

Public Comment

Sheila de la Guerra

From: Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt <lyonspruitt@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 4:58 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt
Subject: Santa Maria-Lompoc NAACP, 4/13/26 Budget Hearings, Community Services
Attachments: NAACP Letter to Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors REG 4-14-26.docx; Letter cont. Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors p 2 & 3 4-14-26.docx

Importance: High

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Good Afternoon Clerk of the Board - Ms. Jacquelyne,
Please add our comments to Community Services Reports.
Thank You.
Warmly,
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





Santa Marial Lompoc Branch

Santa Maria/ Lompoc Branch
National Association for the Advancement of Color People
P.O. Box 1092
Santa Maria, CA. 93456
Phone: (805)-757-7208
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April 14, 2026

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu, 4th Floor
Santa Barbara, CA. 93101

Re: APRIL 13, 2026, BUDGET HEARING COMMUNITY SERVICES, RACIAL EQUITY GRANT

Chair Nelson and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I bring you Greetings from the nation’s largest and oldest civil right organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People whose 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.

In 1965 the Voting Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson. Designed to enforce the 15th Amendment, it outlawed discriminatory voting practices like literacy tests and poll taxes and it’s goal was to eliminate legal barriers at state and local levels that prevented African Americans from voting, particularly in the South. It was a hard-fought victory with many people making the ultimate sacrifice. 48 years later in 2013, it was eviscerated in Shelby v. Holder when the Supreme Court ruled that the formula used to determine jurisdiction was in essence “outdated.” And here we are today with some fo the most restrictive voting laws pre-civil rights being attempted.

In 1954 (before I was born), Thurgood Marshall who would like become Justice Thurgood Marshall on the U.S>,Supreme Court would successfully argue Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. Although I wasn’t in school when it became law, by the time I was of age to attend school in my hometown in Mississippi, it had not been enforced and I would be bused some 15 to 20 miles away to school although there was a school (“the White” school) in my hometown. It would not be until 1970, my freshman year of high school that this legislation would be enforced and I would attend the same school in my hometown.

In the wake of George Floyd, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and others, I and other community members stood before you numerous times and you all heard us. Dr. Van Do-Reynoso and our Santa Barbara County Public Health Department presented you with a Resolution which you adopted declaring “Racism is a Public Health Crisis.”

NAACP 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.

Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt President

**Pam Gates
3rd Vice
President**

Beverly Washington Secretary

**Gloria Mantooth
Treasurer**

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

April 14, 2026

Page Two

You then allocated \$500,000.00 to the Racial Equity Fund, now Grant. \$275,000.00 was deposited in a fund administered by The Fund For Santa Barbara at a 15% administration fee. There continues to be no accountability and/or transparency on the \$225,000.00, it's use and where it goes.

Today, there is interest to have the Human Service Commission administer this fund which is purportedly \$275,000.00 that is news to us! **My question is WHY?** Is it so that the other \$275,000 will be eaten up and unaccounted for, but not by the very community that you pledged to help. What is wrong with The Fund For Santa Barbara continuing to administer the fund at minimum administrative fees?

Admittedly, the NAACP has been a recipient of the Racial Equity Grant and every year we and all grantees submit a Report which I have no problem doing; however, there has never been a Report on the \$225,000.00, how it is used, the recipients, etc.

With our funding, each year, we hold Assemblies at Lompoc Valley Middle School and Vandenberg Middle School **where 1340**, 7th and 8th graders, are given presentations on respect, discrimination, racism, use of the N Word, which I submit to you is at an all-time high, bullying, etal. Last year, we brought in a live play all the way from Denver, "At The Table With Dr. King."

I am not surprised that the Racial Equity Grant would be #1 on the chopping block because historically this has always been the case in marginalized communities and it is hurtful and painful to hear and see. Chair Nelson, I reference to your comments before the hearing that you were not sure it was needed. Although the next week, you walked those comments back, you still made them which is why I cite the Voting Rights Act and the Brown decision as two hard fought victories that were either eviscerated on the basis of "no longer needed" or years to enforce. There are other examples, but these come to mind.

Rolling Back the Racial Equity Grant aligns Santa Barbara County with the broader attacks on equity and aligns with the Trump's Administration efforts to roll back diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We ask you to **HONOR** your original \$500,000.00 commitment to equity funding as it is still needed. Racism and its ugliness, ugly scars, cannot be erased or solved in 5-6 years. It took hundreds of year to get here, although in no way am I suggesting that the commitment be funded for hundreds of years

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

April 14, 2026

Page Three

If the funds are not coming from Cannabis money (Prop 64)as we have always been under this impression, we ask you to review this possibility and make a lasting commitment to sustain the fund.

We leave you with these two quotes;

“Those who expect to REAP the BLESSINGS of FREEDOM, MUST like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it.” Thomas Paine

“Until JUSTICE rolls down like waters and RIGHTEOUSNESS like a mighty stream.” Drum Major for Justice, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. & The Book of Amos

Respectfully,

Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt

Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt

President