

## MOTION

A year ago, at the nadir of the global pandemic, the killing of George Floyd by law enforcement ignited protests locally and across the world, galvanized public opinion to look more deeply at the systemic inequities and racist structures that have plagued this nation for centuries, and pushed for interventions to address gaps within our system. In this collective awakening, corporations issued statements and donated funds, some created diversity pipeline initiatives, and others phased out offensive product images and advertising. Federal, state, and local governments began to realign their budgets for greater investments in community-based solutions to improve public safety and enhance the economic and social well-being of historically underserved communities.

While this work in the public and private sectors has been inspiring, the pace of systemic reform has been slow and difficult to measure. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act still languishes in Congress. The number of fatal encounters with police for communities of color remains unchanged and inequity continues to divide the “haves” and the “have nots” across the City of Los Angeles.

Although June 19th marks 156 years since slavery officially ended in America, its legacy remains ever-present. Chattel slavery, America’s original sin, continues to haunt the soul of the nation in the march for justice. Scholar and activist, W.E.B. Du Bois, identified the color line as America’s greatest challenge in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sadly, the color line continues to divide the nation well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The legacy of the intentional structuring of opportunity, implementation of racist policies and practices, and assignment of value based solely on skin color and other physical characteristics, has created and continues to perpetuate unfair disadvantages to African Americans and other communities of the diaspora. These disparities are painfully evident today in the City of Los Angeles where COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on African Americans and other communities of color, unmasking deep racial, health and economic inequities that sit just beneath the surface of our systems.

As a result, African Americans have systematically experienced unequal access to the foundational aspects of this nation that are universally envisioned as essential to building strong individuals, families, and communities. While comprising only nine percent of the City’s almost four million residents, African Americans consistently lag behind other racial and ethnic groups across important indices of social and economic well-being. Black people represent:

- One-third of those tragically injured or killed by law enforcement (California Department of Justice, 2018);
- Nearly 34 percent of the population experiencing homelessness (LAHSA Homeless Count, 2019); and
- Half of those who filed for employment during the COVID-19 crisis, putting them at risk of long-term unemployment (California Policy Lab, 2020).

While the City of Los Angeles has made considerable strides to address implicit bias and promote equity with the enactment of several policy measures such as the Mayor’s Executive Directive No. 27 and creation of the L.A. Reparations Advisory Commission, our racial equity agenda must go further to address generational inequality and anti-Black racism. This agenda must focus on the actions and outcomes that will produce real systemic change: increasing housing and housing stability, creating meaningful employment opportunities, and promoting economic opportunity.

As we move forward with reopening our economy, while we honor and celebrate Juneteenth, we must remain intentional in our collective efforts to create an inclusive and equitable Los Angeles. We must move beyond symbolic gestures and hashtags to ensure freedom and justice are no longer delayed nor denied. This requires the formalization of an antiracist policy agenda that leaves no community behind on the pathway towards economic recovery. Consistent with these aims, we must also assess the policies and actions that exacerbate barriers to equal opportunity. These assessments will better equip the City with the tools and expertise necessary to enact policies, implement programs and deliver services that are equitable to all.



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I THEREFORE MOVE that the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department, with assistance of the CAO and CLA, as well as the services of an outside agency or research institution, be instructed to produce a Racial Equity Audit of existing City programs, policies and practices to determine whether African Americans and other underserved communities face systemic barriers in accessing benefits and opportunities available across the City. The Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department shall provide a report to the Council within 60 days, in collaboration with community stakeholders, reflecting findings on the following:

- Potential barriers that African Americans and underserved communities may face to enroll in and access City services and programs;
- Potential barriers that African Americans and underserved communities may face to secure procurement and contracting opportunities; and
- The sufficiency of institutional resources available to City departments, commissions and agencies to effectively advance equity and increase investment in underserved communities, and an assessment of whether adjustments or additional resources and/or support is necessary.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department and other relevant departments, be instructed to develop a Plan to Address Barriers to Economic Stability Among African Americans. This plan should include but not be limited to:

- Recommendations for improving existing policies, processes and practices that may prevent African Americans from entering and advancing within City departmental career ladders and the development of procedures that best advance and sustain Citywide and departmental equity commitments;
- Recommended strategies for developing and enhancing culturally-tailored opportunities that increase African Americans' access to career pathway jobs, encourage entrepreneurship and promote small business growth across the City of Los Angeles; and
- A work plan that facilitates implementation of:
  - LAHSA's Ad Hoc Report on Black People Experiencing Homelessness, including improved delivery of culturally sensitive homeless and supportive services and expanded access points such as multi-disciplinary street outreach teams, libraries, crisis housing, faith communities, mobile showers and barber shops, where Black people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can safely and effectively connect to services and housing;
  - The "No Going Back LA" Report, a regional agenda for systemic change, to establish baseline data to track and evaluate implementation of the recommendations.

I FURTHER MOVE, in an effort to codify systemic change and advance racial equity, that the City Attorney be requested to prepare and present an Ordinance designed to strengthen the Mayor's Executive Directive No. 27 as follows:

1. Establish a Racial Equity Task Force within the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department to collect and assess data annually on outcomes across departments and present findings annually to the Council;
2. Require all City General Managers to submit Racial Equity Plans and identify at least one goal each year that strengthens organizational capacity for cultural competency and vigilance to reduce racial stigma, inequality, and implicit bias within their respective departments; and
3. Require all City General Managers to designate a Racial Equity Officer, whose annual work plans should be made publicly available on City websites to ensure transparency and accountability.

PRESENTED BY: Mark Ridley-Thomas Curren D. Price Marqueece Harris-Dawson  
Councilman, 10<sup>th</sup> District Councilman, 9<sup>th</sup> District Councilman, 8<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY: Debraj Kumar

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