



June 24, 2022

Derrick Johnson
President and CEO
NAACP
4805 Mt. Hope Drive. Baltimore MD 21215

Dear President Johnson,

While we are thrilled that the 2022 NAACP National Convention will be held in Atlantic City next month, we are saddened to tell you that New Jersey today is under an unprecedented segregationist assault that, tragically, is being aided, abetted, and defended by our Democratic Governor Phil Murphy. Despite repeated and genuine efforts over the past four years, the Governor has steadfastly refused to engage or even consider any realistic and meaningful proposals to end school segregation. Sadly, he has made school segregation even worse while vigorously resisting any efforts to stop it.

We have been left with no choice but to respectfully yet forcefully call on you and National NAACP leadership to support us and, more importantly, the innocent victims of school segregation in New Jersey, by sending a clear message to Governor Phil Murphy that he not invited and is not welcome to the National NAACP Convention in Atlantic City this year.

As you are aware, plaintiffs here in New Jersey (including the New Jersey State Conference) filed a civil rights lawsuit in Superior Court in 2018 calling on the Governor to remedy the illegal segregation of our schools by both race and poverty. You may also be aware that since that filing, the Governor has aggressively and forcefully fought the plaintiffs with the all-too-well-known tactics of obfuscation, denial, deflection, and delay.

Even before the lawsuit was filed, our group (the NJ Coalition Against Racial Exclusion NJ-CARE), a statewide civil rights group affiliated with Building One America and the national *Summit for Civil Rights*, began to mobilize across the state for a legislative approach to eliminate school segregation. And while some New Jersey legislators have championed our cause, Governor Murphy has repeatedly and stubbornly refused to discuss it or even meet. Instead, despite vociferous objections from our group and civil rights leaders across the state, he signed a bill this year that would allow (and even pay for) school districts to “separate” (secede) in the name of “regionalization”.

Perhaps even more disturbing is the ongoing and coordinated campaign to deliberately cause more segregation through a series of unambiguously racially motivated school district secessions. Over the past decade, despite a clear constitutional prohibition, a group of highly paid lawyers and consultants have been aiding a group of majority white districts in their

decade's long pursuit to break-away from majority Black and brown schools. These secessions, blocked as illegal, racist, and immoral under past administrations from both parties are, for the first time, being approved – first by Republican Governor Chis Christie, and now under Democratic Governor Phil Murphy. The most recent being majority white Maywood's severance from majority Black and brown Hackensack.

We know Governor Murphy has a history with the National NAACP but we cannot allow a powerful political leader to use his civil rights bona fides to obscure or ignore that fact that he is openly and deliberately defending segregation, aggressively resisting and contesting desegregation and allowing active and ongoing racist school district secessions.

We owe it to ourselves - as a 113-year-old organization of justice, independence, and integrity, and we owe it to the children who, by no fault of their own, continue to suffer daily from the stigmatizing, debilitating and opportunity destroying consequences of racial segregation in our schools - to take this firm stand against school segregation.

On behalf of the New Jersey Coalition Against Racial Exclusion (NJ-CARE),

Rev. Dr. Willie D. Francois, Co-Chair

cc:

Richard Smith

Kaleem Shabazz

Bruce Morgan

Phil Murphy

NAACP National Board Members