

**THOMAS J. DONOVAN, JR.**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

**JOSHUA R. DIAMOND**  
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

**WILLIAM E. GRIFFIN**  
CHIEF ASST. ATTORNEY  
GENERAL



TEL: (802) 828-3171  
FAX: (802) 828-3187  
TTY: (802) 828-3665

<http://www.ago.vermont.gov>

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**109 STATE STREET**  
**MONTPELIER, VT**  
**05609-1001**

September 1, 2017

RE: Act 54 - Racial Disparities in Vermont

Dear Stakeholder:

During the last session the Legislature passed Act 54, an act relating to the Racial Disparities in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System Advisory Panel. Section 3 of the act charged the Attorney General, together with the Human Rights Commission and interested stakeholders, with developing:

a strategy to address racial disparities within the State systems of education, labor and employment, access to housing and health care, and economic development. The Attorney General and the Human Rights Commission shall jointly report on the strategy to the Justice Oversight Committee on or before November 1, 2017.

As we all know, the racial disparities that exist in the criminal and juvenile justice systems do not exist in a vacuum. They are driven by institutional bias throughout society. For this reason, it is equally important to address racial disparities in these other systems both to fundamentally change what happens in the criminal justice arena and create a more just State.

You are receiving this letter as a potentially interested stakeholder. We are very interested in your perspective on strategies for addressing what are admittedly broad topics with a wide range of issues. The timeframe is condensed so we hope to seek input as expeditiously as possible.

To that end, we are inviting you (or a representative from your organization) to a meeting on September 28, 2017 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in Room 10 of the Vermont Statehouse in Montpelier, Vermont. If you are interested in attending, please email Karen Richards at [karen.richards@vermont.gov](mailto:karen.richards@vermont.gov) so that we can provide you with additional details closer in time to the meeting.

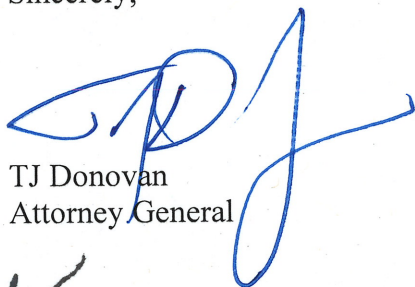
We have attached a preliminary set of questions we would like to discuss. If there are others you feel are important, please include them in your email.

The goal of the meeting is to gather sufficient information to enable us to provide the Justice Oversight Committee with the requested strategy for moving forward to examine racial disparities in these areas.

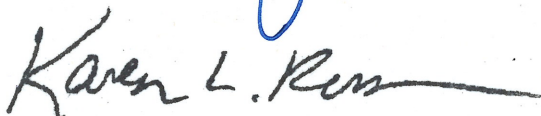
If you cannot attend the meeting please don't hesitate to send written comments. You can submit them by mail to: David Scherr, Office of the Attorney General, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT, 05609-1001, or by email to [human.rights@vermont.gov](mailto:human.rights@vermont.gov). Please do not hesitate to pass the information in this letter along to anyone you think might be interested.

Thank you for your interest and we hope to see you or a representative at the September 28, 2017 meeting.

Sincerely,



TJ Donovan  
Attorney General



Karen L. Richards  
Executive Director  
Vermont Human Rights Commission

enc.

cc: Please see attached Stakeholder Groups

## Initial Questions for the September 28, 2017 Stakeholder Meeting

Act 54

Racial Disparities in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System Advisory Panel  
Sec. 3 Office of the Attorney General; Human Rights Commission; Report

Task: Develop a strategy with interested stakeholders to address racial disparities within the State systems of **education, labor and employment, access to housing and health care and economic development.**

Due Date: Report by November 1, 2017.

- 1) Are there additional stakeholders who may want to be involved in all or some specific areas of inquiry?
- 2) To what extent are we aware of already identified issues/problems in these areas?
- 3) What other issues/problems should be examined as possible contributors to racial disparities?
- 4) Is there data that is accessible to inform us regarding any of these issues/problems? If so, who has it? If not, what other data do we need and what entity has the ability to either collect it or analyze it?
- 5) What actions/strategies could be employed to address the disparities and in what timeframe?

Please email Karen Richards at [karen.richards@vermont.gov](mailto:karen.richards@vermont.gov) to confirm your attendance and provide any additional questions you feel need to be discussed. A final agenda will then be created for the meeting. Thank you!

Stakeholder Groups:

**American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)**

James Lyall, Executive Director  
137 Elm St  
Montpelier, VT 05602

**Apartment Owners Association LLC**

Angela Zaikowski  
P.O Box 701  
5203 Shelburne Road  
Shelburne, VT 05482

**Barre Housing Authority**

Charles W. Castle, Executive Director  
30 Washington St, Suite 1  
Barre, VT 05461

**Black Lives Matter Vermont**

Ebony Nyoni  
294 N. Winooski Ave.  
Burlington, VT 05401

**Burlington Housing Authority**

Allyson Laackman and Chris Barrett, Co-Executive Directors  
1 Prospect St, #1  
Montpelier, VT 05602

**Burlington School District**

Henry Sparks  
150 Colchester Avenue  
Burlington, VT 05401

**Greater Burlington Multicultural Resource Center**

Patrick Brown  
63 Pearl St., Suite 140  
Burlington, VT 05401

**Justice for All**

Mark Hughes, Executive Director  
mark@justiceforall.org

**Migrant Justice**

Will Lambeck  
294 N. Winooski Ave.  
Burlington, VT 05401

**Montpelier Housing Authority**

39 Main St  
Montpelier, VT 05602

**NAACP (Champlain Area)**

Mary Guillory-Brown, Executive Director  
P.O Box 3282  
Burlington, VT 05408

**Peace & Justice Center**

Rachel Siegel, Executive Director  
60 Lakes St, 1C  
Burlington, VT 05401

**Rutland Housing Authority**

Kevin Loso, Executive Director  
5 Tremont Street  
Rutland, VT 05701

**South Burlington High School**

Patrick Burke, Principal  
550 Dorset St.  
So. Burlington, VT 05403

**Spectrum Youth & Family Services**

Michael Hill  
31 Elmwood Avenue  
Burlington, VT 05401

**State of Vermont**

**Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets**

Anson Tebbetts, Secretary  
116 State St.  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

**State of Vermont**

**Agency of Commerce & Community Development**

**Housing Division**

Dale Azaria, General Counsel  
One National Life Drive  
Deane C. Davis Building, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

**State of Vermont**  
**Department of Health**  
Mark Levin, Commissioner  
108 Cherry St.  
Burlington, VT 05402

**State of Vermont**  
**Department of Labor**  
Lindsay H. Kurrie, Commissioner  
5 Green Mountain Drive  
PO Box 488  
Montpelier, VT 05601-0488

**Vermont Law School**  
Bobby Sands  
164 Chelsea St.  
PO Box 96  
South Royalton, VT 05068

**Vermont Legal Aid (VLA)-Burlington Office**  
Rachel Batterson, Project Director  
264 North Winooski Ave  
Burlington, VT 05402

**Vermont NEA**  
Martha Allen, President  
10 Wheelock St.  
Montpelier, VT 05601

**VT Partnership for Fairness & Diversity**  
Curtiss Reed, Jr., Executive Director  
18 Town Crier Drive  
Brattleboro, VT 05301

**Vermont Principal's Association**  
Ken Page  
2 Prospect St., Suite 3  
Montpelier, VT 05601

**Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program**  
Amila Merdzanovic  
462 Hegeman Avenue, Suite 101  
Colchester, VT 05446

**Vermont School Boards Association**

Nicole Mace, Director  
2 Prospect St., Suite 4  
Montpelier, VT 05601

**Vermont State Housing Authority**

Richard Williams, Executive Director  
1 Prospect St  
Montpelier, VT 05602

**Vermont Superintendent's Association**

Jeff Francis, Director  
2 Prospect St.  
Montpelier, VT 05601

**Winooski Housing Authority**

Edward Willenbaker, Executive Director  
83 Barlow St  
Winooski, VT 05405

**Winooski School District**

Sean McMannon, Superintendent  
60 Normand St.  
Winooski, VT 05404