

For Immediate Release
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CONTACT: Cliff Albright, 404-406-7593, cliff@blackvotersmatterfund.org

**Alabama Organizers Who Secured the Black Vote in Special Senate Election
Pen Open Letter to Doug Jones**

**Leaders Representing Black Constituents Congratulate Jones on Victory but Demand Accountability
for Legislative Actions and Urge Jones Not to Take the Black Vote for Granted**

Selma, Alabama — Efforts to mobilize black voters in Alabama’s recent special Senate election have been widely credited with the significant upset victory of Democrat Doug Jones over scandal-ridden Republican Roy Moore. Today, a group of organizations who led the outreach to black voters released a sign-on letter congratulating Jones on his win and calling on him to fulfill specific commitments to the constituents who put him in office.

“The ticker tape for the Jones victory has barely been swept from the floor and we are already seeing him pandering to the right and stepping away from the interests of the people who elected him,” said Latosha Brown, co-founder with Cliff Albright of the Black Voters Matter Fund.

Cliff Albright said, “We are here to let Doug Jones know that the voters in Alabama did not turn out in mass numbers for his personal gain. He was elected to represent the needs of his constituents. Organizers worked hard to galvanize the black community, and we have every intention to hold him accountable.”

The open letter to Doug Jones has been signed by 20 Alabama organizations serving the black community and other people of color, including the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice, Alabama Coalition on Black Civic Participation, Black Belt Citizens Fighting for Health and Justice, Center for Fair Housing, Inc (Mobile), The Ordinary People’s Society (TOPS), and the NAACP chapters of Tuskegee-Macon and Dothan, Alabama.

The letter calls on Jones to adopt intentional methods to hear directly from his constituents like listening sessions, town halls, and people assemblies. The letter points to specific policy objectives such as lifting barriers to voting, ending mass incarceration, fighting tax changes that punish the poor and benefit the rich, establishing a federal living wage, defending the Affordable Care Act, and supporting environmental protections.

An Open Letter to Doug Jones

Dear Senator-Elect Doug Jones,

Congratulations on your historic victory Tuesday night. We were glad to see, based on your nationally televised comments that evening at your campaign watch party, that you are aware of the significant role that Black voters played in delivering your victory. We appreciate the thanks that you've expressed, but we wanted to take a moment to communicate that the best way for you to show your thanks will be through your legislative actions.

Like you, we regret that Roy Moore refused to participate in debates during the campaign. Such debates would have provided an opportunity for you to clarify how you would differ from him and the current Republican majority in the Senate. Unfortunately, we are faced with the challenge of holding you accountable without many specifics on which to base that accountability.

With that in mind, we request that you begin a process of seeking feedback from the community and outlining a prioritized agenda for the remainder of your term. Such discussions should include feedback on how your congressional office is staffed. This process can include listening sessions, town hall meetings, people's assemblies or other mechanisms. Given the abbreviated nature of your term, it is critical that this begin sooner rather than later.

We are not naïve, and we know that in a traditionally red state which you narrowly won, the temptation will be to shift to the right to attract "moderate" Republican voters. Indeed, your television commercial which spoke of the Civil War and compromise spoke volumes. With that in mind, we'd like to remind you of just a few of the things that Black voters who gave you 96% support have no interest in compromising on.

We expect that the Senator from the great state of Alabama which gave birth to the Voting Rights Act, will advocate for its full restoration and, if anything, its further strengthening. The scourge of obstacles such as felony disenfranchisement, Voter ID and other forms of voter suppression are far too common, and we expect you to speak to these issues.

Speaking of felonies, we expect that you will fight for an end to mass incarceration, and resist current efforts by the Trump administration to revisit a drug war that amounted to a war on the Black community.

In a state that has one of the highest poverty rates in the country, we expect you to fight against any tax legislation that benefits the wealthiest individuals in the country while penalizing poor and working-class families. We also expect you to fight for a federal living wage and/or to support local efforts to do the same, such as in the city of Birmingham.

We expect you to defend and expand the Affordable Care Act. And while we understand that you do not control Alabama's utilization of the act and the expansion of Medicaid, we expect you to use your position of influence to ensure that as many Alabamians as possible obtain affordable health insurance.

We like that you believe in science and that you understand that clean air and clean water are essential to our quality of life. We expect you to also recognize and address the disparate impact that these issues have on marginalized communities which are often targets of environmental racism.

We understand that some of these issues and others were mentioned on your campaign website, and that you have promised to “keep fighting for what’s right – whether it’s popular or not.” We are hopeful that you will indeed stay the course, and we only want this letter to serve as a friendly reminder.

Sincerely,

Your Constituents

Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Alabama Coalition on Black Civic Participation
Black Belt Citizens Fighting for Health and Justice
Center for Fair Housing, Inc (Mobile)
Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Greene County Democrat (Newspaper)
NAACP Tuskegee-Macon
NAACP Dothan Chapter
POWER House
Montgomery Area Reproductive Justice Coalition
The Ordinary People’s Society (TOPS)
The Prodigal Child Project
Making a Difference
DuBois Institute for Entrepreneurship
Tandika LLC
SCLC Huntsville
SCLC Tuscaloosa
Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth and Reconciliation
Stand Firm
Fight Back Alabama

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