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American Bar Association Names Jamila Hodge and Cherise Fanno Burdeen as Co-Chairs of Racial Justice Committee

Director of the Reshaping Prosecution Program at the Vera Institute of Justice, Jamila Hodge, and Executive Partner at the Pretrial Justice Institute, Cherise Fanno Burdeen, will co-chair the Racial Justice and Diversity Committee for the American Bar Association's (ABA) Criminal Justice Section.

Washington, DC - The American Bar Association (ABA) recently appointed [Jamila Hodge](#) and [Cherise Fanno Burdeen](#) as co-chairs of the Criminal Justice Section's Racial Justice and Diversity Committee, which will examine the causes of racial disparities in the criminal justice system and develop proposed solutions. In addition, the committee will engage in activities concerning the role of lawyers of color and oversee the ABA's Criminal Justice Section's efforts to reduce discriminatory conduct affecting racial and ethnic minorities within the criminal justice system.

"During this time of racial reckoning in our nation, we all have a direct responsibility to take a look in the mirror and use racial-equity practices to transform ourselves so we can transform the system," said **Cherise Fanno Burdeen, co-chair of the ABA's Criminal Justice Section's Racial Justice and Diversity Committee and Executive Partner at the Pretrial Justice Institute.** "I am honored to serve as co-chair alongside the incredible Jamila Hodge and invite ABA members on this painful but rewarding journey."

"This country has a long history of state-sanctioned violence against Black people, which started with slavery and currently persists within the criminal legal system," said **Jamila Hodge, co-chair of the ABA's Criminal Justice Section Racial Justice and Diversity committee and Director of the Reshaping Prosecution Program at The Vera Institute of Justice.** "We have to confront this history head-on and I look forward to working with Cherise to help ABA members learn more about our legacy of slavery and to implement guidance that centers racial equity as we work toward a more just legal system."

Under Jamila and Cherise's leadership, the Racial Justice and Diversity Committee will focus on curating educational experiences for members around three main areas: the racialized history of the criminal legal system, white identity development, and moving from reckoning to rectifying harm.

You can find updates about the Racial Justice and Diversity Committee and the ABA's Criminal Justice Section [here](#).

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About PJI: *The Pretrial Justice Institute (PJI) leverages more than 40 years of experience to create a practical and proven approach to advancing safe, fair, and effective pretrial reforms that honors and protects all people. Last year, PJI's staff and board committed to an equity transformation to center*

racial justice as the foundation of the organization's vision, mission, and work. To learn more, visit pretrial.org.

About Vera Institute of Justice: *The Vera Institute of Justice is a justice reform change agent. Vera produces ideas, analysis, and research that inspire change in the systems people rely upon for safety and justice. Vera collaborates with the communities most impacted by these systems and works in close partnership with government and civic leaders to implement change. Across projects, Vera is committed to explicitly and effectively reducing the burdens of the justice system on people of color and frames all work with an understanding of our country's history of racial oppression. Vera is currently pursuing core priorities of ending the misuse of jails, transforming conditions of confinement, providing legal services for immigrants, and ensuring that justice systems more effectively serve America's increasingly diverse communities. Vera has offices in Brooklyn, NY; Washington, DC; New Orleans, and Los Angeles.*