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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 19, 2025

The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) Announces the convening of the Candidates in the race for NJ Governor, at the State of Black NJ 2025 Economic Summit

TRENTON, NJ — February 19, 2025, The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) announces **the convening of the Candidates in the race for NJ Governor, at the State of Black NJ 2025 Economic Summit** which will be held on March 25th, from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal, in Princeton, NJ.

The AACCNJ State of Black New Jersey 2025 Economic Summit is themed "Accountability, Opportunity & Equity. The annual summit serves as a platform for an open dialogue with state representatives of various agencies, legislators, faith and community organizations, private sector and main street business owners on public policies and the economic impact on the 1.2 million Black New Jerseyans, and the over 88,000 Black owned NJ Businesses, as it relates to education, health, workforce readiness and their attainment of an equitable share of economic opportunities within the public and private sectors of the state; featuring panel discussions with a focus on how to build bridges towards mutual success with the overarching goal of improving the competitiveness of the state of NJ.

"This year's event will take a comprehensive look at current and proposed public policies and their economic impact on Black New Jerseyans, and Black Businesses in New Jersey. The recent Disparity Study, commissioned by the Murphy Administration, which placed blacks at the absolute bottom in receiving ***less than half of one percent of our state's public contracts;*** a shameful reminder of the disregard for the equitable participation of blacks notwithstanding their availability and qualifications for participation", said **John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM, Founder, President & CEO, AACCNJ.**

"***Blacks have the highest level of poverty and unemployment; 93% of black businesses are sole proprietorships***, Blacks represent 14% of the state's population and according to Nielsen we are over indexed in our spending for several industries. Moreover, black voter participation for the majority political party has consistently made a difference in the election outcomes. Our contributions from a consumer spending and voter participation perspective have not been reciprocal from those that have derived benefits; and therefore, as an organization, representing the interests of black people, it would be an egregious failure of our obligation to our constituency if we did not voice our concerns and pursue strategies for greater accountability, opportunities, and equity", **said John E. Harmon, Sr**.

The Silver Sponsors for the 2024 Summit are **Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ and PSEG**. Patron Sponsor are Ferreira, Ocean First Bank, and United.

Attendees can register through the following link:
https://mms.aaccnj.com/members/evr/reg_event.php?orgcode=AANJ&evid=89784907

2025 SUMMIT PANELISTS

Panel 1 - NJ Disparity Study — 10:05 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Moderator – John E. Harmon, Sr, IOM, Founder, President & CEO,
African American Chamber of Commerce of NJ (AACCNJ)

Panelists
Dr. Denise Anderson, Ph.D., MPH, Director, AACCNJ Board of Directors
CEO, Denise Anderson & Associates
Robert Johnson, Esq., Secretary, AACCNJ Board of Directors,
Director and Chief Diversity Officer, Gibbons Law

Panel 2 – County & Municipal Governance — 12:35 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.
Moderator, John E. Harmon, Sr, IOM, Founder, President & CEO, AACCNJ

Panelists
The Honorable Dan Benson, Mercer County Executive, NJ
The Honorable Patricia Hendricks Farmer, Mayor of Lawrence, NJ
The Honorable Doug Palmer, Former Mayor, City of Trenton, NJ
The Honorable Shanel Robinson, Somerset County Commissioner, NJ
The Honorable Mayor Dahlia Vertreese, Mayor of Hillside, NJ

Panel 3 – Gubernatorial Candidates — 1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.
Moderator: John Bailey, Principal, Bailey Consulting Network

Panelists
The Honorable Ras Baraka, Mayor, City of Newark, NJ
The Honorable Jon Bramnick, State Senator, NJ Legislature
The Honorable Jack Ciattarelli, Former Assemblyman, NJ Legislature
The Honorable Ed Durr, Former State Senator, NJ Legislature
The Honorable Steve Fulop, Mayor, City of Jersey City, NJ
The Honorable Josh Gottheimer, Congressman, NJ 5th District
Bill Spadea, Radio Personality
Sean Spiller, President, NJ Education Association
The Honorable Steve Sweeney, Former State Senate President, NJ Legislature

About The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey
The AACCNJ performs an essential role in the economic viability of New Jersey. While providing a platform for New Jersey's African American business leaders to speak with a collective voice, the AACCNJ advocates and promotes economic diversity fostering a climate of business growth through major initiatives centering on education and public policy. The Chamber serves as a proactive advocacy group with a 501(c) 3 tax exemption, which is shared by the National Black Chamber of Commerce.