

March 9, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We applaud your administration's emphasis on advancing equity, which started on your very first day in office with your "*Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government*" (EO 13985). We support your bedrock commitment, which recognizes, as the executive order stated, "*Affirmatively advancing equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity is the responsibility of the whole of our Government*" and that "*executive departments and agencies (agencies) must recognize and work to redress inequities in their policies and programs that serve as barriers to equal opportunity.*"

We are further encouraged by your follow up executive order last month, "*Executive Order on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government*" (EO 14091) and support your efforts to ensure that federal policy and decision-making work to expand opportunity to Americans who have historically been overlooked, marginalized, and excluded. In your commitment to equity, you have rightfully acknowledged that addressing equity in America is not a zero-sum game. Rather, by helping disadvantaged communities who have been systematically subject to exclusion and discrimination, we expand opportunities for all Americans, and we make our nation stronger.

Today, we write to call your attention to a crucial decision pending before your administration—a decision that has the potential to be a shining example of the integrity of your executive orders and an opportunity to right the wrongs of decades of systemic racism and discrimination by our nation's marquis law enforcement agency. The decision before you is the location of the future headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

For more than a decade, the General Services Administration (GSA) has been working with Congress and the FBI to identify the optimal location for a fully-consolidated FBI headquarters to replace the crumbling J. Edgar Hoover Building. The new site would fulfill the highest security requirements and provide a more efficient, cost-effective option than the dozens of leased locations across the National Capital Region.

Prince George's County, Maryland, offers two potential sites for the FBI's new, consolidated headquarters. These sites are backed by a unified, coordinated effort with policy and financial

commitments across all levels of government in Maryland—County, State, and federal Congressional delegation—to ensure the FBI thrives in a new, state-of-the art campus facility. The Prince George’s County sites also come with a variety of other advantages, including proximity to key institutions to support the FBI and its workforce both now and in the future. The market also recognized the advantages of Prince George’s County: before the Trump administration canceled the procurement of a new headquarters for the FBI, the GSA received six proposals for the development of the new headquarters in Prince George’s.

In addition to these strengths, it must be noted Prince George’s County is a majority Black community that has accommodated a disproportionate share of the federal government’s local warehouse space (48%) vs. federal leased office space (4%), while sending a disproportionate share of its residents outside of the County for work. The economic disparity between Prince George’s County and other jurisdictions in the National Capital Region did not materialize overnight. It is the result of a systemic imbalance in decision making over time about the siting of federal offices and warehouses.

As noted, the selection process for a new FBI headquarters location presents an opportunity to apply your vision and policy direction on equity to an important, federal decision with tangible consequences. We are writing to you because, currently, the General Services Administration, at the behest of FBI leadership, has—at the 11th hour—so precisely engineered its decision-making criteria that the majority Black county cannot fairly compete despite the overwhelming merits of its sites. With such a biased process, the federal government is on the precipice of perpetuating the decades-old approach to decision-making that has contributed to today’s disparities and inequities—an approach where certain communities are disqualified because of their zip codes.

We urge you to consider the serious implications of this GSA decision for the implementation of your executive orders and your legacy on equity and racial justice. We support the ideals and the vision expressed in your February 16 executive order, in which you wrote: “By advancing equity, the Federal Government can support and empower all Americans, including the many communities in America that have been underserved, discriminated against, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.”

The FBI, under former director J. Edgar Hoover—the namesake of the current headquarters building—spent years on surveillance of civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr. Given this history, the decision of where to site the future headquarters of the FBI has the potential to send a message to the nation that the racism that permeated Hoover’s FBI, that sought to “discredit, disrupt and destroy” civil rights leaders, is remembered in history, but that a new chapter has begun. While providing the very best location for the FBI at the very best price for the American taxpayers, you can be responsible for writing this new chapter in both law enforcement and racial justice that embraces communities that were overlooked, underserved, and outright avoided for generations.

Given the significance of this decision, we hope you will take steps to ensure that GSA adopts a fair process that honors your policies and executive orders or, at minimum, makes a fully informed decision guided by your vision and considers all relevant factors and information. As you said at the foot of the Edmund Pettis Bridge while commemorating “Bloody Sunday” four days ago, *“This is a time of choosing ... We know where we have been and we know, more importantly, where we need to go.”*

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Wes Moore
Governor of Maryland



Benjamin L. Cardin
US Senator



Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



Aruna Miller
Lieutenant Governor



Chris Van Hollen
US Senator



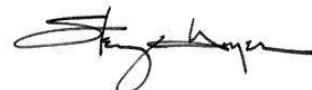
Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Angela Alsobrooks
Prince George's County
Executive



Steny H. Hoyer
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John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



David Trone
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