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African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey

NEWS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

APRIL 3, 2026

"Black Women & New Jersey's Economy" Women's History Month 2026 Op-Ed

AACCNJ - Dr. John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM — **March 30, 2026**

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As we approach the final day of Women's History Month 2026, it is vital to remain focused on the profound contributions of Black women. From transformational math calculations that secured our edge in the space race to the GPS technology we use daily, Black women have consistently fueled the growth and sustainability of our local and national economies.

Despite this legacy of ingenuity, a recent Wall Street Journal article highlights a troubling trend: a growing disregard for this talent within corporate America. Promotions into senior leadership have declined, prompting many Black women to exit corporate structures to establish their own business enterprises. In fact, Black women are now starting businesses at the fastest rate of any demographic in the country—growing by 13 percent in the past year alone.

This shift represents a redirection of talent that New Jersey must capture. Currently, the infrastructure does not match the ambition; in 2025, Black-owned businesses received just 0.3 percent of venture capital funding. Closer to home, New Jersey's Disparity Study revealed that over a five-year period, Black businesses were awarded only $3 million of an $11 billion(plus) total construction procurement spend.

Governor Sherrill Signs Proclamation Designating April 2026 as Second Chance Month in New Jersey

NJ.Gov - Press Release — **March 31, 2026**

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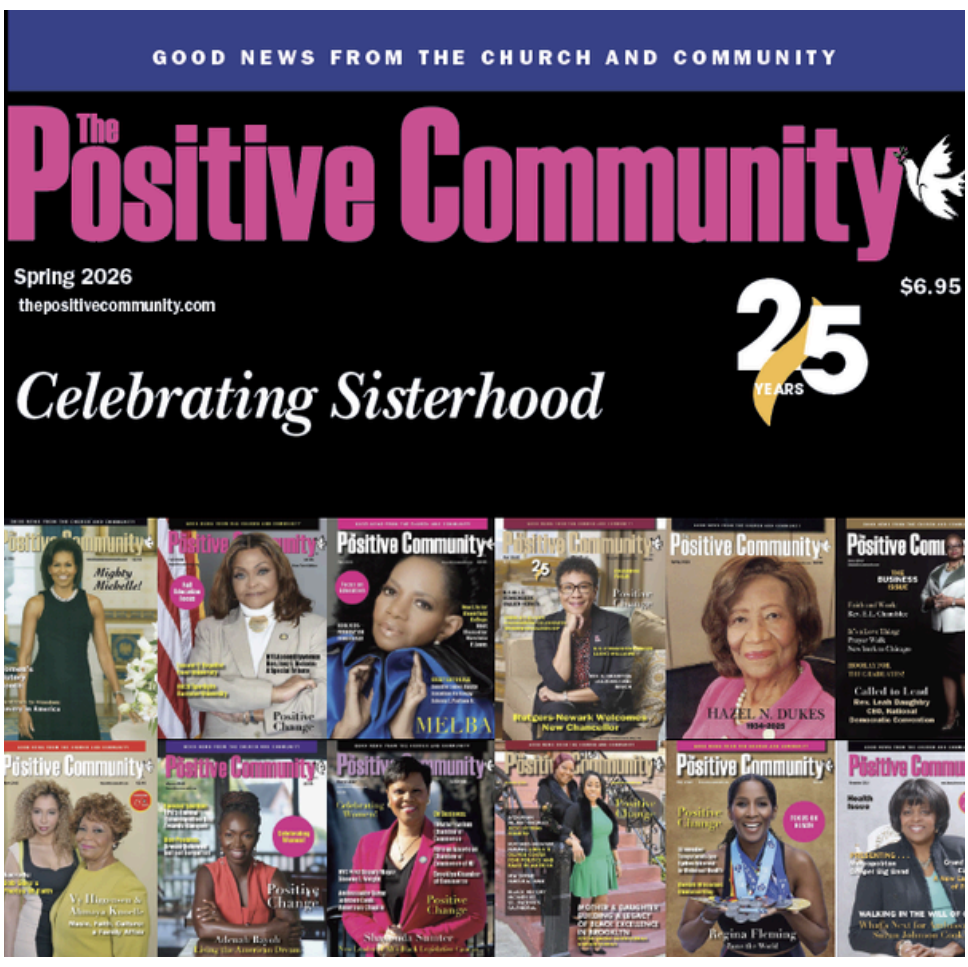
TRENTON – Governor Mikie Sherrill today signed a Proclamation designating April 2026 as Second Chance Month in New Jersey.

"During my time at the U.S. Attorney's Office, I helped establish New Jersey's first federal reentry court and worked on important efforts to help people find jobs, housing, and get back on their feet," said Governor Mikie Sherrill. "Everyone in New Jersey deserves the opportunity to move forward with dignity and purpose. Second Chance Month is a reminder that successful re-entry is about more than just leaving prison. It is about being welcomed back with real opportunities to work, contribute, and rebuild. When communities come together to extend a second chance, we strengthen both individual lives and the future of our state."

Second Chance Month is recognized nationwide as a time to raise awareness about the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals and to encourage employers, community organizations, and residents to support fair opportunities for all. The Council of State Governments reports that the number of legal collateral consequences of a criminal conviction exceeds 44,000, including 1,000 consequences specific to New Jersey. These barriers can contribute to recidivism, which increases crime and threatens public safety.

The Positive Community - Spring Issue 2026

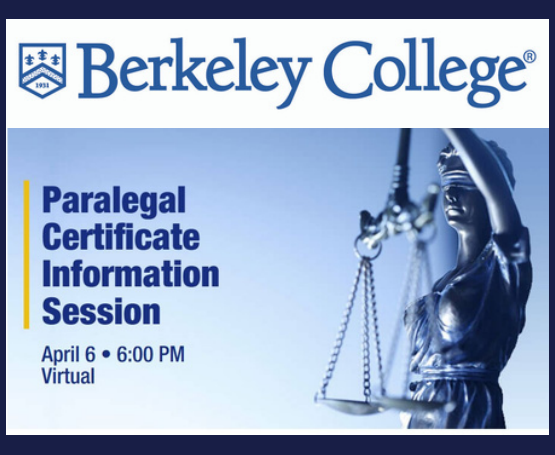
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