

BLACK MUSLIM LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

POLICY AGENDA

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Mission

The Black Muslim Leadership Council's mission is to unify and empower the Black American Muslim community by developing policy initiatives that address the vital needs of our diverse populations, including Indigenous African Americans, West Africans, East Africans, Afro-Latinos, and Caribbean Americans.

We are dedicated to promoting justice, equity, and opportunity, and to ensuring that every voice within our community is heard and valued in the pursuit of societal advancement and collective well-being.

To note: When we reference Black American Muslims in this document, we recognize and honor the fact that this community is an indelible part of the Black community, as well as the Muslim community. While Black American Muslims share in the challenges and successes of these groups, we also face difficulties unique to our particular community. This document lays out policy initiatives designed to address the concerns and needs of the Black American Muslim community, but many of the proposed actions would also support and uplift the greater Black and Muslim communities.

Overview

This Policy Agenda is designed to demand accountability from candidates vying for our support and endorsement. We expect that the critical challenges we have identified are recognized as priorities that require immediate and sustained action, not just electioneering rhetoric. Candidates must present transparent, actionable plans with definitive timelines that demonstrate a genuine commitment to turning policy platforms into tangible outcomes for our community.

Within our assembly, we have a roster of experts readily available to assist with planning and strategy as well as implementation.

Policy Issues

a) Economic Equity & Opportunity

The Black American Muslim community in the United States faces systemic barriers to economic equity and opportunity, hindering the ability of individuals and families to thrive and build generational wealth. To address this critical issue, we propose a comprehensive approach that focuses on creating pathways to economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, as well as equitable access to financial resources.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for targeted federal investment in economic development initiatives tailored to support Black American Muslim entrepreneurs and small business owners. This includes the expansion of Small Business Administration (SBA) programs specifically designed to provide access to capital, contracts, technical assistance, and mentorship for Black Muslim-owned businesses. Additionally, we support the establishment of community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and minority depository institutions (MDIs) in areas with significant Black Muslim populations in order to provide financial services and support for local economic development.
2. We call for increased federal support for pay equity, workforce development, and job training programs targeted at addressing the unique needs of the Black American Muslim community. These programs should provide skills training, job placement assistance, and support for career advancement, particularly in industries and sectors where Black Muslims are historically underrepresented including senior-level appointments across the White House administration.
3. We call for policies that promote equitable access to affordable credit, banking services, and homeownership opportunities. This includes initiatives to address discriminatory lending practices that target the Black American Muslim community, expand access to affordable banking services in underserved communities, and provide support for homeownership education and assistance programs.

To ensure the successful implementation of these initiatives, collaboration with federal agencies such as the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Labor, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is essential. These agencies play a crucial role in administering programs and regulations aimed at promoting economic

equity and opportunity, and their involvement is vital in ensuring that resources are effectively allocated to support the economic advancement of the Black American Muslim community.

b) Education

Access to quality education is a fundamental right that must be ensured for all children, including those within the Black American Muslim community. To address the educational disparities faced by Black American Muslim students, we propose a comprehensive set of initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes and opportunities.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for increased federal investment in public education, particularly in underserved Black American Muslim communities. This includes funding for after-school programs, mentorship initiatives, and the development of culturally relevant curriculum materials. By providing additional resources to these communities, we can help bridge the educational achievement gap and provide students with the support they need to succeed.
2. We call for increased federal investment in scholarships and mentorship programs for Black public education staffers and teachers. This investment must be based on structures that uphold equitable opportunities and access. This investment would assist in addressing the need for representation among teaching and administrative staff.
3. We call for increased federal grants to support historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other institutions serving Black American Muslim student populations. These institutions play a critical role in providing access to higher education and must receive adequate federal support to continue their mission of serving historically underrepresented communities.
4. We call for the development of policies and programs that address the unique needs of Black American Muslim students, including the provision of culturally-responsive teaching materials, support for English language learners, halal meals, prayer spaces and facilities to make ablutions, and the promotion of diversity and inclusion within schools.

5. We call for the expansion of federal programs aimed at addressing the social and emotional well-being of students, including mental health services and counseling support.

To ensure the successful implementation of these initiatives, collaboration with federal agencies such as the Department of Education (DOE) and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is essential. These agencies play a vital role in administering federal education programs, enforcing civil rights laws in educational settings, and ensuring that policies are in place to address the specific needs of Black American Muslim students.

Black American Muslims are impacted by the school-to-prison pipeline, which impacts Black Americans at an alarming rate. Disproportionately higher percentages of Black students are subjected to discriminatory actions including school-based arrests, gaps in education, and stricter policies compared to white students. Investment in the unique educational needs of Black American Muslims will advance the quality of life for our youth and provide a pathway that is culturally informed and focused on long-term, community-wide success.

c) Public Safety & Gun Violence

Gun violence poses a significant threat to the safety and well-being of the Black American Muslim community in the United States. In response to this pressing issue, we advocate for a comprehensive approach that addresses both the regulation of firearms and the underlying factors that contribute to violence in our communities.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for the implementation of universal background checks for all firearm purchases, including closing the gun show and private sale loopholes.
2. We call for the enactment of red flag laws, which allow for the temporary removal of firearms from individuals deemed to pose a risk to themselves or others. These measures are essential in preventing individuals who are at high risk of committing violence from obtaining firearms.
3. We call for increased federal funding for initiatives such as community outreach programs, youth mentorship, and conflict resolution efforts. This comes in recognition of the importance of community-based intervention programs in addressing the root causes of gun violence. Such programs can help address

systemic issues contributing to violence, provide support to at-risk individuals, and empower communities to develop their own solutions to reduce violence.

To implement these measures effectively, collaboration with federal agencies such as the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) is crucial. These agencies play a central role in enforcing gun laws, regulating the firearms industry, and providing resources to support community-based violence prevention efforts.

While Black American Muslims are impacted by public safety alongside every other group, they are too often implicated as perpetrators, as well as often victims of gun violence. The community is subjected to discriminatory and bias-based policing practices, which leads to false accusations and potentially arrests. BIPOC communities, including both Black Americans and Muslims – and thereby, Black American Muslims – are impacted by gun violence at a much higher rate than white Americans. In 2020, over [12,000 Black Americans were killed by guns](#), compared to just over 7,000 white Americans. In addition, Muslims are often targeted by others due to their religious or ethnic identity; this often leads to verbal or physical harassment or even violence.

In large cities like Philadelphia, Chicago, and Detroit, gun violence has deeply impacted the quality of life for Black Muslim Americans. We must address the unique needs of this community, which will be a positive step in the direction of addressing gun violence in urban communities. In other words, addressing public safety and gun violence for the Black American Muslim community will positively impact the safety standards of all groups.

d) Social & Criminal Justice

We advocate for a commitment to education equity and restorative justice practices to address the growing issue of the school-to-prison pipeline. We call for the immediate reform of extreme sentencing statutes and the passage of policies that will address racial inequity and disparities in the criminal justice system.

The United States has less than five percent of the world's population but almost 25 percent of the total prison population. Most of the two million Americans incarcerated today are non-violent offenders, with African American men being far more likely to be stopped and searched by police, charged with crimes, and sentenced to longer prison terms than white men found guilty of the same offenses.

A key component in addressing criminal justice reform is to strive for social justice, especially in the education sector. Current systems use approaches that remove children from mainstream educational environments into a one-way path to prisons. We must consider rehabilitation and root causes over permanent terms of incarceration. These systems must be addressed where the problem begins: in a neglected and under-resourced public education system. When students are removed from school, they end up in inferior settings such as suspension centers, juvenile prisons, and alternative schools.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for the repeal of mandatory minimum sentencing and research into effective alternatives to incarceration for individuals convicted of low-level offenses. Mandatory minimum requirements are exacerbating the problem by condemning non-violent drug offenders to sentences of 20 to 30 years, or even life sentences.
2. We call for federal, state, and local investment in social and economic justice programs, as well as mental health resources, in communities across the country.
3. We call for ensured ballot access for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. This will expand voting rights for this historically disenfranchised population.
4. We call for racial equity and social justice to be core principles in all decisions, policies, and functions of the Executive Administration. Such decisions, policies, and functions include, but are not limited to: education; living wage jobs; safe neighborhoods; a healthy, sustainable natural environment; efficient public transit; parks and green spaces; affordable and safe housing; and healthy food.
5. We call for well-funded, high-quality education that includes trained professionals and support systems designed to address root causes of injustice and ensure access and continued participation in education.
6. We call for culturally aware and religiously sensitive prison reform that includes special accommodations for Black American Muslims, such as access to halal meals, Islamic books, Qurans, Islamic attire (including kufis and hijabs), prayer rugs, facilitation of congregational Friday Jummah prayers, and recognition of Ramadan and Eid holidays. Such accommodations are in line with accommodations afforded to other religious groups and would allow for more equitable treatment of Black American Muslim inmates. This improvement in life

quality and support would assist in preparing Black American Muslim inmates for re-entry into society.

7. We demand immediate local, state, and federal research into and action to address and end the scourge of police brutality, which disproportionately affects Black people. Findings should be publicly available, and all decisions related to follow-up plans and implementation should be made in coordination with local and federal civil rights experts.

Islam is a fast-growing religion, particularly among Black Americans. Black Americans are disproportionately targeted by the criminal justice system and are incarcerated at higher rates than the rest of the population. Many Black Americans have turned to Islam as a means for support, and even for salvation in prison.

Tragically, American prisons are known to be largely inhumane places focused on punishment and punitive measures rather than treatment, reform, and re-entry into society. By addressing the unique challenges that face Black American Muslims, including respecting religious accommodations and investing in dismantling systems of oppression, entire prison populations will be better off and will benefit from these efforts.

e) Health Care: Mental Health & Black Maternal Health

Systemic oppression and discrimination of Black people are seen clearly in the United States' health care, where policy and practice contribute to an inequitable system of care. Black people have [higher rates of morbidity and mortality](#) than white people; they are [less likely to receive mental health services](#); and Black infants are over two times as likely to die as white infants. Black women, alongside American Indian and Alaska Native women, have the [highest rates of pregnancy-related mortality](#).

Socioeconomic discrimination plays a major role in these rates, with Black people [more likely to face financial barriers](#), including insurance access, when it comes to health care. This group is also [more likely to face economic difficulties](#) such as food insecurity and poverty, which lead to health issues.

In this Policy Agenda, we have chosen to address two of the most pressing matters in this disparate system: mental health and Black maternal health.

Mental Health

When considering the mental health of Black Americans as compared to other demographics, it's important to look at historical and cultural factors, some of which have led to significant disparities among groups. For example, 25% of Black people seek mental health treatment when needed, compared to 40% of white people.

The root of mental health stigma among Black people can be traced back to slavery. At that time, it was commonly thought that enslaved people were not sophisticated enough to develop depression, anxiety, or other mental health disorders. This historic lack of social and medical mental health support for Black people can be traced to the present, when health concerns, including mental health concerns, of Black people are not taken as seriously (and therefore, not treated as effectively) by the medical establishment. The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic recession furthered this issue, drastically and negatively impacting the mental health of Black and Brown individuals and creating new barriers for people already suffering from mental illness and substance abuse.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for engagement in truth-telling about the United States' history of mental health and disparate treatment among groups with the goal of facilitating trust and building a platform to shape future policies. We cannot build truly equitable systems without a thorough and critical understanding of the country's historic failures and opportunities to improve.
2. We call for an investment in scholarships and mentorship programs for Black medical students, including aspiring Black psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. This investment must be based on structures that uphold equitable opportunities and access. This investment would assist in addressing the country's shortage of Black health professionals, especially Black mental health professionals.
3. Institutionally, we call for a revision of existing policies and social norms to account for historical, collective, and individual traumas experienced by Black people.
4. We call for the provision of access to free, high-quality, culturally competent mental health support services in underserved communities.
5. We call for mental health professionals to serve on co-responder teams with law enforcement officials, in which these professionals and officials would respond to

mental health calls together. While models differ, these teams are designed to de-escalate situations and determine if a person needs behavioral health help rather than arrest. This could, in turn, lead to the prevention of tragedies such as injury or death at the hands of the police, which too often occur during such mental health calls. Particularly when Black people, and especially Black men, are injured and killed by police at rates higher than any other group, such efforts are critically needed.

6. We call for timely, effective mental health evaluation and treatment, including for substance use disorder, for those who are detained or incarcerated. This evaluation and treatment must be systematized nationally to ensure all in need are given support and treatment.

Black Maternal Health

Our faith teaches us that under a mother's feet lies Heaven. This teaches children to show their mothers love and respect for all the sacrifices they make to raise them, while also inspiring our community to hold mothers in the highest regard. In service of these beliefs, we advocate addressing the disproportionate maternal mortality rates of Black mothers in America, along with the factors that contribute to it, such as underlying chronic conditions, institutional racism, and implicit bias.

The United States is one of the richest developed nations in the world, and yet our mothers are experiencing some of the highest mortality rates in the developed world. This rate is increasing. The maternal healthcare crisis does not impact all women equally: Black mothers are dying at rates three to four times higher than their white counterparts. Addressing the maternal health crisis and the inequities within the healthcare system are of great importance to the Black Muslim community.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for an investment in free, high-quality, culturally competent mental health services in historically underserved and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. These systems should partner with local community centers and groups, and the staff should be representative of the local community. Staff should be trained in issue areas specific to Black American Muslims.
2. We call for the establishment of Black maternal health as a national public health priority.

3. We call for the passage and enactment of evidence-based and culturally competent policies and best practices for health outcomes for Black mothers. This includes establishing policies aimed to secure critical resources for Black mothers, including: 12-month postpartum Medicaid coverage; access to high-quality health care coverage for pregnant and postpartum mothers; access to the care and support for the full postpartum period; access to safe and stable housing before and after childbirth; and protections for disproportionately-impacted Black and Indigenous people.

Black American Muslims are impacted by disproportionate access to quality healthcare, the same as all Black Americans. This includes less physical access to treatment facilities, lower rates of health insurance, higher rates of maternal mortality, and inability to receive treatment due to systemic poverty. In addition, Black American Muslims are largely descendants of enslaved Africans and often have cultural needs handed down through history; many health providers are not culturally competent when it comes to treating patients. This leads both to incomplete healthcare options and also to would-be patients not seeking out medical treatment because they don't feel seen or understood by medical providers.

f) Affordable Housing

The Black American Muslim community in the United States faces significant challenges in accessing affordable and safe housing. Addressing these issues will require a multi-faceted approach.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for increased federal funding for low-income housing programs such as the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, which provides rental assistance to eligible low-income individuals and families.
2. We call for the expansion of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, which incentivizes private investment in affordable housing development.
3. We call for the establishment of a federal housing trust fund specifically earmarked for urban areas with substantial Black American Muslim populations in order to spur the construction of affordable housing units.

4. We call for the expansion of housing counseling and assistance programs, particularly tailored to the needs of the Black American Muslim community. These programs can provide guidance on navigating the housing market, understanding mortgage options, and accessing resources for homebuyers.
5. We call for the development of initiatives aimed at addressing housing discrimination and promoting fair housing practices in order to ensure equitable access to housing for all.

To achieve these goals, we recommend close collaboration with federal agencies such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA). These agencies play a crucial role in the administration and oversight of federal housing programs, and their involvement is essential in ensuring that resources are effectively allocated to meet the unique housing needs of the Black American Muslim community.

g) Voting Rights (Beyond Registration)

While registering to vote is a vital first step, casting one's vote is where true civic engagement and power materialize. It is the act of voting that translates our voices into tangible impacts on our communities and helps guide the direction of our nation.

Unfortunately, Black American Muslims have experienced voter suppression and voter intimidation alongside many Black Americans, Latinos, and Caribbean citizens residing in urban communities under poor socioeconomic conditions. In some instances, Black American Muslims are targeted more intensely, or in different ways, than other groups; Muslim communities (including Black American Muslim communities) are often infiltrated with disinformation campaigns, and popular chat groups among community members frequently facilitate the spreading of these campaigns. It is critical that we take action to combat voter suppression and intimidation and to encourage voting in historically low-propensity communities.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for a federal investment in researching and combatting sources of disinformation, both generated internationally and globally. This could include developing curricula for public schools to teach young people how to recognize and stop disinformation, which frequently spreads through social media.

2. We call for local, state, and federal election officials to review current voter suppression efforts – including by community groups, elected officials, and even their own election offices – and put in place tangible steps to halt these efforts and enshrine voting rights access for all voters.
3. We call for local, state, and federal political groups and voter mobilization organizations to work with organizations, such as the Black Muslim Leadership Council, who are connected with local niche communities that have historically had low voting propensities. Political organizations could use groups like the Black Muslim Leadership Council in an advisory capacity to assist in, for instance, developing engaging materials to drive mobilization, or in directly linking political groups to local mosques, etc.
4. Black Muslim Leadership Council will facilitate workshops, distribute informational materials, and partner with local mosques and community organizations to ensure that our community is informed, empowered, and ready to fully participate in the electoral process. This reflects our commitment to providing voting resources and education to Black American Muslim voters.

To achieve these goals, we will need the establishment of a variety of country-wide partnerships that bring in elected officials, election officers, civic groups, and political bodies. Each of these has a part to play in engaging voters and therefore has a part to play in ensuring that every voter in the country has the rights and means to vote and have their voice heard.

h) Reparations

As the diverse Black American Muslim community continues to contribute to the fabric of the United States, it is crucial to recognize and address the historical and ongoing injustices faced by this community. Reparations, in the form of comprehensive redress for the systemic and institutionalized oppression faced by Black Americans as a whole and Black American Muslims in particular, should be a cornerstone of the national agenda.

- **Historical Context:** Black American Muslims have long been at the intersection of racial and religious discrimination in the United States. From the enslavement of African Muslims to the systemic discrimination and profiling faced by Black American Muslims in contemporary times, the community has endured significant injustices. Moreover, policies such as the targeting of Black Muslim communities and leaders through surveillance and counterterrorism measures have exacerbated the marginalization of this community.

- Rationale for Reparations: Reparations are essential to acknowledge and redress the historical and ongoing injustices faced by Black Americans. The legacy of slavery, Jim Crow laws, discriminatory housing policies, and systemic racism has had a profound and enduring impact on the economic, social, and political well-being of Black American communities. Reparations are necessary to address this legacy of oppression and to provide restitution for the economic, social, and psychological harm inflicted on the community.

Proposed Actions

1. We support the work of the National African American Reparations Commission. Established by Bill HR 40, this group is dedicated to studying the impact of historical injustices on Black communities and formulating proposals for reparations. Their research should be reviewed and insights particular to the Black American Muslim experience should be highlighted for specific restitution.
2. We call for the immediate appointment of Black Muslims to the National African American Reparations Commission and call for plans to be put in place to ensure that at least one Black Muslim always is a member of this Commission.
3. We call for the federal government to allocate resources for direct financial reparations to Black American individuals and communities, taking into account the economic impact of historical injustices.
4. We call for reparations to include investments in educational and healthcare infrastructure in Black Muslim American communities in order to address disparities resulting from historical discrimination.
5. We call for reparations efforts to include reforms to address the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system on Black Muslim Americans, including the reform of policing and the correctional system.
6. We call for an official acknowledgment and apology from the United States government for the historical and ongoing injustices faced by Black Americans. This is a crucial component of the reparations process. Specific acknowledgment of the targeted surveillance and efforts to undermine Black American Muslim communities across the country is a key feature.

Black American Muslims are impacted today by the historical legacy of the enslavement of African Muslims, as well as by disparities in healthcare, targeted surveillance measures that focus on Muslim communities, and policing of Black American Muslims. These are all compounded by the high rates of mass incarceration of Black Americans, the educational inequity facing Black Americans and urban communities, discriminatory housing policies, and more.

In short, the obstacles facing this community are enormous and have caused widespread systemic poverty and lack of access to social and governmental support systems. A thorough, deep consideration of restitution, in its many possible forms, must be undertaken in order to build informed and effective strategies to combat these obstacles.

i) Environmental Justice

A significant portion of Black Muslim Americans live in urban areas which are often deeply saddled with the environmental justice issues. Such issues include, but are not limited to:

- Air quality and respiratory health issues, including exposure to air pollution due to legacy land issues, mass transit, truck traffic, and school bus traffic
- Urban heat islands due to lack of tree canopies
- Lack of accessible, inclusive outdoor recreational spaces at the federal, state, and local levels, including sidewalks, street lights, parks and green spaces, and culturally appropriate athletic infrastructure. Research demonstrates a correlation between mental health and access to the outdoors and physical activity.
- Flooding, including stormwater flooding, due to aging infrastructure and combined sewer systems

Proposed Actions

1. We call for increased monitoring of air pollution and responsive enforcement of evidence-based solutions to this concern; this should include community advisory boards.
2. We call for implementing traffic diversion programs to mitigate issues caused by mass transit in urban areas.
3. We call for federal, state, and local investment in electric school buses and electric public transit options.

4. We call for investment in the planting and maintenance of tree canopies in urban areas.
5. We call for investment in accessible, safe, inclusive outdoor recreational spaces, including green spaces and parks.
6. We call for investment in local green infrastructure, especially in historically underserved and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas.
7. We call for an expansion of and investment in: electric vehicle charging stations; solar energy; green jobs; and utility bill assistance.
8. We call for the federal government to leverage funding and jurisdictional oversight to ensure that local governments and agencies receiving federal funds are adhering to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
9. We call on the federal government to ensure that disadvantaged Black American Muslim communities are considered in the Justice40 Initiative.

To achieve these goals, we recommend close collaboration with federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Transportation (DOT), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and regional, state, and local agencies that play crucial roles in the administration and oversight of environmental concerns.

Black American Muslims living in urban communities are impacted by environmental justice issues profoundly. Too often, urban areas that are predominantly BIPOC communities do not receive the same level of infrastructure investment by city governments. This leads to a lack of green spaces, lack of, or poor maintenance of, recreation spaces, and increased rates of pollution. Resultant issues include higher rates of pollution-related and outdoor exercise health concerns, safety concerns, and lack of protection from the elements (i.e. from high heat levels due to lack of tree canopies). Urban communities face unique environmental challenges, with increased levels of challenges for areas that house largely minority communities like Black American Muslims; it is critical that action is taken to build a better quality of life for these groups – both socially and health-wise.

j) Eid Holidays as Federal Holidays

The United States is a diverse and inclusive nation, home to millions of Muslim Americans (predominately Black Muslim Americans) who contribute to the vibrant mosaic of our society. In recognition of the significant cultural and religious importance of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to the Muslim community, it is imperative that these holidays be officially recognized as federal holidays.

Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are sacred religious observances marking the end of Ramadan and the culmination of the annual (Hajj) pilgrimage, respectively. By acknowledging these holidays as federal holidays, the government would demonstrate its commitment to religious freedom, diversity, unity, and inclusion. It would also send a powerful message against discrimination and Islamophobia. By embracing the religious and cultural traditions of all its citizens, the United States would demonstrate its dedication to upholding the principles of freedom, justice, and equality for all citizens.

Proposed Actions

1. We call for the federal government to establish Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as federal holidays.

Recognizing the Eid holidays as federal holidays would have practical implications as well. When the holidays are acknowledged in schools, Muslim students, including Black American Muslim students, feel validated and are more likely to have quality learning experiences. Similarly, when Muslim Americans can observe their religious holidays at work and in the community, it makes them more productive and comfortable, because a central part of their identities is publicly recognized. It would allow Muslim Americans to observe these important religious occasions without having to choose between their faith and their professional responsibilities. This recognition would promote workplace diversity and inclusion, enhancing employee well-being and productivity.

Americans of different faith backgrounds would also be presented with the opportunity to learn more about this growing religious group and celebrate the rich diversity in our nation. Our nation was founded upon the principle of religious tolerance and inclusion, which makes this policy change important for all Americans.

Voting Options

Black American Muslim voters should be aware of the various voting options available to ensure their voices are heard. These include, but are not limited to:

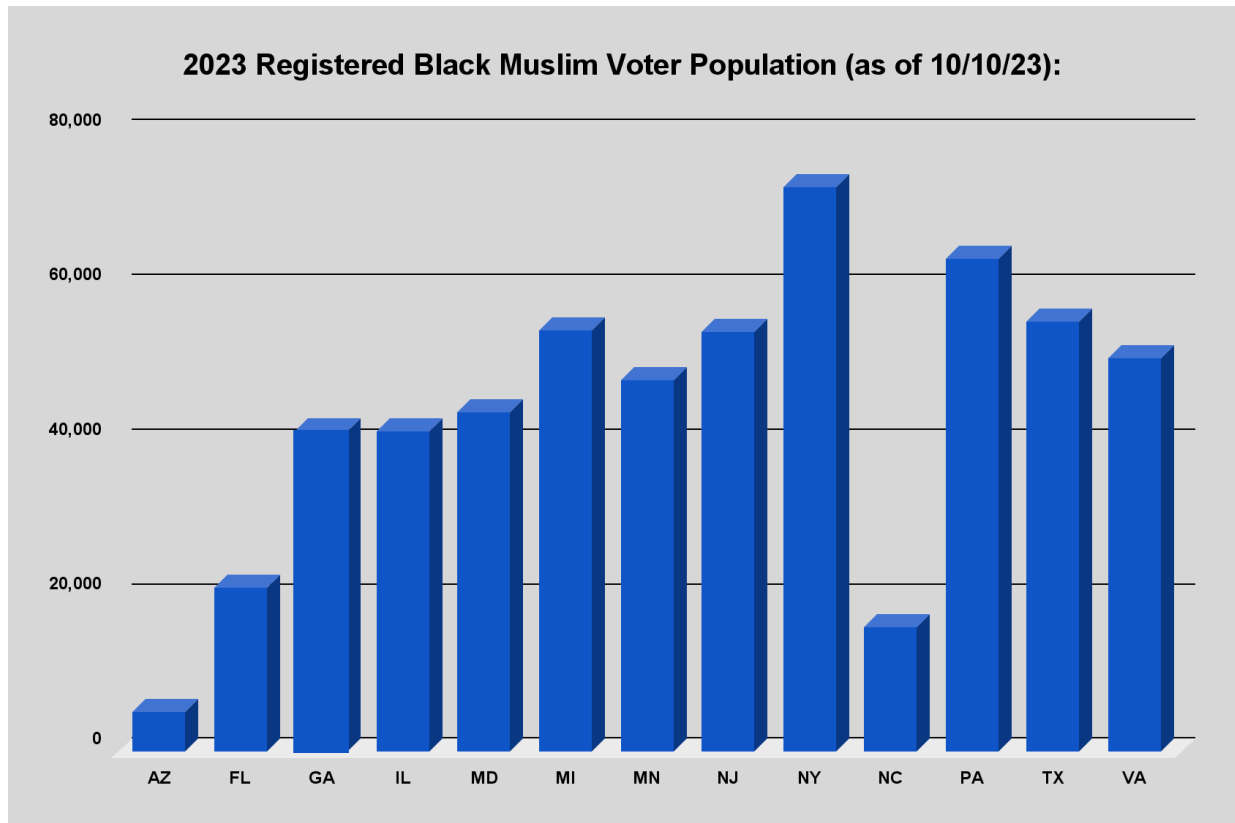
- **Vote by Mail:** This allows voters to receive their ballots by mail and submit them without needing to attend a polling place on Election Day. Voters can take their time to research and fill out their ballots at their convenience.
- **Absentee Voting:** For those who are unable to vote in person due to being out of their voting jurisdiction, illness, or disability, absentee voting is an alternative that ensures their votes are counted.
- **Early Voting:** Many states offer early voting periods before Election Day. This allows greater flexibility for voters who might have scheduling conflicts or wish to avoid potential lines.
- **Same-Day Voter Registration and Voting:** Some states permit voters to register and vote on Election Day. This helps eliminate barriers for those who were unable to register in advance.
- **Provisional Voting:** If there are any questions about a voter's eligibility, a voter may cast a provisional ballot which will be counted once their eligibility is confirmed.
- **Re-Registration for Parolees and Probationers:** Those who have completed their parole or probation sentences may have the right to vote again, depending on their state's laws. It's critical for our community to provide education on how these individuals can re-register and rejoin the democratic process.

Voter education is key to empowerment. Black Muslim voters should be informed about various ballot formats and voting techniques. Familiarity with these formats and techniques in a voter's jurisdiction will help voters ensure they correctly cast their votes for their intended candidates. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Ranked Choice Voting:** In jurisdictions where ranked-choice voting is used, voters rank candidates by preference, which allows for a more nuanced expression of voter choice.

- **Party-Column Ballot:** A party-column ballot is a type of ballot used in elections where the candidates' names are listed in separate columns by political party, regardless of the offices they are running for. This means that voters can easily vote for all the candidates from one political party by marking a single column.
- **Tracking Vote by Mail Ballots:** Voters can track their mail ballots to ensure they've been received and counted, which is especially important in close elections.

Data on the 2023 Registered Black American Muslim Voter Population



As of October 10, 2023, Black American Muslim registered voter numbers for select states are as follows:

- Arizona: 5,029
- Florida: 21,188
- Georgia: 41,355
- Illinois: 41,380
- Maryland: 43,874
- Michigan: 54,537
- Minnesota: 48,019
- New Jersey: 54,205
- New York: 72,982
- North Carolina: 16,057
- Pennsylvania: 63,705
- Texas: 55,567
- Virginia: 50,803

Total: 563,672

Notes:

- The data is vastly undercounted due to issues with the methods by which Muslims are tracked demographically. These numbers, for instance, do not include Muslims who do not have Arabic or “Muslim-sounding” names.
- We are working on access to data in California and Wisconsin.
- We are finalizing an African diaspora algorithm that would include Muslims from West and East Africa.

Closing Statement

The agenda presented here is the culmination of a collaborative and thoughtful process undertaken by Black American Muslim leaders from across the nation. Topics laid out here transcend regional boundaries in order to voice the critical policy issues that we, as a community, hold paramount. This is a reflection of our determined pursuit to transform rhetoric into action, ensuring that the challenges we face are met with robust and effective solutions. Our advocacy is unwavering as we seek to forge alliances with candidates, political leaders, and federal agencies that share our vision of a just and equitable society.

Together, we are laying the groundwork for a future in which every Black American Muslim community member may access the tools for success and navigate a path of opportunity toward justice and prosperity.