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**The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey announces that  
The Honorable Tahesha Way, Esq., NJ Lieutenant Governor & Secretary of State,  
will make opening remarks, at the 2024 Black History Month, Black – Tie Gala, in Garfield, NJ.**

TRENTON, NJ — January 29, 2024. The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) announces that the Honorable Tahesha Way, Esq., Lieutenant Governor & Secretary of State, will make opening remarks at the 14th Annual Circle of Achievement Awards Gala on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Venetian in Garfield, NJ.

“We are excited to have the Lieutenant Governor join us for our Black History Month Gala,” said John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM, Founder, President & CEO, AACCNJ. “We are at a critical juncture for our co-existence in NJ. The Lieutenant Governor’s presence is significant and appreciated as we look forward to advancing a more intentional economic agenda to improve the social economic standing of Black people in NJ. This will be a night of Excellence on full display.”

The AACCNJ 2024 Annual Awards Gala themed “Leading the Way” is the premier Black History Month event in the state of NJ. Each year at the black-tie affair, the AACCNJ recognizes a distinguished group of African Americans that have attained a significant level of accomplishment in business, politics, education, sports and/or entertainment. The event provides the platform, on behalf of the members of the AACCNJ and the over 88,000 Black owned businesses in the state of NJ, to continue to increase the visibility of its members and their businesses.

**2024 Honorees:**

The Honorable **Benjamin Crump**, Founder & Principal, Ben Crump Law; will be presented with the Presidential Award of Excellence. **Brett J. Hart**, President, United Airlines, and **Dr. Darcella Patterson Sessomes**, Chief, Division of Programs and Reintegration Services, State of New Jersey, Department of Corrections will both receive the Community Service Award. **Keith D. Wright, PhD.**, Director, Business Diversity Operations, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Port Authority of NY&NJ will receive the Public Service Award.

The evening will begin with a “Black Carpet Experience” for the attendees, honorees and guests and will also include a Cocktail Reception in the Grand Ballroom and dinner, dancing, and the Awards Ceremony in the Palazzo Ballroom.

**The 2024 Gala “Exclusive” Sponsor is Truist.** Gala Gold Sponsors include Atlantic Health Center, Consolidated Edison, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ, Milhouse Engineering, PSEG, Provident Bank, United Airlines, Valley National Bank. Silver Sponsors include American Water, Atlantic City Electric, Atlantic Shore Winds, Citizen’s Bank, Davis EIS, JCP&L, Lakeland Bank, NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), PNC and SJI.

More information can be found at [www.aaccnj.com](http://www.aaccnj.com) <https://www.aaccnj.com/gala>

**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.