

INEQUALITY IS

Rashad Robinson on inequality and a fair chance to work

Rashad Robinson discusses how having to reveal a past felony disadvantages thousands of Americans from finding work and making a new life for themselves.

A conversation about inequality in all its forms.

Transcript begins.

RASHAD ROBINSON: Inequality is the structural forces that make some folks' voices powerful and other folks' voices silent.

[Inequality is logo. A graphic black equal sign with an orange slash through it. #InequalityIs. Rashad Robinson, executive director, Color of Change. A Black man with brown skin and short black hair, wearing a navy blue pinstripe three piece suit, light blue shirt, and a purple and lavender striped tie.]

It's the structures at the voting booth, in our technology, in our institutions, that ensures that some folks will have access to all that America can provide. That some folks' voices will be heard and counted and visible, and other folks' voices simply won't. When we were working to Ban the Box; the box on applications that says, "Have you been convicted of a felony?" That box stays with people for decades and decades; prevents people, after they have come out of prison or jail, from being able to get a job, from being able to build a life, from being able to enter the financial marketplace.

[Activists, including Rashad, hold protest signs in front of the White House, reading "This wait has almost always meant 'never', and "President Obama, ban the box now."]

And we were at the White House, and we had delivered over 100,000 petitions, and we recognized who they weren't inviting to the meeting were formerly incarcerated leaders; folks who had been leading this effort for decades. And we said, actually, we are not the right folks to meet with officials in the White House. We are not the folks with the stories that should be told.

[Images of formerly incarcerated individuals addressing a crowd in Washington D.C.]

The White House accepted a meeting from those formerly incarcerated officials. A little over a week later, the president signed an executive order banning the box. That's how we challenge and change inequality in this country; giving real people the ability to not just be present, but to be powerful.

[Inequality Is Logo. Join the conversation. #InequalityIs.]

End of transcript.