



## Government Policy and the Role of Government

Government Policy has an impact on every phase of our lives twenty-four hours a day. This is true whether we are in agreement with these policies or not. Government policy affects the food we eat, the water we drink, where we can park our cars, what medications we can take. Government policy determines which activities are legal or illegal and what the punishment is for said illegal activity. Government policies are set at all levels of government: federal, state and local.

Government policies should be written in such a way as to protect the rights of all citizens and to maintain an orderly society. However, some government policies have contributed to unequal treatment of some segments of our population and gave others unfair advantages. This includes severely restricting the rights and opportunities of some citizens to access life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Where necessary, current government policies need to be reformed in order to correct inequities, and future government policies should show no bias against any citizen or group of citizens.

### Government Policies should:

- **Protect** and **Preserve** the rights of all citizens
- **Guarantee** all citizens equal protection under the law
- **Ensure** all citizens have access to adequate health care.
- **Assure** that all children receive a quality education
- **Protect** citizens from unfair lending practices
- **Prevent** discrimination in employment practices
- **Counteract** discrimination in law enforcement
- **Defend** citizens from unfair housing practices
- **Provide** equal access to public services in all communities
- **Dispense** equal public safety in all neighborhoods



## The Role of Government

The purpose of government is to engage in activities to promote the “common good,” and to regulate and control social, political and economic spheres. Government entities must collaborate with local communities, businesses, and the philanthropic communities to impact violence. To alleviate the root causes of violence, and not merely control the violence, governmental entities should do the following:

- **Fund**, monitor and evaluate programs that meet the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of children, youth, families and adults in the community. These needs affect the human spirit -- acceptance, belonging to community, positive social grouping, as well as affirming both the self *and* the community
- **Support** “real” programs that emphasize keeping families safely together.
- **Pass**, implement, and enforce regulations and legislation that protect the civil rights of *all* people. Be open to participate in evaluations of program effectiveness to ensure that such programs meet the needs of affected individuals.
- **Create** and/or expand opportunities for input from youth, families and adults regarding policies aimed at reducing violence.
- **Produce** a political report card to assess accountability to responsibilities and campaign promises involving the reduction of violence. This report should be presented to the public periodically, preferably quarterly.
- **Provide** incentives, including tax incentives, for businesses participating in the economic revitalization of blighted areas; providing training/apprenticeship programs; creating employee wellness plans and programs; and developing employer sponsored childcare programs.
- **Commit** finances and provide sufficient staff for expanded and comprehensive youth employment and apprentice programs.
- **Provide** community education forums about political and governmental processes.
- **Fund** programs for those transitioning from the criminal justice system.
- **Fund** and support mentoring programs, particularly those which recruit more persons of color.
- **Fund** and promote entities which can provide wide publicity for positive examples of African American images and role models.
- **Legislate**, regulate, and provide funding for culturally relevant best practices that ensure a quality education for *all* children, especially African Americans, to prepare them to live in a global community.

- **Fund** educational programs from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 that ensure that students can function well in cultural, recreational, and social contexts.
- **Support** research initiatives that identify best practices in violence prevention. Give priority support to programs that integrate the best practices in violence prevention.
- **Ensure** that *all* people have access to comprehensive illness prevention and treatment health services regardless of financial status.
- **Form** partnerships with communities that include health care centers and health care clients to ensure that the physical, social, and emotional needs of everyone are being met in a culturally sensitive manner.
- **Fund** for early childhood stimulation to assist children in reaching developmental milestones.
- **Provide** wellness centers that include recreation *and* education.
- **Provide** health insurance coverage for both mental *and* physical health care services.

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