BAN THE BOX
New York has joined Georgia, California, Rhode Island and 15 other states in “banning the box,” that is, eliminating the question on federal job applications inquiring about a prospective employee’s criminal history. What’s more, President Obama has called on Congress to follow suit on these applications nationwide.

NURTURING BLACK TECHIES
Apple is taking a step in the right direction toward diversifying the racial makeup of Silicon Valley. As part of its $40 million diversity initiative, the tech giant will team up with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (tmcf.org) and award 30 HBCU students with one-year college scholarships and summer internships at the company.

ACCOUNTABILITY NOW
New data show that the number of police officers charged in fatal shootings has risen to a ten-year high. In 2015, 12 policemen were charged with either murder or manslaughter, which is more than double the five charged, on average, every year since 2005.

PAYING IT FORWARD
Howard University graduate student and Washington, D.C. native Yasmine Arrington knew what it was like to struggle financially during her college years. She lost her mother at a young age and had a father who was in and out of prison. To assist other students in similar situations, the 23-year-old founded Scholar-CHIPS in 2010, a nonprofit that provides academic college scholarships to children whose parents are incarcerated. To date, Arrington has awarded 23 scholarships totaling $80,000 to Black students in the D.C. metro area. Last November, she won a $175,000 grant to help fund future scholarships and push her initiative forward.

INVESTING IN WOMEN OF COLOR
The Obama administration announced a $118 million grant that will be used to improve the lives of women and girls of color. Donated by various foundations, the money will help women and girls escape poverty by funding existing job training programs and providing affordable and quality child care options to working mothers. A portion of the funds will also be used to conduct studies and collect data on the various issues affecting women of color.

GETTING TO HEALTHY
Advancements in health care and better access to medical treatment are possible factors that have led to a rise in the life expectancy of African-Americans, according to a recent federal study. Worth noting: Researchers say that a decline in heart disease in Black women has greatly contributed to life expectancy rates among all Blacks increasing from 71 in 1999 to 75.5 in 2013.

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