



Monmouth/Ocean County

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - OCTOBER 14TH, 2026

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GOVERNOR MIKIE SHERRILL, SHAVONDA SUMTER FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR.

ASBURY PARK, N.J. — Governor Sherrill, the departure of Lieutenant Governor Dr. Dale Caldwell creates more than a vacancy; it creates a defining moment for Black representation in New Jersey. Caldwell made history as New Jersey's first Black male Lieutenant Governor. His departure should not mean the disappearance of Black leadership from one of the highest offices in our state.

National Action Network Monmouth/Ocean County and the undersigned call upon you to respect the Black voters who were instrumental to your election. In 2025, 94% of Black New Jersey voters supported your candidacy. Approximately 857,600 Black citizens comprise New Jersey's voting-eligible population, about 13.9% of the state's eligible electorate.

"We cannot treat the will of the people as an afterthought. We witnessed a record-breaking turnout, with our participation more than 30 points higher than that of any other voting group. The overwhelming support from the Black community cannot be overlooked or taken for granted. Our community showed up, made our voices heard, and demonstrated that our participation matters.

At a moment like this, we need leadership that understands the significance of that message, respects the will of the people, and is prepared to serve every community with purpose and accountability. We believe Shavonda Sumter represents the kind of leadership we need right now." - **Felicia Simmons, President, National Action Network, Monmouth/Ocean County.**



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"Since joining the New Brunswick Area Branch NAACP in 2020, I have heard nothing but profound respect and admiration for Shavonda Sumter as a well-respected and fearless leader. I saw this firsthand at the 2026 NAACP New Jersey State Conference Convention, where members voted unanimously to make Sumter our preferred candidate for Lieutenant Governor." - **Rev. Elorm Ocansey, Assistant Pastor, Transformation International Chapel.**

Black New Jersey voted overwhelmingly for the Sherrill-Caldwell ticket. It would be an affront to democracy if our voices were not meaningfully considered in selecting the next Lieutenant Governor. We have asked the people, and they have spoken, not only through countless petition signatures, but through a tripartite coalition of faith, labor, and civil rights leaders across this state.

We refuse to be indispensable on Election Day and disposable when it is time to govern.

Governor Sherrill, appoint Shavonda Sumter as the next Lieutenant Governor of New Jersey.

Sincerely,

**Felicia Simmons
Monmouth/Ocean County National Action Network**

**Committeewoman Cynthia Harris RDH/MS
Greater Newark National Action Network**

**Kathy Valentine
Cape May County National Action Network**

**Rev. Dr Willie D. Francois
Building One New Jersey**

**Rev. Elorm Ocansey
Transformation International Chapel**

Pastor Barry Wise II
Greater Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Community Leader, North Jersey

Stacy-Ann Wilkins
Community Leader, North Jersey

Rev. David Ocansey
Community Leader, Central Jersey

Rev. Herbert Saforo Addo
Community Leader, Central Jersey

Shep Glennon, LCSW, M.Div., Union Theological Seminary
Community Leader, Central Jersey

Pastor Jason Rogers
Community Leader, Central Jersey

Rev. Dr. Ricky Donato
Community Leader, Central Jersey

Pastor Desmond Koranteng Addow
Community Leader, South Jersey

Kevin Barfield, Past President, Camden County NAACP
Community Leader, South Jersey

Naa'san Carr
Community Leader, South Jersey

Rev. Rhonda Hart
Community Leader, South Jersey

Rev. Douglas Moore & First Lady Angela Rodriguez Moore
First Baptist Church of Whitesboro, Community Leader, South Jersey

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National Action Network is one of the leading civil rights organizations in the Nation with chapters throughout the entire United States. Founded in 1991 by the Reverend Al Sharpton, NAN works within the spirit and tradition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to promote a modern civil rights agenda that includes the fight for one standard of justice, decency, and equal opportunities for all people regardless of race, religion, nationality, or gender.