

National Black Justice Coalition

NBJC.org

Annual Report



CENSUS 2020
of Mental Health

Engage



C O V I D - 1 9



SUICIDE

Bullying

HIV TESTING

THRIVE DAY

JUSTICE

Advocacy



PROTECT OUR BABIES

July 2020



“We are all impacted by **COVID-19; however, Black LGBTQ/SGL people face unique challenges resulting from concurrent economic, health, and social crises. Responses should account for historic inequities and how they are being exacerbated by the global pandemic. ”**

—David J. Johns
Executive Director

Executive Summary



As the only national civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black LGBTQ and same gender loving (SGL) people, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) remains steadfast in our commitment to **change narratives, advance policy protections and political support, and provide cultural competence trainings and resources, especially those connected to students and educational institutions**. NBJC's ultimate goals are eradicating racism, homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia, and any of the other barriers that restrict access to opportunity for Black LGBTQ/SGL people, communities, and families.

“*In light of the coronavirus, the National Black Justice Coalition remains committed to ensuring that the challenges Black LGBTQ/SGL people, families, and communities face—as a result of the collusion of anti-Blackness, homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia, stigma and bias—are addressed.*”

Consistent with the goal of ensuring that our community survives COVID-19, our efforts now include raising awareness to counter the misinformation that had too many Black people believing that the coronavirus is a hoax and ensuring that Black LGBTQ/SGL people—who are most likely to face economic, social, and health crises—are supported.

NBJC is excited to partner with Black Policy Lab to conduct a survey on how COVID-19 impacts Black LGBTQ/SGL people, families, and communities. Data shows that Black communities make up 60% of COVID-19 deaths in the United States. While we don't yet have the capacity or protections required to collect intersectional data, we know that LGBTQ/SGL people are more likely to smoke cigarettes, be living with HIV, be employed in the industries most impacted by COVID-19, and not be covered by the CARES Acts.

Our survey, *COVID While Black And Queer*, will collect important data on how Black people, especially Black LGBTQ/SGL people, are weathering the pandemic. You don't have to be Black and queer to complete the survey.

What is not fully reflected in this report is the work we are doing to meet essential needs of Black LGBTQ/SLG people and families. This work includes sourcing and distributing masks, gloves, and other protective gear. NBJC staff and volunteers are also responding to increased calls for both mental health support and domestic violence and abuse.

Priorities:

1. Advancing policies and practices that prevent bias, discrimination, and violence against Black LGBTQ/ SGL people.
2. Ending stigma and shame, as well as drawing connections between HIV/ AIDS stigma and the coronavirus;
3. Disrupting myths and misinformation that may prevent Black LGBTQ/SGL people, specifically, and Black people, more generally, from being safe, happy, and healthy; and
4. Addressing unmet physical and mental health needs of Black LGBTQ/SGL people.



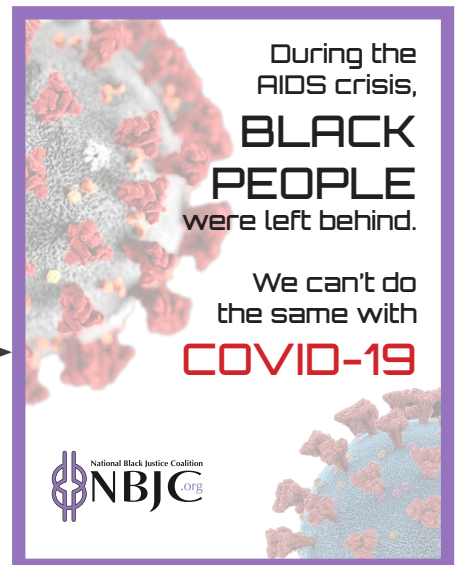
Above:

The Executive Director is a frequent and popular guest on the globally-syndicated, top-rated show, [The Breakfast Club](#).

Left:

His appearances include public affairs programming like *Sister Circle*.

NBJC developed this report on critical connections between the HIV/AIDS crisis and the coronavirus pandemic as well as the gaps that Black LGBTQ/SGL people, families, and communities frequently fall into during moments of crisis.



“Census data informs access to public accommodations important to the LGBTQ+ community.”

David J. Johns, National Black Justice Coalition



ADVOCACY

In addition to helping to draw critical connections between COVID-19 and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we are pivoting to develop and disseminate:

A policy primer describing the policy priorities that are most important to ensure that Black LGBTQ/ SGL people are able to survive the current crises we are experiencing. The policy primer will be supplemented by a virtual conversation series.

Our goal is to ensure that Black LGBTQ/SGL people—and those from other marginalized communities—are equipped with the information necessary to understand the unique needs of Black LGBTQ/ SGL people and are supported in advocating for our needs, at every level, in every state throughout the country. Over the last year, our work with national organizations, and local community-based centers or affiliates has enabled us to disseminate information and engage with communities on the following important issues/topics impacting Black LGBTQ/SGL people, communities, and families:

- **Census 2020;**
- **Voting rights;**
- **Ensuring our community is connected to care, through the Out2Enroll campaign; and**
- **Raising awareness and support for the Equality Act and other non-discrimination protections.**

The National Black Justice Coalition

accepts the responsibility to respond to calls for justice when Black people are discriminated against, or are victims of hate crimes, including crimes committed by the police.

NBJC is proud of board member Attorney Benjamin Crump, who is seeking justice on behalf of the families of Nigel Shelby, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, among others.

NBJC looks forward to launching its Justice Initiative. The project will include efforts to expand legal theory around protections for students who experience bullying and violence in schools based on racial/ethnic identity, sexual identity, gender orientation, and gender expression. Of particular focus will be the application of stand your ground laws when Black people act in self defense.



Ahmaud Arbery (left) with his mother, Wanda Cooper-Jones.



Breonna Taylor (right), pictured during her recognition ceremony.

Throughout the balance of the calendar year, the organization's advocacy efforts will focus on the following emergent priorities:

1. **Ensuring that COVID-19 investments maintain an equity lens that the prioritizes Black LGBTQ/SGL people, families, and communities;**
2. **Ensuring that Black LGBTQ/SGL people, families, and communities are aware of and have access to resources to respond to COVID-19 and related economic, social, and health crises; and**
3. **Increasing access to competent and quality mental health support for Black LGBTQ/SGL people.**

NBJC understands that words matter

and there is a need for language to describe the gifts that Black LGBTQ/SGL people possess and the challenges we face. Additionally, we must develop compassion and competence to ensure that Black LGBTQ/SGL people have the choice to fully participate in economic, social, and political opportunities.

NBJC's communication efforts include working with media partners and platforms that have national reach and that speak to, and sometimes on behalf of, Black and Black LGBTQ/SGL people, families, and communities.

1. Top media hits

- [ED Johns on MSNBC on Anniversary of Stonewall](#)
- [The Breakfast Club, with Malik Yoba](#)
- [Op-ed in BET on Zaya Wade](#)
- [Op-ed in Shondaland on Black Youth Suicides](#)
- [Op-ed in the Hill on the Equality Act](#)
- [TIME story on murders of Black Trans women](#)

2. Top HIV/AIDS media hits

- [The Breakfast Club, with Tamika Mallory](#)
- [Op-ed in The Root for National Women&Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)
- [Article on Black Doctor featuring the Words Matter Toolkit](#)
- [Colorlines Piece on National Women and Girls HIV Awareness Day](#)
- [Seattle Gay News on pro-LGBTQ NAACP resolutions, including one on HIV prevention and detection](#)

WATCH: Lawmakers, Advocates Center Black Women on National Women and Girls HIV Awareness Day

Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman and David Johns of National Black Justice Coalition join forces to increase access to lifesaving health care for Black women and girls, who represent two of every three women diagnosed with HIV.

CATHERINE LIZETTE GONZALEZ | MAR 10, 2019 9:05AM ET



Suicide Rates Are on the Rise for Black LGBTQ Youth — and It's Time to Do Something About It

In this op-ed for Shondaland, David Johns, Executive Director of the National Black Justice Coalition, writes that we need to design our schools and communities to ensure all kids can thrive.

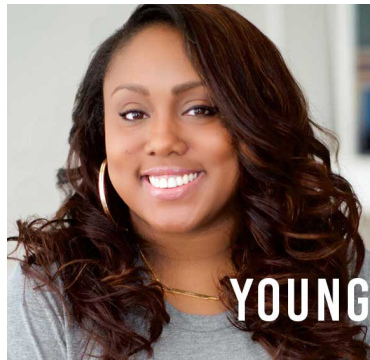


Since 2017, NBJC's communication efforts have included a specific focus on digital media.

NBJC leverages digital platforms to disseminate information, encourage thought-provoking discussion, and strengthen relationships between and among individuals and organizations seeking to support the diverse needs of Black people, including Black LGBTQ/SGL people.

In light of COVID-19, NBJC has increased investments in digital tools to support a virtual village—space for members of our beautifully diverse community to convene, share their gifts, identify needs, connect to sources of support, and move to action.

Examples of recent digital investments include a **Coffee Chat** Digital Series. NBJC also launched **Black Brilliance**, a digital platform to discuss topics and spotlight leaders within and responding to the needs of Black LGBTQ/SGL communities.



PROFESSIONALS VIRTUAL COFFEE CHAT: BUILDING COMMUNITY FROM A DISTANCE

FRIDAY - 3:00-3:30pm EST

APRIL 24, 2020

Quarantine Chillin' - Dating During a Pandemic

- **Genese Jamilah**
(Creator: *I Don't Do Clubs and Must Love Beard Movements*)
- **Paul Brunson**
(Matchmaker, Columnist, TV Host)

RSVP LINK: <https://bit.ly/YPCoffeeChat>

NBJC
National Black Justice Coalition

BLACK BRILLIANCE

What Does The New Recovery Bill *Really* Mean For Me?

Thursday April 9, 2020 6pm EST

**DARRYN
HARRIS**

**DAVID J.
JOHNS**

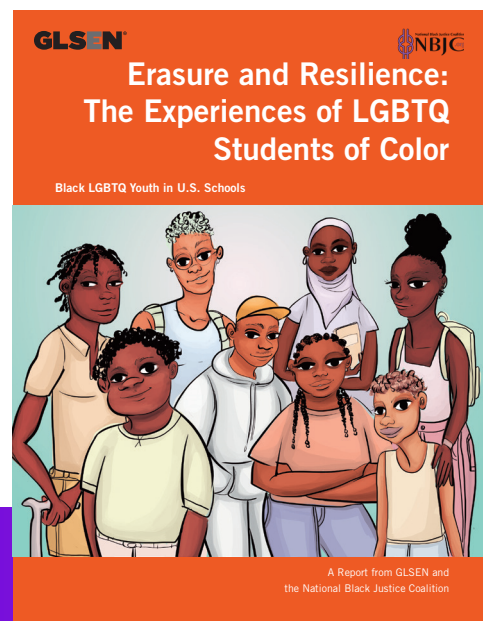
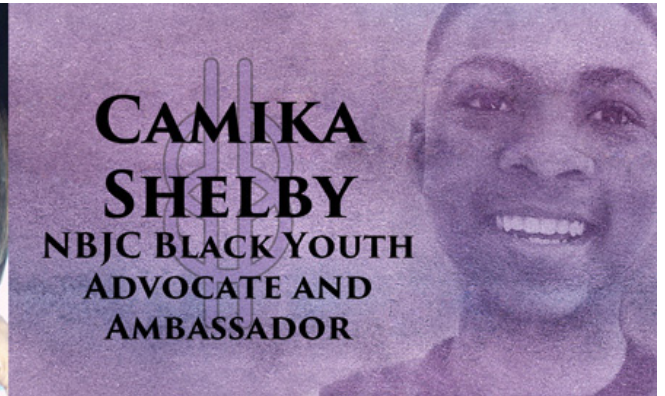
@nbjconthemove

COUNTERING STIGMA

NBJC is responding to the needs of LGBTQ students of color

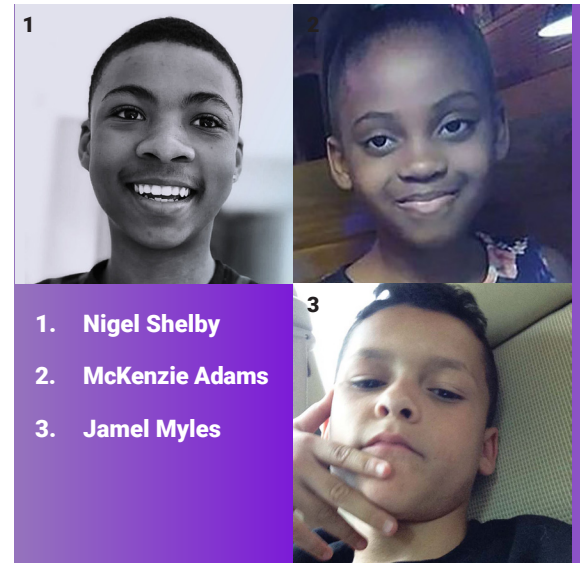
—too many of whom suffer from mental health, stigma, bullying, harassment, which sometimes leads LGBTQ students of color to die by suicide. NBJC is the public representative for the family of

Nigel Shelby, a ninth-grade student in Huntsville, Alabama who died by suicide after being bullied for being both Black and gay. Camila Shelby, Nigel's mother, is speaking about the need to protect Black LGBTQ/SGL youth, at national convenings, as a [NBJC Black Youth Advocate and Ambassador](#).



PROTECTING OUR BABIES

Nigel, like other students, including Jamel Myles and McKenzie Adams, found schools to be hostile spaces. We know that when students do not feel safe they cannot demonstrate what they know or have learned. To disrupt the challenges that Black LGBTQ+ students face in schools where educators are not culturally competent or supported in sustaining diverse and inclusive classrooms and communities, NBJC is proud to have accomplished the following goals:




1. Deepened partnerships with advocacy and direct service organizations to increase competence and ensure that schools are safe and supportive. NBJC leads a coalition of national education policy and LGBTQ advocacy organizations focused on improving policies and practices impacting Black LGBTQ/SGL students and schools. Recently, NBJC contributed to the production of a report titled, [Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color \(Black LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools\)](#).

Additionally, nearly 300 people gathered virtually for a webinar on the experiences of Black LGBTQ students in schools in the United States. Executive Director David J. Johns joined GLSEN staff to discuss data from a recently released report on the topic. The report, ***Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Black LGBTQ Youth in the U.S.***, comes from the GLSEN Research Institute in collaboration with National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), and is one of a series of reports on LGBTQ youth of color. Data for this report comes from [GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey, which can be viewed HERE](#).

2. Extended partnerships with media platforms, like BET, to raise awareness and facilitate conversations about the needs of Black LGBTQ/SGL students:
 - a. [How Black People Can Protect and Defend Dwyane Wade, Gabrielle Union and Zaya Wade At All Costs](#)
 - b. [Lil Nas X: Inviting In, Coming Out](#)

Prior to the shift in business resulting from Coronavirus, NBJC's signature advocacy events included: **The Black Institute at Creating Change**, a premier LGBTQ advocacy conference; signature **HIV/AIDS Awareness and Testing events**; **cultural competence training and support**—which expanded to include a focus on mental health and K-12 students and schools; and advocacy events produced during the **Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Caucus (ALC)** and in collaboration with the Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

On January 17, 2020, NBJC hosted the annual **Black Institute** at the Creating Change Conference in Dallas, Texas. This year's Institute was titled, **(re)Framing Narratives: Black Liberation in Trump's America** and was designed to equip attendees with the information and tools needed to advocate for policy changes that improve the lives of Black LGBTQ/SGL people, specifically, and for Black people more generally. The National Black Justice Coalition is appreciative of the sponsorship provided by Planned Parenthood and the support provided by the LGBTQ Task Force. [View photos from the 2020 Black Institute by visiting our Facebook page.](#)



creatingchange
conference

THE BLACK INSTITUTE:
ADVANCING AN INTERSECTIONAL JUSTICE AGENDA

Thursday, January 16, 2020 | 9am
Dallas A1, A2, Convention 1st Floor
Dallas Sheraton
(400 North Olive Street, Dallas, Texas, 75201)

The 2020 Black Institute will equip attendees with the information and tools to advocate for policy changes that improve the lives of Black LGBTQ/SGL people and for Black people more generally.

MODERATOR
DAVID J. JOHNS | NBJC

PANELISTS

IFY IKE
Think Rubix

VICTORIA KIRBY YORK
LGBTQ Taskforce

VENTON HILL-JONES
Southern Black Policy and Advocacy Network

ADRIENNE HILL
VP PRIDE & Amnesty International
Northwestern State University

FREE HIV Testing 3/7/20



National
Women
& Girls
HIV/AIDS
Awareness
Day
March 10

Juices for Life
1028 Castle Hill Ave.
Bronx, NY

STAND
WITH
BLACK
WOMEN

PACT
PARTNERING
AND COMMUNICATING
TOGETHER

NBJC
National Black Justice Coalition

Juices
for Life

IrisHouse

NBJC is proud to disrupt stigma and increase HIV/AIDS awareness, testing, and support in diverse communities. In addition to producing and disseminating unique toolkits to support HBCUs and community-based organizations in having stigma-free conversations about HIV/AIDS and increasing connections to care, NBJC deepened partnerships with [The Breakfast Club](#), Angela Yee and Juices For Life, and new HIV testing partner Just Been Tested, to provide HIV/AIDS (as well as Cholesterol and other STI) exams and to facilitate conversations about HIV/AIDS more generally. In collaboration with Tamika Mallory, advocate and community leader, NBJC worked to disrupt the myth that HIV is a “gay disease.” Executive Director David J. Johns joined Tamika Mallory on The Breakfast Club to discuss how Black cis heterosexual women are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS and to discuss other health disparities.

NBJC’s Cultural Competence work includes an explicit focus on civic engagement and mental health. By equipping students, faculty, and staff with the language and resources needed to better support the unique and often overlooked needs of Black LGBTQ/SGL students we are working to advance twin goals of advancing the modern civil rights and LGBTQ movements toward racial equity and LGBTQ+ equality.



Helping our people THRIVE

NBJC is especially proud of meeting our goal of launching a major Prekindergarten-12th grade education, awareness, and advocacy campaign to increase awareness about and support for LGBTQ youth of color through our [Thrive Campaign](#). The Thrive Campaign contributes to both racial equity and LGBTQ+ equality movements by fortifying the pipeline of young leaders seeking to advance intersectional social justice. Long-term impact of this work includes increased support provided to Black LGBTQ/SGL people and a reduction in the stigma and shame that can restrict access to opportunity and self actualization. [This video describes this work in vivid colors.](#)



Thrive is a national campaign led by the National Black Justice Coalition to celebrate students and their expertise while solving persistent problems impacting students and schools.

THRIVE

SUPPORTING NEW LEADERSHIP BY CENTERING THE EXPERTS, OUR STUDENTS

#ListenToTheBabies

ABOUT THRIVE:

Thrive is a national campaign led by the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) to celebrate students (high school and college) and their expertise while solving persistent problems impacting students, schools, and communities. Thrive Summits are community forums where students make recommendations about the best ways that caring and concerned adults can support their learning and development while adults are supported in shifting policy and practice to respond to the recommendations that students make. Thrive Summits build the capacity of student leaders, specifically racial/ethnic and sexual minority students, by exposing them to programs and practices that can improve their lives holistically. Thrive Summits also leverage partnerships with individuals and institutions to ensure that students who are traditionally under-supported have access to the learning and development opportunities needed to overcome poverty and enjoy sustained economic opportunity. To learn more, watch the profile video of David Johns on [YouTube \(https://youtu.be/f-62A21-Ezg\)](https://youtu.be/f-62A21-Ezg).

THEORY OF CHANGE:

WHEN CARING ADULTS PARTNER WITH STUDENTS TO DEVELOP PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS THAT ADDRESS ENDURING SCHOOL PROBLEMS EVERYONE WINS!

THRIVE SUMMITS:

Challenge traditional notions of what students "need" and address the complex issues that students and their families face in the pursuit of cognitive, social, and emotional development opportunities. They also invite community leaders and caring and concerned adults to work better together to support students and schools, especially those most often neglected and ignored.

THRIVE SUMMIT OBJECTIVES:

- Center, celebrate, and support traditionally underserved students
- Shift to a model of shared power between educators, students, and their communities.
- Provide professional development to student organizers and educators.
- Highlight promising and proven strategies to support the cognitive, social, and emotional development of students.



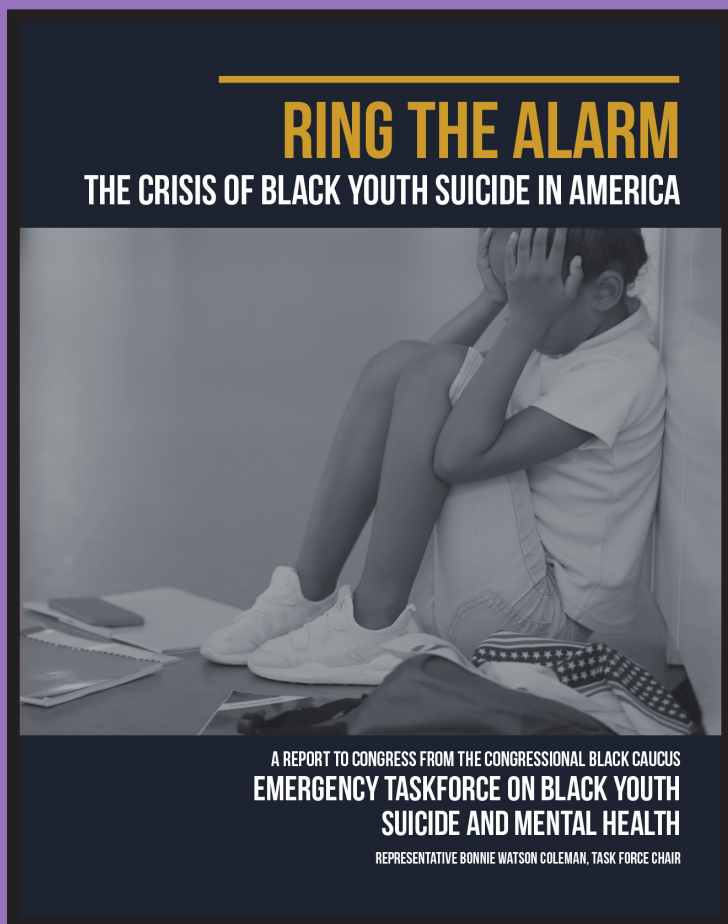
Resourcing a Movement

NBJC has worked with the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation to produce events and amplify content seeking to:

1. Increase awareness about the presence of, contributions made by, and unique needs of Black LGBTQ/SGL people, communities, and families;
2. Increase advocacy for policies and practices that respond to the needs of Black LGBTQ/SGL people, communities, and families;
3. Increase the number of Black LGBTQ/SGL elected officials; and
4. Support Black LGBTQ/SGL people in advocacy at every level of government.

We also:

1. Delivered testimony and supported others who delivered testimony before Congress;
2. Submitted the ["Ring The Alarm"](#) report to Congress; and
3. Elevated the voices of Black LGBTQ/SGL youth.



The suicide death rate among Black youth has increased faster than any other racial/ethnic group.

It is important to note that while we are prevented from hosting physical convenings, at least at present, we have pivoted to leverage digital tools to engage in virtual conversations and collaborations. In the wake of COVID-19, NBJC's efforts will focus on leveraging technology and partnerships:

1. **Ensure that Black LGBTQ/SGL people** who are often most impacted by decisions made by political, economic, and social leaders and are frequently least engaged in their decision-making processes, including around the 2020 Census, COVID-19, and the 2020 Presidential election are prioritized in the policy-making process;
2. **Support partnerships with legacy civil rights organizations** like the NAACP, NUL, and NAN to increase conversations about the Black LGBTQ/SGL community and related priorities and engagement around joint advocacy efforts like [Holiday Census Discussion Guide](#). See these examples:
 - a. [Gender Justice Toolkit during National Convention](#)
 - b. [NAACP Votes Unanimously on 3 Pro-LGBTQ resolutions](#)
3. **Raise awareness, shatter myths, and increase competence.**



Attendees of the inaugural White House Summit for African American LGBTQ+ Youth

We are asking for your continued support to enable the **National Black Justice Coalition** to further this important work.



I dream of a version of the beloved community that is unapologetically and intentionally Black—one that makes room for and celebrates the unique contributions of Black LGBTQ/SGL people. Our mission is to challenge the hearts and minds and enroll every member of our community in the work of educating and advancing the beloved Black community. This work requires the use of technology and the establishment of a virtual village. NBJC is uniquely positioned to continue leading with your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David J. Johns". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "D" and "J".

David J. Johns
Executive Director
National Black Justice Coalition