

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE CONFERENCE**

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Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II  
President

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Dear North Carolina Legislator:

We are concerned about the lack of attention to our **H K on J** Agenda. On February 10, 2007 the State Conference of Branches of the NAACP along with over 75 partner organizations in the **H K on J** Coalition (**Historic Thousands on Jones Street**) led a group of 5,000 grassroots people in a dramatic demonstration of collective voice about the crises that plague our communities. We collected our voices in a 14-point empirically-based People's Agenda that addressed the myriad of miseries that our communities, especially those of color, endure everyday. This Agenda was presented to every member of the House and Senate. We then unveiled recommended language for an **H K on J** legislative package of 14 comprehensive bills to address our Agenda. The Agenda was greeted with support ranging from enthusiasm to polite nods of agreement. But, to our dismay, little has been done to arrange for serious debate about most of our Bills, much less get them to the floor to vote on them, or pass them!

This 'business as usual' pace in the People's House exists while the unconstitutional education system continues to fail our children. While workers continue to work for poverty wages and can't collectively bargain. While people are shut out of adequate child care and good health care. While the criminal justice system doles out a form of justice that can be viewed only as a remnant of the slavery system that you recently apologized for. To say these are life and death issues is not hyperbole.

Some positive things have happened. We have seen same-day voter registration pass the House, the NC Racial Justice Act pass the House Judiciary II committee, \$20 million appropriated to low wealth school funding and \$500,000 appropriated to AIDS funding in the House budget. Aside from these, however, little has been done on the **H K on J** agenda in the 62 legislative days since this session convened. Now the artificial May 17<sup>th</sup> crossover date looms. We note that 53 years ago on May 17<sup>th</sup>, our nation took a decisive step to begin the long process of redressing the legacies of slavery and Jim Crow when it committed to the elimination of discrimination in our public schools, recognizing that segregation was inherently discriminatory. Let us not turn back the clock this May 17<sup>th</sup>!

And we cannot help but note the speedy consensus reached on the Slavery Apology Bill. It did not say, "Let's apologize and get back to business as usual." It made specific promises "**to work daily to treat all persons with abiding respect for their humanity and to eliminate racial prejudices, injustices, and discrimination from our society.**" During the debate on this Bill, Rep. Alma Adams, Chair of the Black Legislative Caucus, rose to the House floor and in a moment filled with harmonies of liberty, read from my statement about the Apology:

*If North Carolina is serious, let it follow the model of Jesus. Let us repent for slavery. Let us take seriously what repentance means by adopting the 14 Points of the **H K on J** People's Agenda and the agenda of the **North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus**. Let us stop the rapid re-segregation of schools in North Carolina. Let us remedy the 200 years of discrimination in state contracts. Let us fully fund Leandro. Let us strengthen our civil rights enforcement agencies and laws. Let us repay and repair the damages caused by the Wilmington Terrorist Attack in 1898 and the ugly sterilization of Black women in the 1960's. Let us work toward truth*

*and reconciliation around the 1979 Greensboro Massacre. Let us make sure that at the very top levels of government there is diversity and leadership. Let us repeal collective bargaining restrictions for our public employees. Let us make a full commitment to providing all the resources necessary to fix the forty-four failing high schools that are mostly poor and majority black. Let us face squarely the injustice and discrimination in our criminal justice and health care systems. Let us double the funding to the minority economic development package. Let us insure elected minority representation in every county and city. Each of these public policy challenges is rooted in the vestiges of slavery and Jim Crow.*

Without this kind of concrete action, many may conclude that the unanimous apology and commitment to eliminate discrimination from our society was not heartfelt by all. We have been told by those who know the process that many of our Reform Bills will not survive the May 17<sup>th</sup> crossover deadline; many will not be introduced, and many have been assigned to graveyard committees and will never see the light of day. Therefore, on behalf of the NAACP and our 75 HK on J Coalition Partners, I respectfully make three requests:

1. Extend the cross-over deadline, now arbitrarily (and ironically) set on the Anniversary of *Brown*, for four more weeks until June 14<sup>th</sup>. This would provide time for overworked legislators to better respond to our Agenda.
2. Bring up our 14 Comprehensive Bills or their component parts for a vote. Some legislative leaders have fallen into the habit of not bringing a bill for a vote unless it will pass. This keeps the people from holding their representatives accountable at election time. This practice should be stopped. Bills that represent our Agenda should come before the Senate and the House for recorded votes, even if they don't pass. How can we measure our legislator's position, if they aren't permitted to vote on our Bills?
3. We ask you for the third time, please consider our Agenda again in the light of the economic, political and moral crises we face as a people. I have faith that if you will do this, you will find the moral strength to request our Agenda, including the Bills listed below, be considered by both houses, voted on and substantially enacted:

- \*Fully fund LEANDRO & Low Wealth School Districts this session
- \*Pass the 'Living' Wage – H 1709
- \*Pass the NC Racial Justice Act – H 1291
- \*Assist Homeowners Facing Foreclosure – H 1374/ S 1264
- \*Appropriate \$50 million to NC's Housing Trust Fund – H 182/ S 459
- \*Increase funding to NC Community Development Centers – S 622/ S 428
- \*Enact Sentencing Commission Recommendations – H 805/ H 806/ H 807
- \*Raise the Compulsory School Attendance Age to 18
- \*Raise the Juvenile Sentencing Age to 18
- \*Stop Torture in North Carolina
- \*Stop Investing NC's Money in the Sudan
- \*Provide High Quality Mental & Physical Care to all North Carolinians
- \*Pass a Moratorium on Executions
- \*Stop prison construction and address education needs
- \*Increase support for HBCU's.
- \*Take action on employment and housing discrimination
- \*Ensure that minorities are competitive in the contract bidding process

- \*Pass an Earned Income Tax Credit
- \*Appropriate funding to victims of Sterilization
- \*Give immigrants access to public education
- \*Provide paid sick leave
- \*Repeal the anti-collective bargaining law

We have learned much since our first **HK on J** three months ago. As we plan our second **HK on J** for February 2008, and our third on February 12, 2009 (The NAACP's Centennial Celebration!) we shall put these lessons to good use. We shall report to the people from Manteo to Murphy, from Roanoke Rapids to Rockingham, how the People's House on Jones Street is run. Most families have no idea where Jones Street is or what goes on there. We want to report that the People's House is putting itself in order; that it has put an end to the "pay to play" backroom and bathroom meetings of wheeling and dealing; that part-time legislators have not forgotten what it's like to be hungry; what it is like to have no new clothes for their kids; and what's its like to work two jobs and still not be able to make it.

I also want to assure you the **HK on J** Coalition is growing bigger. Stronger. And Smarter. We are not going away. With God's grace we will raise our demands this year, next year, the next year, and every year thereafter. We will push our program on Jones Street, in our home counties, and across the state. We will not stop until our government helps the 'weak grow strong' so we all can become **One North Carolina**.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, President

## THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA: 14 POINTS



- \* **All Children Need High Quality, Well Funded, Diverse Schools.**
  - **Livable Wages and Support for Low Income People.**
  - **Health Care for All.**
  - **Redress Two Ugly Chapters in N. C. Racist History: The overthrow of the bi-racial 1898 Wilmington Government and the sterilization of poor Black women from 1947-1977.**
  - **Same Day Registration and Public Financing of Elections.**
  - **Lift Every HBCU.**
  - **Document and Redress 200 years of State Discrimination in Hiring and Contracting.**
  - **Provide Affordable Housing and Stop Consumer Abuse.**
  - **Abolish Racially Biased Death Penalty and Mandatory Sentencing Laws; Reform our Prisons.**
  - **Put Young People to Work to Save the Environment and Fight for Environmental Justice.**
  - **Collective Bargaining for Public Employees.**
  - **Protect the Rights of Immigrants from Latin America and other Nations.**
  - **Organize, Strengthen, and Provide Funding for our Civil Rights Enforcement Agencies and Statutes Now.**
  - **Bring Our Troops Home from Iraq Now.**

“Not Just a Moment. . . But a Movement.”