



December 2, 2021

Governor Phil Murphy
The State House
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

We hope this missive finds you eager to work toward justice and equity after the Thanksgiving Holiday and your re-election. We respectfully, yet resolutely, call on you to meet with members of our coalition to discuss the shameful and immoral, but repairable, problem of school segregation in New Jersey.

Over the past two years, we have offered multiple opportunities to have this conversation, for which you have been unavailable on each occasion. The next such opportunity will be on Martin Luther King Day, Monday, January 17, 2022, at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Pleasantville where we will be gathering at 12:00 PM for one of the oldest King Day observances in South Jersey. If you are, again, unavailable for this next gathering, please propose a date and time, and we will bring a delegation to meet with you. It is imperative that we have this conversation as soon as possible.

Our intention is to present and discuss with you a set of meaningful and realistic policy proposals that we have developed in consultation with major constituency groups, national experts, and civil rights leaders. It is based on demographic, educational, and fiscal analyses aimed at stabilizing diverse communities and dramatically reducing, and ultimately eliminating, school segregation in New Jersey.

Moreover, we have developed a framework for a legislative approach that primarily requires changes to existing legislation but will benefit poor and middle-class school districts, provide relief to property taxpayers, and open up educational opportunity for millions of public-school students across the state in both cities and suburbs.

We are aware of, but not involved with, any litigation against the state regarding school segregation. We are neither associated with the plaintiffs in the *Latino Action Network* lawsuit nor asking to discuss any aspect of that case—or any other legal case—with you. Instead, we seek only to present to you our practical and realistic policy solutions to a problem that does not and should not require a court ruling for you to act. And, of course, the existence of any ongoing litigation in no way prohibits you from having this discussion with members of the public. The

problem itself should be enough to propel you to act with vigor, imagination, and determination. In the coming weeks, we will host our regular statewide leaders meeting, which convenes more than 100 faith leaders in our state. We intend to share your response with them during said meeting. A non-response is a response for us.

We believe you have a unique opportunity to become a powerful and courageous civil rights governor while uniting the multiracial working-class electorate of this great state—the spine of the Democratic party here. We are prepared to support you fully in this effort, but we cannot be true to the values of Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement if we fail to act on this salient, glaring and entirely actionable structure of racial and economic injustice.

Please contact us to confirm your attendance or to arrange for a meeting.

Sincerely,

Rev. Willie Dwayne Francois III
Pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Pleasantville

Rev. Karen Hernandez-Granzen
Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Princeton

Rev. Kenneth Darryl Ray Clayton
Pastor, St. Luke Baptist Church, Paterson