



*"One Nation Working Together, For Justice and Equality Everywhere"*

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**Dennis Powell & Toni Buckley**

Freedom Fund Co-Chairs

NAACP, Berkshire County Branch

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December 6, 2020

His Excellency the Governor  
Charles D. Baker  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The State House  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: NAACP, Berkshire County Branch Support for S.2963**

Dear Governor Baker:

As you know, the NAACP is the largest, oldest, and most pre-eminent civil rights organization in the nation. The NAACP has 13 active Branches, extending from the Berkshires in the west to Martha's Vineyard in the east. The NAACP's mission is to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights for all and to eliminate race-based discrimination. The Berkshire County Branch, through its Race Relations, Legal Redress, and Political Action Committees, are engaged in activities to end race-based discrimination and to foster our nation's principal belief of a society grounded in the idea of liberty and justice for all. It is in this context that the Berkshire County Branch appeals to you.

**Massachusetts urgently needs Police reform.**

The Berkshire County Branch appreciates your support to bring about a more significant criminal justice measure in the Commonwealth. Policing reform is essential and urgently needed to create a fair and equitable criminal justice system. The Mass Legislature took a necessary step in its passage of S.2963, which is now before you for your signature. We are very gratified that the Legislature has passed S.2963, which will:

- a) bring about greater accountability of law enforcement officers to Massachusetts citizens
- b) direct unified training of law enforcement officers on best practices to protect and serve
- c) provide for legal doctrines which enable courts to impose rulings when citizens are unjustly harmed by aggressive policing tactics
- d) provide checks on biometric recognition technologies to ensure that their results are not discriminatory
- e) ban arresting techniques which are unnecessary and are likely to cause severe harm or death
- f) provide for adequate protection of citizens before law enforcement officers enter one's home
- g) require law enforcement officers who witness misconduct of other officers to report such misconduct
- h) and such other provisions designed to protect Massachusetts citizens, curtail systemic racism, promote fair and just policing, support law enforcement officers who diligently work to protect and serve and, promote the hiring of law enforcement officers on reasonable standards without discrimination.

The Berkshire County Branch now asks that you sign S.2963, without amendments, so that it becomes law in Massachusetts. Again, S.2963 will help create a more just society for all Massachusetts citizens.

Cordially yours,

Dennis L. Powell  
President