

## *6. Make Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion a Foundational Element of State Government*

The Franchot administration will create a new cabinet-level position focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). This Secretary of DEI will be charged with three major initiatives: (i) promote diversity in government, especially in leadership positions, (ii) assess existing and proposed state policies to identify any biases, disparate impacts, or inadequate attention to existing inequity, and (iii) develop policies to promote economic relief for communities that have been structurally denied opportunity.



**The Franchot Administration will be driven by a conviction that when diverse perspectives are leveraged in policymaking, better policies and outcomes are achieved.** This fundamental value requires promoting diversity within government so that all voices and perspectives are represented. Platitudes about having a diverse cabinet are insufficient – diversity must be achieved throughout government at all levels. This specifically relates to race, gender, and sexual identity, but should also include consideration for the inclusion of Marylanders from all counties, as well as rural communities. Inclusion of Marylanders from all backgrounds and regions in state government will promote more equitable outcomes and accountability to all communities in our state.

Franchot will also address the ill effects of policies that have created unequal outcomes and institutionalized biases. The Secretary of DEI will review existing policies and within the first year of the administration be expected to publicly issue a report outlining priority action items for the governor. A requirement of this review will be a focus on the disparities in incarceration and the highest impact opportunities for closing wealth gaps.

The Franchot administration will prioritize addressing the ongoing effects of redlining. In collaboration with state-chartered community banks, local credit unions, and other community-focused lenders, the administration will seek to provide state-backed mortgage loans to communities of color with a goal of creating parity in new homeownership rates by the end of the administration's first term, with an explicit focus on disinvested communities.

A Franchot administration cannot claim to work for all Marylanders without transparently addressing past and present wrongs, and ensuring they do not continue.