

January 25, 2021

Dear Vaccine Advisory Committee,

Thank you for your critical work. We read the news that the Vaccine Advisory Committee (VAC) is proposing draft recommendations that prioritize Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities to be next in line for vaccines after healthcare workers, seniors and educators, but before:

- Adults in custody,
- Frontline workers
- Essential workers (farmworkers, meat packers, etc.)
- Families in multigenerational homes
- Refugees
- People in low-income senior housing and other congregate living for people under 65

We strongly believe that we need to prioritize the people who are in significantly vulnerable situations and who are dying right now---frontline workers, adults in custody, and people in low-income senior housing and other congregate care facilities. We are concerned about the way this is being framed and how these groups, most of whom are disproportionately BIPOC, are pitted against each other and against BIPOC communities in general.

We urge the VAC to base its decisions on the data of who is most vulnerable because of their occupation or living situation. The data shows that people in congregate care settings, adults in custody, and families in multigenerational homes, are most vulnerable. We also want to ensure that frontline and essential workers who risk their lives every day--working in our warehouses, farms, grocery stores, delivery systems, restaurants, and other front-facing organizations that provide direct services to the public--are protected. This is how we can give thanks to frontline and essential workers for their many sacrifices--by prioritizing them in our actions, not just our words.

We recognize that the limited supply of vaccines from the federal government is the larger fundamental issue that is causing this vaccine scarcity in our state, and we appreciate your focus on racial equity. However, these frontline and essential workers, adults in custody, and people in low-income senior housing and other congregate care settings, are disproportionately BIPOC, and by prioritizing frontline and essential workers and communities, we *are* centering BIPOC communities.

Thank you for the hard work of the VAC in this challenging time, and we appreciate you listening to and incorporating our concerns in your draft recommendations.

Sincerely,

The BIPOC Caucus, including:

Representative Teresa Alonso León

Representative Janelle Bynum

Representative Winsvey Campos

Senator Lew Frederick

Representative Diego Hernandez

Senator Kayse Jama

Senator James Manning

Representative Mark Meek

Representative Khanh Pham

Representative Andrea Salinas

Representative Ricki Ruiz

Representative Tawna Sanchez

