

Attorney General Kwame Raoul Commemorates Black History Month

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CHICAGO – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today commemorated Black History Month by leading a panel discussion with Black attorneys general from around the country. The panel, made up of Raoul, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford, New York Attorney General Letitia James and

District of Columbia Attorney General Karl Racine highlighted the importance of addressing racial inequity and fighting for social justice in their roles as attorneys general. The group also discussed their paths to the attorney general's office; how their personal experiences shape their agendas; and challenges to diversity, equity and inclusion.

“The past year has shed light on the injustices that Black and minority men and women continue to face each day,” Raoul said. “I am proud of the work my office has done to begin to rectify these injustices and grateful for the partnerships I have with my fellow Black attorneys general that allow us to share some of our common personal experiences that help inform our decision making. I am committed to continuing to use the tools and resources of my office to enforce laws that protect the civil rights of all Illinois residents, and advocate for policies that strengthen those laws and protect against discrimination.”

During today's discussion, Attorneys General Raoul, Ellison, Ford, James and Racine shared personal experiences that have helped shape their agendas and inspire their continued efforts to fight against racial injustice. One such effort is fighting against voter disenfranchisement, which disproportionately affects Black and minority voters. In August 2020, Raoul and Racine led a coalition of 20 attorneys general in opposing a “pay-to-vote” law that would create barriers to voting for formerly-incarcerated individuals. During today's discussion, Raoul and the attorneys general highlighted broader efforts to protect election integrity and voting rights.

Criminal justice reform is another joint effort that Raoul and the group are addressing to combat racial injustice. During today's discussion, the attorneys general shared their perspectives on how the death of George Floyd, along with their own personal experiences, helped shape their approaches to reform and served as a catalyst for them to examine what they can do to help fight racism and inequality in the criminal justice system. In June 2020, Raoul led a coalition of 18 attorneys general in urging Congress to pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020 which would give state attorneys general clear statutory authority to collect excessive force data and investigate patterns or practices of unconstitutional policing. While that measure passed the U.S. House of Representatives but not the Senate, Raoul continued his effort to create lasting, systemic criminal justice reform in Illinois by initiating the recently-codified reforms that improve the police certification and decertification process, allow the Attorney General's office to conduct pattern-and-practice investigations of civil rights violations by law enforcement, and improve services for survivors of crime.

Attorney General Raoul's Civil Rights Bureau is dedicated to protecting the civil rights of all Illinois residents. The bureau enforces state and federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination and advocates for legislation to strengthen those laws. Raoul's

Civil Rights Bureau also investigates complaints of patterns and practices of discrimination in housing, public accommodations, employment, and financial matters.