

**NEW JERSEY STATE CONFERENCE OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF COLORED PEOPLE**

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW JERSEY NAACP OPPOSES DEREGULATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM THROUGH "OPT-OUTS"

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The New Jersey State Conference of the NAACP (NJSCNAACP) strongly opposes the deregulation of public employment though proposed "Civil Service opt outs." About 200 of the New Jersey's 566 towns hire employees using the Civil Service system that the state created more than one hundred years ago to prevent excessive political patronage. Civil Service rules require that new hires be chosen according to "merit and fitness," determined partly by competitive exams.

New Jersey's Community Affairs Commissioner, Lori Grifa, describes the current Civil Service system as a great impediment to New Jersey towns looking to save money through shared services. She and Governor Christie are in favor of allowing municipalities to "opt-out" of the Civil Service system when it is an obstacle to shared services.

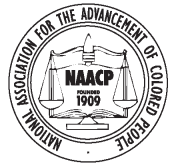
While there is no reliable evidence that such deregulation will save taxpayers' money, there is every indication that "opt-out" will diminish equality and cut off access to public sector employment. Historical evidence suggests that the resulting erosion of accountability for jobs funded by tax dollars would add to political patronage and embolden nepotism in the "good old boys'" system.

Public sector employment has long been an important gateway to the middle class for New Jersey's citizens of color and women, who are too often under-represented in higher echelons of the workforce. Without access to such a major job market, as well as a vehicle for equitable upward mobility, millions of brilliant careers in nursing, employment counseling, science and social work would never have happened for many of those people of color who have made this their greatest contribution to America.

Additionally, the Civil Service system has served as a pathway to successful civilian careers for many skilled workers from communities of color. One of the most important civil service

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protections is the mandate to make all qualified workers aware of job availability throughout the system. Though imperfect (it has not eliminated all disparities or other problems with uniform jobs), the Civil Service system, in many cases, has been the only way to challenge employment discrimination and track other civil rights abuses.

We urge you to oppose any further deterioration of employment regulation in this State through any Civil Service "opt out" plan. In pursuit of shared government services, those cities and towns that strive for the equity of a Civil Service system must help potential municipal partners move toward this cherished standard of fairness in public sector employment.

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Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in education and in the public and private sectors. The NAACP is organized into State Conferences and Regions, and the New Jersey State Conference has 42 units or branches, a prison unit and increasing units or chapters on college and university campuses throughout the state. For more information about the New Jersey State NAACP, please visit us on the web at www.njnaacp.org.