

July 15, 2020

Dear Gov. Murphy,

As people called “to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God,” we are writing to you seeking justice on behalf of a member of our community, Blueprint Capital Advisors. Blueprint Capital Advisors is the only Black asset managers in the state of New Jersey, yet we fear your administration’s treatment of the company suggests an attempt to not only limit Blueprint’s business dealings with the state but end its enterprise altogether. Words fail to adequately express the disappointment and concern we feel over how persons in your employ have treated this trailblazing staple of our community.

Let me share why this issue hits close to so many of us. There are few people more intimately aware of the needs of the Black community as clergy. From our time with parishioners, we know that there is great need within our community.

As you know, New Jersey has one of the worst racial wealth gaps in the nation: The median net worth for a white family is more than \$309,000, while it is just \$7,020 for a Latino family and \$5,900 for a Black family. It would take a Black family 228 years and a Latino family 84 years to achieve the wealth that an average white family had in 2018. This is not because of lack of capability, but rather lack of opportunity.

Given this sad reality, we are appalled to hear of your administration’s alleged treatment of Blueprint Capital Advisors. As the only African American asset manager, they are a pioneer in our community. While they are forging new paths, they should not have to contend with racism, much less from an administration that publicly proclaims to support Black people’s economic agency. As someone who garnered 94% of the Black vote, you have an opportunity to get involved, and a responsibility to do so as well.

Based on news reports detailing the racial discrimination, retaliation and fraud complaint filed by Blueprint, we understand that Blueprint’s proprietary information was allegedly acquired and handed over to a majority white firm, BlackRock Alternative Advisors headed by Larry Fink. One of the things that stood out to us in the complaint was the explanation given to Blueprint that the state of New Jersey was not a fan of doing business with Black-owned or women-owned firms. We are further disturbed to learn that Blueprint faced retaliation following its questioning of the administration’s actions.

We must ask for a response from you and your team. We are less interested in statements disavowing racism, and keenly interested in proof that your policies are anti-racist in both intent and impact. We are less concerned with shallow demonstrations of concern, and more interested in reviewing the administration’s pattern of dealing with Black-owned firms.

Collectively, we represent thousands of New Jersey residents. From our work and our time in social justice movements, we understand that to have integrity in social and racial justice work, one must embrace economic justice. We cannot achieve racial justice if we are not seeking to

uplift communities economically. Further, given the level of intense need in Black communities in New Jersey, there can be no solidarity with Black people without redress for Blueprint.

While you have often discussed your connection with the NAACP, membership to a civil rights organization is less meaningful than adopting the principles of racial inclusion that such organizations espouse. We respectfully request your attention and action on this matter. Justice demands no less.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. David Jefferson, Sr., Macedonia Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Calvin McKinney, Calvary Baptist Church, Garfield
Rev. Dr. Lester Taylor, Pastor, Community Baptist Church, Englewood
President, General Baptist Convention of NJ, Inc.
Rev. John Williford, The Willing Heart Community Care Center
Rev. Bernard Wilks, Resident Minister's Alliance, Newark
Rev. Fleeta Bulle, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Newark
Rev. Dr. Glenn Wilson, Pilgrim Baptist Church, Newark
Rev. Johnny Green
Rev. Sharonda McClain, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Newark
Rev. Michael McClain, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Newark
Rev. Grady James, First Bethel Baptist Church, Irvington
Rev. John C. Arnold, CKMI Whosoever Will, Plainfield
Rev. Omar McDowell, The St. Mark Church, Newark
Rev. Reggie Thomas, Greater Harvest Baptist Church
Rev. Kenneth D. Clayton, St. Luke's Baptist Church, Patterson
Rev. Dr. Willie Dwayne Francois III, Dmin, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Pleasantville
Rev. Keith Wilks, Community Transformation Church, Newark
Bishop Donald Hilliard, Cathedral International
Rev. George Britt, Mt. Temon AME Church, Elizabeth
Rev. Joshua Armstrong, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Barnegat
Rev. Justin Hayward, Friendship Baptist Church, Asbury Park
Rev. George Hunley, First Union Baptist Church, Neptune
Rev. Kevin Hughley, Bethany Baptist Church, Farmingdale
Rev. Tommy Miles, Macedonia Baptist Church, Neptune
Dr. Edward D. Harper, Macedonia Baptist Church, Lakehurst
Rev. Bernard Oates, Union Missionary Baptist Church, Middletown
Rev. Robert Morris, Sixth Street Baptist Church, Lakewood
Rev. William Simmons, Asst. Pastor, Sixth Street Baptist Church, Lakewood
Rev. Alexander Smith, Community Baptist Church, Whiting
Rev. Garrett Simmons, Church of God, Linden
Bishop Jerome Robinson, By Faith Ministries Church of God, Lakewood
Superintendent John D. Jones, Greater Bethel Church of God in Christ, Lakewood
Rev. Percy Smith, St. John's AME Zion, Lakewood, Moderator Park
Rev. Robert Perkins, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Tinton Falls

Rev. Edmond Lee, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Neptune
Dr. Gary Brandon, Mt. Pisgah Temple, Asbury Park
Rev. Frederick Q. Smith, Old Ship of Zion Baptist Church, Monroe Township
Dr. Amelda Lee, Providence Baptist Church, Cliffwood
Dr. Wilbur Whitehurst, St. Paul Baptist, Atlantic Highlands
Rev. Michael Morgan, Shiloh Baptist Church, Manasquan
Rev. Alexander Brown, St. Paul Baptist Church, Red Bank
Dr. William Greene, Jr., Second Baptist Church, South Toms River
Rev. Aaron Gibson, Second Baptist Church, Long Branch