleared, uh, in - in Crawford -

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

MS. HENDERSON: -- apparently.

00:02:54

MS. HENDERSON: But, um, I think the - one of the central arguments of Barack Obama's presidency - and his candidacy, in fact - was that he could reset the face of foreign policy on the world stage, really kinda start fresh. And what's happened, I think, with this rejection, is that it kind of undermines that argument. Here, he wasn't able to get the Olympics; but, yet, he's - he - you know, the argument is that he can really turn his personality into s- -- into some - something substantial and some sort of political persuasion on the world stage. And we see here with the IOC he wasn't able to do that.

00:03:26

MS. HENDERSON: But, again, as we said, the IOC is an odd body. It's very political. You know, you - you look at these other folks. They've been making these pitches to the IOC for months

and months and months. So, it's probably an unfrare [sic -  
phonetic] - unfair argument to say that, you know, this is gonna  
really kind of damage him politically -

00:03:42

MR. MARTIN: An' - an' -

MS. HENDERSON: -- because -

MR. MARTIN: -- loo- -- an' look.

MS. HENDERSON: -- [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: Look. And also, the bottom line is, you know, it's  
not like Americans win everything. I mean we have lost before.  
New York City lost the bid to London for a variety of reasons, so  
it - so, it's not unprecedented.

00:03:54

MR. MARTIN: I wanna pick up on that last point you just made.  
Will there be any long-term damage, or is this simply a shot to  
the President's ego, if you will, not being able to - to deliver  
the Games for Chicago? Or, really, frankly, was it all about  
him? Could it have been something else that had no- -- nothing  
to do with the President?

00:04:13

MS. HENDERSON: Oh, yeah. I mean there a l- -- again, this is a  
secret and odd process - picking who gets the Olympics. You

know, there're all sorts of, you know, kind of backroom horse trading - all those sorts of things - that 're - is, actually, pretty familiar to folks who know anything about Chicago politics.

00:04:27

MS. HENDERSON: But in the long run - again, this has nothing to do with his ability to get healthcare through, his ability to get climate change legislation passed. So, it'll be a story for a little while that, you know, Chicago kinda got the smack-down, and Obama wasn't able to go into - in there an' save the day. But, ultimately, it'll have very little political fallout or ramifications.

00:04:46

MR. MARTIN: Well, for all our folks who're watching who were hoping to jump on local airlines and fly to the Games, look. Just simply get your passport ready. You're gonna have to travel overseas -

MS. HENDERSON: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: -- if you want to b- -- go to the Olympic Games.

And so for me, it was gonna be right down the street from where I live. So, oh, well. I guess I gotta jump on a plane myself.

00:05:02

MR. MARTIN: Nia, thanks for a great -

MS. HENDERSON: That's right.

MR. MARTIN: -- conversation. We certainly appreciate it. And we'll check with you soon in "Obama Watch."

MS. HENDERSON: Take care.

MR. MARTIN: All right, folks.

00:05:08

MR. MARTIN: Coming up later in the broadcast, we'll have "Web Watch" with Smokey Fontaine of NewsOne.com. We['ve] got some great stuff lined up [in] that conversation. And also Representative Barbara Lee of Oakland, California, also the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, talks about her efforts to protect those living with HIV and AIDS, as well as wanting to cut off funding for the war in Afghanistan.

That complete story and more still ahead on "Washington Watch." 00:05:32

[OUT AT 00:05:38.]

**(SEG-  
MENT D)**

[B-ROLL.]

00:00:14

MR. MARTIN: My next guest, Congresswoman Barbara Lee of California, also head of the Congressional Black Caucus, is dedicated to battling HIV and AIDS at home and abroad. "Essence"

magazine called her the leader of the global fight to stop HIV and AIDS. And so we certainly welcome her to "Washington Watch."

Congresswoman Lee, glad you're here.

REP. LEE: Good to be with you.

MR. MARTIN: Thanks a bunch.

00:00:31

MR. MARTIN: I wanna - I wanna start first, uh, though, with the issue of healthcare. We saw the Senate this week go back and forth over this whole issue of public option. Now, all of a sudden, the Senate Finance Committee - uh, it might be a quasi-public option.

You have been adamant that there must be a public option in the bill that goes across the President's desk. Will that happen?

00:00:52

REP. LEE: I'm cautiously optimistic, Roland. Uh, it's very important, because why are we doin' this? First of all, if we don't have a robust public option, we won't be able to cover, uh, the 47 million uninsured. Secondly, it's essential to, uh, make sure that insurance companies, uh, as the President says, uh, become honest. But also, we have to have insurance premiums and insurance companies that allow for competitive premiums.

00:01:18

REP. LEE: People are suffering. Uh, havoc has been wreaked on their lives as a result of the loss of jobs now, the loss of their healthcare. And so healthcare premiums continue to soar. A robust public option would allow the costs of those premiums - people who have healthcare - those premiums would go down. It's essential for competitiveness, for choice, and for, uh - to cover t- -- the uninsured. It's very, very important.

00:01:42

MR. MARTIN: There's this huge divide, though, because you have people who say, "Look. I understand the need for healthcare, but this is going to cost almost a trillion dollars."

How do you ensure that we're not going to see a rise in the deficit? How do we even say we're not going to see taxes increase? How do you get people to get comfortable that that actually is going to happen?

00:02:04

REP. LEE: We have to explain the realities of the fact that that's not going to happen. And the President assured us tha- -- of that in his speech. He said he would not sign a bill that would add, uh, one dime to the deficit.

00:02:16

REP. LEE: When you look at - and let's just look at one issue: closing healthcare disparities. You know, Roland, in our communities - communities of color - we have *huge* disparities in healthcare. Many o- -- of our people end up in emergency rooms.

Well, an ounce of prevention's worth a pound of cure. We have, uh, looked at the numbers, and we have a 280-some billion dollar *savings*, mind you, if, in fact, the healthcare disparity provisions are implemented in the bill. ` 00:02:41

00:02:42

REP. LEE: When you look at the cost savings, uh, in terms of all of the efficiencies that are in the bill; when you look at the fact that, uh, people will be able to have, uh, op- -- an *option*, and by creating these options within the - a- -- as a - and the public health option as one of a menu of options, you bring down the cost.

00:03:03

REP. LEE: Uh, we're gonna have a deficit-, uh, -neutral bill, but I have to remind you, though, we have spent over a trillion dollars, uh, in Iraq, 200-and-some billion dollars in Afghanistan, huge tax cuts for the wealthy. And so the resources are there; it's about how we prioritize our resources and do we believe that, uh, healthcare is a moral imperative of our country; and do we believe that everyone in our country has, uh,

a right to healthcare, rather than it being a privilege - as it has been.

00:03:34

MR. MARTIN: You spoke about these health disparities. We are now seeing, when it comes to HIV-AIDS that, frankly, the face of AIDS is no longer a White, gay man; it is a Black, heterosexual woman. In Washington, D.C., the number [is] higher than [in] sub-Saharan Africa.

How - how did we get to this point? And what must be done from a federal level, but also a - a - a community level to stem this dramatic increase of a preventable disease?

00:03:58

REP. LEE: For so long, HIV and AIDS has - the issue, the disease has been swept under the rug. We, in 1998, uh -

MR. MARTIN: Because - because it was all about gays? A- -- and -

REP. LEE: Well -

MR. MARTIN: -- you know a- -- [unintelligible] - Black folks feel on that? O- -- or -

00:04:10

REP. LEE: I'm not sure *what* it was, really; because, you know, we have a problem, oftentimes, bein' for-real in our community,

talkin' about the real issues.

00:04:17

REP. LEE: But now, uh, I'm very pleased and proud of the fact that President Obama, uh, durin' the campaign said that he was gonna make this a priority in his administration, and is moving forward to develop a national HIV-AIDS plan and strategy.

00:04:31

REP. LEE: In my district in 1999 - Alameda County, Oakland, California, we had to declare HIV and AIDS in the African-American community a state of *emergency*.

MR. MARTIN: Right.

REP. LEE: And that's what it *is*. We haven't had the resources.

00:04:44

REP. LEE: Under the leadership of Congresswoman Waters in '99, I think, when she was chair of the Black Caucus, we began the Minority AIDS Initiative. It started at 157 million - [a?] drop in the bucket. Now we're asking for 457 million. But we need billions of dollars to really address this.

00:04:59

REP. LEE: We met with, uh, our great, uh, humanitarian vocalist Bono this week and talked about, uh, lookin' at HIV-AIDS in a

comprehensive way. It disproportionately affects sub-Saharan Africa - people who live in sub-Saharan Africa, [the] Caribbean and the African-American community.

00:05:18

REP. LEE: And so this has to be a global response. We have to have - and I work very hard -

MR. MARTIN: Right.

REP. LEE: -- on the international PEPFAR, this[?] 50 billion initiative. We have to have a *domestic* PEPFAR to really begin to look at how we, uh, w- -- w- -- uh, wipe this from the face of the earth. 00:05:31

00:05:33

MR. MARTIN: Less than a minute left. Earlier, you mentioned Afghanistan - what we're spending there we spent in Iraq. You have a resolution to stop the funding of the war in Afghanistan. Explain that - [crosstalk] --

REP. BARBARA LEE: This resolution -

MR. MARTIN: -- [crosstalk].

00:05:42

REP. LEE: -- this resolution, what it would - and I introduced it, uh, this week; twenty-one members - would say just no additional funds for any additional troop level in Afghanistan.

The President, I think, is, uh, being very careful, and he's doing the right thing by reevaluating, uh, our strategy there and our mission there. But there're many of us who believe that it's time to recognize the fact that there's no military solution. History shows that there's no military solution in Afghanistan.

00:06:09

REP. LEE: So, we're working very hard to try to come up with a comprehensive strategy, uh, that ensures that a diplomatic, economic initiative, rather than, uh, the additional troops [sic]. And so my resolution is picking up a lot of support.

MR. MARTIN: Well, of course, folks might forget you were the only person who voted against the war in Iraq. Got a lotta criticism, but a lotta your colleagues came *your* way after they realized what happened, so -

00:06:30

REP. LEE: No[?] -

MR. MARTIN: -- maybe -

REP. LEE: -- this was a blank check, and I could not give *any* President a blank check to use force forever, and -

MR. MARTIN: Whether it's President Bush or President Obama.

REP. LEE: -- *any* President, uh, should not have a blank check. Only Congress can declare war, and so to give that authority over

to any President is unconstitutional as -

MR. MARTIN: All right.

REP. LEE: -- well.

00:06:46

MR. MARTIN: Congresswoman Lee, we certainly appreciate it.

Thanks a lot. Look forward to having you back.

REP. LEE: Good to be with you.

MR. MARTIN: All right.

00:06:50

MR. MARTIN: Folks, when "Washington Watch" returns, we'll check in with NewsOne.com's Smokey Fontaine about what's hot and what's just curious online. Plus, in my "Perspective," the state of Black marriage in America.

We'll be right back. 00:07:02

[OUT AT 00:07:20.]

**(SEG-  
MENT E)**

[B-ROLL.]

00:00:13

MR. MARTIN: All right, folks. Time for our weekly segment "Web Watch" with Smokey Fontaine, the chief content guru for NewsOne.com. Smokey joins us via the worldwide web.

Hey, Smokey. How's it goin'?

MR. SMOKEY FONTAINE: Um, good. I love being virtual an' online.

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.] Absolutely.

Now, big story online, all across the country -- that - beating in Chicago that was captured on video. What are African-Americans saying about it?

00:00:25

MR. FONTAINE: Look. Ever since that brother was just[?] - [unintelligible] - murdered, comments have been flooding in, both for Black Planet and to NewsOne. First, it was all condolences, really expressing sympathy to the family of - of the kid that died.

But then it quickly turned to anger. I mean kids have been being killed in our community for generations now. We've seen that anger merely make itself plain online.

00:00:45

MR. FONTAINE: One member said, "We need to stop all this by defining gangs within our communities as terrorists."

MR. MARTIN: Urban terror- --

MR. FONTAINE: Look -

MR. MARTIN: -- -ists.

MR. FONTAINE: -- at - he looked up the FBI definition of what it means to be a terrorist and found this. Terrorists kill to incite fear. They steal money and objects and lives from our communities. They have secret codes. They delineate their

territories, and they intimidate anyone who speaks out against them. That's the FBI definition of a terrorist. This long-time Black Planet member said we need to define gangsters in our cities the same way.

00:01:16

MR. MARTIN: Now, Smokey, one of the issues that the police are having to deal with in Chicago - yeah, all these folks who are witnessing this crime. Yet, folks are not coming forward. So, what is happening - what are people saying about this whole issue of snitching - that is, talking to the police about crimes?

00:01:32

MR. FONTAINE: Look[?]. The idea of "stop snitching" is one that runs through - runs through our cities. You see it on stop signs. Right? Kids spray paint "snitching" under the "stop" sign.

But online, they flipped it. They said, "You know what? Let's start a 'start snitching' campaign. Not 'stop snitching'; let's start snitching, because that's the only way we'll protect ourselves. That's the only way we'll have the value and - and the love for ourselves, if we participate with police investigations to stop all the murder."

00:01:59

MR. MARTIN: Smokey, I was in a rally several years ago. There wa- -- there was a student who was killed, as well. And then Senator Barack Obama spoke at this church, and he said, "Look." You know, "I can go to Washington, D.C. I can do all kinds of programs, but in order to stop this, it must stop ere in the community."

Are peop- -- do people believe online that President Ba- -- Barack Obama can have an impact on Black-on-Black crime?

00:02:21

MR. FONTAINE: You know, it's split. We did a poll. We asked all of our Black Planet members, "Do you think President Obama can stem Black-on-Black crime?"

Only 62 percent said yes. So, as much - as much as we feel that he has an influ- -- -fluence, as much as we know he's our president, and we believe in his Black agenda, I think the answer is they're not clear whether he can personally do anything about it. Only 62 percent said he can have a real influence an' stop the hatred in our community.

00:02:46

MR. MARTIN: All right. One of our more popular segments, Smokey, is "Just Curious." And so what are folks just curious about this week?

00:02:53

MR. FONTAINE: Well, we found something fascinating. The question this week was, "Is it okay for art to be racist?"

One of our Black Planet members ordered some wallpaper online, was redecorating his apartment. Ordered the wallpaper, thought it was a nice, little kinda nineteenth-century colonial scene. Wa- -- put the wallpaper up on the wall, and then looked closely at it. And what did he find? A picture of a Black male with a gun, shooting a White boy - a Black male shooting a White boy. It was very small. It was hard to see from far away. When you looked closely, that was the scene you had.

00:03:25

MR. FONTAINE: He freaked out, put it online. It's created a real fury, and the conversation is about, "Can art be racist?"

We've seen the pi[c]ture of Obama painted as The Joker from "The Dark Knight." Is *that* racist?

00:03:37

MR. FONTAINE: The conversation even went to the oldest pi[c]ture, that we've talked about in the Bible -

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. FONTAINE: -- about Jesus Christ. Jesus was described as being brown and bronze in the Bible. Most pi[c]tures of him have him far lighter-skinned than that. Is that okay?

00:03:50

MR. MARTIN: All right. Tha- -- that's pretty curious.

Smokey Fontaine, we certainly appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

MR. FONTAINE: Thank you very much, Roland.

MR. MARTIN: Talk to you next week.

00:03:58

MR. MARTIN: All right, folks. Now it's time for "My Perspective."

This June marked 42 years of marriage for my parents. A generation ago, that would've been anticipated. Today, it's greeted with thunderous applause, because it is increasingly rare - especially among African-Americans.

00:04:12

MR. MARTIN: This past week, my wife and I participated in a National Marriage Summit at Hampton University, sponsored by the National Center on African-American marriages and parenting. The Center released the marriage index, a scientific way to assess where we stand as a country in [sic] regard to marriage. Overall, these indicators show that in 1970, the index was 76.2 percent overall. In 2008, that was down at 60.3 percent.

00:04:38

MR. MARTIN: For African-Americans, the numbers are *alarming*. In 1970, it was 64.0. Thirty-eight years later, in 2008, 39.6. There's no doubt that many of the ills we see in the Black community today, such as the case in Chicago, are a result of a fractured and disappearing Black family. Research clearly shows the benefits a two-parent home has on children.

00:05:02

MR. MARTIN: All of us who care about strong, healthy, African-American marriages should be pushing hard to make sure our children are being born *in wedlock*. We should be encouraging folks to get married for the right reasons.

00:05:14

MR. MARTIN: Marriage w- -- ha- -- will have its ups and downs , but finding compromises is the way to survive and thrive. If we don't do it, Lord knows how bad of a [sic] shape our community will be in 20 years from now.

00:05:25

MR. MARTIN: So, let's tackle it head-on. We simply can't afford anything else.

That's my perspective. What's yours? 00:05:31

00:05:31

MR. MARTIN: We'll be right back with your comments on how we're doing here on "Washington Watch." 00:05:35

[OUT AT 00:05:45.]

**(SEG-  
MENT F)**

[B-ROLL.]

00:00:10

MR. MARTIN: Here at "Washington Watch," we want to know how you think we're doing. Sometimes, you may agree with us, and sometimes you may not. 00:00:17

[OUT. INFORMAL COMMENTS.]

00:00:57

MR. MARTIN: Here on "Washington Watch," we want to know how you think we're doing. Sometimes, you may agree with us, and sometimes you may not. Here's some feedback from viewers about last week's debut of TV One's "Washington Watch."

00:01:03

MR. MARTIN: Marilyn had this to say: "I watched how you interviewed Vice President Joe Biden. You set the standard this morning, and I was very proud of you. The guests you had expressed their point of view without yelling over each other."

Well, Marilyn, we certainly appreciate that. Yeah, we don't do yelling here. No drama.

00:01:20

MR. MARTIN: Anna Perez says, "This morning's show was a fine start, except when you let Armstrong Williams get away with his big lie - that most Americans don't want healthcare reform. Every reputable poll I've seen says the opposite."

Okay. Armstrong's a good guy. He made a point.

00:01:37

MR. MARTIN: And Dorinda R. adds, "Brother Roland, I, for one, support you and respect your opinions. Though I may not agree with everything that you or your guests may say, I trust that even when we differ, we're coming from the same page. That page is various and varying viewpoints all designed to come to productive conclusions that will enhance, inform and empower the Black community."

We don't always have to agree. That's a *good* thing.

00:02:00

MR. MARTIN: And Victoria Epps says, "I am very excited to view the premiere of 'Washington Watch.' I know a great deal of work was put into" - "into it to assure that the show was a success.

"'Washington Watch' is long overdue. The image of people of color is now taking a great leap over a very high hurdle."

00:02:14

MR. MARTIN: Well, we certainly appreciate that, Victoria.

Keep your comments coming. The only we're going to be able to bring the stories you want to hear is if we hear from you. So, log on to TVOne.com and click on "Washington Watch" and leave your comments. We'd love to hear from you.

00:02:28

MR. MARTIN: Well, that's it for this week's edition of "Washington Watch." See you next time. And until then, I'm Roland Martin. Goodbye, and have a blessed week. 00:02:37

[B-ROLL. OUT AT 00:03:05.]

**(PERSPECTIVE  
DO-OVER)**

00:01:11

[SILENT B-ROLL.]

00:03:34

MR. MARTIN: I'm Roland Martin, and this is "My Perspective."

This June marked 42 years of marriage for my parents - normal a generation ago. Now increasingly rare - especially among African-Americans.

00:03:43

MR. MARTIN: This past week, my wife and I participated in a National Marriage Summit, where the latest marriage index was

released. It's a scientific way to assess the state of marriage in America.

00:03:55

MR. MARTIN: Overall, in 1970, the index was 76.2. In 2008, that was down to 60.3. But for African-Americans, the numbers are *alarming*. In 1970, it was 64.0. Thirty-eight years later, 39.6.

00:04:12

MR. MARTIN: There's no doubt that many of the ills we see in the Black community today are a result of a fractured and disappearing Black family. All of us who care this should be pushing hard to make sure our children are being born *in wedlock*, encouraging folks to get married, and stay married, for the right reasons.

If we don't, how bad will it be 20 years from now?

00:04:33

MR. MARTIN: We simply can't afford to do anything else.

That's my perspective. What's yours? 00:04:38

[OUT AT 00:04:44.]

**[END.]**