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DATE: May 14, 2020

TO: City Council and Members of the Public

FROM: Councilmembers Nikki Fortunato Bas, Rebecca Kaplan, Sheng Thao

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION DECLARING A LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY FOR OAKLAND'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN (BLACK) RESIDENTS DUE TO THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 LOCALLY AND ITS DEVASTATING AND DISPARATE IMPACT ON OAKLAND'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN (BLACK) RESIDENTS

Dear Councilmembers,

We respectfully submit the attached resolution and request your support declaring a local health emergency for Oakland's African-American (Black) residents due to the spread of COVID-19 locally and its devastating and disparate impact on Oakland's African-American (Black) residents.

We believe that the people closest to harm should chart the course forward. Thus, **we acknowledge the leadership of Black community members who have created *The Black New Deal, Black Oakland Demands in Light of COVID-19 and Rates of Black Death* [<https://justiceteams.org/the-black-new-deal>]**. At their request for formal City Council action, we are responding to follow their leadership and bring forward this resolution as a first step.

COVID-19's Impact on the Black Community

The Black New Deal's signers highlight that the alarm bell first sounded out of Chicago, where while only making up 29% of the population, Black people made up 70% of COVID deaths. Then Detroit. Then Washington DC. In Oakland, Black people are also being disproportionately impacted by the Novel CoronaVirus.

In just one week between April 18th - April 25th, Black people in Oakland went from second place in COVID-19 infections and deaths to leading the pack. As of May 13, 2020, the data from the Alameda County website shows the majority of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Oakland are taking place in zip codes where large swaths of Oakland's Black population reside: 94601 with 158 cases, 94619 with 90 cases, and 94621 with 108 cases.

Black Oaklanders face a myriad of disparities that make achieving a healthy quality of life difficult, if not impossible, that simultaneously contribute to the high rates of Black COVID-19 infections and deaths. Oakland's Black neighborhoods have the worst air quality, the most pollutants, the least access to quality healthcare, the least access to healthy food and live with some of the worst community stressors like poverty, unemployment and violence which take dire tolls on immune systems.

Prior to the minimally desegregated data being released, a broad swath of Black community leaders, advocates, faith leaders, organizers and formerly elected persons came together to call for a Black New Deal; asking both City and County officials to take proactive steps to interrupt the devastating impact that the virus is, and will continue to have, on the Black community of Oakland.

If proactive actions like the creation of Black-led decision making and strategic planning tables; mass, free and no symptom testing; and community-led outreach are taken now, we may be able to slow down the wildfire pace of the virus that is spreading among Black Oaklanders.

Additionally, **we must utilize the Department of Race and Equity in the spirit with which it was created to engage and respond to the needs of the Oakland Black community that existed prior to the pandemic which have exacerbated the COVID crisis.** While all community members deserve to be protected from COVID-19; those who are disproportionately impacted must receive the proportionate amount of resources, support and interventions.

These efforts are happening across the State. Both Los Angeles and Sacramento have also released their own versions of The Black New Deal and organizers in the three cities are coming together to put forth a shared set of demands for Black California that will lead to statewide policies targeting resources and support for Black Californians.

The large breadth of the Black New Deal Coalition will ensure outreach to Black Oaklanders across neighborhoods, income, age, gender and technological capabilities; providing entrusted community leaders and institutions with the opportunity to engage thousands of Black residents with the information and resources they need to make healthy and informed decisions regarding COVID-19 safety.

These interventions are needed not just to address the immediately pressing needs of the Black community related to COVID-19, but also the long-term health, financial and psychological impacts this pandemic will have on Black Oaklanders.

Oakland's Response to COVID-19's Impacts to the Black Community

On April 17, 2020, Mayor Libby Schaaf and regional leaders announced the formation of an emergency COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force to immediately address the racialized impacts of the COVID-19 virus and create state legislation to reduce health disparities for people of color. It is having its first public hearing this evening.

Strategies that the task force will advance include:

- Proactive engagement of entrusted neighborhood leaders, organizations, and health care providers in neighborhoods with high risk to further clarify and remove barriers to services needed to address health disparities, vet strategies, and enlist their assistance in implementation;
- proactive distribution of PPE to community clinics, organizations, and essential businesses serving populations at high risk; provision of basic health and safety supplies and provisions to high-risk populations to aid them in sheltering in place and home-based recovery if they become ill; and
- strategic community test siting in neighborhoods with high-risk populations, partnering with trusted community organizations.

This task force and other spaces should include diverse Black voices to plan around, impact and shape Black lives. This Black leadership could, for example, **work immediately and directly with Black churches who are offering up their parking lots for COVID-19 testing**. While the City has opened a new test site in East Oakland, there are not yet testing sites in zip codes 94601, 94619, and 94621 where Black residents are disproportionately impacted. Yet, these churches have already expressed interest: Allen Temple Baptist Church, Imani Community Church, Greater St. Paul Baptist Church, Center of Hope Community Church, and Brookins AME Church.

Another immediate step to addressing this crisis is **ensuring that resources are directed to organizations who have the trust and track record of reaching Black residents traditionally not reached by traditional organizations and outreach methods**. We have an opportunity to ensure this at our Council Budget meeting on May 26th by supporting Oakland nonprofit organizations Affect Real Change and All of Us or None to continue their COVID-19 work.

Affect Real Change is the fiscal sponsor for Community Ready Corps who pre-pandemic was providing safety training and earthquake materials to vulnerable Black Oaklanders. With the onset of COVID-19, they quickly pivoted and have provided masks, hand sanitizers, informative webinars and a COVID-19 informational packet drafted by a medical professional to Black Oaklanders. All of Us or None is a grassroots civil and human rights movement, organizing and making an impact in Oakland's community for currently and formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Their COVID-19 work includes providing two week hotel stays for individuals released from Santa Rita Jail, providing groceries, gift cards, education and information, masks, and sanitation supplies.

Signers to The Black New Deal include:

Cat Brooks - Anti Police-Terror Project/Justice Teams Network, Carroll Fife - AACE Action, Tur-Ha Ak - Community READY Corps/Anti Police-Terror Project, Desley Brooks - Community Citizen, Harold Mayberry - Senior Pastor, First AME Church, Patrisse Cullors - Co-founder Black Lives Matter, BK Woodson - Faith in Action, Jackie Byers - Black Organizing Project, Saabir Lockett, Zach Norris - Ella Baker Center/Oakland Not For Sale, Marc Philpart - Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, Michael McAfee - PolicyLink President and CEO, Keith Brown - Teacher/President Oakland Education Association, Dr. Noha Aboelata - ROOTS Clinic,

Derrick Muhammad - ILWU, Esther Goolsby, Ayodele Nzinga - BAMBD CDC/LBP, INC, Candice Elder - East Oakland Collective, Mama Ayanna Davis - MXGM-Bay Area/Congo Angola Capoeira Institute, Allyssa Victory - Afrikan Black Coalition, Kampala Taiz-Rancifer, OEA - Black Women's Caucus, James Burch - Anti Police-Terror Project/St. James Infirmary, Jakada Imani, John Jones III, Pastor Anthony Jenkins, Jahmese Myres - Oakland Resident, Tonya Love - California Dem Party AD18 Delegate/2021 Alameda County Central Committee Member, Kev Choice - Musician/Educator/Activist/Oakland Arts Commissioner/Recording Academy-SF Chapter Secretary, Lateefah Simon, Melina Abdullah - Black Lives Matter Los Angeles, Black Lives Matter California, Gerald Lenoir - Other & Belonging Institute, Sonia Lewis - Sacramento for Black Lives, Asantewaa Boykin - APTP Sacramento, Nana Gyamfi - Black Alliance for Just Immigration, Kweli Tutashinda - Owner of Imhotep Chiropractic/Board Member of Brotherhood of Elders Network, Beatrice X, Uncle Bobby X, Young Women's Freedom Center, Peace Out Loud, Ethi Love - Oakland Resident, Ryan Nicole Austin, Eric Arnold - BAMBD CDC/CCED-Oakland,, Rasheed Shabazz - Habari Ummah, Wright Institute Black Students Union, George Galvis - Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, Annie Banks - Anti Police-Terror Project/Justice Teams Network, Daniela Kantorova - Healers for Abolition/Psychologists for Social Responsibility/Anti Police-Terror Project, Dan Siegel - Attorney, Siegel & Yee, Tony Douangviseth - Youth Together, POOR Magazine, National Brown Berets, Reverend Deb Avery, WeCopWatch, Anand Subramanian - PolicyLink, Neighbors for Racial Justice (N4RJ), Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR).

Respectfully Submitted,



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