

Letters To The Editor

A healthy empowerment initiative

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In the Feb. 8 Local Opinions commentary “[A necessary rescue](#),” former D.C. city administrator Robert C. Bobb offered compelling data in support of the “[Empowering Males of Color](#)” initiative recently announced by Mayor Muriel Bowser (D) and D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson. Among the outcomes Mr. Bobb cited as symptomatic of a public education system in need of innovation was the nearly equal chance young men of color have of incarceration as they do of graduating high school.

This crisis is manifested by a dearth of black and Latino students, particularly males, entering professions in which they are critically needed. Nowhere is this starker than in health care. African American and Latino males combined [made up less than 7 percent of the nearly 50,000 applicants to U.S. medical colleges](#) in 2011, significantly underrepresenting their overall population. A decade ago, the [Institute of Medicine recognized that workforce diversity](#) could help combat the crippling health disparities in communities of color.

Priming the education pump, stimulating the workforce pipeline and offering opportunity through this empowerment initiative is absolutely necessary and the right

thing to do.

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