



NEW JERSEY SENATE

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HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND
SENIOR CITIZENS

August 18, 2022

Assemblywoman Shavonda E. Sumter, Chair, New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus
Members of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus
Members of the Board of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus Foundation
P.O. Box 2136
Paterson, NJ 07509

Dear Chairwoman Sumter, Members of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus
and Board Members of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus Foundation:

As I announce my retirement from the Senate on August 31, 2022, this is a heart-wrenching letter to compose.

Working with the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus has been the most rewarding and meaningful endeavor of my professional life. It has been the highest privilege and one that I've considered sacred – to sculpt our corner of America into something that more closely resembles “liberty and justice for all.” Together, we have been etching compassion and equality into our society, one issue, and sometimes one person, at a time.

We and our predecessors on this Caucus have accomplished so much to educate and legislate what equity looks like. We have been a mighty voice combating anti-Black racism at its stealthy, ubiquitous roots and in its flagrant offshoots of expression. We have stood up against bigotry in all its forms and we've fought for the rights of all minorities and women.

In the 18 years I served as caucus chair and to this day, I cannot remember one instance when our various backgrounds, education, experience and perspectives interfered with our unwavering support of each other. To me that speaks volumes about our character as individuals and as a collective body. It is also an indelible testimony to our commitment to the ideals of this nation and our reverence for the innate dignity of all people. Surely, this Caucus is an instrument for good and a most beloved community.

I know you will continue onward, ever vigilant for opportunities to make New Jersey a more equitable place to live, work, study and visit. I'm sure your focus will always be on those who

suffer most. And I hope you might reflect from time to time on a saying that my father planted in my heart as inspiration long before my years as a public servant:

“I felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet.”

If this caucus continues to act as a united body to extend its hand to those who are weakest and lend its voice to those who are muted, then it cannot help but answer Alice Walker’s call to offer

*two flowers
whose roots
are twin*

*Justice and Hope
Hope and Justice*

Let us begin.

Let us always begin!

With gratitude,



Senator Ronald L. Rice
28th Legislative District