

The
Economic
Club of
New York

ESTABLISHED 1907

MID-YEAR SUMMARY REPORT 2024

EQUITY & INCLUSION

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



S&P Global



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EQUITY & INCLUSION

WHAT WE HEARD

“A stable and resilient financial system is critical to the well-being of households and firms, allowing them to access credit, so it is essential for the Federal Reserve to achieve its dual mandate of maximum employment and price stability.”

Dr. Lisa D. Cook

Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors

The Economic Club of New York kicked off its fourth year of the Equity & Inclusion series. The series would not have been possible without the generous support of **Mastercard**, **PayPal**, **S&P Global**, and **Taconic Capital**. Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, commended “the Club for providing a really important forum to present views and analysis and discuss complex matters in a setting that is nonpolitical and nonpartisan.”

Given the negative effects of inflation on individual consumers, households, and small businesses, Collins expressed a need “to rebalance the post-pandemic economy.” Her talk also addressed recent government policies, those that stand to be most consequential to everyday people. There was a consensus among speakers in the series that solutions for pressing issues will have



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WHAT WE HEARD [CONTINUED]

to be adjusted to meet the needs of various enclaves, especially those regions of the country where the makeup of the economy is uniquely different, as well as society's most vulnerable demographics: people and small businesses in rural areas, racial and ethnic minorities, and women.

Dr. Melissa Kearney, Neil Moskowitz Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland, spoke about how trends in households and family life can have implications for the economy. Dr. Kearney made a strong case for two-parent households, sharing research that proves the positive outcomes for children raised in said family structure, and how it can provide a degree of cushioning from economic stressors, such as inflation, and social issues. Some of these issues were also addressed by Eric H. Holder, Jr., Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling LLP, and 82nd Attorney General of the United States, who shared from both his personal experience and his tenure as Attorney General. Overlapping ideas in talks by Kearney and Holder demonstrate how personal lives can be impacted by government policies and by decisions made at the corporate level—a reminder that policymaking should be a data-driven endeavor.

Technology also figured prominently in many of the series' conversations. Julieanna Richardson, Founder and President of The HistoryMakers, spoke about her organization's efforts to digitize archives and to use technology for the preservation of cultural memory. Despite such excitement



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WHAT WE HEARD [CONTINUED]

about the possibilities of new technologies, specifically Artificial Intelligence, Dr. Lisa D. Cook, Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors, urged cautious optimism. Dr. Cook stressed the top priorities on the Federal Reserve's agenda: "A stable and resilient financial system is critical to the well-being of households and firms, allowing them to access credit, so it is essential for the Federal Reserve to achieve its dual mandate of maximum employment and price stability."

Below are key takeaways and recommendations that our speakers shared, which we are cataloging and publishing to broadly disseminate beyond the Club's immediate audience. It is our hope that these findings will be used by organizations large and small in your work towards a more equitable society. If you would like to watch the full series, video links are included by topic area in this report. We've also included for your convenience links to materials which discuss these topics and are part of the ongoing dialogue on these important and sensitive issues.

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**Inclusive Leadership and
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and Social Justice**

**Metrics and Data-Driven
Solutions**

**Using Technology to Drive
Innovation**

**Sustainable Progress
Toward a More Resilient
Economy**

SPEAKERS

Esteemed Speakers

Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

Dr. Lisa D. Cook, Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors

Eric H. Holder, Jr., Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling LLP, and 82nd Attorney General of the United States

Melissa Kearney, Neil Moskowitz Professor of Economics, University of Maryland

Julieanna Richardson, Founder and President, The HistoryMakers

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION FOR A DIVERSE WORKPLACE

SPEAKER CONSENSUS:

“I hope that we can marshal the opportunities in ways that help inclusivity so that it really increases our productive capacity, help raise living standards, so that it benefits [society] more broadly.” - Susan M. Collins, President & CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston



CHALLENGE:

“What companies want to do is not necessarily to anticipate where the Court is going to go, but to certainly see what the Court has said, and then try to reasonably extrapolate from that how we should be conducting ourselves. We talk about these DEI programs—I mean how should we structure these things? How should we talk about these DEI programs such that we don’t make ourselves the target?”

**ERIC H. HOLDER, JR., SENIOR COUNSEL, COVINGTON & BURLING LLP, AND
82ND ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES**

ACTION LEADERS CAN TAKE:

“I was the first Black Attorney General, and there’s a special pressure that, I think, firsts feel in the sense that you don’t want to disappoint the communities and the people who have pushed for, hoped for an appointment like yours. And so, you feel a certain pressure there. And then there are others who will think, well, you’re only there because of your gender or the color of your skin, your sexual orientation, and you want to prove to them that you’re there based on the merits. And so, there’s that dual pressure, I think, that firsts face.”

“The work that we did to try to promote same-sex marriage, I think that’s something that history will look favorably upon.”

“There is a bit of backlash with regard to diversity efforts, I think a lot of that is politically-driven.”

Eric H. Holder, Jr., Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling LLP, and 82nd Attorney General of the United States

“During the pandemic there was a real rise in entrepreneurship—a lot of small businesses. In particular, minority and women-owned small businesses.”

Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

BARRIERS IN BUSINESS FOR WOMEN

SPEAKER CONSENSUS:

“Women are not as well-recorded in our society. And so, we have a lot of work to do.” - Julieanna Richardson, Founder and President, The HistoryMakers



CHALLENGE:

“Higher labor force participation among prime-age workers was another welcome surprise, especially for women, despite continued challenges with the supply of childcare.”

**SUSAN M. COLLINS, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF BOSTON**

ACTION LEADERS CAN TAKE:

“I have been very focused on childcare challenges. When I talk to people across the First District, the three things that I hear about the most are the challenges of available, affordable housing. And [we want it to be] affordable across the income spectrum – affordable for low and moderate income, you know, affordable for middle income, even affordable for folks with somewhat higher incomes. And the next thing is childcare. And the focus, hearing from employers in Maine about how childcare challenges actually restrict abilities to hire and the challenges from a childcare center that they can’t open and therefore people can’t go back to work.”

Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

“I have to give a shout-out to Ursula because Ursula was born poor. But she rises up through the ranks and becomes CEO of Xerox. And then she has gifted us money to actually increase the representation of women.”

Julieanna Richardson, Founder and President, The HistoryMakers

“Single moms who are very professionally educated are the exception...Only 12% of kids whose moms have a four-year degree are living with an unpartnered mom as compared to 30% of kids whose moms have either a high school degree or less than a high school degree. So, the single mom by choice who is highly educated and very successful is the exception to the pattern.”

Melissa Kearney, Neil Moskowitz Professor of Economics, University of Maryland

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

SPEAKER CONSENSUS:

“It’s important to understand what diversity means in the context of your business. I think, with all businesses, it certainly means looking at your workforce. It also means how does a particular entity deal with those communities in which it sits.” - Eric H. Holder, Jr., Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling LLP, and 82nd Attorney General of the United States

CHALLENGE:

“We actually produced a program called *Boss*, the first major PBS special on the history of Blacks in business going back to the Freedman’s Bank and moving forward. We keep talking about business as the next rising for Black people, but Black people have been involved in business since the very beginning.”

JULIEANNA RICHARDSON, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, THE HISTORYMAKERS



ACTION LEADERS CAN TAKE:

“Working Places Initiative, which I mentioned before, tries to focus based on research, developing and fostering collaborative.”

Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

“I was the first attorney general in history to visit all 94 U.S. Attorney’s offices. It took me six years to do it. That means U.S. Attorney offices as far west, I guess, as Guam, and as far east as – I’ve been to the Virgin Islands, Maine, I’m not sure which one is farther east. But I hit all of them in an attempt to really kind of let people understand in a very personal way what I wanted to do with the department. But it also gave me the opportunity to hear from the people who I was leading, who had ideas, great ideas about policy, about efficiencies. And so that’s something I would urge managers to do as well, to stay in touch with the people who you lead.”

“Nelson Mandela said – and I had this behind me, my desk, when I was AG, and I have it behind my desk at Covington & Burling now – Mandela said, I never lose. I either win or I learn. And I think that’s a good way to think about the leadership of an organization. You never lose. You either win or you learn.”

“What I counsel our clients is that you should stay committed to DEI or the commitments that you’ve made over the years, but you’ve got to be smart about the way in which you describe those commitments and the programs that you have in place and some of the language might have to be tailored so as not to draw unwanted attention or make you, my client, a principal in a case that’s potentially going to be brought.”

Eric H. Holder, Jr., Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling LLP, and 82nd Attorney General of the United States

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

SPEAKER CONSENSUS:

“Banks have significantly tightened credit standards over the past two years. In particular, small businesses and some small banks and community development financial institutions are experiencing diminished access to credit. Many of these businesses also face short-duration loans that need to be refinanced at higher interest rates.”

- Dr. Lisa D. Cook, Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors



CHALLENGE:

“[Religious institutions and other organizations in the community] are probably better positioned to influence people’s thinking and commitment rather than government policy.”

MELISSA KEARNY, NEIL MOSKOWITZ PROFESSOR ECONOMICS,
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

ACTION LEADERS CAN TAKE:

“I think we have gotten away from the notion that the only stakeholders in the corporate setting are shareholders. You know, I guess it was the Business Roundtable a few years ago that defined stakeholders more broadly.”

“When I was attorney general, I worked with state Chief Justices who were both Republicans and Democrats to try to come up with ways in which we could try to eliminate some of the disparities that still exist in our system. And we focused a lot on the criminal justice system as we should because we’re talking about taking people’s liberty away from them.”

Eric H. Holder, Jr., Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling LLP, and 82nd Attorney General of the United States

“[I want to] highlight the importance of community banks, which are one of the places that historically has been a resource for smaller businesses, given the relationships in communities, and it really speaks to the importance of the range of types of financial institutions that we have in our economy as part of that vibrancy that I’ve been talking about.”

Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

(CONTINUED)

ACTION LEADERS CAN TAKE:

“One purpose of the Beige Book and one purpose of my getting out of D.C. as often as possible is to talk to people and to go where they are. So, where I was in the upper peninsula of Michigan, you would see, you would potentially see – I saw evidence of it, I didn’t talk to anybody who was telling me about the gray economy – but you would expect in rural areas that there would be a gray economy. And as you might know, before I came to the Fed, I worked on developing countries a lot. So, I see, in our own economy, where there may be evidence of that. So, we might get undercounts, for example, with respect to labor force participation or economic activity.”

Dr. Lisa D. Cook, Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors

“Policymakers should be willing to invest in big programs like a Fatherhood Academy, where, okay, we’re going to help you get job training, and we’re going to pay for some sort of substance abuse program. We’re going to actually address your barriers and give you some parenting classes. That would be a big shift in mindset from just sort of saying the family is outside of public policy regime, and we’re going to put a lot of this on public schools to address the challenges kids are bringing from home.”

Melissa Kearney, Neil Moskowitz Professor of Economics, University of Maryland

METRICS AND DATA-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

SPEAKER CONSENSUS:

“It’s important for policymakers to rigorously study data, for empirical insights, and to engage widely, explaining what we do and why, and sharing perspectives.”

- Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

CHALLENGE:

“Given our data dependence, we will closely monitor incoming information to determine the future path of policy.”

DR. LISA D. COOK, MEMBER, FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD OF GOVERNORS



ACTION LEADERS CAN TAKE:

“Making sure that we’re talking to people in real-time should help us recalibrate what we’re seeing in the aggregate data.”

Dr. Lisa D. Cook, Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors

“Small businesses are really critical to the vibrancy of our economy in a lot of different ways. We are focused on gathering data about the experiences of small business [owners]. That’s something that we do collaboratively across the Federal Reserve System and to make that data publicly available, to help a range of people, to learn from and understand and see where their challenges are.”

Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

“All of us who worry about a child’s well-being or inequality should be concerned that now less than 70% of kids in the U.S. are growing up in two-parent homes, that there’s massive differences by education, class, by race and ethnicity.”

“Daniel Patrick Moynihan had a memo in the 1960s when he was at the Department of Labor calling attention to the rise in single-parent households among urban Black families at that time. At that time, about 23% of Black children in the U.S. were born to unmarried mothers. Now that number is 70%. At that time, fewer than 3% of children to White mothers were born outside marriage. Now that’s 30%... I suspect it’s because now this really has taken on a very large socioeconomic class divide and it’s widespread among non-Black families in America too.”

Melissa Kearney, Neil Moskowitz Professor of Economics, University of Maryland

USING TECHNOLOGY TO DRIVE INNOVATION

SPEAKER CONSENSUS:

“Investment spending for equipment and intangibles, such as intellectual property and software, has been strong this year.”

- Dr. Lisa D. Cook, Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors



CHALLENGE:

“Technology was always a part of the underpinnings of our organization. We have underneath a lot of databases, a lot of metadata that can be ported to technology, whether it’s virtual reality or anything, as a way of giving access to the collection.”

JULIEANNA RICHARDSON, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, THE HISTORYMAKERS

ACTION LEADERS CAN TAKE:

“Productivity growth is volatile and difficult to measure, but if it remains strong, then a faster pace of economic growth might not be inflationary. While the pace of gains may have cooled from last year, I still lean toward optimism on innovation and productivity. Looking ahead, I see adoption of artificial intelligence, or AI, technology as a potentially significant source of productivity growth, keeping in mind that breakthroughs, such as effective generative AI, will take time to fully reach their potential and disseminate throughout the economy and for complementary investment to bear fruit.”

“I’ve studied this for some time, and I think that generative AI is probably a general-purpose technology. That it is an invention that will lead to other processes changing that could alter the direction and the rate of arrival of new ideas and new inventions. And that depends on a number of different factors, including the rate of dissemination as I was saying in my speech. So, I’m hopeful, but it’s too early to tell when this will have an effect. It’s too early to tell the impact that it will eventually have. But again, I’m an optimist on technology and innovation and its impact on the economy going forward..”

Dr. Lisa D. Cook, Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors

“Some of [the labor productivity we’re seeing] might relate to artificial intelligence and other technological advances.”

Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

“We’re serving as digital repositories for other people that have large collections that would have been lost had we not gotten to them. I started to be very concerned about, not just the interviews themselves but the documentary evidence that people take through their lives, that those were being thrown into the garbage, were being actually lost. So that’s what we’re focused on right now.”

Julieanna Richardson, Founder and President, The HistoryMakers

SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS TOWARD A MORE RESILIENT ECONOMY

SPEAKER CONSENSUS:

“While the economy’s productive capacity may not expand as quickly as it did in 2023, it should still grow at a solid pace this year and next. The intent is to help slow demand in a manner that’s consistent with inflation sustainably returning to 2%, amid healthy labor market conditions.”

- Susan M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston



CHALLENGE:

“What businesses need to remember is that certainly in the United States, you know, we’re dealing with a nation that is in the midst of really amazing demographic changes. A lot of the studies that I have seen indicate that those businesses...that are more diverse or seen as more diverse have healthier bottom lines than their competitors.”

ERIC H. HOLDER, JR., SENIOR COUNSEL, COVINGTON & BURLING LLP, AND 82ND ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

ACTION LEADERS CAN TAKE:

“I am fully committed to bringing inflation sustainably back to our 2% target. As I said when I joined the Board, I care about both sides of our dual mandate – maximum employment and stable prices.”

“The labor market has largely returned to a better alignment between supply and demand. Many indicators suggest the job market is roughly where it was before the pandemic – tight but not overheated. Labor force participation has broadly rebounded from pandemic lows, except for those aged 65 or older. Women between the ages of 25 and 54 led the rebound, with their participation reaching 78.1% in May, the highest ever recorded.”

Dr. Lisa D. Cook, Member, Federal Reserve Board of Governors

“I’m really bullish on increasing skills. So, I recently read about a fabulous program, and I would love to see more public dollars, funding, and research going into this kind of program. A community college is launching a Fatherhood Initiative. Basically, it’s a Fatherhood Academy. If you’re a dad between 18 and 34, come get trained in this labor market program. We’re developing your skills. You know, it’s a trade school type approach. You get these skills. Here’s a job for you. And we’re going to give you some parenting classes on top of it.”

“I’m really interested in the decline in fertility. I’ve seen nothing to suggest it’s going to turn around, which means that this is going to have major implications for society, for fiscal systems.... I’ve become really interested in international comparisons in terms of how different countries are dealing with these challenges. And I’m interested in what we can learn from each other.”

Melissa Kearney, Neil Moskowitz Professor of Economics, University of Maryland

LINKS TO VIDEOS OF EACH SESSION



Susan M. Collins
President & Chief Executive Officer,
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

[VIEW VIDEO](#)



Dr. Lisa D. Cook
Member, Federal Reserve
Board of Governors

[VIEW VIDEO](#)



Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Senior Counsel, Covington &
Burling LLP, and 82nd Attorney
General of the United States

[VIEW VIDEO](#)



Julieanna Richardson
Founder & President,
The HistoryMakers

[VIEW VIDEO](#)



Additional Readings

[Nine-in-ten business leaders agree increasing diversity and inclusion in the workplace will benefit their business, Mastercard](#)

[America's Greatest Workplaces for Diversity 2023, Newsweek](#)

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report 2022, S&P Global](#)

[Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Belonging, Paypal](#)

[Black DEI Executives discuss how to excel as a leader of diverse teams at Black Men XCEL Summit, Black Enterprise](#)

[Making The Case For Inclusive Capitalism: An Asset Owner](#)

[Perspective, Forbes](#)

[Pillar One Of The Path To Inclusive Capitalism Forbes](#)

[Want To Underwrite More Equitably? Here's How Forbes](#)


[The Path to Inclusive Capitalism: An Asset Owner Guide for Investment Portfolios, Milken Institute](#)

SERIES MEDIA COVERAGE

63K+

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

We are proud to leverage our social media platform as a space to lead important conversations on equity and inclusion. Thus far in 2024, the Club shared a total of 117 pieces of content across Instagram, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and YouTube dedicated to engaging, educating, and inspiring our community. This content captured the attention of thousands, receiving a total of 63K+ impressions and 1.3K+ engagements.



SCOTUS affirmative action ruling leaves opening for corporate DEI, former AG Holder says

The Supreme Court's June 2023 decision knocking down race-based university admission practices won't necessarily scuttle corporate DEI efforts, former Attorney General Eric Holder told the Economic Club of New York last week.



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The Club is honored to welcome Eric H. Holder, Jr., 82nd U.S. Attorney General and Senior Counsel at **Covington & Burling LLP**, for a webinar discussion!

Eric will be joining the Club for a discussion on the intersection of law and corporate governance, the role of technology in shaping legal frameworks, and regulatory compliance for multinational corporations.

➔ Follow @EconClubNY on X for live updates and join in the conversation with **#ECNYHolder!**

LIVE WEBINAR

ERIC HOLDER, JR.

Senior Counsel
COVINGTON
COVINGTON & BURLING LLP

FEB 27, 12 PM ET


Eric will be joining the Club for a discussion on the intersection of law and corporate governance, the role of technology in shaping legal frameworks, and regulatory compliance for multinational corporations.



The Economic Club of New York
@EconClubNY

Kearney: In a study including 130 different countries, kids in the United States are more likely to live in a one-parent household than any other country, and it isn't because women in the United States can afford to be single mothers.

#ECNYKearney #Economics #Family



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The Club was honored to host **Julieanna Richardson**, Founder & President of **The HistoryMakers**, for an Equity and Inclusion webinar last week! 🙌

Julieanna joined the Club to discuss the importance of preserving cultural heritage, how historical narratives shape society, and the roles that technology and media play in archiving history. 🗣️


Don't miss this enlightening discussion! Watch the full webinar on our YouTube channel → <https://lnkd.in/gzkJaPRI>

JULIEANNA RICHARDSON

FOUNDER & PRESIDENT, THE HISTORYMAKERS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

Bloomberg Mastercard PayPal S&P Global TACODIG CAPITAL BlackRock



The Economic Club of New York
@EconClubNY

Collins: When you think about what a vibrant **#economy** looks like, it requires high participation in the **#workforce**. Any barriers to employment can hinder the energy, the **#innovation**, and the **#productivity** growth that comes from high participation.

#ECNYCollins #LaborMarket #MonetaryPolicy @BostonFed