



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Dr. Charles Steele Jr Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr
Founding President President/CEO Chairman of the Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2020

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**SCLC HOSTS DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND POLICY FORUM
ON FEBRUARY 26 AND 27 IN COLUMBIA SOUTH CAROLINA**
Streamed Nationwide at [SCLC'S FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

**Forum provides opportunity for candidates to directly address African American voters at
critical time in campaign**

COLUMBIA, S.C. - With Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders emerging as the frontrunner for the Democratic Presidential Nomination before African Americans, and other communities of color, have substantially weighed in on the nominating process, the next few weeks are critical for minority voters to learn about policy proposals from the contenders. Who are the best candidates to expand economic, housing, healthcare, and voting opportunities in communities of color? What candidates will combat the attack upon poor people and people of color and provide access to capital and economic opportunity. Will they fight against public and private policies that are turning back the clock on the progress made since the civil rights movement?

Over two days, February 26 and 27, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) will provide a tremendous platform for the candidates, their surrogates and public policy experts to make a pitch to voters in South Carolina before Saturday's primary, and to disenfranchised people nationwide via our stream [SCLC FACEBOOK PAGE](#).

The SCLC Public Policy Conference and Presidential Candidate Forum will begin Wednesday, February 26, at 9 am at the Tin Roof Event Center in Columbia, S.C. After opening ceremonies and a welcome address by Columbia At-Large Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine, Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed, Director of the Center for the Education and Equity of African American Students at the University of South Carolina (USC), will moderate panels of experts on Healthcare policy (9:15 am) and jobs and economic development policy (10:40 am). From 1 pm to 4:15 pm, presidential candidates and their surrogates will discuss how their policy proposals will impact African Americans and other communities of color. The Forum is open to the public.

Each presidential candidate or their surrogate will have one hour to make their presentation, which includes 20-minute segments of remarks, questions from SCLC, and audience questions.

“African Americans and other minority voters are facing a crucial situation,” said Dr. Charles Steele, Jr. SCLC’s President and CEO. “In what may be the most important election of our lifetime, it’s critical that a viable candidate be an advocate for fairness and equality in all communities. We must know where the candidates stand on our issues, how strong they will advocate for them and how they will put together a winning coalition. The SCLC forum provides opportunities for the candidates to make presentations to South Carolina voters, Super Tuesday voters, and people of color across the country. I am imploring the candidates to make presentations and not deprive African American voters of an opportunity to judge their thoughtfulness and commitment to issues that will shape our future, and our nation.”

On Wednesday, Dr. Steele will open the forum at 11:45 am, and Jamie Harrison, a U.S. Senate Candidate in South Carolina, will be the lunchtime speaker. At 12:45, Antoine Thompson, Executive Director of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, will moderate a panel of housing experts, and Dr. Steele will moderate a panel on voting rights with celebrity and voting rights advocate Sheryl Underwood. (2 pm). The schedule will be flexible throughout the two days to accommodate the presidential candidates. The event is open to the media, and journalists and technicians can contact Jerry Thomas at 312-414-4016 for logistical needs. Campaigns can call DeMark Liggins at 334-467-1273 for more information.