

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Appoints Charles Barker to the Cannabis Regulatory Commission

03/24/2021

Policy Staffer for Senator Booker to Serve as Final Commission Member

**TRENTON** – Governor Murphy today announced the appointment of Charles Barker to the Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC), completing the five-member commission after previous rounds of appointments in November and February. Mr. Barker will fill the seat previously announced for William Wallace, who will transition to the senior staff role of Director of Labor Relations for the Commission.

“As we move forward with our effort to establish a legal adult-use cannabis market, I am excited to add Charles Barker to our Cannabis Regulatory Commission,” **said Governor Murphy**. “I know Charles has the experience, commitment, and skills needed to help build a fair and inclusive adult-use cannabis market that will serve as a national model. We’re thrilled to welcome Charles to the Commission and look forward to his continued public service.”

“As a young Black man from an underserved neighborhood in New Jersey, I am humbled to join the Cannabis Regulatory Commission and bring my perspective to the table,” **said Charles Barker**. “For generations, the misguided War on Drugs has devastated entire families and communities. I know this experience first-hand from being unjustly profiled and pulled over, illegally searched, and scolded many times by the police simply for the color of my skin. This is very real for me.”

“Family members and friends of mine endured even harsher realities and have been gravely impacted by this war on people,” **continued Mr. Barker**. “I’m thankful to God, and honored that the Governor has entrusted me with the responsibility of promoting equity and restorative justice as we establish and regulate a new adult-use cannabis marketplace.”

“Charles has been an incredibly valuable member of our team with an important voice on issues from criminal justice reform to equitable marijuana legalization policy, and I know he will continue to stand up for justice in this new role,” **said U.S. Senator Cory Booker**. “While we will miss Charles and the incredible spirit he brings to our team, I am confident that he is the right person for this historic responsibility, and all of New Jersey will be better for it.”

“I am very proud of Charles. I have been in his life as his pastor since he was a child. His commitment to social and economic justice was started and was nurtured here at Calvary,” **said Reverend Calvin McKinney, Senior Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church of North Jersey at Garfield**. “Congratulations Governor Murphy for an outstanding pick.”

“I have worked several years with Charles on cannabis and racial justice issues throughout his time in Senator Booker’s office,” **said Reverend Charles Boyer, Pastor at Bethel AME Church in Woodbury and Executive Director of Salvation and Justice**. “He is a brilliant young man from our community, who understands how prohibition targeted us. I am confident Charles will bring relevant insight and a strong work ethic for equity.”

“Charles Barker, a projects specialist for U.S. Senator Cory Booker, is currently a member of the National Action Network and has garnered wide respect from leaders of our organization due to his work to ensure fairness in our marijuana laws,” **said Senior Pastor Reverend Dr. Steffie Bartley, Sr., Senior Pastor at New Hope Memorial Baptist Church and Northeast Regional Director/New Jersey Coordinator for the National Action Network**. “The National Action Network enthusiastically supports Governor Philip D. Murphy’s appointment of Mr. Barker to the Cannabis Regulatory Commission”

“I am sincerely disappointed that the NAACP had to go to such lengths to ensure that the Marijuana Legalization Law was followed and that this commission was reflective of the communities most harmed by this failed war on drugs,” **said Richard T. Smith, President of the NAACP New Jersey State Conference**. “That said, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Charles Barker as he will be appointed to the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission. He is truly a phenomenal young man who has led numerous initiatives for Senator Cory Booker. He and I have had the opportunity to talk and he truly understands the importance of this commission and his pivotal role to ensure the law is implemented correctly.”

Since January 2017, Charles Barker has served as Constituent Advocate and Projects Specialist for U.S. Senator Cory Booker, managing several policy areas, including criminal justice reform and cannabis, economic and small business development, financial services, consumer protection, and technology and innovation. During the 2018 election, he served as a Strategic Advisor to the campaign of Anthony Cureton, the first Black Sheriff in Bergen County. Barker has also served as Associate General Counsel for Alma Realty Corp. and legal intern for Wilentz, Goldman, & Spitzer; Enterprise Community Partners; the Elder Rights Clinic at South Brooklyn Legal Services; and the Community Development Clinic at Brooklyn Law School. Barker earned his undergraduate degree in 2010 from Rutgers University and Juris Doctor in 2014 from Brooklyn Law School. A native of Passaic City, Barker is a proud member of Calvary Baptist Church of North Jersey at Garfield, as well as the National Action Network.

The Cannabis Regulatory Commission will both regulate New Jersey’s medical cannabis marketplace and also provide oversight for the soon-to-be-established adult-use recreational cannabis marketplace.

For a letter from Senior Pastor Reverend Dr. Steffie Bartley, Sr., Northeast Regional Director and New Jersey of the National Action Network (NAN), declaring Mr. Barker a state representative of both NAN’s state branch and national organization, please click here ([https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210324/44/2e/14/53/4e1f740fe9b012b368e0d3f8/Steffie\\_Bartley\\_Letter.pdf](https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210324/44/2e/14/53/4e1f740fe9b012b368e0d3f8/Steffie_Bartley_Letter.pdf)).

For a headshot of Mr. Barker, please click here ([https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210324/49/92/b9/b8/72159a1116a1f60b11e8f6a1/Charles\\_Barker.jpg](https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210324/49/92/b9/b8/72159a1116a1f60b11e8f6a1/Charles_Barker.jpg)).

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