

**PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF  
RACIAL, INDIGENONS AND MAINE TRIBAL POPULATIONS**

**AN OVERVIEW OF MAINE'S GROWING CORONAVIRUS RACIAL DISPARITIES  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

June 30, 2020

**Solutions**

- Legislators can look at ways every committee can address this crisis and seek opportunities for leaders from the Black and indigenous African American communities, immigrant communities, Indigenous communities, Latinx communities, Asian communities, and other communities of color to have meaningful decision-making powers to guide the legislative response to this crisis.
- Black people, Latinx people, and other people of color are the reason we are able to reopen the economy—they are doing the jobs that are most high-risk—and we are killing them and putting them at risk of death for themselves and their families every day. Our response to the economic crisis should include an analysis of how those plans will these communities and should not move forward without adequate protections in place for these populations.
- All Mainers need access to comprehensive health care no matter their immigration status and we should use state funds to make that happen. We should look at ways we can reduce health disparities that make people of color more vulnerable to COVID-19 and other public heath crises due to preexisting conditions.
- All Mainers need access to safe and adequate housing no matter their income or immigration status. We must create supports to make this happen, including immediately removing immigration related restrictions to state housing and general assistance.
- All Maine workers need to have adequate protections from exposure to COVID-19 and access to paid sick days and paid leave so that they can stay home if they are at high risk, get exposed, test positive, or have symptoms. All Maine workers need access to the Unemployment Insurance system so they have access to income in case they cannot work for any reason due to COVID-19. This is a public health emergency; we need to have a way to ensure poor people impacted receive an emergency infusion within one week of making a claim.
- We should further decrease the number of people who are incarcerated in Maine to reduce the risk of spread and harm from the virus in jails and correctional facilities. This requires looking at systemic racism and inequities in our entire criminal justice system that result in Black and Brown Mainers experiencing disproportionate harm that system.

- A comprehensive plan is needed in the Department of Education (DOE) to address disparities in our education system going forward and to work to reduce them during any future school shutdowns that result in remote learning.
- All agencies in state government should have a specific focus on reducing disparities for race and ethnicity—both those disparities related to COVID-19 and disparities in all other areas on which the agencies are focused. All agencies must use best practices for hiring that will increase the diversity of our state agencies so that more people from the communities most impacted by disparities have roles throughout government.

DRAFT