



Office of the Lieutenant Governor
The State House
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David Zuckerman, Lieutenant Governor

June 8, 2020

Steering Committee
Vermont Racial Justice Alliance

I appreciate your letter, which I received Friday as it was originally sent to an old address.

I appreciate the list of ideas to address issues of systemic inequality for people of color in Vermont. It is clear that those systemic issues have been made more clear during this pandemic. All these things are important. Some of them demand a legislative approach and some are beyond the scope of legislation. I think the most important thing is to identify which of these things can be dealt with on a short-term basis and push for immediate action by the legislature with support from the Governor.

It is my understanding from Senate leadership that today, the Senate made a commitment to draft a comprehensive racial justice bill that they intend to pass within two weeks. The bill will include several provisions, hopefully including the following things that could be done soon as well as others:

- Withholding money from towns that do not provide required racial data from traffic stops
- Create a use of deadly force policy for law enforcement
- Develop model policies to deal with racism
- Body cameras for all state police

My office will also be working with the VT Law School's, National Center for Restorative Justice around the need to reduce imprisonment and shift budget expenditures to restorative practices. The data is already demonstrating this is working. My vision for the future includes an openness to this approach rather than criminalizing some behaviors that are typically rooted in trauma and other systemic financial inequities.

True equal opportunity is a goal that we have not achieved. It is impossible to have equal opportunity when there have been systemic issues leading to wealth disparities based on race, when there are issues of unequal treatment by law enforcement (public safety), where there are issues of unequal punishments in our schools. Equality is an absolute necessity NOW, not soon, not "one day". We must be looking to implement policies and procedures to address these challenges as quickly as possible.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Zuckerman".

Lt. Governor David Zuckerman