

Incorporating Racial Equity Analysis in Policymaking: Racial Impact Statements in Justice Reform

Speaker Biographies

Wayne Ford is a former Iowa state representative. Previously, he founded Urban Dreams, a nonprofit organization that advocates for improving life in poor and minority neighborhoods, where he served for 32 years. When he was elected Iowa state representative in 1996, he became only the 10th African American in the state's history to hold such a position. He was the state's longest-serving Black state legislator when he retired 14 years later. Because of Iowa's disproportionately high rate of incarceration of Black men, Ford authored landmark legislation in 2008 that made Iowa the first state in the nation to require a minority impact statement with respect to both new criminal laws and state contracts. Ford has received numerous accolades; he was inducted into Rochester Community College's Alumni Hall of Fame in 1994, Des Moines B'nai Brith Sports Hall of Fame in 2002, and the Iowa State African-American Hall of Fame in 2004, and he received Drake University's Double-D Award for athletics and civic involvement in 1995. He was appointed to Iowa's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council as chair of its Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee in 2012. In 2017, he cofounded the Unemployment and Outreach Subcommittee for the State of Iowa Workforce Development Department. He also received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Drake University in 2018. Currently, Ford serves as an advisory board member for the Urban Institute's Prison Research and Innovation Initiative and as the community consultant for Broadlawns Medical Center. Most recently, Ford founded the Wayne Ford Equity Impact Institute, where he is director and chief executive officer.

Jazz Lewis is a member of Maryland's House of Delegates for the 24th legislative district and a candidate for Maryland's Fourth Congressional District. In Annapolis, he serves as chairman of the Democratic Caucus. As a legislator, Delegate Lewis has worked on issues ranging from criminal justice reform to health care access to food security and Maryland's economy. He was the sponsor for racial impact analysis in the General Assembly. The analysis is currently in a pilot program and has been conducted on issues within the criminal justice sphere. Delegate Lewis hopes to expand the program to other issue areas to create a wider breadth of knowledge on crucial racial equity issues.

Nicole D. Porter is the senior director of advocacy for The Sentencing Project. Porter manages the organization's state and local advocacy efforts on sentencing reform, voting rights, and eliminating racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Her advocacy has supported criminal justice reforms in several states including California, Kentucky, and Missouri. Porter was named a "new civil rights leader" by *Essence* magazine for her work to eliminate mass incarceration. Since joining The Sentencing Project in 2009, Porter's work has been cited in several major media outlets including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and NPR. She has given several talks on state sentencing policy, collateral consequences, and racial disparity to various audiences, including the League of Women Voters, NAACP, and the United Methodist Women's Assembly. Porter is the former director of the Texas ACLU's Prison and Jail Accountability Project, whose mission was to monitor the conditions of confinement in state jails and prisons. Porter advocated in the Texas legislature to promote felony enfranchisement reforms, to eliminate prison rape, and to improve prison medical care. Porter received her undergraduate degree from Johns Hopkins University and a master of public affairs degree from the University of Texas at Austin. Her master's thesis

addressed exploring self-employment among formerly incarcerated African Americans. She also studied African politics at the University of Ghana, West Africa.

Leah Sakala is a senior policy associate in the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where she coleads a team focused on criminal and juvenile justice reform. Her work includes collaborating with policymakers and advocacy organizations to advance reform discussions, evaluating the impacts of criminal and juvenile justice policy change, and supporting strategies to build effective community-based systems for safety, healing, and accountability. Sakala has a decade of experience conducting research to inform local, state, and national criminal justice policy conversations. Before joining Urban, she was a senior policy analyst at the Prison Policy Initiative. She led research projects to document the impact of mass incarceration on issues ranging from voting rights to family communication, and she worked with government officials and other stakeholders to develop policy solutions. Her research has been featured in major media outlets, such as the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *USA Today*, and *The Atlantic*. Sakala holds a bachelor's degree in American studies from Smith College and master of public policy degree and master of business administration degree in nonprofit management from Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management.

Tracey Tucker is the coordinator for the National Juvenile Justice Network's (NJJN's) Youth Justice Leadership Institute, a program to develop leaders of color within the field of youth justice reform. Tucker is an alum of the institute and previously served NJJN on the board and the membership advisory council. Before her work at NJJN, she worked as the state policy manager and Raise the Age SC coordinator with the Campaign for Youth Justice, where she advocated for youth justice reform efforts in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. She holds a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Georgia and a master of social work degree and juris doctor degree from the University of South Carolina.