



National Black  
Chamber of Commerce®

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### MEDIA CONTACT

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# NBCC Launches Black Business & Ballot Initiative With October 28 Virtual Town Hall

*National Black business leaders convene for a nonpartisan forum on the policies shaping Black-owned business*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. — October 23, 2026 —** The National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) today launched the Black Business & Ballot Initiative, a national, nonpartisan civic-education effort connecting Black business owners with the public decisions that shape their growth. The Initiative opens with The State of Black Business America, a free virtual town hall on Wednesday, October 28, 2026, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

Under the theme "Our Ballot. Our Business Future. Our Power.," the two-hour program will examine how local, state, and federal policy affects access to capital, government contracting, supply chains, trade, and workforce development for Black-owned businesses.

Shawn Cunningham, Chief Officer of News and Public Affairs at Build Network Television (BNTV) and host of Black Politics & Power, will moderate. BNTV is the official streaming broadcaster.

### Confirmed participants

- **Charles H. DeBow, III**, President and CEO, National Black Chamber of Commerce; Co-Founder, National Alliance for Black Business (NABB)
- **Dr. Kenneth L. Harris**, President, National Business League; Co-Founder, NABB
- **The Honorable Johnny R. Ford**, President and Founder, World Conference of Mayors; Co-Founder, NABB
- **Dr. Larry D. Ivory**, Chairman, National Black Chamber of Commerce; President and Founder, Illinois State Black Chamber of Commerce
- **Denise Tyler**, President and Founder, National Policy Alliance
- **Cherie Shepherd**, President and CEO, National Black Business Owners Association
- **Dr. John E. Harmon**, Founder, President and CEO, African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey
- **Dedrick Asante-Muhammad**, President, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
- **Holli Holliday**, Howard University Alumni Association

- **Dr. Terri O'Neal-Ford**, President, National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. (NANBPWC)

Additional participants will be announced as confirmations are finalized.

"This town hall is the kickoff, not the finish line. Elections decide who holds office; what happens after decides whether our businesses win," said Charles H. DeBow, III, President and CEO of NBCC. "For more than three decades, NBCC has convened Black business leadership at the national level. This Initiative makes certain that voice is organized, informed, and present every time policy is made, not only in election season."

The Initiative is nonpartisan. It does not rate, endorse, or oppose candidates or parties, and it does not direct anyone's vote. After November 3, NBCC will continue the Initiative by engaging elected officials on the issues that matter to SMEs, entrepreneurs, and founders.

## Event details

**Event:** The State of Black Business America: 2026 Midterm Election Virtual Town Hall

**Date and time:** Wednesday, October 28, 2026, 7:00–9:00 p.m. ET (starts promptly at 7:00)

**Format:** Live and virtual; free, registration required

**Register:** [Register for the town hall](#)

**Questions:** Submit questions for the panel when you register

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## About the National Black Chamber of Commerce

The National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) is America's first federation of Black chambers of commerce, representing more than 150,000 Black-owned businesses through 200+ affiliated chambers across 40+ U.S. states and 50 nations. Founded in 1993, NBCC advances the economic empowerment of Black entrepreneurs through policy advocacy, international trade development, capital access, and workforce readiness programs. For more information, visit [nationalbcc.org](https://nationalbcc.org).