

## **BLACK CLERGY & COMMUNITY LEADERS MEETING WITH GOV. STITT PRESS RELEASE**

May 6, 2021

On Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 3pm the Governor met with 10 African American clergy and community leaders, at the request of the clergy, to ask him to veto HB 1775.

Out of an abundance of concern regarding HB1775 and how it adversely affects different communities within Oklahoma, several members from the Black Clergy expressed why Governor Stitt should veto the measure. The group laid out multiple concerns over the bill some of which include:

- 1.) The bill contradicts Gov. Stitt's values of being an inclusive state.
- 2.) It displays Oklahoma as an intolerant state that rejects diversity and promotes censorship.
- 3.) It prohibits the much needed discussions about race and racism and how we as a state can learn and heal from the past.
- 4.) It adversely affects students and teachers who are working to educate and empower children to have difficult conversations that produce solutions to problems.

These and other concerns were raised at the meeting. If Oklahoma is to be a thriving place where people from all walks of life can use the past to develop a better future, then this bill cannot become law. HB1775 moves us further from progress and reconciliation. As faith leaders, we pray that Governor Stitt takes time to reflect on what we shared to see the blindspots of this dangerously crafted legislation and veto it. The Governor can stand up for all Oklahomans by rejecting this legislation.

Regardless of the outcome, a larger meeting of clergy and community leaders will meet to discuss action steps to benefit Oklahoma and the African American community at-large.

Those in attendance:

Rev. Dr. John Reed, Senior Pastor, Fairview Baptist Church Oklahoma City, Ok  
Rev. Derrick Walter, Assistant Pastor, Fairview Baptist Church Oklahoma City, Ok  
Rev. Racilus Douglass, Senior Pastor, Greater Mt. Olive Baptist Church Oklahoma City, Ok  
Rev. Christine Byrd, Senior Pastor New Life Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Ok  
Rev. Larry Crudup, Senior Pastor, Tabernacle Baptist Church Oklahoma City, Ok  
Rev. Tony Rhone, Senior Pastor Galilee Baptist Church Shawnee, Oklahoma  
Rev. Derrick Scobey, Senior Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church Oklahoma City, Ok  
Senator Rev. Dr. George Young Sr. State Senator District 48 Oklahoma  
Rev. A. Byron Coleman III Senior Pastor, Fifth Street Baptist Church Oklahoma City, Ok  
Dr. Sharri L. Coleman, Fifth Street Baptist Church Oklahoma City Ok

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