



December 27, 2017

Happy Kwanzaa!

The days leading to Christmas have come and gone. Let our community continue the loving Christmas spirit and unite to build a more healthy community in which we can live, work, and play.

The end of Christmas marks the beginning of Kwanzaa, a week-long celebration held in the United States and in other nations of the African diaspora in the Americas.

This celebration honors African heritage in African-American culture and is observed from December 26 to January 1, culminating in a feast and gift-giving. Kwanzaa has seven core principles. It was created by Maulana Karenga and was first celebrated in 1966–67.

The celebration of Kwanzaa is a time to reflect on Black Lives, Black Businesses, Black Families, and our Black community. Kwanzaa is a week-long holiday that calls for the improvement of all Black lives.

Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of the following principles, as follows:

- Umoja (Unity): To strive for and to maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.
- Kujichagulia (Self-Determination): To define and name ourselves, as well as to create and speak for ourselves.
- Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.
- Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.
- Nia (Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
- Kuumba (Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
- Imani (Faith): To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

In the spirit of Kwanzaa, let's remember that Black is Beautiful, Black Lives Matter, Black Businesses Matter, and Black Communities Matter. In 1968, the late James Brown gave us, "Say it loud- I'm Black and I'm Proud." Let's live out that motto throughout Kwanzaa and throughout the upcoming year of 2018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LSK', with a stylized flourish at the end.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District