

National Black Church Initiative

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For Immediate Release

National Black Church Initiative President Rev. Anthony Evans Clarifies Position and Issues Apology to the Black Church, Black Press, and Black Community Concerning HB2 Law in North Carolina

Washington, DC – The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a faith-based coalition of 34,000 churches comprised of 15 denominations and 15.7 million African Americans, wishes to clarify its position and issue an apology to members of the Black church, Black press, and Black community concerning the HB2 law in North Carolina. Simply stated, we deeply regret and apologize for publishing a press release that was not properly vetted. We recognize this type of ill-vetted press release gave an unwarranted impression that NBCI supported discrimination against African Americans. This is not the case and it will never be the case.

NBCI received many inquiries from churches and related constituents from across the country regarding our stance on the HB2 law. Hence, we felt compelled to clarify and issue an apology for any misunderstandings or misinterpretations regarding our position on HB2 as we immediately began to call, clarify, and apologize to church leadership across the country. NBCI only sought to make it clear that we were not in support of transgendered individuals using bathrooms contrary to their biological sex. Because of the manner in which the press release was written, the impression was given that the Black church supported discrimination. The HB2 law states that it opposes all groups, including gays and African Americans, who wanted to sue the state for racial and sexual discrimination.

We have since come to understand and abhor the fact that the HB2 law not only discriminates against the LGBT+ community, particularly transgendered individuals and their use of bathroom facilities, but also the law can be used to discriminate against African Americans who comprise the membership of NBCI churches. The shameful fact that the state of North Carolina used the law to manipulate a highly-sensitive, publicized issue with racialized politics by promoting the HB2 law as focused solely on transgendered individuals using bathrooms contrary to their biological sex is unacceptable and deceptive.

We clearly understand the following portions of HB2 in Section 3.3, Chapter 143 of the General Statutes has been amended by adding a new article, particularly found in Section 143-422.10 under Short Title, Section 143-422.11, Section 143-422.12, and Section 143-422.13. All of these sections underscore how the North Carolina legislation went far beyond the objectives and purview of the legislation of simply stopping transgendered individuals from using certain bathroom facilities. **We clearly state again that we do not support that part of the HB2 law.** We will send a letter to Governor Pat McCrory indicating our position about the HB2 law and the manipulative tactics used in this process. Notwithstanding, we still do assume responsibility for the role we assumed in this unfortunate outcome.

Please know our fundamental reason for supporting any portion of the HB2 law was on the basis of Biblical principles and protecting the integrity of the Church and its teachings regarding homosexuality. We love our gay brothers and sisters like we love everyone else who is in a sinful relational state. We do not condone persons' behaviors [homosexual or heterosexual] that are contrary to scriptural teachings.

Rev. Anthony Evans, NBCI President, "I take full responsibility for issuing a poorly vetted press release on the HB2 law. Charge the error to my head and not my heart. I do not, however, in any way, apologize for the church's stance against homosexual behaviors. Given the widespread impact of the erroneous impression generated by the first press release issued on May 11, 2016, I do apologize to all of our member churches, the Christian citizens of North Carolina, and the African American Christian Leadership. I will personally send letters to civil rights organizations, especially those in North Carolina, clarifying and apologizing for publishing a poorly vetted press release."

Again, we do understand that not only does HB2 discriminate against transgendered individuals; HB2 discriminates against other groups including African Americans. This HB2 law is not perfect and we will never support the Governor Pat McCrory and the State of North Carolina in any legislative efforts that discriminate openly against African Americans. We oppose the State of North Carolina and their gerrymandering concerning voting rights for our people. We believe that the voting rights legislation, which has been upheld, is wrong, immoral, and morally reprehensible and we will continue our concerted and tireless efforts to overturn it. The stakes are too high.

Reverend Mark McCleary who serves as Chair of the NBCI Minister Alliance and Reverend Sheldon Williams who serves as Chair of the Northeast Faith Command both say, "We accept Rev. Evans' sincere apology. We understand the intent behind his message although his execution was flawed and left an unwarranted impression about the organizational stance."

In closing, let it be clear that NBCI will never support the evil of racism against its own people. We will never support the racist North Carolina legislation that systematically hampers our voting rights to be full citizens of this country. We will never support legislations that manipulate one group against another. There are those who will think that the Church is ignorant to these points and we want to demonstrate our capacity to clearly understand and articulate positions how legislators can write laws with unintended consequences. We know the brutal history of what North Carolina has done to African American people.

ABOUT NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 African American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI's mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. Our methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science.

NBCI's purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the-box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI's programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. Visit our website at www.naltblackchurch.com.