



State of Connecticut

African-American Affairs Commission

State Capitol

210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509

Hartford, CT 06106

860-240-8555

May 2, 2016

General Assembly Leadership:

The State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) understands the difficult budget reality that is before you and residents in the State. The AAAC has and will continue to make sacrifices. The budget proposed by Governor Malloy today (May 2) will cause irreparable damage to the African-American community in Connecticut.

The elimination of AAAC tells the African-American community that their issues are not important to the State. The message that resonates is that despite the successful efforts of the past to eliminate the disparities that exist for this constituency in education, health, economic development, criminal justice and incarceration, and social well-being have become marginalized. Years of progress made has been cut short from being fully impacted to the level that this growing segment of Connecticut's population deserves and expects.

The consolidation of the African-American Affairs Commission to the Commission on Equal Opportunity makes the goal of eliminating the disparities we have fought for more than a decade and a half trivial. To view the work that the AAAC does as a stepping stone to equal opportunity is actually a regression. We need to continue to strive to eliminate structural and institutional barriers that prevent the African-American population from obtaining a quality education, family wealth, a decent home, business opportunities and fair representation in the justice system. The Commissioners, community partners and state agency partners view this action as a step to remove a very important voice from the table. It will be extremely difficult for the AAAC to fulfill the mandate that the General Assembly set forth in 1999 and again in 2009 under the proposed structure and resources allocated.

On behalf of the African-American Affairs Commission and all the constituencies, partners, community based organizations and state agencies that we work so closely with; I request that you reconsider the actions that are being proposed. I would be very appreciative to discuss how the AAAC and the other five Legislative Commissions can be most effective under severe budget conditions.

Respectively,

Glenn A. Cassis
Executive Director, African-American Affairs Commission

Our Mission

To improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut