

July 10, 2020

The Honorable Jim Justice
Governor, State of West Virginia
State Capitol, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. E
Charleston, WV 25305

The Honorable Mitch Carmichael
President, West Virginia Senate
206 Cedar Lakes Drive
Ripley, WV 25271

The Honorable Roger Hanshaw
Speaker, West Virginia House of Delegates
5035 Wallback Road
Wallback, WV 25285

Dear Governor Justice, President Carmichael, and Speaker Hanshaw,

In May, the Charleston Branch of the NAACP and faith leaders in the African American community wrote to you and urged you to take urgent action to address the disproportionate negative impact the Coronavirus is having on our state's African American and low income communities, as well as the long-standing disparities in healthcare and economic opportunity among these populations in the state of West Virginia.

Their letter requested that 20% (or \$250 million) of the \$1.25 billion in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act money West Virginia received be set aside to address the impacts of the virus (through expanded testing, contact tracing and other mitigation and treatment schemes) and at the same time promote health and economic equity in the state's minority and low-income communities by using a portion of the funding to stimulate work force participation and economic development in these communities, with census tracts with a poverty rate of 20% and higher being given priority for allocations of the funds set aside.

We, the undersigned organizations, write to voice our support for this initiative (dubbed the Hope 20/20/20 Economic Justice & Equity Fund) and ask that you make additional funding and resources available to address COVID-related and other health and economic disparities in African American and poor communities in West Virginia.

It cannot be overlooked that the timing of the request from the NAACP and faith leaders coincided with the brutal murder of George Floyd at the hands of the police in Minneapolis, and the subsequent protests that have renewed focus on the need to demilitarize and reform policing. But the Black Lives Matter movement isn't just about police brutality and criminal justice. It's about economic equality, the transformation of society, and restructuring the economy in a way that is responsive to the collective needs of our communities.

In West Virginia, we must seize this opportunity to address the health and economic disparities that amount to an unequal distribution of personhood, and move our state economy toward one that serves the needs of all our people.

Sincerely,

Gary Zuckett, Executive Director
West Virginia Citizen Action Group

Julie Archer, Coordinator
West Virginia Citizens for Clean Elections

Joseph Cohen, Executive Director
ACLU of West Virginia

Sally Roberts Wilson, Chair
Rise Up WV

Sam Hickman, Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers, WV
Chapter

Jeff Allen, Executive Director
West Virginia Council of Churches

Vivian Stockman, Executive Director
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Angie Rosser, Executive Director
West Virginia Rivers Coalition

Alisa Clements, WV Director of Public
Affairs
Planned Parenthood South Atlantic

Jessica Ice, PhD, Executive Director
West Virginians for Affordable Health Care

Julie Warden, Chief Operations Officer
WV FREE

Cc: Ricardo C. Martin, President
Charleston Branch NAACP

The Honorable Roman Prezioso
Minority Leader, West Virginia Senate
1806 Dogwood Drive
Fairmont, WV 26554

The Honorable Tim Miley
Minority Leader, West Virginia House of Delegates
1027 Lauren Drive
Bridgeport, WV 25330