

## **Commonwealth of Virginia**

### **Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans**

**May 10, 2023, 1:00 p.m.**

**Library of Virginia**

**Conference Rooms A & B**

**Members present:** Delegate Delores McQuinn (Chair), Senator Mamie Locke (Vice-Chair), Dr. Jody Allen, Dr. Edward Ayers, Dr. Andrea Douglas (virtual), Dr. John W. Kinney, Dr. Newby-Alexander, Mr. Xavier Richardson, and Dr. Karen Sherry.

#### **Call to Order & Commission Business**

Commission Chair Delegate McQuinn called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and confirmed a quorum of Commission members present in person. Delegate McQuinn then requested a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes of the March 29, 2023, meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Richardson and seconded by Dr. Ayers. The vote to approve the May 9, 2023, agenda and the March 29, 2023, Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Delegate McQuinn then asked the Project Manager to call attendance. Ms. Luster reported the completion of five subcommittee meetings (Economics, Education, Healthcare, Justice & Equity, and Voting) in May 2023. The Project Manager also confirmed that the website will be archived as a part of the State Library's record retention policy and that a "Resources" page will be built in conjunction with the Commission's final report.

#### **Subcommittee Reports**

Delegate McQuinn called each subcommittee to report on its meeting. The forum was then open for the various subcommittees to present their reports. First, Dr. Ed Ayers, on behalf of the Economics Subcommittee, highlighted their focus on studying Virginia's economic history and the strides made by African Americans in the face of racial inequality. The dialogue that followed explored themes of generational poverty, the impact of eminent domain, interstate systems, and industries on African American neighborhoods.

The Education Subcommittee report, presented by Dr. Newby-Alexander, focused on African American education in Virginia. A structured bibliography designed as a timeline was presented as a significant tool to analyze the evolution of African American education in Virginia, the history of Black schools, unequal funding in public education, and the role of curricula. This plan aimed to comprehensively cover different periods - Freedom's first generation, Progressivism, Segregation, and the Modern Era.

Mr. Richardson, representing the Healthcare Subcommittee, initiated a conversation on healthcare disparities often attributed to socio-economic factors. Their major focus would be on Black maternal mortality rates, mental health disparities, and access to healthcare for veterans. Various topics, such as carcinogenic impactors, issues that impact life expectancy, and an audit of medical textbooks, were brought forward in the ensuing discussion.

The Housing Subcommittee was unable to meet due to illness, but an acknowledgment of the intersectionality between housing and other subcommittees was expressed. A request was made for a repository of resources related to housing.

Speaking for the Justice & Equity Subcommittee, Senator Locke brought forth the committee's proposal to rename themselves as "Justice & Legal Equity." Several topics were discussed, such as the criminal justice system, poverty, the need for DEAI, and the removal of racial imbalance from the justice system.

Dr. Allen, presenting the Voting Subcommittee's report, shed light on the history of voting periods in Virginia, the suppression of Black votes post-Reconstruction, redistricting, and voter fraud allegations. A significant part of their approach, she said, would be to educate Black communities about the power of their votes.

### **Discussion Items & Public Comments**

Delegate McQuinn asked that the Commissioners submit any updates, particularly on Juneteenth, to the Project Manager. The meeting concluded with public commentary. Two members of the public advocated for lineage-based cash payments and spoke on diverse topics ranging from food deserts to the book "Medical Apartheid" and "The Color of Law." The sentiment was expressed that the public had been encouraged to vote but had seen little return.

### **Adjournment**

Delegate McQuinn moved to close the meeting, and Dr. Allen motioned to adjourn, which was seconded by Dr. Newby-Alexander. The session ended at 2:35 p.m.