

UNITED BLACK LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The United Black Legislative Agenda is a collection of values, priorities and policy proposals of individuals and communities of African Descent in the state of Minnesota.

Leaders from black communities throughout the state of Minnesota are working together to address the state's growing racial disparities. This effort has led to a collaborative, movement-building effort where priorities are created by the organizations, leaders and community members who are directly impacted by the inequities we seek to change. This legislative agenda is intended to provide a set of pragmatic policy solutions, led and shaped by the black community and endorsed by a broad range of community partners. With a state budget surplus of nearly \$1 billion we believe that there is no better time to align our legislative priorities with the deliberate and specific needs of our most under-resourced communities.

As a uniform belief, we support funding for capacity building and technical assistance of black-led organizations, programs, and initiatives to ensure that our communities have the resources and strength to address the growing racial disparity gaps in Minnesota.

Economic Justice

- 1) Creation of a **Business Capital Fund** to support African and African American businesses.

Black businesses access to startup and cash flow capital stop many visionary business ideas in the black community from becoming a reality, and the private sector hasn't addressed the problem. To lower.

- 2) Adopt Recommendations of the **Urban Initiative Board for Workforce Development**
- 3) Support **summer jobs programs** in Minneapolis and St. Paul that target disconnected youth of color ages 16-19 who experience an unemployment rate doubles that of white youth at 23.1%.

Young African and African American children face unemployment rates significantly higher than their white counterparts. This lack of economic opportunity at a young age contributes to isolation, and non-traditional economic alternatives. When our young people have opportunity, they become stronger members of our community.

- 4) Working Parents Act

Workers and families deserve to understand their schedules for their coming week so they can plan life, a guarantee that they will be paid for the hours they work and not stolen from and the ability to earn time for their loved ones when they are sick. The Working Parents Act does all of those things.

Criminal Justice

1) **Grand Jury Ban** for Police Involved criminal proceedings

Grand Juries are an antiquated, ineffective process in our legal system that doesn't give the people any confidence in their outcomes.

2) **Ban Private Prisons**

Corporations should not be allowed to profit on the backs of black and brown bodies in Jail. There's a push on reforming drug sentences to ensure less people are entering the criminal justice system. Opening a new prison, private or public, would set the stage for people to stop fighting for lower drug possession sentences because they will be focused on filling the new prison.

3) **Sentencing Guidelines Recommendations Adoption**, efforts to stop recommendations from taking effect should be blocked (no bill necessary).

The growth of inmates in our criminal justice system is unsustainable, disproportionately impacting black communities, and must end. The number of Minnesotans under Department of Corrections control has more than doubled just in the past two decades, at a time when crime is on the decline nationally and statewide. Simply put, we are locking up too many people and need change. Adoption of the Minnesota Sentencing Guideline Commission's Recommendations will be a step forward towards ending mass incarceration.

4) **Voting Rights Restoration**

47,000 Minnesotans are denied the right to vote after serving their time. Society has said these individuals have paid their debts. When released, they're expected to pay taxes, to society but are denied the ultimate voice in how taxes are spent or programs are run. That is wrong.

5) **Establish a strong Body Camera policy and funding** for Minnesota (applying to cities of the first class, as defined by Minnesota statute 410.01)

Black Immigrant Justice

1) **Hate Crime Penalties Increase**

Islamophobia, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments have been on the rise across the country, and Minnesota is not exempt from its horrific consequences. Attacks motivated on people based on race are unacceptable and must be punished at heightened levels.

2) **Somali Community Needs- Job Training, Youth Development, and Education:**

East African Youth are too often seen as threats or individuals who are part of global and international problems, rather than key people in the future vitality and growth of our region. This must change. To change that, we must invest in these young people.