



## CALL TO ACTION!!

June 2nd, 2020

Dear Members and Concerned Citizens,

While we have been working to advance racial equity and social justice policies in New York State for years, the need to address the disparities at a systemic level has reached a fever pitch. The crisis that is COVID-19 has lifted the veil of inequities in the healthcare and education systems against a backdrop of disparities in the criminal justice and political systems.

As trained social workers on the frontlines, we are grappling with the day to day needs presented by the crisis and an acute awareness and grief that those most at risk, severely impacted, and with limited access to quality health care and testing are Black and Brown individuals. Simultaneously, there is around the clock coverage of the ongoing attacks, murder, and dehumanization of people of color in our State and across the country. The ongoing display of injustice can be both paralyzing and galvanizing.

We are taking this moment in time to stand stronger in the face of such injustice. We will stand stronger in the face of a criminal justice system that disproportionately targets Black and Brown Americans. We will stand stronger against the systemic disenfranchisement of Black and Brown communities in relation to access to healthcare, education, and employment. And we will stand stronger in the face of ongoing attempts to systematically oppress individuals and communities of color.

As such, we CALL UPON YOU to voice your support for S.8209 (Kennedy) / A.10319 (People-Stokes), which will establish the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. Although currently, the Executive and Legislature may take actions to acknowledge or support racial equity and social justice, there is not a central entity within state government specifically created to further this goal.

Decisions made by agencies throughout the government have an enormous impact on either reducing or increasing disparities across New York State, often in the most

vulnerable communities. This legislation creates a mechanism within the state to ensure racial and social justice and would, if enacted, put the state of New York at the forefront of addressing systemic racism, inequality, and disparities nationwide.

The Legislature is returning next week to take up issues related to policing reforms and racial profiling. **MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!** Ask that they also take up S.8209 / A.10319. We can no longer ignore the injustices being perpetrated on communities of color. Call the Majority Leader and Speaker and request this bill be part of the package they take up next week!

Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins: 914-423-4031  
Speaker Carl Heastie: 718-654-6539