

BLACK IN NEW JERSEY

2025 ACTION AGENDA

>3:1 BLACK TO WHITE INFANT MORTALITY
2ND HIGHEST DISPARITY IN U.S.

>5:1 BLACK TO WHITE ADULT
DEATHS DUE TO ASTHMA

61% INCARCERATED PEOPLE DENIED THE VOTE
WHO ARE BLACK (VS 15% POPULATION)

29:1 BLACK TO WHITE KIDS LOCKED UP
HIGHEST DISPARITY IN U.S.

12:1 BLACK TO WHITE ADULT INCARCERATION
HIGHEST DISPARITY IN U.S.

5:1 BLACK TO WHITE LIKELIHOOD
OF FACING POLICE FORCE

SEVENTH MOST SEGREGATED STATE
IN THE NATION FOR BLACK STUDENTS

77% VS **41%** BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP
WHITE HOMEOWNERSHIP **40%** LATINA/O HOMEOWNERSHIP

\$662,500 VS **\$19,700**
WHITE FAMILY MEDIAN NET WEALTH BLACK & LATINA/O FAMILIES



do social justice.
NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

njisj.org | Find us on:      

BLACK IN NEW JERSEY

2025 AGENDA TO MAKE **BLACK LIVES REALLY MATTER** IN NEW JERSEY

We are living through turbulent times.

With each new day, we see increased federal attacks on democracy and racial justice.

These attacks inevitably trickle down to the states, including New Jersey, both directly and indirectly.

Now is a time to lean in – not retreat.

A time to focus on building what comes next, even as we fight the assaults that come our way.

This affirmative vision must be more just and equitable than the status quo – the cracked foundation that brought us to this moment.

Stand with us as we create a new New Jersey where Black people and all of us can be free, be whole and flourish.

To Close the Racial Wealth Gap

- Expanded Homeownership
- Equitable Financial Returns from Homeownership
- Baby Bonds
- Affordable and Inclusive Higher Education

To Transform the Youth Justice System

- Youth Prison Closure & Investment in Community-Based System of Care for Youth
- Minimum Age of 14 for Prosecution of Youth

To Keep Communities Safe

- Culture of Accountable Policing
- Investments in Community-Based Public Safety Options
- Legislation Codifying the Attorney General's Ability to Supersede a Police Department
- Protect Bail Reform

To Ensure Democracy for All

- Freedom to Vote for People in Prison
- Same-Day Voter Registration
- Jury Service for People with Criminal Convictions
- Strong New Jersey Voting Rights Act
- Lowering the Voting Age in Local Elections

To Advance New Jersey's Reparations Agenda

- Increased Public Education about New Jersey's History of Slavery and Systemic Racism
- Public Apology that Takes Responsibility
- Enactment of Policies Proposed in the New Jersey Reparation Council's Report, *For Such a Time as This: The Nowness of Reparations for Black People in New Jersey*

TO CLOSE THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP

- **Expanded Homeownership.** Open doors to homeownership for Black and other families of color by removing barriers, strengthening and expanding existing programs, and launching new initiatives to reduce racial homeownership disparities
- **Equitable Financial Returns from Homeownership.** Ensure that Black families have equitable opportunities to build wealth through homeownership by promoting fair lending, combatting discrimination, reducing foreclosures and helping Black families increase their home equity, while protecting against policies that strip or limit home equity growth
- **Baby Bonds.** Create and fully fund a baby bonds program that is progressively designed to provide the greatest support to children of color from low-wealth households
- **Affordable and Inclusive Higher Education.** Remove financial and other barriers to college by expanding equity and investments in – and access to – higher education and by increasing awareness of current support programs
 - Ban Legacy and Donor Preferences in College Admissions
 - Advance Automatic Enrollment in Community College

TO TRANSFORM THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

- **Youth Prison Closure & Investment in Community-Based System of Care for Youth.** Close New Jersey's three youth prisons and invest \$100 million in front-end youth services and programs to keep kids out of the system, including expansion of the programming implemented by the Restorative and Transformative Justice for Youths and Communities Pilot program bill (A4663/S2924)
- **Minimum Age of 14 for Prosecution of Youth.** Advance S1319 to establish a minimum age of 14 for juvenile delinquency in accordance with international standards

TO KEEP COMMUNITIES SAFE

- **Culture of Accountable Policing.** Ensure that law enforcement is guided by policies and systems designed to build a culture of accountability that are created and implemented through engagement with community members
 - Ban and criminalize use of police chokeholds (A870/S1494)
 - Advance measures that reduce racial disparities in police car stops
 - End law enforcement qualified immunity
 - Create strong municipal civilian complaint review boards (A3441/S1551)
 - Reduce police enforcement of non-serious offenses, particularly for youth
 - Continue participation on Independent Monitoring Team for remainder of Newark Police Consent Decree

TO KEEP COMMUNITIES SAFE (continued)

- **Investments in Community-Based Public Safety Options.** Rethink policing by investing in community-based approaches to public safety that will decrease law enforcement's footprint
 - Develop mental health first responder and crisis intervention systems that rely on highly trained professionals other than police to address certain crises
 - Reinvest dollars into community-based services that empower communities – like violence intervention programs, schools, hospitals, libraries and parks
- **Legislation Codifying the Attorney General's Ability to Supersede a Police Department.** Pass legislation codifying the ability of the Attorney General, as Chief Law Enforcement Officer in New Jersey, to provide oversight of a police department for civil rights violations
- **Protect Bail Reform.** Fight efforts to undermine New Jersey's successful bail reform system, where pre-trial release is premised on risk rather than wealth, and which has been accompanied by both an increase in court appearances and a reduction in crime

TO ENSURE DEMOCRACY FOR ALL

- **Freedom to Vote for People in Prison.** Restore the right to vote to incarcerated people
- **Same-Day Voter Registration.** Enact same-day voter registration, including on Election Day (A925/S1193)
- **Jury Service for People with Criminal Convictions.** Expand jury service to include people with criminal convictions (A834/S292)
- **Strong New Jersey Voting Rights Act.** Pass a strong version of the John R. Lewis Voter Empowerment Act of New Jersey, a state voting rights act (A4083/S3009)
- **Lowering the Voting Age in Local Elections.** Make our democracy more inclusive, representative and dynamic by allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in local elections

TO ADVANCE NEW JERSEY'S REPARATIONS AGENDA

- **Increased Public Education about New Jersey's History of Slavery and Systemic Racism.** With less than half of New Jerseyans aware that slavery happened here, expand public education about the foundational impacts of slavery and systemic racism on our history and current racial disparities.
- **Public Apology that Takes Responsibility.** Reissue an official public apology that truly takes responsibility for New Jersey's history of slavery, does not include limiting clauses and guarantees that racial discrimination will not be tolerated
- Enactment of Policies Proposed in the New Jersey Reparation Council's Report, *For Such a Time as This: The Nowness of Reparations for Black People in New Jersey*