

Fairfax County
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
2018 Advocacy Agenda

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Fairfax County Residents:

Overt and institutionalized racism remain a significant obstacle in our nation. If the national political climate is an indicator of what lies ahead for us locally, the coming years will undoubtedly challenge those of us striving to achieve equality. Fairfax County is in it of itself a fault line between the ways of old and the ways of new and a microcosm of the all the hot button national debate topics. The friction caused by demographic changes witnessed in our communities in recent years has manifested itself in several ways including battles over immigration reform, education reform, funding to close the minority student achievement gap, criminal justice reform, and the struggle to expand affordable housing, just to name a few. Fairfax NAACP has been at the forefront of these issues, and will continue to advocate to for reform in the years ahead.

Founded on Feb. 12. 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or the NAACP, is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. We have over a half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world. In Fairfax County we have over 400 active members and almost 2,000 friends and allies. Our mission is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination by ensuring the removal of barriers of racial discrimination through a democratic process.

As we enter 2018 the need for the NAACP's presence in our community couldn't be more evident. Just as the soldiers of oppression feel emboldened to roll back the clock to the "good 'ole days", we too feel emboldened to not only secure the gains made thus far, but to fight to make even more progress in holding Fairfax County accountable to its stated ideals. To those who say now is the time to lay low, we say now is the time fight harder than we've ever fought before. To those who say the political climate is too hostile to demand change, we say now is the time to lock arms and forge ahead. Progress has never been linear, and the road has never been smooth, but together we shall overcome.

Our 2018 Legislative Agenda will challenge complacency in the school system; champion criminal justice reform; and encourage economic development and job growth in Fairfax County. Also Fairfax County NAACP will work collaboratively with the Virginia State NAACP on policies and legislation on a variety of issues that are vital to the success and prosperity for all - particularly communities of color.

Sincerely,

Kofi Annan

President, Fairfax County NAACP

Criminal Justice

In 2017 the Criminal Justice Committee (CJC) had some significant accomplishments. We published the branch's first ever County Criminal Justice Report Card, which examined our county officials' performance record on criminal justice reform efforts. We toured the Adult Detention Center, and were briefed on the efforts to divert mentally challenged individuals that come into contact with the justice system. We advocated for the adoption of police body-worn cameras (BWC) by the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD), and helped draft the BWC policy. The pilot program was approved in November 2017, and will commence in early 2018. We also hosted the first ever Cops vs. Kids (Blue vs Gold) basketball game. The event featured kids from across the county playing against members of the FCPD. The event brought together the community in the hope of increasing trust and communication with the police. We also hosted a criminal justice panel discussion featuring FCPD Chief Ed Roessler, Public Safety Chair, Supervisor Cook, representatives from the Civilian Review Panel, the Independent Police Auditor, and Chairman of the Communities of Trust, Shirley Ginwright.


In 2018 the CJC will seek to build on these efforts to broaden the scope of our advocacy in the following ways:

1. School to prison pipeline

- a. Work with the Education Committee to identify and address areas where systematic discrimination is affecting children color in Fairfax County Public Schools
- b. Advocate for limiting of the scope responsibilities of the School Resource Officer (SRO) to prevent minority students getting caught up in the criminal justice system unnecessarily.
- c. Advocate for the SRO program to be assigned a separate crime analyst to track SRO arrests and other activity.
- d. Investigate if SROs cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and work to eliminate such cooperation.

2. Use of Force

- a. Intensify efforts to identify the root causes for the discrepancy in how Use of Force (UoF) is applied by FCPD against African Americans; Advocate for outside organization like the Center for the Study of Social Policy to be contracted by the FCPD to study the discrepancy.
- b. Advocate for Sheriff's Department to publish their UoF data, including the statistical breakdown by race and ethnicity.



ACCORDING TO BOTH THE FCPD 2015 AND 2016 DATA, APPROXIMATELY 40% OF ALL THE UoF CASES INVOLVED AFRICAN AMERICAN RESIDENTS. THIS STATISTIC IS ESPECIALLY ALARMING CONSIDERING THAT THE COUNTY'S AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION IS ONLY ROUGHLY 9% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION.



3. Diversity of FCPD

- a. Contribute to ongoing FCPD efforts to improve diversity of the department. *The department was roughly 15% percent minority in 2013 and it remains the same today.*
- b. Advocate for FCPD to embark on more targeted efforts to address the trust deficit between African American community and FCPD

4. Oversight and Accountability

- a. Advocate for Civilian Review Panel (CRP) and Independent Police Auditor (IPA) to have increased power to investigate Use of Force incidents;
 - i. Support **HB1514** to grant CRP investigative authority
- b. Advocate for Sheriff Department to submit the department to the CRP and IPA.
- c. Advocate for the Police Body Worn Camera program to be fully and permanently adopted and implemented county-wide in 2018.
- d. Advocate for Board of Supervisors to make it mandatory for FCPD officers to inform everyone they arrest or issue citations about CRP or IRP

5. Alternatives to Incarceration

- a. End support for Diversion First program dependent pending county's willingness to collect and publish diversity data demonstrating that minorities have equitable access to the program's benefits as whites
- b. Support Restorative Justice/Alternative Accountability Program

6. Arrests and Detention Procedures

- a. Advocate for the reduction and eventual elimination in the disparity in arrests of people of color in the county.
- b. In collaboration with the Political Action Committee, advocate for the ending cooperation between the FCPD and The Sheriff's Office and Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE), other than that which is *mandated* by State or Federal law. *The Office continues to voluntarily hold individuals beyond their release date at the request of ICE.*

AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE FOUR TIMES AS LIKELY TO BE ARRESTED, AND LATINOS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE ARRESTED COMPARED TO WHITES.

7. Community Engagement

- a. Encourage county leaders to engage the minority committee in more deliberate attempts to understand our concerns with regard to criminal justice; serve as a partner for that engagement whenever possible
- b. Host a Returning Citizens Resource Fair
 - i. Part A: Job and Continuing Education Fair
 - ii. Part B: Panel Discussion on voting rights restoration, criminal record suppression, and ban-the-box efforts.
- c. Host more Blue vs Gold games
- d. Host a Criminal Justice panel discussion focused on the county's juvenile justice system



Health

African Americans continue to have the highest incidence, prevalence and mortality rates from chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity, and issues like HIV/AIDS continue to overwhelm the Black community more so than any other racial or ethnic group. African Americans and other people of color have a right to access to timely, quality, affordable health care. In 2018, the Health Committee will have two main lines of effort to help ensure the residents of Fairfax County - particularly the poor and working class - improve the quality of their health. The first will be to educate the residents on the facts surrounding federal health insurance programs and benefits including the Affordable Care Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). We will simultaneously advocate for local elected officials to support these programs. Our second line of effort will be to educate the community on ways to establish and maintain healthy living.

1. Federal Programs

- a. CHIP Reauthorization - We will advocate for Fairfax county Congressional representatives to continue funding for CHIP program.
 - b. Advocate for Congress to continue to support the Affordable Care Act by sending letters to Fairfax Congressional delegates of the importance of affordable and accessible health care for Fairfax county residents.
 - c. Host public information forum to publicize facts and dispel rumors surrounding both the ACA and CHIP.
2. Host a Health Fair with National Coalition of 100 Black Women
 3. Work with the Youth Council to host a Youth Suicide Prevention and education seminar to discuss the warning signs and available community resources.
 4. Work with the Youth Council to host a seminar on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases



CHIP PROVIDES HEALTH COVERAGE TO ELIGIBLE CHILDREN, THROUGH BOTH MEDICAID AND SEPARATE CHIP PROGRAMS. CHIP IS ADMINISTERED BY STATES, ACCORDING TO FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS. THE PROGRAM IS FUNDED JOINTLY BY STATES AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

Political Action

In 2017 the Political Action Committee (PAC) organized several programs focused on educating the residents of Fairfax County on who was running for office and where they stood on the issues that are pertinent to them. We hosted a Public School Board Candidate Forum, Coffee talk with House of Delegate Candidates, 2017 Pre-Primary Candidate Forum which included both gubernatorial and lieutenant governor candidate forum, and a forum on local immigration enforcement efforts. In 2018 the PAC will continue to focus on building relationships within the community, educating our membership and supporting the NAACP on the efforts started in 2017. We will do more to turn our education into action, and increase our advocacy efforts. We will continue to highlight the importance of voting in all elections, but also stress the importance of participating in other efforts to communicate resident concerns.

1. Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

- a. Develop and provide training/informational opportunities throughout the year to inform and encourage active participation in the electoral process. Upon request, the PAC will coordinate with committees, such as the Membership Committee, to make sure registration opportunities are available at their events as well.
- b. Conduct Phone-banking

2. Voting Rights Infringement

- a. Support No-Excuse Absentee Voting. We support efforts to repeal excused-based absentee voting laws.
- b. Support the Right to Vote. We believe all citizens should be able to vote regardless of their criminal history. We will advocate for the repeal of current discriminatory limits on the right to vote; and insert an affirmative right to vote in Virginia that cannot be abridged by law.
- c. Work to reduce deceptive practices in polling locations



3. Encouraging Member Advocacy - Host a community information session on “Becoming a better Advocate.” The discussion will focus on the importance of grassroots organizing, community building, ways to be involved with the branch.

4. Voter Education

- a. Host a candidate forum(s) for to allow members an opportunity to listen to and ask questions and concerns to candidates running for local, state and federal offices, particularly those offices that will appear on the ballot in 2018.

5. Environmental Justice - Educate the community on environmental justice - particularly the disparities in how environmental issues affect minority communities.

6. LGBTQ Advocacy

- a. Work collaboratively with the Education and Legal Redress Committees, Education, and outside organizations such as FCPS Pride to reduce discrimination at the workplace and in schools.
- b. Petition the FCPS to fully implement the nondiscrimination policy passed on May 7, 2015 to include Gender Identity.
- c. Support legislation changes that reflect the recently adopted policy, One Fairfax, when new policies and regulations are adopted, existing policies are updated and services are provided



THE STATE OF VA IS ONE OF THE STATES THAT STILL REQUIRE APPLICANTS TO SUBMIT THEIR FULL SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ON VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS. BECAUSE OF THIS, PEOPLE ARE HESITANT TO FILL-OUT HARD COPY REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS DURING REGISTRATION DRIVES. THE PAC WILL LOOK FOR INNOVATIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE ONLINE REGISTRATION, AND WILL COORDINATE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES DURING EVENTS. VOTER REGISTRATION OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT ALL EVENTS LISTED.

7. Immigration

- a. Work collaboratively with the Education and Criminal Justice Committees and community organizations to monitor and advocate for sensible laws to protect undocumented residents from profiling, unnecessary detention, involuntary child abandonment, and unwarranted ICE activities.

8. Redistricting

- a. Support fair bi-partisan redistricting efforts that do not disenfranchise minority communities

Economic Development

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) recognizes that Fairfax County experiences significant economic disparity, where African Americans often do not have the same opportunities to prosper. The EDC will work to ensure local elected officials address the challenging economic realities facing our county including poverty, lack of quality jobs and disproportionate high unemployment, and the scarcity of affordable housing. In 2018 the EDC will work to enhance the capacity of African Americans and other underserved groups through financial economic education; individual and community asset building initiatives; diversity and inclusion in business hiring, career advancement and procurement.

1. Home Buying/Renting

- a. Work with county to investigate for the possibility of discriminatory practices by land developers, realtors and landlords.
- b. Advocate for transparency in the home buying process and rental process
- c. Work with the Veterans Committee to ensure landlords keep their properties in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for people with disabilities to include disabled veterans in Fairfax County
- d. Work with Education Committee to explore ways steering and other forms of housing discrimination affects youth



2. Employment

- a. Advocate for more quality blue-collar employment opportunities in Fairfax County
- b. Advocate for more trade school programs and entrepreneurial programs
- c. Work with Veterans Committee to increase accountability and transparency when hiring officials discriminate against minorities and veterans

3. Community Engagement

- a. Encourage county leaders and representatives to engage the minority community in more pronounced way to understand our concerns with regard to economic development, empowerment and veterans' issues, and serve as a partner for that engagement whenever possible.
- b. Host a Home-buying seminar
- c. Host a panel discussion featuring leadership of the Zoning Commission and Economic Advisory Commission

Education

In previous years, both the County and the branch focused intensely on closing the achievement gap. One of the central missions of the Education Committee (EC) in 2018 will be to do away with the constant focus on the achievement gap, as we feel this only leads to chasing test scores and attacks a symptom, not the disease. Instead we will focus on closing the “opportunity gap.” This shift in terminology places the emphasis on the systemic disparities rather than on students and test scores. The Fairfax County Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee (MSAOC) has identified concentrated poverty as a major contributor to the achievement gap. However, it does not address the dual housing market, hiring discrimination, and other systemic issues that led to that issue. By focusing on the opportunity gap, we will no longer discuss tests scores as if they occur in a vacuum but start to address the many conditions that lead to an achievement gap. We will also address issues of teacher and staff discrimination, and religious and racially-based bullying in the schools.

1. Moving from “Achievement Gap” to “Opportunity Gap”

- a. Host a panel discussion of the many facets of the opportunity gap including housing discrimination, hiring discrimination, and discrimination in schools
- b. Work with Economic Development Committee on joint programs regarding the opportunity gap.
- c. Advocate for the Board of Supervisors to do real estate testing and litigate against companies found to be steering.

2. Address Teacher Discrimination in Hiring

- a. Work with Superintendent and School Board on efforts to address discrimination in hiring
- b. Maintain press attention on hiring discrimination.
- c. Set concrete expectations, metrics, and goals in the process and continue to monitor FCPS’s progress.



3. Building Community

- a. Create a support group for teachers of color
- b. Partner with Political Action Committee and FCPS Pride on their efforts to ensure LGBTQ students do not suffer discrimination or harassment
- c. Partner with LULAC on their efforts

4. School to prison pipeline

- a. Support Restorative Justice/Alternative Accountability Program

- b. Advocate to insure ICE never steps foot in FCPS or collaborates with School Resource Officers (SRO) or FCPD
 - c. Advocate for limiting of the scope responsibilities of the School Resource Officer (SRO) to prevent minority students getting caught up in the criminal justice system unnecessarily.
- 5. Protecting Students**
- a. Advocate for holistic approach to incidents of racial bullying from either students or faculty
- 6. Robert E. Lee High School**
- a. Advocating to changing the name of Robert E. Lee High School
- 7. FCPS School Curriculum**
- a. Advocate to make FCPS school curriculum more reflective of the diverse student body