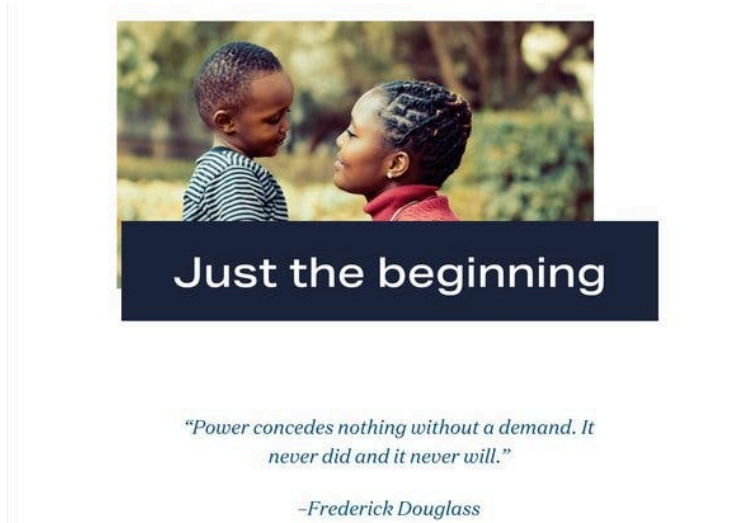




Buttigieg Campaign Used Stock Photo of Kenyan Woman to Illustrate Plan for Black America

The campaign said the photo, displayed on a webpage touting the candidate's anti-racism plan, was posted by a contractor who didn't know where it was taken.



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Pete Buttigieg's presidential campaign, struggling to build support among black voters, removed from its website a photo of a Kenyan woman that was used earlier this year to illustrate his plan to dismantle racism in the United States.

The photo of the woman kneeling and talking to a child, selected from an assortment of stock photos available for public reuse, was first posted over the summer as part of the rollout of Mr. Buttigieg's "Douglass Plan," billed as "a comprehensive investment in the empowerment of black America."

The plan includes health care, education and voting-rights reforms as well as proposals to address discrimination in policing and criminal justice.

Mr. Buttigieg has failed to gain traction among black voters — a critical constituency in the path to the Democratic nomination — even as polls show he is building support in largely white Iowa. A poll of likely Democratic primary voters in South Carolina, released Monday by Quinnipiac University, found that Mr. Buttigieg had the support of less than 1 percent of black voters.

Mr. Buttigieg stirred controversy when he fired the department's black police chief shortly after taking office, and he left the campaign trail in June to return home after a white South Bend officer shot and killed a black man, prompting protests.

Reacting on Monday to the controversy over the stock photo, Senator Kamala Harris of California, the only black woman in the presidential race, told reporters that its posting was a "big mistake" that Mr. Buttigieg would have to answer for, and that it was up to each candidate to demonstrate the "ability to be relevant to the diversity of who we are as a country."

She added: "You can't unify folks if you don't understand who they are, and their specific needs, and the right that they have to be represented — based not on a stock photograph but who they actually are."

Stephanie Saul covers national politics. Since joining The Times in 2005, she has also written about the pharmaceutical industry, education and the illicit foreign money fueling Manhattan's real estate boom. @stefsaul