

Brianda Negrete *Public Comment - Public Defender*

From: Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt <lyonspruitt@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2023 11:15 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt
Subject: Letter of Support, Santa Barbara County Public Defender Office, Budget Hearings/Request
Attachments: NAACP Letter to Board of Supervisors Budget Public Defender 2023.pdf
Importance: High

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Good Morning,
I would appreciate dissemination of this letter to all supervisors.

Thank you.

Best Regards,
Lawanda

Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt
President
Santa Maria-Lompoc NAACP
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"I URGE you to answer the highest calling of your heart and STAND UP for what you truly believe."
Congressman John R. Lewis

"Democracy Dies In Darkness." The Washington Post

**NAACP
SANTA MARIA-
LOMPOC BRANCH**

P.O. BOX 1092
SANTA MARIA, CA 93456

OFFICERS:

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Lyons-Pruitt**
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MISSION

Our mission is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.

VISION

We envision an inclusive community rooted in liberation where all persons can exercise their civil and human rights without discrimination.

NAACP

Santa Maria Lompoc Branch

April 20, 2023

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

C/O Clerk of the Board

County Administration Building, Board Hearing Room

105 East Anapamu Street, 4th Floor

Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Departmental Budgets, Public Safety, Public Defender

Chair Williams and Members of the Board.

Unfortunately, I was ill yesterday and during the comment period and did not adequately convey our support for the Public Defender request for Racial Justice positions. That said, please accept this letter as the position of the Santa Maria-Lompoc NAACP.

I bring you greetings from the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, the National Association For the Advancement of Colored People. You know us as the NAACP and our mission is to achieve EQUITY, political rights and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination and accelerate wellbeing, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.

On behalf of the Santa Maria-Lompoc Branch of the NAACP, it's officers and members, we wish to convey our FULL SUPPORT for the Public Defender budget request before you. We thank and commend the Board and the County on your boldness and the work you all have done to date to advance equity and inclusion and for continuing this important work.

Before you now is the Public Defender's request for positions necessary as a result of the passage of AB2542 and AB256 the California Racial Justice Act (RJA), by the California Legislature. Racial disparate impact in the administration of criminal justice is a longstanding, pernicious, and pervasive problem and is a Public Health Crisis. Starks disparities in charges, convictions and sentencing was gathered by researchers at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) from analyzing CA DOJ data over a 13 year period (2006-2018) and their first three fact sheets were recently published by the ACLU of Northern CA on April 6, 2023 ([Projects – Michael Light – UW–Madison \(wisc.edu\)](#))

Yesterday, Public Defender Macuga, Assistant Public Defender Kyle Griffith and Deputy Public Defender Juan Higuera, all spoke on assessing and litigating individual RJA claims as specialized, data driven and time consuming. The Santa Barbara County Office of the Public Defender does not currently have the resources to meet these heavy burdens and provide the quality representation our communities of color deserves and an attorney specializing in the RJA is needed to adequately identify, investigate and litigate these claims.

In his August 28, 1963, March on Washington speech, Dr. King spoke of The Declaration of Independence and the founding fathers signing a promissory note and that they were at the Capitol that day to "cash the check." We believe your "Adoption of a Statement of Commitment to Advance Equity and Inclusion," in late 2020 and 2021 was also such a promissory note and we FULLY SUPPORT AND STRONGLY URGE THE BOARD TO GRANT THEIR REQUEST FOR THESE POSITIONS.

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Santa Maria/ Lompoc Branch

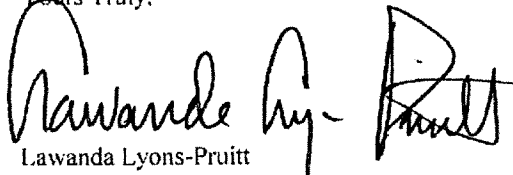
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisor

April 20, 2023

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Lastly, in the spirit of leaving you with a quote, I quote Thomas Paine from September 12, 1777, "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men undergo the fatigue of supporting it." Our analogy, the blessings we enjoy, requires your' and everyone's support.

Yours Truly,



Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE**

LAWANDA LYONS-PRUITT
President



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