Written Testimony of Dwana Franklin-Davis
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United States House of Representatives Committee on Financial Services

Virtual Hearing entitled "Closing the Racial and Gender Wealth Gap Through Compensation Equity"

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Chairwoman Beatty, Ranking Member Wagner, Chairwoman Waters, Ranking Member McHenry, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. It is an honor to be here and speak to something that is near and dear to my heart.

My name is Dwana Franklin-Davis, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Reboot Representation Tech Coalition, a partnership of leading tech companies that have pooled funding and committed to a goal of doubling the number of Black, Latina, and Native American women graduating with computing Bachelor's degrees by 2025.

I'm going to speak about my background, including the organization I now lead, and then describe how the issues my organization works on will affect compensation equity.

I have a background in technology and spent the 13 years prior to joining Reboot at a top financial services corporation leading global technology teams. I also have the pleasure of serving on the National Center for Women & Information Technology Board of Directors, am on the Break Through Tech Advisory Committee, and the Last Mile Education Fund's Champions Board. I graduated from Purdue University with a bachelor's degree in Management, and from Washington University with a Master's degree in Information Management.

My experience and expertise are through the lens of the tech sector; however, the concepts and principles can be applied across industries because after all, tech transcends industry.

Collective Action

It is noted in the memorandum overview that wage gaps exist for women of color because "[they] have not had— nor do they have now—access to the same education and employment opportunities that white people have....[and] are disproportionately working in service, domestic, caregiving and agricultural jobs, which have been systemically undervalued and undercompensated."[1]

The organization I represent today, the Reboot Representation Tech Coalition, is working specifically to increase access to computing education and employment opportunities. Increasing access to computing education for high school and college students is one of the fastest and most sustainable ways to improve compensation equity.

The Reboot Representation Tech Coalition is focused on recruiting and retaining Black, Latina, and Native American female-identifying students in computing Bachelor's degree programs in the United States. Reboot is a nonprofit re-granting organization that pools and directs funds from corporate funders (Coalition member-companies) to nonprofits programs in alignment with our mission.

The Coalition was launched alongside the report, *Rebooting Representation: Using CSR & Philanthropy to Close the Gender Gap in Tech,* published in September 2018. The report's goal was to conduct research on how tech companies approach gender diversity using corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility giving. The media had indicated that companies were "throwing money at this diversity problem," but the report gathered data on how much companies were actually spending on gender diversity, where their resources were going, how they were making decisions, and how they could improve the efficacy and impact of their giving. The research surveyed 32 leading tech companies representing over $500 billion in revenue and over $500 million in philanthropic giving, as well as extensive interviews with ~100 tech company leaders and experts.[2]

The research report found that most companies do not take a gender-specific lens to their CSR and philanthropy. Only 5% ($32M/year) of companies' philanthropy (of the 32 we surveyed) went towards gender diversity in tech. Only 0.1% ($335K/year) of tech companies' grants (of the 32 we surveyed) focus on women of color specifically. In part because companies had prioritized investing in programs serving underrepresented people of color in general rather than investing in underrepresented women in tech specifically, they were still letting women & girls of color fall through the cracks.[2]

As a result, Black, Latina, and Native American women's share of computing degrees has been declining for the past 15 years, and their absolute number of computing degrees is progressing at a glacial pace. If we don't take action, we won't double the already-small number of underrepresented women of color majoring in computing until 2052. Specifically, Black, Latina, and Native American women represent X percent of the US population, but only 4% of computing bachelor's degrees.[2]

The research found that tech companies' contributions to the gender/tech space is largely fragmented and there is little alignment among donors.

If we are going to truly move the needle on gender and racial diversity in tech, we are at a pivotal moment for the tech sector to collaborate. It won't be one company's efforts alone that will close the gender gap for women of color in tech.

As part of the research a Tech Advisory panel of 15 companies (Adobe, Google, Best Buy, Cisco, Dell, LinkedIn, Intel, Microsoft, Nvidia, PayPal, Snapchat, Twitter, Workday, eBay, and Salesforce) was convened to inform the report and develop a set of recommendations from the industry itself. This research report was uniquely positioned because it was based on data collected directly from tech companies themselves and had enlisted their leadership in creating a roadmap of action with the goal of ensuring that the tech industry itself would own executing these follow-up actions. As a result, the tech companies came together to drive forward collective impact as the Reboot Representation Tech Coalition.

Reboot Representation was launched in September 2018 with 11 member-companies and has since grown to 19 organizations (Adobe, Applied Materials, Amazon, Best Buy, BNY Mellon, Cognizant, Comcast NBCUniversal, Dell, F5, Intel, LinkedIn, Microsoft, NortonLifeLock, Qualcomm, Riot Games, Salesforce, S&P Global Foundation, Verizon, Walmart).

The Future of Work

According to the National Center for Women & Information Technology *By the Numbers* fact sheet, there will be 3.6 million U.S. computing-related job openings by 2029.Only 24% of these jobs could be filled by U.S. computing bachelor's degree recipients by 2029.[3] These numbers alone should tell you that we need to do more to prepare individuals in this country for these high paying jobs and better position our companies to compete on the global stage.

One way that our Tech Coalition is trying to prepare students to compete is ensuring that they have access to computer science in high school. When high school students have access and take AP Computer Science Principles (CSP), they are more than 3 times likely to major in computer science in college, compared to similar students who did not take CSP.[4] Differences are similarly large for female, Black, Hispanic, and first-generation college students. College freshmen who declare a computer science major take a critical step toward receiving the second highest paid college degree in the nation, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers.[5]

States should continue to broaden participation in computer science by passing policies to make computer science a fundamental part of the K–12 education system. Only 40% of states require high schools to teach computer science and only 2 schools require CS for graduation.[3] I support the 9 policies[6] that many agree are necessary to make computer science fundamental to a state's K-12 education system.

1. Create a state plan for K-12 computer science. [6]
2. Define computer science and establish rigorous K-12 computer science standards. [6]
3. Allocate funding for rigorous computer science teacher professional learning and course support. [6]
4. Implement clear certification pathways for computer science teachers. [6]
5. Create programs at institutions of higher education to offer computer science to preservice teachers. [6]
6. Establish dedicated computer science positions in state and local education agencies. [6]
7. Require that all secondary schools offer computer science with appropriate implementation timelines. [6]
8. Allow computer science to satisfy a core graduation requirement. [6]
9. Allow computer science to satisfy an admission requirement at institutions of higher education. [6]

I encourage each of you to go to code.org/advocacy and look up your own state's progress on these policies.

Data and Accountability

Data is key! It is important that companies and organizations collect and disaggregate data in order to take an intersectional approach while creating targeted solutions to make an impact. This

needs to be woven into policy. To address the intersectional barriers that so many experience we cannot treat groups as monoliths. These metrics simply cannot reveal the total number of Blacks, or the total number of men and women and fail to provide the total number of Black women. These numbers help an organization know what their baseline is and then they can be explicit and intentional about designing programs and policies to impact specific subgroups while making their environments more inclusive and more equitable. Our Coalition encourages Member Companies and grantee partners to provide disaggregated data when possible.

However, it is not enough to collect and disaggregate the data. We also must track it over time.to hold organizations accountable. In a corporation, it would not be acceptable for a business unit's year over year return on investment (ROI) never to increase or to increase by only a few percentage points. So why is this acceptable for the organization's DEI metrics, when there have been countless studies proving that diverse teams are more productive and contribute to a higher ROI? Corporations must be inclusive through both diverse hiring methods and programs that support retention. Inclusive and equitable workplaces will lead to greater retention and contribute to the opportunity for pay equity.

An intentional intersectional approach is also necessary when creating policy. When programs and policies are informed and implemented for the least represented, they also benefit the greater good. Rising tides raise all ships.

We are at a critical inflection point. Meaningful solutions are impossible without collective action. No single company created gender and racial inequity in the industry, but as the collective, they have the unique power to change the current landscape. Bold leadership from the public and private sectors must step up, acknowledge the policies and practices that are fomenting inequity, and lead the change that is long overdue. Technology empowers, innovates, and adapts. It is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that our policies and our companies do the same.

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