

Dr. Menna Demessie

EDUCATION

Economics, Law & Society Major
Oberlin College
Joint PhD in Public Policy & Political Science
University of Michigan

EMPLOYMENT

Vice President of Policy Analysis and Research Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
Adjunct Professor University of California Washington Center

Interesting Facts: Played college basketball, lived in China my junior year of high school, Play Piano/Spoken Word, and tried out for American Idol in 2008

Dr. Menna Demessie is the Vice President of Policy Analysis and Research at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation where she leads the foundation's policy initiatives in the areas of education, economic opportunity, and healthcare as it affects African Americans and the global black community. She received her joint PhD in political science and public policy from the University of Michigan and conducted the first and only study of African congressional caucuses in the U.S. House of Representatives. She is a passionate scholar who was one of only five political scientists in the country selected for the prestigious American Political Science Association Congressional Fellowship and worked for Rep. Barbara Lee (CA-13) in the 112th Congress.

Since 2000, she has tirelessly served as the National Youth Coordinator for the Society of Ethiopians Established in the Diaspora (SEED), a nonprofit aimed at empowering Ethiopian American youth in academic excellence, community service, and professional development. In addition to her longtime former service as an executive board member for the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS), she also produced and directed a documentary featuring prominent political scientists across the country that was screened in Houston in 2009. Dr. Demessie also serves as an adjunct professor at the University of California Washington Center where she teaches courses on U.S. - Africa Foreign Policy, Race and Ethnic Politics, and American Government.

In 2016, DC Mayor Bowser awarded Dr. Demessie with the Community Advocacy Award for her civic engagement and community service. In 2013, Dr. Demessie established the DC African Coalition with a few likeminded activists, and successfully lobbied the DC City Council to authorize independent grant making authority for the Mayor's Office on African Affairs for the first time in its history along with an increased budget to better serve the African immigrant communities in the District of Columbia. In September 2016, Dr. Demessie received the Community Advocacy Award from the Mayor's Office of African Affairs for her mobilization and advocacy. Dr. Demessie is an advisory board member for the Diaspora African Women's Network (DAWN) and traveled to Benin in 2013 with an American women's delegation to host a Young Women's Empowerment Summit for 60 young Beninese women ages 16 to 25 on issues ranging from reproductive healthcare to political participation.

She has spoken and published on the critical importance of mobilization and representation of black ethnic groups and the need for the U.S. government to recognize the value of working in partnership with Diaspora communities in addressing domestic and international policy.
