FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Friday, October 25, 2019

Contact:  
Ryan Berni  
ryan@ununfund.org  
504-417-1933

MITCH LANDRIEU LAUNCHES E PLURIBUS UNUM WITH THE RELEASE  
REPORT ON RACE AND CLASS IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH  
The Honorable Bill Clinton, Congressman John Lewis Among Members of  
National Advisory Council

NEW ORLEANS, LA – Today, former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu officially launched the E Pluribus Unum initiative with the release of its first report, *Divided by Design: Findings from the American South.* The findings on how residents of the American South experience issues of race and class in their communities follows nearly a year-long qualitative and quantitative research phase in which the E Pluribus Unum team travelled to 28 communities across 13 states. The team met with over 800 people in one-on-one interviews, small groups and random-sample focus groups to learn how southerners are impacted by race, equity, economic opportunity and violence. E Pluribus Unum also commissioned an 1,800-person survey conducted earlier this month on attitudes on race and class across the 13-state region.

*Divided by Design: Findings from the American South* provides an unparalleled look at the lived experiences in the American South and identifies 15 key insights which will be used to build a more inclusive South.

[Click here for the report](#)

“Bringing people together to find common ground requires listening, learning, and having tough, honest conversations,” said **Mitch Landrieu.** “For the past year, the E Pluribus Unum team has been on the road, listening and learning. It was clear that barriers were put up purposefully and that we remain divided along racial and class lines by design. Though we found that tremendous, unaddressed challenges remain in most Southern communities, I also have hope because there was a sense of strength, pride and resolve that shone through in nearly every place we visited. ”

Incubated at Emerson Collective and led by Landrieu, E Pluribus Unum is an initiative created to fulfill America’s promise of justice and opportunity for all by breaking down the barriers that divide us by race and class.

**Landrieu** added, “I founded E Pluribus Unum, to help find common ground and seek new solutions. We can only fulfill America’s promise of justice and opportunity for all if we break
down the barriers that divide us. This report is the culmination of our first year and provides us a roadmap for tackling the vestiges of Jim Crow that are still impacting our shared lives, making a case for creating an inclusive, new South. Through this work, we will ultimately prove our American motto, *E pluribus unum*, 'out of many, one' and we are better for it"

The Honorable Bill Clinton, 42nd President of the United States, said, “America has always been at our best when we work to fully embrace the meaning of our motto, *E pluribus unum*—out of many, one. Our strength is rooted in our diversity, and we are united in the values we share. But too many people are still locked out from the opportunities to achieve their full potential because of who they are, what they look like, or where they were born. We need to keep working to build an America that truly lives up to our highest aspirations. That’s why I’m proud to support the mission of E Pluribus Unum.”

**KEY INSIGHTS**

Over 800 participant interviews across 28 communities in 13 Southern states were analyzed and then paired with secondary data to help develop 15 key insights that bring life to the themes identified in the data.

1. Many white people lack an understanding of the scale of racism in America, including our racial history and how it still permeates today's institutions.
2. Education and inequality go hand in hand.
3. We continue to lead deeply segregated lives.
4. The legacies of the Confederacy and Jim Crow are still widely felt by residents in the South, but the degree to which there is contemporary impact is not agreed upon.
5. Political leadership and media have power and some are setting a permissive tone for racist behavior and reinforcing stereotypes.
6. Communities of color, low-income individuals, and those living in the margins have seldom been in control of telling their own stories.
7. Honest and fact-based conversations about the depth of the challenges presented by racism and classism seldom take place and rarely lead to action.
8. Rapid population growth, changing economies, and shifting demographics in some thriving Southern cities have reinforced stark racial and economic divisions between people — exacerbating long-standing issues related to inequality of opportunity, tension between groups, and distrust of local government and institutions.
9. People want financial security, but the barriers to accessing good work look different in every city. It is often the unfair influence of the “who-you-know” economy, and the numerous effects of racial discrimination and exclusion in the workplace that diminish access to true economic opportunity.
10. Many attribute poverty to laziness or individual failings and decry those who receive government assistance, rather than asking why or taking to task the systems that perpetuate and benefit from poverty.
11. Pain and trauma caused by racial inequities are mutually reinforcing, creating ripple effects across generations.
12. For many people of color, efforts made toward equity, inclusion, and integration have often come with deep costs, both hidden and overt.
13. Exposure to different cultures and ways of life helps people develop an awareness of others and of possibilities for the future, furthering their acceptance of differences and ability to pursue their full potential.
14. Where local political, community, and philanthropic leaders openly prioritize racial diversity and inclusion, there is more hope and optimism in their community’s future among residents.

15. Opportunities for people to connect and find a common purpose across racial lines are often centered on cultural and sporting events.

SURVEY RESULTS
In October 2019, E Pluribus Unum conducted a large-scale survey of 1,800 black, white and Latino residents in the American South. A comprehensive analysis of the E Pluribus Unum’s Southern Survey is available at www.unumfund.org. Primary takeaways from the survey include:

- **There are clear racial divides in opinion regarding the causes of socio-economic discrepancies in America.** 76 percent of black residents attribute poor economic situations to a lack of opportunity, compared to just 42 percent of white residents and 55 percent of Latino residents.

- **Tremendous differences in opinion exist across numerous issues pertaining to race and the impact of history on the American South, reflecting the vastly different experiences of black, Latino, and white citizens.** Most black respondents (69 percent) and nearly half of Latino respondents (48 percent) report that they are sometimes or very often discriminated against because of their race, compared to 31 percent of white respondents.

- **A majority of Southern white respondents do not accept the idea that they have more economic opportunities than black respondents and Latino respondents, and they reject claims that systemic barriers, historical legacies, or discrimination impact black respondents’ and Latino respondents’ economic conditions today.** Nearly all black respondents (90 percent) and almost two-thirds of Latino respondents (64 percent) think that white respondents in the United States have more economic opportunities than black respondents and Latino respondents, but only 44 percent of white respondents share this view.

- **Despite the widely divergent views expressed across racial groups, there are shared cultural experiences and some common ground on the value of diversity and equal opportunity.** 86 percent of Latino respondents, 84 percent of black respondents, and 83 percent of white respondents agree that, “diversity is good for a community and makes the community stronger”

- **Racial reconciliation and progress will require education that brings people together around a shared understanding of our history and commitment to the values that will ultimately lead to policies that overcome today’s barriers.** A plurality of Southerners across races say that the Civil War was not fought primarily over slavery. There is evidence that ongoing efforts to establish equity as a shared goal and to educate Southerners about it have powerful potential.

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ANNOUNCED
Mitch Landrieu also used the launch event to announce E Pluribus Unum’s National Advisory Council, which is a network of respected leaders and experts from the fields of the arts and
culture, business, higher education, history, media, philanthropy, public policy, and sports. This diverse group of professionals will lend its expertise and knowledge to advise on and support E Pluribus Unum’s programming and policy goals. E Pluribus Unum’s National Advisory Council includes:

- **Angela Glover Blackwell**, Founder in Residence, PolicyLink;
- **Donna Brazile**, veteran political strategist, adjunct professor, author, and columnist;
- **Bill Bynum**, Chief Executive Officer, Hope Credit Union;
- **The Honorable Bill Clinton**, 42nd President of the United States;
- **Michelle Ebanks**, President, Essence Communications Inc.;
- **Oskar Eustis**, Artistic Director, The Public Theater;
- **Drew Gilpin Faust**, President Emeritus, Harvard University;
- **Henry Louis Gates, Jr.**, Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, Harvard University;
- **Laurene Powell Jobs**, Founder and President, Emerson Collective;
- **The Honorable John Lewis**, United States Representative (GA-5);
- **Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D.**, President and CEO, UNCF (United Negro College Fund);
- **Fred Luter, Jr.**, Pastor, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, former president, Southern Baptist Convention;
- **Marc H. Morial**, President and CEO, National Urban League;
- **Adam Silver**, Commissioner, National Basketball Association;
- **Cleo Wade**, Author & Activist; and,
- **Darren Walker**, President, Ford Foundation.

**PUTTING INSIGHTS INTO ACTION**

In 2020, E Pluribus Unum will launch a series of programs and initiatives to (1) cultivate courageous leaders who are committed to realizing an inclusive vision for a new South, (2) champion transformative policies to reverse the enduring harms of America’s Jim Crow era past for those who continue to experience them today, and (3) change narratives that perpetuate systemic and interpersonal racism in order to shift people’s attitudes and behaviors.

For more information on the *Divided by Design: Findings from the American South* report or E Pluribus Unum, visit [www.unumfund.org](http://www.unumfund.org).

###

**About E Pluribus Unum**

*E Pluribus Unum* is an initiative created to fulfill America's promise of justice and opportunity for all by breaking down the barriers that divide us by race and class. In its first year, the E Pluribus Unum team traveled extensively across the American South to uncover and confront the challenges we face, to learn from people about what separates us and what can bring us together, and to find bold and effective solutions to tackle the modern legacy of Jim Crow so that an inclusive new South may be born. Incubated at Emerson Collective and led by former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, the E Pluribus Unum team is building a series of programs and initiatives to cultivate courageous leaders who are committed to realizing an inclusive vision for a new South, champion transformative policies to reverse the enduring harms of America’s
Jim Crow era past for those who continue to experience them today, and change narratives that perpetuate systemic and interpersonal racism in order to shift people’s attitudes and behaviors.