

Midterm Messenger

An Alternative to their Racist Bullshit

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

THEY'RE NOT UP TO MEN.

Doesn't matter, go vote on Nov 8.

ARE YOU SURE YOUR UNCLE WAS ACCURATE... OR DID HE READ IT IN THE CITY WIRE OR FOX NEWS?

SCIENCE. IT'S LIKE MAGIC, BUT REAL.

FORGING A PATH TO CLEANER AIR, WATER, AND ENERGY.

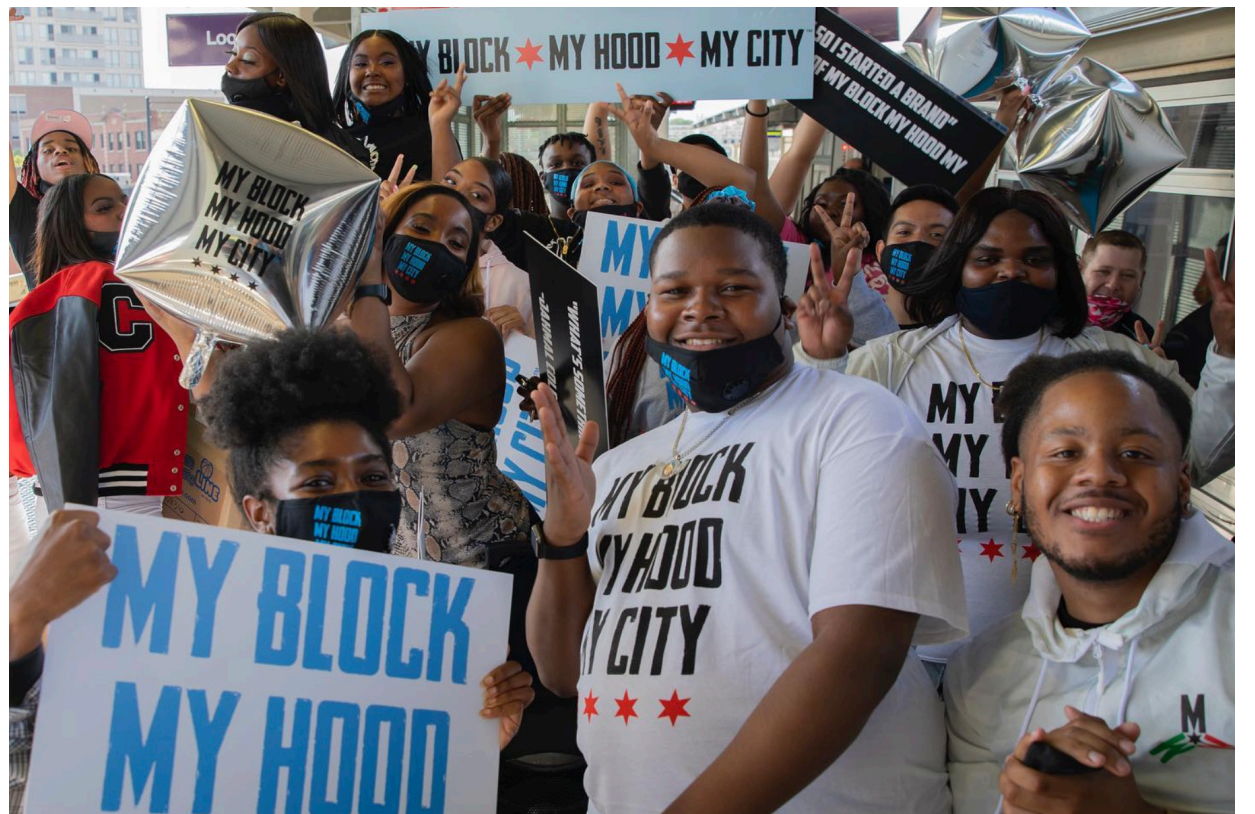


On the ballot in Cook County, Illinois, among other communities across the country, voters will have the opportunity to vote to protect clean water sources, air quality, and wildlife.

There are counties facing climate crisis all across our region. The Midwest produces 65% of all corn and soybean, and several farm areas with impervious infrastructure are expected to endure "destructive flood damage and strained drainage systems" according to the Third National Climate Assessment.

We can change outcomes with actions now. On November 8th, vote to protect our Great Lakes, our farmlands, their wildlife habitats, the air quality, and prevent future generations from paying for our extractive mistakes. More at climatechange.chicago.gov.

COMMUNITY > CRIME



BLACK CEO'S & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

BY JAHMAL COLE, FOUNDER OF MY BLOCK MY HOOD MY CITY AND 2018 CHICAGOAN OF THE YEAR

I gave a presentation recently at Blue Cross Blue Shield. They've been supporters of my organization for years. I met someone from their community engagement team while selling my hoodies at an event in Englewood. Until the day of my presentation, I didn't know they had a Black CEO. Come to find out, this large company has two Black CEO's.

The future is here. This spring, they listed a record number of Black CEO's on the Fortune 500 and a new report from Third Way revealed that in majority-black counties (where more than 75% of residents are Black), applications for new businesses have increased by 198% since 2020. Trust me, we're not even close to where we need to be. Most of my time is usually spent doing this work on the ground, with block club captains or with under-resourced students inspiring them into entrepreneurship and showing them what's possible in school. (CONTINUED ON PG 2)

WOMEN UNITE TO UPEND THE STATUS QUO

In her Netflix special, Nanette, comedian Hannah Gadsby begins discussing gender identity and eventually lands on, "I identify as tired. I'm just tired." That line struck a chord with viewers and has since been meme-ified, turned into merch, and is so overused and recontextualized that it's getting harder and harder to remember the original source.

This line first took off in 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic, before the murder of George Floyd sparked a global uprising, before the growing threat of nuclear war, before yet another horrific elementary school shooting. Looking back at all that's happened between now and Gadsby's standup, I can't help but wonder, "Did we even know what it meant to be tired in 2018? Did we have any idea of how much deeper our fatigue could get?"

I struggle with this question everyday. What gives me hope- what inspires me to keep moving forward- is community, the firm belief that we are not meant to be alone, to work alone, to heal alone. Our best efforts, our biggest impacts happen together.

In 2016, I started Women Unite! with four of my closest friends. Our founding goal was to amplify the voices and work of those who have been most exploited by our current systems. We do this through free and sliding-scale capacity-building services to BIPOC, women, and LGBTQ focused nonprofits, prioritizing groups that are community led. It's resulted in over \$7M in grants awarded for our mostly small and neighborhood-focused Chicago grant partners. We also raise critical dollars through our Feminist Action Fund, which provides direct cash to organizations helping protect and enable abortion access, reproductive healthcare, and other critical women's issues.

Women Unite!'s story is the story of any person, any group of friends, any organization that's out there doing the hard work of collective action. It's the story of so many great movements that started right here in our community. Dr. Toni Bond, a founding member of African American Women Evolving, and later the Executive Director of the Chicago Abortion Fund. Without CAF, where might nearly 500 women each month get safe access to

abortion healthcare? They've become a beacon of hope for young Chicago women and folks from less tolerant nearby states to this very day. Or Mari Copeny, a young girl from Flint, Michigan, who at just 14 years old started a global campaign to shine a spotlight on the inhumane and racial injustice of the Flint Water Crisis. Each of them were driven to action because inequities in their own backyard.

In the face of overwhelm, I invite you to think small with us. Find the people, the groups, the nonprofits out there who are doing the work in your community. Connect with them and explore how you can use what you have to make our world a more just, more compassionate place.

BY LIZ JANSEN, FOUNDER OF WOMEN UNITE AND CHICAGO ACTIVIST.



Need a place to start? Check out these women-led organizations in Illinois.

Sista Afya Community Care: Their mission is to build sustainable mental wellness communities through providing affordable and culturally-centered community mental wellness care and education. Their vision is for women of color to have access to mental wellness care that is community focused, centers their experiences, and is affordable.

Free Root Operation: A nonprofit organization intercepting poverty induced gun violence by investing in the healing and empowerment of Black and Brown communities in Chicago and beyond through centering opportunity and compassion as core values of the organization.

The #LetUsBreatheCollective: They're an alliance of artists and activists organizing through a creative lens to imagine a world without prisons and police. The Collective operates the Breathing Room space, a Black-led liberation headquarters for arts, organizing, and healing on Chicago's South Side.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THEIR RACIST BULLSHIT

ABORTION IS HEALTHCARE.

WOMEN'S BODIES ARE MORE REGULATED THAN GUNS. WE WILL NOT GO BACK TO 1849.

When The Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, they rolled back half a century of constitutional reproductive rights on women overnight. 50 years would be one thing, but where I live – in Wisconsin – our republican-run state legislature immediately reverted back to an 1849 law declaring abortion a felony including in instances of rape and incest.

For context, this was a time well before women had the right to vote, let alone a seat at the table where decisions were being made. Ultrasounds were absolutely not invented yet (nor were cars).

Though the situation is undeniably bleak, there is hope. Physicians are standing up and speaking out. Folks are putting aside trauma to share personal stories of how deeply this has affected their healthcare, and their lives. All across this country, decent humans are running for office and fighting for women to regain their freedom, privacy, and bodily autonomy.

Women are registering to vote in historic numbers and they're getting involved. They're organizing and mobilizing. They're knocking doors, making calls, talking to everyone they know about what's at stake with these midterm elections. We have Moms, daughters, sisters, all banding together to reclaim our autonomy in this important election.

Here in Wisconsin, we have one of the best chances in the nation to flip a Senate seat, expand the reproductive justice consensus, and codify abortion access into law once and for all. Mandela Barnes is fighting to unseat a 12-year incumbent who voted in favor of a federal abortion ban seven times, including a version with no exceptions.

Women are the single largest voting bloc in this nation. We will not go back to the 1800's and we will not back down now.

Kate Duffy (below), rocking her Moms for Mandela t-shirt before a Wisconsin election rally. Kate is a women's rights activist and the founder of Moms for Mandela in Milwaukee.



DEMOCRACY MATTERS

CORPORATIONS AREN'T PEOPLE AND OUR VOTING RIGHTS AREN'T FOR SALE.

HR1 is back. The For the People Act will ensure clean elections, the end of dark money, and every American's right to vote without harassment.

It shouldn't be hard. Voting is a fundamental right to our democracy but it's being challenged in this election. More than anytime in the last 60 years, a war on voters is being waged. More than 440 racist anti-voter bills were introduced in state legislatures last year alone. 19 states have restricted access to voting. The only thing stopping them in Michigan and Wisconsin, two vetoes by two pro-vote governors. Recurring restrictions in these bills include shortening the window for applying for a mail-in ballot; shortening the deadline for delivering mail ballots; and restricting voters' ability to receive

assistance with returning a mail ballot. Many attach criminal penalties.

Dark money could be worse. A small number of wealthy families have hijacked our democratic process. Recently, an unknown mega donor transferred \$1.6B to a conservative anti-abortion, anti-science group with zero disclosure. Who is trying to stifle women's choice? Who is preventing real climate justice solutions? We deserve to know.

In 2022, we have a chance to pass the For The People Act and The Disclose Act. Both would force dark money into the light, protect access to voting at the ballot box and by mail, as well as help end corporate personhood. Where will you stand in this midterm election?

COMMUNITY > CRIME (CONTINUED)

Applications for new businesses in majority-black counties (where more than 75% of residents are Black) have increased by 198% since 2020.

I sat next to this guy and didn't even know he was the CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield. He was at the head of the table, you know. he sat up very straight and he wore a clean suit. Clean, as in stylish! Y'all know what I mean, man.

When we went around and did introductions he introduced himself as the CEO and my soul screamed "Okay!! That's what up." I suddenly felt super embarrassed to have interrupted what seemed like a very important meeting with my presentation. From that point on I was locked in. Access to this caliber of businessperson would be rare for my kids or neighbors. It shouldn't be, and we're changing that. That's why I was in this room: to bridge the gap.

It was my first presentation since I'd been shot in the arm so I was dealing with a lot of PTSD. My speech timing was off so I kind of just leaned into that jitteriness because I had

to shake off the cob webs per say. Trauma comes out at weird times and I can't really stop it from flaring up. I got a lot of cards after the presentation and gave everyone a hoodie before I left, even the CEO. Crazy how I met them when I was giving hoodies

The share of Black CEO's is on the rise-- it's on us to provide the next generation jobs and a future, not handcuffs or a jail sentence.

away in Englewood. Now I'm doing the same thing in a skyscraper downtown! I want my students to meet this Black CEO and many others. My mission is access and exposure. We've come a long way. In Forbes, in Fortune, with employment on the West Side of Chicago, but there is way more to do. We need positive influences everywhere.

For more on Jahmal's work or to get involved with My Block My Hood My City, visit formyblock.org



My Block My Hood My City has delivered positive outcomes for BIPOC youth. Last year alone, Jahmal delivered 29 Hit the Hood grants to counter violence, 11 Gotchu scholarships for student advancement, and served over 200 low-income youth with education and exploration programs.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THEIR RACIST BULLSHIT



SURVIVE A MASS SHOOTING AND YOUR LIFE WOULD CHANGE, TOO

BY A HIGHLAND PARK FATHER, SON, AND SURVIVOR OF THE JULY 4TH SHOOTING

A 4th of July parade is an opportunity to celebrate our country and our independence. Communities all over the US get together to commemorate this day. As you could imagine, people that attend parades are predominantly young families with children and older people. It's also a special day because you get to see a lot of your neighbors out and about supporting the town in a unified way.

After therapy and trauma support, I was finally able to absorb what happened. Only our horrible gun laws could've allowed this. More specifically the proliferation and access to assault weapons. Now is the time to get involved to ensure this never happens to you or your family. We shouldn't be scared for our kids to go to their own school, a movie theater, or a parade.

On July 4, 2022, our plans were the same as many families. My wife and two older kids (8 and 5) were on a float and I was going to watch them in the center of town, on Central and First street with my 19 month old and 70 year old father. We saw friends, neighbors, and a lot of smiling families sitting together as the parade kicked off at 10am. Not even fourteen minutes later, we were being shot at by a sniper on a rooftop. As I was running for my life I accepted my fate, but quickly begged for my daughter to survive this event. 7 people killed and 60 more injured. The most horrific and senseless tragedy.

"We shouldn't be scared for our kids to go to their own school, a movie theater, or a parade."

There are many organizations devoted to this cause and I'm supporting their efforts to prevent the next mass shooting in your town. Advocate with us for red flag laws, background checks, and a right to live in safety. For more on how to help, visit everytown.org/actions or wemarchfourth.org.

IMMIGRANTS MAKE AMERICA GREAT.

On the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty it reads, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

When a group of far-right congresspeople proposed a ban on all foreign immigration from South America and a full shutdown of our Southern Border last summer, it was clear xenophobia, and anti-immigrant trumpism had far from disappeared.

What they don't know, we do. The immigrant story is the American story. Not just legal immigration, but refugees, asylum seekers, illegal migrant workers. These people have come to form the backbone of our promised land.

According to Pew Research, as the Baby Boom generation heads into retirement, new immigrants and their children are expected to offset a decline in the working-age population among manufacturing, agriculture, and more by adding about 18 million people of working age between 2015 and 2035.

Currently, first generation immigrants contribute \$550B of annual tax revenue and have together started over 3M small businesses. This is a disproportionate share of the entrepreneurship economy and has been the source of many progressive innovations and improvements in our way of life. It's not new either. Anti-immigration sentiment is as old and powerful as immigrant



productivity. We need to fight it.

Recently, Congress passed the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights to protect undocumented workers from exploitation and ended the "Remain in Mexico" policy that forced families into uncertainty and violence. Landmark achievements, but just the beginning.

This next legislative session can finally assure Dreamers legal protection from deportation, and prevent the un-American immigrant wealth test from reinstatement-- the size of our bank account or level of education should never determine our humanity. Many of our families were once immigrants here. It is our responsibility to pave the path in an equitable, compassionate way for others.

DATING & RELATIONSHIPS

WOMAN ACCIDENTALLY DATES MANSPLAINER

SAYS REGULAR TOPICS INCLUDED AUTONOMY OF HER OWN BODY.

"Things were going well" for newly-formed Minneapolis couple, says Ilana, 28, Biomedical Engineer.

"We met on Bumble, where, obviously, I had to make the first move. He was really cute and even though he had a weird name, he had all the picture categories from my list of requirements. You know, one with a dog, one with friends, one dressed up in a wedding. No pictures holding a fish. I thought, 'this could be it.'"

After a promising first date, they started seeing each other regularly. Ilana explains, "We had gotten into this early-relationship routine of spending time watching all of his favorite shows. It was awful, however I was into Game of Thrones, actually. Kit Harrington is nice on the eyes"

"It was awful"

Ilana says things took quite a turn one Sunday evening when her and Ronan, 29, Financial consultant, were sitting on the couch in her apartment watching the latest episode of House of Dragons when suddenly everything went dark.

That is to say, the internet went out.

"Oh my God, what happened?" I yelled. "The dragon just crashed into a building during the king's coronation. This couldn't be worse timing." Ronan, staring at Ilana as though she had just grown a horn on her head, scoffed, expelled a small laugh of pity and said, "The internet went out, Ilana.

It says it right there on the TV. We need to turn it off, and then turn it back on."

"I'm not a dumb person, obviously I didn't need him to tell me how to reset my internet," explains Ilana. "Things only spiraled from there. The next week at work was really stressful for me. I was working 10-to-12-hour days and was hardly stopping to eat."

Ilana, who is prone to migraines and Dysmenorrhea due to Endometriosis that accompany her period each month and are triggered easily by increased stress, was experiencing the worst of it when Ronan called. "He complained that he hadn't seen me that week and that I needed to prioritize him if I was going to make this work. He asked if I wanted to go to dinner at his favorite restaurant that night and I told him I didn't even go to work that day because I had felt like throwing up" she said.

"As if he were saving the day, he told me that he looked up "cramps" on Web MD and it said I should take some Midol and drink some water and I'd be fine by dinner time. Seeing red, I tried to tell him I had been dealing with this shit 12 times a year for over 15 years and that they would, in fact, not be gone by dinner."

"He told me that it sounded like I was choosing a tummy ache over him. After clutching my nonexistent pearls from the shock, I ended it on the spot. I immediately blocked him on all social media, deleted his number, and then reported his insensitive ass profile on Bumble. We haven't spoken since and from what my girlfriends and I can tell, he's still out there, expecting the first move to be made and 'teaching' other women about their own bodies. Men, amiright?"

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THEIR RACIST BULLSHIT

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

KEY REFERENDUMS

ILLINOIS

#1 **The Workers' Rights Amendment [Yes ✓]**

We can safeguard workers rights to organize for safe working conditions and fair benefits without government interference.

#2 **The Forest Preserve Referendum [Yes ✓]**

We can pay \$1.66/mo/taxpayer to ensure Cook County has the cleanest water, air, protected wildlife, and reduced flooding from heavy rainfall.

MICHIGAN

#1 **Protect Abortion Rights [Yes ✓]**

Enshrine the right to abortion healthcare in the state's constitution, preventing a return to a 1931 ban on abortions.

#2 **More Time To Vote [Yes ✓]**

Expand access to absentee voting, early voting, and an opportunity to cast your ballot with an affidavit not just an ID.

MINNESOTA

No new referendums in Hennepin County for 2022.

WISCONSIN

#1 **Prohibit Semi-Automatic Firearms [Yes ✓]**

Give the Wisconsin legislature its ability to stop the import, sale, and transfer of military-style rifles in our communities.

#2 **Personal Use of Marijuana [Yes ✓]**

Enable adults 21 years of age to make their own choices on the use of recreational & personal use of cannabis.

RACES THAT NEED YOUR VOTE:

ILLINOIS

Gubernatorial Election
Gov. J.B. Pritzker vs. Darren Bailey, who compares abortion to the Holocaust.

Illinois Supreme Court
Two seats, both outside of Cook County, will decide control of the state's highest court; if both are flipped, equal protection under the law is threatened.

MICHIGAN

Gubernatorial Election
Gov. Gretchen Whitmer who made the largest K-12 education investment with a budget surplus, vs. Tudor Dixon.

Michigan Supreme Court
Two seats will determine the state's voting rights and criminal justice reform.

Michigan Secretary of State
Jocelyn Benson who has strengthened Michigan's voting access faces election denier Kristina Karamo.

Michigan Attorneys General
Dana Nessel faces Republican Matt DePerno, with major stakes for the criminalization of abortion and elections.

MINNESOTA

Gubernatorial Election
Gov. Tim Walz who passed the largest jobs bill in state history, vs. Scott Jensen.

Minnesota: Hennepin County Sheriff
The incumbent retired after pleading guilty to a DUI, leaving an open race for an office that's been under local scrutiny for its cozy relationship with ICE.

Minnesota Secretary of State
Democratic incumbent Steve Simon faces Kim Crockett, who has spread anti-semitic conspiracies.

WISCONSIN

Gubernatorial Election
Gov. Tony Evers who vetoed a statewide abortion ban to protect women's autonomy, vs. Tim Michels.

Senate
Senator Ron Johnson who distributes conspiracy theories and wants to end social security, vs. Mandela Barnes

Sheriff: Wisconsin Dane County
Kalvin Barrett who supports police accountability vs. Anthony Hamilton

