

President Derrick Johnson
NAACP National Headquarters
4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215

Dear President Johnson,

As active and lifetime members of the local and national NAACP, we are breaking our silence and speaking out on critical issues facing our organization and our city. Our branch is being negatively impacted by political maneuvering that will only set us back as a People, and we need immediate action.

Recent conversations on how to address numerous crises in Oakland have created a fissure in Branch 1051. Our leadership is reverting to lies, fear-mongering and the “tough-on-crime” rhetoric that has targeted African Americans throughout our entire history in this county, evoking stereotypical narratives of Black criminality that have led to the United States incarcerating more Black people than there were enslaved Africans. We seek to be in alignment with the national NAACP on topics of education, public safety, housing and economic justice, but our chapter constantly contradicts this aspiration. As stated so eloquently on the website of our national organization:

“When we talk about race and justice, we're talking about the ways that discrimination, policing, prosecutions, and incarceration practices impact Black communities.

Our criminal justice system is shaped by biased policing and unfair judicial precedents, rooted in anti-Blackness and racial disparity. The emotional, mental, physical, and financial impact on our communities is a tangible experience for millions of Black people in the U.S. The cost of an unjust justice system is high.”

We want to work with the national NAACP, as well as local leaders and allies who have vowed to dismantle entrenched discriminatory systems, but find ourselves drowned out by our own organization’s officers who constantly harass, [threaten](#) and [malign](#) attempts to undue historic harm. This must end. We stand with organizations advancing unity over division and solutions over acrimony. We support the formal positions taken by the [East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club](#) and the [Alameda County Democratic Party](#) denouncing hate and must do the same for Black women currently under attack..

National efforts to control Black voices in GOP supermajority locales are working aggressively to privatize public education; repeal voting rights; recall democratically-elected, reform-focused District Attorneys; relax regulations that protect vulnerable renters and more. In the local NAACP chapter, this push has manifested in the singular support of charter school candidates in board of education elections; efforts to recall the first Black, female District Attorney in our county's history; supporting legislation that defunds public education in favor of tax breaks for the powerful real estate lobby over renters; and taking payouts from big tobacco and big pharmaceutical corporations.

In addition, a separate nonprofit named *Friends of the Oakland Branch* was originally created in 2010 to funnel a percentage of funds, including municipal grant awards, away from the national NAACP through disregarding reporting requirements. This diversion from the organization’s primary mission is unethical, a violation of bylaws and deeply disturbing.

Branch 1051 has been largely silent on issues that truly impact the lives of Oakland's Black residents, like homelessness and housing affordability, but recently the organization has springboarded onto the national stage due to the work of Sam Singer of Singer Associates Public Relations, a professional PR firm that specializes in crisis communications for "public relations disasters". Clients include a San Francisco Bay Area high school who allegedly covered up a series of sexual assaults by teachers and coaches against school-aged youth; and representing Chevron in multiple cases including an "oil refinery disaster in California and a legal ruling in Ecuador that could have awarded billions of dollars to indigenous people for the company's alleged pollution damage to the Amazon" rain forest. Singer's tactics rely on the use of NAACP members who've lost elections to women of color who are currently serving in office, creating stark divisions in the public discourse. Talking points include framing and disseminating false information based in truth, while using lies and subjectivity to center wokeness, progressive policies, 'liberal Democrats' and debunked claims that "defund the police " are the sources of everything wrong in the city". This misinformation campaign intends to do a few things:

1. Agitate people around a divisive, yet organizable Conservative agenda
2. Discredit trusted Black leaders and organizations currently serving Oakland
3. Distract from the historic disinvestment in Black communities by previous administrations
4. Build a platform for provocateurs to "legitimately" engage on the local, state and national stage
5. Break down progressive strongholds in the world's 4th largest economy for exploitation by corporate interests

We urge the Oakland NAACP to do the following:

1. Cease the spread of false information; Fact-check first.
2. Remove any member, officer or former elected official currently misusing their position to attack, misinform and politicize, and/or who seek to weaponize the Oakland NAACP for their personal gain
3. Disentangle the Oakland NAACP from the political agenda of the Alameda County Republican Party
4. Reject all connections to Sam Singer
5. Provide transparency on all financial contributions including, but not limited to funds, benefits and perks to to members/officers, Oakland Branch 1051 and the nonprofit organization *Friends of the Oakland Branch*

We have individually voiced concerns to NAACP leadership, but have been ignored. Some members have left the chapter entirely. This is why we are reaching out to allies to assist. Our desire is to end the weaponization of painful issues and political positions so that genuine conversations on moving our city forward can occur. We are pastors, educators, attorneys, union organizers, entrepreneurs, civic leaders, lifelong NAACP members, officers and more. We urge national and supportive organizations to step in and help us reclaim the legacy of this historic organization before it's too late.

Signed,

Concerned members the Oakland NAACP Branch and community partners

Doug Blacksher, Host, Black Business Roundtable, Community Activist, Oakland Native
Millie Cleveland, Retired SEIU 1021 Field Representative
Cathy Leonard, Oakland Native, Community Activist
Walter Riley, Civil Rights Atty, Co-Chair of John George Democratic Club, Community Activist
Ben Tapscott, Architect, Athletic Coach, Public Education Advocate
Sheryl Walton, Community Activist, Oakland Native

Digital references

Media spots organized by Sam Singer

- **The Megyn Kelly Show** - <https://youtu.be/lth2NBVdm2k?si=AOub5LTqP0ISFAdp>
- **News Nation** - <https://youtu.be/ZCgbHyzBrzU?si=OmtEwYgPVXWrJgqA>
- **Fox News** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIhS7dYverA>
- **Forbes Breaking News** - https://youtu.be/7XdDH-Tyem0?si=EBVhn_3w8Tfa7him
- **Conservative Podcaster Robert Gouveia Esq.** - <https://youtu.be/3GTo86tfEks?si=nLktEQUuHmlWNB8X>

Conservative Views On Oakland's Democratically-Enacted Rank-Choice Voting Process

- **Fox News** - <https://youtu.be/aGhGWhocYiU?si=hDkgshzbY9DIM-ds>
- **Heritage Foundation** - <https://www.heritage.org/election-integrity/report/ranked-choice-voting-bad-choice>
- **Alameda County Republican Party** - https://www.alamedagop.org/ranked_choice_is_bad
- **Republican National Lawyers Association** - https://www.rnla.org/icymi_a_ranked_choice_voting_disaster_in_oakland

Positions taken and/or endorsed by the Oakland NAACP Branch

- **Big Pharma**
 - <https://theintercept.com/2016/10/28/lgbt-drug-price/>
 - <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-11-20/california-naacp-leader-to-step-down-alice-huffman>
 - <https://prospect.org/politics/alice-huffman-black-leader-taking-corporate-money-to-write-phony-newspapers/>
- **Big Real Estate**
 - <https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/Rent-control-foes-hire-California-NAACP-leader-13144448.php>
 - <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-oct-22-me-spokesmodel22-story.html>
- **Bail Reform/Public Safety**
 - <https://calmatters.org/politics/2020/09/california-naacp-president-helps-corporate-ballot-measure-campaigns/>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJ2O_hTKn1s
- **Public Education/Charter Schools**
 - https://www.huffpost.com/entry/naacp-charter-school_n_5d433931e4b0aca3411ab9a4
 - <https://www.postnewsgroup.com/51845/>
 - <https://goadvocatesoakland.org/2017/02/go-oakland-recognized-by-naacp-for-outstanding-service/>
- **“Defund the Police” Debunked**
 - [Despite calls to defund police, Oakland PD's budget increased nearly 18% since 2019, I-Team found](#)
 - [Oakland's new budget doesn't 'defund' the police, but it boosts funding for alternatives](#)
 - [No, Oakland didn't 'defund' the police](#)
 - [Republican Party Funds Recall of Black DA](#)
 - <https://www.foxnews.com/media/oakland-police-chief-budget-crime-surge>
- **Oakland NAACP on Democrats, African American Elected Officials and Local Leaders**
 - [Alameda Co. DA Pamela Price says she's being 'targeted' amid recall effort over progressive policies](#)
 - [The @AlamedaCoDem are in a crisis of relevancy.](#)
 - [Editorial: Oakland NAACP should cut ties with Scott](#)
 - [Oakland! This whole thread with receipts about a couple of Seneca's right-wing pals that he brought to town last weekend is a must-read](#)
 - [Seneca Scott, organizer of upcoming rally for public safety, denounced for 'hateful anti-LGBTQ statements'](#)