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March 17, 2022 206-591-1936 / 409-939-1818

**Pleasantville Pastor and Coalition March for Freedom, Justice, and Opportunity**

*March will end at Somers Point next to County Democratic Convention*

The Rev. Willie Francois III of Mount Zion Baptist Church will lead a march from Pleasantville to Somers Point, NJ to demonstrate against school segregation in Atlantic County and across the state and demand action from Governor Philip Murphy. “Sunday marks the 57th anniversary of the start of Dr. King’s historic march from Selma to Montgomery to confront Alabama’s segregationist governor,” said Rev. Francois, Senior Pastor at Mount Zion Baptist Church. “It also marks one year since our coalition’s historic march to Absecon to demand Governor Murphy deny any more school district sessions and begin to work with us to end school segregation.”  Pastor Francois leads the New Jersey Coalition Against Racial Exclusion (NJ-CARE), which is a part of Building One America (BOA). NJ-CARE and BOA have developed and presented [a comprehensive set of principles and a nine point plan](https://buildingoneamerica.org/plan-end-school-segregation) for state action to end school segregation in the state of New Jersey. They will be presenting that plan at a legislative hearing Wednesday, March 23 in Trenton before the legislature’s Joint Committee on Public Schools.

During the march, the coalition will deliver [letters to nearly 150](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/letter_to_murphy_supportersmerge.pdf) of Governor Murphy’s biggest 2021 campaign contributors. “Since he won’t listen to us, we’ll ask his big donors and supporters for help;” said NAACP Mainland Pleasantville President Olivia Caldwell, “perhaps he’ll listen to them.”  [The list of Murphy backers](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/murphy_2021_donors_0.pdf) include luminaries in business and entertainment such as George Soros, Robert Rubin, Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks and John Bongiovi, as well as Mari Shaya, head of the New Jersey Cannabis Trade Association, Patrick and Amy Kennedy of Brigantine, and controversial low-income housing developer Israel Roizman, who owns a six-million-dollar summer home in Longport. The coalition intends to follow up with said donors over the next few weeks and months.

The group of demonstrators will end up at [Municipal Beach Park in Somers Point on the Corner of Bay Ave and Higbee Ave, Somers Point, NJ 08244](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Municipal+Beach+Park/@39.3116853,-74.5938054,243m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m13!1m7!3m6!1s0x89c0c1d6bb91d39f:0x14d56e19a00b5ac5!2s325+W+Groveland+Ave,+Somers+Point,+NJ+08244!3b1!8m2!3d39.3248951!4d-74.5980425!3m4!1s0x89c0ea827a44f7eb:0xb3a4e740d7f6dd80!8m2!3d39.3112983!4d-74.5932116). There they will ratify a list of demands for the Governor and the leadership of the Atlantic County Democratic Party, who will be meeting directly across the street at the Gateway Playhouse. “We will be holding a meeting of the Freedom Caucus of the People’s Convention,” said Rev. Francois. He continued, “We intend to deliver a people’s platform including a demand that our message be taken to the Governor and that political leaders in this county oppose segregation and illegal secession immediately.” Rev. Francois and the New Jersey Coalition Against Racial Exclusion [vociferously opposed](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/dear_acting_commissioner_allen-mcmillan_2.pdf) Absecon’s bid to break away from their send-receive relationship with Pleasantville.

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