

October 20, 2023

New York State Legislative Delegation  
Albany, NY

Dear Members of the New York State Legislative Delegation,

We, the undersigned organizations committed to racial justice, health equity, child wellbeing, and economic mobility, write to you today urging you to take a bold step towards realizing racial equity in New York by requiring the incorporation of racial and ethnic impact statements into our State's legislative and rule-making processes.

We are appreciative that the Senate and Assembly passed legislation last year to establish an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice and were disappointed that this critical legislation was vetoed by Governor Hochul. This Session, we are pleased that *S. 1359 (Kennedy) / A. 4187 (Peoples-Stokes)* has passed both the Senate and the Assembly. We implore Governor Hochul to act expeditiously to sign this critical legislation into law. While we appreciate the Governor's signing of an Executive Order establishing a Director of Racial Equity and Social Justice within the Executive Chamber, this action does not go far enough. In order to take bold action to address systemic inequity in New York, our State must establish an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice and enact legislation requiring the creation of racial and ethnic impact statements for all proposed rules and prior to advancing any bill out of committee. Such impact statements could potentially be produced by the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. New York must also prohibit the enactment of legislation or rules found to have a potentially negative impact on communities of color. Our racial and ethnic impact statement proposal has received the support of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus and was included in their [2021](#), [2022](#) and [2023](#) *The People's Budget*.

New York was recently classified as having among the highest structural racism and income inequality indexes in the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic has only magnified the long-standing and deeply-rooted racial inequities that cause increasingly disparate outcomes in New York. These wide-ranging inequities, encompassing such areas as healthcare access, economic security, involvement in the child welfare system, educational opportunities and workforce disparities, continue to harm New York's most marginalized children, families and communities. Black and Latinx children are more than twice as likely as white children to live in poverty in New York. In Manhattan, Black and Latinx children are 10 to 13 times more likely to live in poverty than white children, and Asian children are 5 times more likely to live in poverty than white children. As noted in a report released by New York State Comptroller DiNapoli last December, poverty rates are more than double for Hispanic New Yorkers compared to white, non-Hispanics; and Black, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander and American Indian New Yorkers experienced poverty at twice the rate of white New Yorkers in 2021. Furthermore, Black New Yorkers are more than twice as likely as whites to die in their first year of life, nearly twice as likely to not finish high school and almost five times as likely to be incarcerated. New York's Latinx population has an unemployment rate more than double that of whites and has experienced pandemic-related food insecurity at rates three times higher than those of white New Yorkers. Asian Americans have the highest poverty rates in New York City.

Enacting new legislation and rules without first evaluating their potential to disproportionately impact communities of color only perpetuates these disparities. Just as our State legislators consider

the fiscal and environmental impacts of new laws, so too must they examine the potential racial and ethnic impact of *all* legislation and rules – prior to enactment.

[Several states](#) have already incorporated racial and ethnic impact statements into their legislative and rule-making processes. Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon and Virginia all require racial and ethnic impact statements for certain subject matters or in certain circumstances. However, no state yet requires racial and ethnic impact statements for *all* areas of their legislative and rule-making processes. New York thereby should and must lead the nation in truly aiming towards equity in all policies.

There is clear and urgent need to take decisive action to end New York’s entrenched racial inequalities and promote equitable economic mobility. Undoing generations of racial and ethnic disparities and institutionalized harm demands an anti-racist approach that actively examines the role of legislative and regulatory action in perpetuating inequality in New York. Our State must take a stand and lead the nation in only legislating policies that uplift – not harm – our most marginalized communities.

We urge you to act swiftly to make this bold commitment to achieving racial equity in New York. Now is the time to make it right.

Sincerely,

African Services Committee



Artists Athletes Activists



Asian American Federation



Black Church Center for Justice & Equality



Cameron Community



Campaign for New York Health



Center for Independence of the Disabled



Central American Refugee Center (CARECEN)



Children's Defense Fund – New York



Children's Health Fund



Citizens' Committee for Children of New York



Coalition for Asian American  
Children and Families



Community Service Society of New  
York



CUNY Rising Alliance



Education Reform Now New York



El Puente



Emergency Shelter Network



Federation of Protestant Welfare  
Agencies



Feeding New York State



Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (FIAR)



Futures Ignite



Grand St. Settlement



Guyana Day Committee Inc.

Guyanese American Workers United

Health Care for All New York



Hispanic Federation



Housing Works



I Challenge Myself



Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood  
Settlement



Latino Commission on AIDS



Metro New York Health Care for All



Middle Collegiate Church



Mixteca Organization, Inc.



National Action Network



NAACP – New York State Conference



New Pride Agenda



New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS)



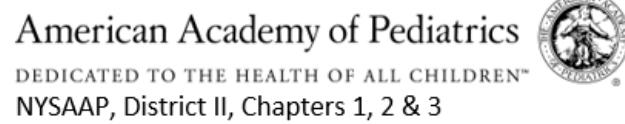
New York Immigration Coalition



New York Legal Assistance Group



New York State American Academy of Pediatrics



New York Trade Justice Coalition

Prevent Child Abuse New York



Prophetic Whirlwind Fellowship



R.A.I.N. TOTAL CARE, Inc.



Robin Hood



Rural & Migrant Ministry, Inc.



Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy



South Asian Council for Social Services



St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction



The Children's Agenda



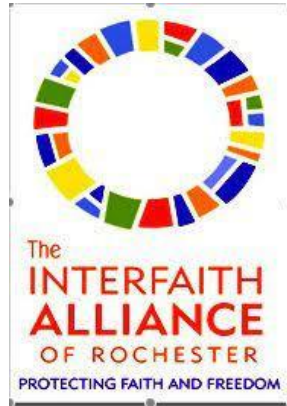


The Education Trust – New York



**The Education Trust–New York**

The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester



The Riverside Church in the City of New York



**THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH**  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

uAspire



United Way of New York City



**United Way**  
of New York City

VIP Community Services



Volunteers of Legal Service



Westchester Children's Association



Young Invincibles

