



To: The Honorable Governor Phillip Murphy and Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver

Re: African American Action Priorities for New Jersey

We, the undersigned leading advocacy groups in New Jersey, look forward to the opportunity to work with you, our constituents, partners, and other elected officials to advance the following African American action priorities. Based on your progressive leadership and commitment to social and racial justice, we anticipate that you will consider these among your top priorities, and work with us to realize each of them.

1. Restore, fund, and staff the Office of the Public Advocate, Division of Equal Employment and Affirmative Action, and the Division of Civil Rights.
2. Fully support and implement the *Mt. Laurel* doctrine throughout New Jersey.
3. Reinstate the New Jersey Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise program utilizing the Essex County model. In addition, we ask for a disparity study and a cabinet-level position focused on management and enforcement. This initiative requires additional state support for entrepreneurs and small businesses in New Jersey's urban communities.
4. Fully and fairly fund public schools and lead an aggressive effort to successfully integrate public schools.
5. Give careful consideration before marijuana legalization to ensure that revenue is directed to communities impacted by the war on drugs, that people with marijuana convictions receive immediate expungement and release from confinement, and that there is access to the new marketplace for African Americans.
6. Ensure access to the Public Bank and various financial resources (e.g. EDA, HMFA, etc.) by providing incentives, goals, and training for African American communities.
7. Fundamentally transform New Jersey's broken youth justice system by, among other things, addressing the over 30-to-1 Black to white youth incarceration disparity rate, interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline, increasing the use of stationhouse adjustments across all counties and importing accountability into the stationhouse adjustment directive, decreasing the number of incarcerated youth through sentencing and parole reform, closing New Jersey's three failed youth prisons, and reinvesting in the creation of a community-based system of care for all of our young people.
8. Restore the fundamental right to vote to people with criminal convictions. New Jersey currently denies voting rights to people on parole, on probation, or in prison for a felony, a practice that further entrenches racial inequality by importing the racial disparities of the criminal justice system into the political process. The governor should advocate for the

legislature to pass, and then sign into law, legislation that would sever the link between the fundamental right to vote and the criminal justice system and restore voting rights to more than 94,000 people currently in prison, on parole, or on probation, as is the practice in Maine, Vermont, and most Western democracies.

9. Include African Americans on boards, commissions, management of state pension funds, the judiciary, and taskforces to ensure the administration is representative of our constituency—and the State of New Jersey.
10. Require Racial and Ethnic Impact Statements for all legislation and regulations to evaluate the consequences new and existing laws have on Black communities.

We would like to have a standing quarterly meeting to ensure that these priorities are moving forward. We are confident that, with your commitment, we will advance a robust, progressive racial justice agenda in New Jersey. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

**Richard T. Smith**  
President, NAACP New  
Jersey State Conference

**Reva Foster**  
Chairperson,  
NJ Black Issues Convention

**Ryan P. Haygood**  
President & CEO  
New Jersey Institute for  
Social Justice

**John Harmon**  
President,  
NJ African American  
Chamber of Commerce

**Adrienne Sanders**  
1st Vice President,  
Education Committee Chair  
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**Elise Boddie**  
Board member,  
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

**Carolyn Chang**  
President,  
The Association of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey

**Rev. Eric Dobson**  
Fair Share Housing Center  
Co-Convener,  
NJ Black Multi-Faith Alliance

**Rev. Dr. Charles F. Boyer**  
Chair,  
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