



**Statement on the White House Update on Efforts Since the Signing of Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.**

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Executive Order 13985 was signed by President Joe Biden during a critical moment in the ongoing struggle for racial justice in America, starting with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, disasters related to climate change that intensified long-standing environmental injustices for communities of color, then the tragic killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and other Black lives that only deepened existing racial, social, and environmental disparities. Systemic barriers, deeply entrenched, continue to leave too many Black, brown and other disinvested communities of color behind and prevent them from achieving the American dream.

Out of these challenging events came the urgent need to pursue a bold approach to address these inequities and to deliver on America's fundamental promise of prosperity that can be created and shared by all. That is why this Executive Order, and the steps that the Biden-Harris Administration have taken over the past two years to address systemic inequities are important. The efforts that federal agencies have implemented to expand investment in and support for underserved communities is unprecedented.

These efforts are directly intersectional to everything we do at the Partnership for Southern Equity. From our organizing efforts, to democratizing communities with data and through our forums and research, we bring communities together to lift up and encourage just, sustainable, and civic practices for balanced growth and opportunity.

One of those efforts is the Justice40 Initiative, which is transforming hundreds of federal programs to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, clean water, and other federal investments to disadvantaged communities. This was the catalyst behind PSE partnering with other organizations to create the Justice40 Accelerator, now in its second cohort. The Accelerator has captured this moment to radically reimagine the existing government resource delivery system as a restorative and reparative framework that better supports Black and historically disinvested communities of color - and to hold the Biden-Harris Administration accountable in this regard.

This is an historic moment in our country, and one that we don't take lightly at PSE. But we have a lot more work to do. The fight for racial equity is a journey. We must remain bold in calling out inequities wherever they may be, uphold our responsibility to fight racial injustice in all forms, and continue to lift up one another and the communities we serve.

We applaud the White House for their historic and brave efforts, and we at PSE will continue to work to realize racial equity in the American South and abroad.