



California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans

**Mental And Physical
Harm And Neglect
Advisory Committee**

ADDRESS HEALTH INEQUITIES AMONG BLACK CALIFORNIANS

Issue:

Anti-Black discrimination and implicit bias in health care has led to severe negative disparities in health outcomes for Black Americans; for example:

- The Black maternal death rate has been 3.3 times the white rate, amounting to 43 percent of the national total. Between 2014 and 2016, Black women in California were six times more likely to die within a year of pregnancy than white women.
- Black people have led in 13 of 15 categories of the leading causes of death.
- Black life expectancy has five to seven fewer years than the white life expectancy.

ADDRESS HEALTH INEQUITIES AMONG BLACK CALIFORNIANS

Proposal:

- Fund the Health Equity and Racial Justice Fund within the California Department of Public Health's Office of Health Equity to provide grants directly to community based organizations, including clinics to identify and address the most pressing health care issues;
- Expand healthcare coverage for Black Californians or descendants of enslaved people who lack coverage or alternatively endorse previously introduced Assembly Bill 1400 providing comprehensive universal single-payer health care coverage for all residents;
- Close gaps in access to primary and specialty care for those covered under Medi-Cal subject to denial by providers due to low reimbursement rates.
- Adopt the additional proposals outlined here to remedy ongoing discrimination in the delivery of health care services.

ADDRESS ANTI-BLACK DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTH CARE

Issue:

Disparities persist in Black health outcomes as a result of historical inequality, discriminatory health policy, and racial discrimination, including unconscious, implicit bias.

African Americans:

- Receive fewer procedures and poorer-quality medical care across almost every type of diagnostic and treatment intervention than white Americans;
- Suffer higher rates of morbidity and mortality than white Americans in almost all health outcomes, and this inequality only increases with age.

Moreover, in order to effectively address discrimination in healthcare, standardized data collection is critical to understanding the disparities that exist in the system.

ADDRESS ANTI-BLACK DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTH CARE

Proposal:

- Add evidence-based anti-bias training and an assessment based on such training to the graduation requirements for all medical schools and other health care provider programs, including mental and behavioral health, in California receiving state funding;
- Mandate an annual study of California health care laws and policies to evaluate their effect on Black Californians, and publish findings and recommendations to the Legislature;
- Create statewide standards for data collection and reporting of demographic and social needs data to assess “the individual cultural, linguistic, and health-related social needs of patients to address health disparities, and improve health care quality and outcomes.”

REMEDY THE HIGHER RATES OF INJURY AND DEATH AMONG BLACK BIRTHING PEOPLE

Issue:

Black birthing Californians are substantially more likely than white birthing people to

- Suffer severe health complications during their pregnancy;
- Give birth prematurely;
- Lose their babies;
- Die in childbirth, accounting for more than 20 percent of pregnancy-related deaths despite being only 5 percent of the birthing population.

REMEDY THE HIGHER RATES OF INJURY AND DEATH AMONG BLACK BIRTHING PEOPLE

Proposal:

- Require California to adequately support doula services to provide physical and emotional support during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period (covered as a Medi-Cal preventive service starting in 2023) by requiring the California Department of Health Care Services to take additional steps to implement doula care services.

ADVANCE THE STUDY OF THE INTERGENERATIONAL IMPACT OF RACISM

Issue:

- A growing body of research has begun to document the individual and multi-generational impact of racism on health, and numerous states and municipalities across the country have declared racism as a public health crisis.

Proposal:

- Fund the study of the intergenerational impact of racism and formulate recommendations for enhanced mental health care, including educating mental health care workers.

PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH

Issue:

Segregation, redlining, and unequal distribution of the benefits of public infrastructure have resulted in Black Californians having:

- Unequal access to affordable healthy food;
- Poor-quality housing with less access to green spaces, playgrounds, and parks.

PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH

Proposal:

- Require grocery store closure guidelines and advance closing notice in food deserts;
- Facilitate innovative farmer's markets initiatives and/or mobile vendors;
- Promoting urban agriculture through various tax credits and mixed-use zoning ordinances;
- Distribute grants to community-based organizations within neighborhoods that have been redlined to address environmental and infrastructure inequity.

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BLACK HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Issue:

While research has demonstrated the importance of Black medical and mental health providers in delivering health care services to underserved Black patients:

- Black Californians make up 6 percent of the state's population, but only 3 percent of doctors in California are Black;
- Substantial barriers remain for Black students to enter the medical and mental and behavioral health professions;

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BLACK HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Issue:

- Unmet mental health needs are higher among Black Californians, as compared with white Californians, and across racial groups, the highest percentage of serious psychological distress and attempted suicide was found among Black Californians;
- California Medical Board data from 2003 to 2013 revealed that Black physicians were more likely than white physicians to be the subject of complaint investigations, but these investigations were not more likely to result in disciplinary action, which may indicate racial bias.

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BLACK HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Proposal:

- Fully fund and expand the UC Programs in Medical Education (UC PRIME) for African, Black, and Caribbean Communities (UC PRIME-LEAD-ABC) to all UC medical campuses, a successful model of both recruiting and mentoring Black medical students while also increasing the number of medical professionals dedicated to serving predominantly-Black communities. The program provides:
 - Specialized coursework;
 - Structured clinical experiences;
 - Advanced independent study, and
 - Mentoring programs for Black communities.

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BLACK HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Proposal:

- Create and fund equivalents to the UC PRIME programs for psychologists, licensed counselors, and licensed therapists;
- Permanently fund the California Medicine Scholars (pilot) Program and create and fund equivalent pathway programs for students in the California State Universities (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems. This program:
 - Connects community college students to medical schools, clinics, and practitioners to promote pathways for underrepresented college students to enter medicine;
 - Provides mentorship by practitioners, academic advising, enhanced curriculum, and priority enrollment to that student when the student applies to that particular medical school.

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BLACK HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Proposal:

- Fund or expand similar pathway programs for high school students and/or for other medical professions, such as nurses, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.
- To prevent racially biased disciplinary practices by the Medical Board, require:
 - The Medical Board of California to undergo implicit bias training;
 - Conduct an annual review by an independent party of the Board's records to determine racial bias in disciplinary proceedings;
 - Implementation of remedial measures if bias is found.



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HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH PROPOSALS

INCREASE TREES IN REDLINED COMMUNITIES

Issue: Legacy home loan appraisal maps correlate with infrastructure inequality and housing segregation today. Neighborhoods rated “A” as best by redlining maps have twice as many trees as those rated “D” for the worst. Without trees, communities suffer from increased health and environmental hazards; trees are essential in:

- Combating some of the deadliest harms of climate change by improving air quality;
- Reducing the effects of “heat islands”; i.e. urban areas that are significantly warmer than surrounding areas due to the concentration of buildings, roads, and structures that absorb solar radiation and transform and emit it as heat.

INCREASE TREES IN REDLINED COMMUNITIES

Proposal:

Amend Senate Bill (SB) 1000 to require local governments to identify redlined communities within their jurisdiction and make plans to increase tree canopy coverage and access to green space to limit pollution exposure, ameliorate heat island effects, and improve air quality.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE HUBS IN REDLINED COMMUNITIES

Issue:

Redlined communities lack the public infrastructure to adapt to the gravest climate change risks and African Americans bear some of the greatest risks from climate change, including:

- Increased asthma diagnoses;
- Premature mortality from extreme heat or pollution exposure.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE HUBS IN REDLINED COMMUNITIES

Proposal:

Utilize existing programming and funding from the California Strategic Growth Council to provide economic support to redlined communities that lack the public infrastructure to adapt to the gravest climate change risks by:

- Supporting local resilience hubs to facilitate communication, distribute aid, and become more self-sustaining during climate emergencies;
- Provide grants to local redlined communities to improve infrastructure, climate resiliency, and other health harms associated with the legacy of redlining;

CLIMATE RESILIENCE HUBS IN REDLINED COMMUNITIES

- Retrofit public buildings to serve as climate resilience hubs to respond to climate disasters by providing clean water, food distribution, high-speed internet, electricity, heat or cool air, etc.;
- Develop accessible warning/alert systems and climate shelters for unhoused residents;
- Ensure investments in lowering greenhouse gas emissions and climate change projects do not cause displacement by increasing property values and spurring cycles of gentrification that make the now-improved communities unaffordable for original residents.

REMOVE LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Issue:

- Lead pollution from industrial sites, paint, gasoline exhaust, and pipes that deliver drinking water to homes is disproportionately high in Black communities that were segregated through redlining;
- In 2019, the New York Times reported that as many as 1,000 community water systems in California may be at high risk of failing to deliver potable water, with a disproportionate number located in low-income areas;
- A UCLA report in 2021 identified 29 failing water systems in Los Angeles County, and these systems largely service communities of color.

REMOVE LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Proposal:

- Fund full lead service line replacement on privately-owned property to remove lead in drinking water and ban partial lead service line replacement (which leads to greater health risks);
- Allocate 40% of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds received by the State of California for full lead service line replacement to go directly to disadvantaged or low-income communities and Black communities that were formerly redlined.

PREVENT HIGHWAY EXPANSION AND MITIGATE TRANSPORTATION POLLUTION

Issue:

From the 1950s-70s, highway construction targeted neighborhoods and valuable inner city land that tended to be overwhelmingly poor and Black. These highways:

- Destroyed Black communities or otherwise suffocated their economic vitality by cutting off their access to the rest of the city;
- Caused Black communities to be disproportionately located near highways and exposed to:
 - On-road carcinogenic pollution;
 - Nitrogen dioxide emitted from vehicles, contributing to asthma and other respiratory ailments;
 - Higher-than-average concentrations of PM 2.5, fine particulate matter, from all sources including industry, diesel trucks, and construction.

PREVENT HIGHWAY EXPANSION AND MITIGATE TRANSPORTATION POLLUTION

Proposal:

- Reduce the pollution burden of Black communities by ending highway expansion in areas with high levels of pollution.



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**Education Advisory
Committee**

REDUCING K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Issue:

In recent decades, California passed, and the Supreme Court upheld, laws that stopped school desegregation, resulting in California, as of 2020, being among the top 10 most segregated states for Black students—64 percent of Black students attend hyper-segregated, low-resourced schools.

Proposal:

Follow the Berkeley model, permitting students to transfer to public schools within their district or between neighboring districts if doing so would improve racial integration (and other diversity measurements, such as socioeconomic status).

PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO SCHOOLS WITH STUDENTS EXPERIENCING THE GREATEST LEVEL OF NEED

Issue:

Funding is critical to closing the opportunity gap, yet Black students in California disproportionately attend under-resourced schools in highly segregated neighborhoods. The existing Local Control Funding Formula (LCCF) does not concentrate funding on Black students, who for decades have experienced the greatest disparities, and the LCCF does not require schools to ensure that funds are used to directly support high-needs students.

Proposal:

Direct substantial additional funding to schools with students experiencing the greatest educational disparities, require that the funds be used to address academic needs directly, and monitor to ensure that such funding is deployed in the required manner.

PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR TARGETED GRANTS

Issue:

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted education, exacerbating racial disparities that existed before the pandemic, causing:

- Multi-month learning losses in math and reading, with disproportionate impact for low-income students of color, including a widening of the academic gap for Black students;
- Mental health crises for young children and teens, compounding the need for mental health services, particularly among Black and Latinx students. Research shows that Black students are less likely to attend schools with adequate counseling staff or access to mental health services; and
- Teacher and educational staff shortages.

PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR TARGETED GRANTS

Proposal:

Provide additional COVID-19 relief grants for local educational agencies, with a requirement to focus on reducing racial disparities and mitigating the pandemic's harmful impacts on Black students. Ensure sufficiently long-term funding to support the measures identified as necessary to close the pandemic-exacerbated educational opportunity gap, including:

- Expanded-day and full-year instruction and enrichment for elementary students, including summer school;
- Tutoring and other instructional interventions, including learning acceleration;
- Counseling and mental health services.
- A proposal relating to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) disparities in education is in progress; cross reference to high quality career and technical education (CTE) and training.

DIVERSIFY THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND PROVIDE TRAINING TO ENSURE BLACK STUDENTS RECEIVE HIGH-QUALITY, BIAS-FREE, CULTURALLY RESPECTFUL TEACHING

Issue:

Studies establish the importance of students having at least one teacher who looks like them. Black students comprise 5.1 percent of California's students, but Black adults comprise just 3.9 percent of the state's teachers, with Black men only one percent of teachers in California.

Proposal:

- Adopt mandatory curriculum for teacher credentialing and trainings that includes culturally responsive teaching methods.
- Identify and support teachers who give culturally nurturing instruction and adopt new models to improve teacher habits in the classroom.
- Develop proactive strategies to recruit African American K-12 teachers.

REFORMING CURRICULUM IN K-12 SCHOOLS

Issue:

- Erasure of Black history and dehumanization of African Americans in textbooks contribute to a sense of alienation and being unimportant, invisible, and voiceless.

Proposal:

- Conduct a review of curriculum to assess whether it is inclusive, free of bias, and honors the contributions and experiences of all peoples regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, or sexual orientation.
- Advance the timeline for ethnic studies classes in public and private high schools.
- Adopt a K-12 Black Studies curriculum.

REFORM THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE BY ADDRESSING DISPARITIES IN DISCIPLINE

Issue:

- Black students are suspended at three times the rate of white students, are consistently punished more severely than white students for the same infractions, and lose nearly four times the number of days of instruction to suspensions and expulsions as white students.

Proposal:

Require

- Annual review of school disciplinary records to determine racial bias;
- Implementation of racially equitable disciplinary practices;
- Mandated training on implicit bias and cultural competency and positive behavioral interventions; and
- Improved access to educational opportunities for all incarcerated people in both juvenile and adult correctional facilities.

ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION, INCLUDING TUITION AND DISCRIMINATORY STANDARDIZED TESTING

Issue:

- The costs of higher education have grown exponentially over the last several decades, disproportionately excluding Black Californians, and reinforcing the ongoing history of discrimination in education.
- Since 2000, the percentage of Black enrollment has plummeted. Researchers identify the focus on standardized testing for admissions as one key cause behind the decline.
- Studies dispute the efficacy of standardized test scores as an accurate predictor of success in college and graduate school, and there is a strong correlation between test scores and race and wealth. Due to concerns with the discriminatory impact of these tests, the UC and CSU Systems have discontinued use of standardized tests for undergraduate admissions.

ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION, INCLUDING TUITION AND DISCRIMINATORY STANDARDIZED TESTING

Proposal:

- Fund free tuition to the State's community colleges, California State Universities, and Universities of California for California residents who are descendants of enslaved people.
- Eliminate standardized testing as a requirement for admission into graduate programs within the California State Universities and Universities of California.
- Require the California Department of Education to conduct an annual review of racial bias in the design and administration of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, a standardized test purporting to measure proficiency.