Dr. Sartor’s theme was "Leadership, Government, and BIG (Blacks In Government).”

Highlights from her speech are provided below:

Thank you for inviting me here today to talk about leadership, government, and BIG. For me, the linking of these elements has become essential to our ability as Black Americans to thrive in a world of increasing global complexity and accelerated change. Because Leadership is the act of creating outcomes that matter most and is the ability to move people toward change. So, how do we do this in our current environment of injustice, uncertainty, and denial?

Well, I am so glad you asked! It is more crucial, than ever before, that we, as leaders, take additional responsibility for authoring the vision; for enrolling others in that vision; and empowering them to see just how that vision enables them to fulfill their purposes. As successful leaders, we hold an enterprise vision of the welfare of the entire system and are the architects of its future... focusing on the greater good that includes the welfare of the total system of government in which our organizations are embedded.

In the words of Bill Adams and Bob Anderson in their thesis on the new Leadership Paradigm, “There is no safe way to be great, and, there is no great way to be safe.” Let me say that again, “There is no safe way to be great, and there is no great way to be safe!” The safe paths have all been taken. The paths that are left to us to establish require courage, commitment, focus, and tenacity ...that is IF we are to achieve any kind of competitive advantage. Leadership will be inherently risky. It requires a different voice—one that always knows the answer to the question, “What would you do if you could?”

This voice leads us away from the dictates of old beliefs, makes us independent of past conditioning, and requires us to be the change we want to see. So, we do what Stan Slap says, and I paraphrase, “Instead of waiting for a leader you can believe in, you become the leader you
can believe in.” Tell your neighbor, “It’s all up to you!” Tell your other neighbor, “I believe in you!”

Each of us is unique, and with that uniqueness comes a purpose for a contribution that only we can make. Each of us should have a vision of what that contribution could look like. That brings me to the Recommendations from the 2016 National Black Political Convention. It is comprehensive and provides us with an excellence framework from which to structure our purpose. Blacks In Government’s vision, mission, and goals originate from many of their recommendations. Just to highlight a few … the Diversity mandate; the expectation of more federal and state dollars to promote needed systemic change; the priority of actively engaging our youth in meaningful and sustainable positive behaviors; promoting HBCU’s; creating more community partnerships; and of course; advocating for federal, state, and local employees.

This is why just recently, BIG members authored a resolution during our National Delegates Assembly, entitled “BIG Endorses Restoration of D. C. Pension Tax Benefit for 40,000 Retired Federal Workers, D.C. Government Employees, Teachers, Police, Firefighters, and Veterans.” I presented written testimony to the Council of the District of Columbia Committee of the Whole Public Hearing on May 12th. Our hope was that this legislation would help restore recognition of civil servants’ public service and bring attention to the low salaries they are receiving now compared to the private sector.

BIG members also participated in the "Preparing Tomorrow's Public Service: Spurring Educational Innovation to Meet the Challenges of Complex Governance" national survey. The survey identified the essential skills and competencies required of an effective public manager in the decades to come and identified educational innovations and training for attaining those skills and competencies. The survey results will help focus development of new professional development programs and improvement of existing programs for current professionals and for the next generation of public servants.

Earlier, this month, we partnered with “Women Veterans Interactive; “a national not-for-profit organization created to address the unique, and often unrecognized, challenges facing our nation’s 2.2 million women veterans as they return to civilian life. In a July 17th Press Release, I stated, “It is important that we empower women veterans who have served our country with honor and courage and make sure they are aware of and take full advantage of existing programs that support their needs. BIG is proud to be part of forward-thinking dialogue and actions that will enable women veterans to live full productive lives.”

These initiatives are a testament to the recommendations from the National Black Political Convention, and I quote, that we “stop talking and prepare for action” and “vote in our best interest” as we “create higher expectations for ourselves” and demonstrate accountability for all. There is no better way to illustrate the intertwining of Leadership, Government, and BIG”! It is our personal values of caring, honesty, authenticity, and compassion that propel us as leaders toward a better tomorrow, for not just Black Americans, but for ALL Americans.
Following the luncheon, National Policy Alliance Sessions were conducted to further the dialog on leadership and education; social media; and leadership and justice. Honorable Denise Langford Morris, Circuit Court Judge, Oakland County Michigan, discussed the role of race in voter turnout and stated that racial and gender diversity is lacking in American courts.

The National Policy Alliance presented the Agenda Resolutions and Recommendations from the 2016 National Black Political Convention which focused on Educational Justice for All; Justice and Reform; Health and Well Being; Energy; The Environment; Economic Opportunity and Income Inequality; Social Media, Marketing, Nonprofits and Black Agenda Resources; Black Veterans; and Our New Political Landscape.