

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

July 27, 2021

**Improving How We Meet the Needs of Our Black Immigrant Communities**

Black immigrants are one of the fastest growing demographics in the United States (U.S.). According to the 2018 report, [\*The State of Black Immigrants in California\*](#), issued by the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), from 1980 to 1990, California’s Black immigrant population more than doubled, with continued growth outpacing the overall population growth rates. Currently, there are approximately 178,000 Black immigrants in California, which comprise about 6.5% of the overall Black population in the State, and upwards of 78,000 Black immigrants in the Los Angeles-Orange County region. Between 2014 and 2018, the population share of Black people in Los Angeles County (County) who were immigrant, or second generation was 7.3% and 9%, respectively.

The County has elevated the immigration discourse over the years, and the Board of Supervisors (Board) has shown exemplary leadership in creating awareness of immigration matters, as well as allocating significant resources to support our immigrant communities. This effort culminated in the Board declaring immigration a Board-directed Priority on September 12, 2017, placing it alongside the County’s commitment to fight homelessness, institute justice reform, protect children, and strengthen healthcare. Other major Board initiatives include the creation of the Office of Immigrant Affairs and standing

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up the Los Angeles Justice Fund, a two-year public-private pilot program to provide legal representation to low-income immigrants who are at risk of deportation. With an immigrant community of approximately 35% of the County's total population, these bold County efforts to advance equity for its immigrant residents are essential.

Similarly, this Board has made strides in calling out anti-Black racism in our systems, including the recent creation of the Anti-Racism Diversity and Inclusion Initiative in 2021. However, despite growing numbers, Black immigrants remain in the margins of this discourse, even while many Black immigrants live at the intersections of discourse on racial, immigrant, gender, LGBTQ+, and disability related justice issues. It is imperative that we recognize and address the fact that, like African Americans, Black immigrants face systemic racial discrimination, over-policing, and disproportionate negative impacts of systematic and institutional racism. Lack of awareness regarding the unique needs of the Black immigrant community leads to disproportionately negative outcomes in a historically inequitable Federal immigration system.

Over the years BAJI has worked diligently to shine a light on the issues shaping and impacting the Black immigrant experience. According to BAJI's 2018 report, *The State of Black Immigrants*, more than one out of every five noncitizens facing deportation on criminal grounds before the Executive Office for Immigration Review is Black. The report also found that Black immigrants are more likely to be detained and deported for criminal convictions than the immigrant population overall, despite the fact that they often have lived in the U.S. for a long time and have established strong community ties. Black immigrants make up 7% of the total immigrant population, but comprise 10.6% of all immigrants in removal proceedings, due to racial profiling and heightened surveillance and policing. The racial inequities in the immigration enforcement system are unequivocal.

The County must strengthen its outreach to and engagement with Black immigrant communities to meet the unique needs of this population. While a large percentage (31%) of Black immigrants come from East and West Africa, a significant number of Black immigrants also come from the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico. The Black

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immigrant community has a huge cultural and language diversity, which creates unique communication and outreach needs that we are not currently meeting.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Direct the Executive Director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) within the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs to:
  - i. Conduct an assessment, in collaboration with impacted Los Angeles County (County) departments and community organizations which work with Black immigrants, of priority needs impacting Black immigrants and their families;
  - ii. Identify the wraparound County and other services available to support Black immigrants and their families, including immigration legal representation, housing services, food insecurity, unpaid wages, and healthcare;
  - iii. Develop and implement an outreach plan to inform and provide Black immigrants with these services in a culturally, linguistically and immigration appropriate manner;
  - iv. Work with the Chief Executive Officer to identify additional resources necessary to implement this motion; and,
  - v. Report back in writing within 90 days on these efforts.

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(CG/HS/JM)