

**Response to Members and Friends RE: San Francisco Chronicle Editor, "NAACP leader in Spotlight"
from Alice A. Huffman August 13, 2018**

The San Francisco Chronicle article on August 10, "NAACP leader in Spotlight" requires a response. from the person who is president of both the California Hawaii National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (CA-HI NAACP) and AC Public Affairs, Inc. (ACPA). Yes, I am a business woman who in 1991 took over the state NAACP Conference that had no office, no money, and no presence in the state capitol which is its constitutional charge. No one wrote how many years ACPA included the NAACP in her business location for free to give them a presence in Sacramento. In 1992 when then Senator Kevin Murray (retired) was trying to get Governor Gray Davis to sign a mandatory data collecting bill to stop racial profiling and Governor Davis said No, Senator Murray reached out to the state NAACP to support a compromise bill for police training only. The national NAACP screamed foul, No Compromise. I was a Capitol woman who made a successful career as executive for Governor Jerry Brown because I understood the art of compromise. The most stinging comment during a call from then Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. who gave me his two-minute tongue lashing that I never forgot. He said "Huffman, I understand that you are selling out Black folks on this racial profiling bill. We don't need a state president that compromises the welfare of Black people. You are the only organization with the history and reputation of looking out for black people, don't sell us out". **I got it.**

Yesterday many minority organizations were in the news in Los Angeles advocating Yes on 10. I wonder how many of their members voted on their position and how many really represent the disenfranchised and speak for their members? For 13 years, I managed the California Teachers Association's Political Action Committee that was well funded. I realized that all the NAACP has is "truth to power". One of the reasons the NAACP is 109 years old is because it has structure and has a rule for everything. In California, we follow the rules. We operate by majority and debate most issues we think are important to African Americans, especially the economically challenged and poor that few represent any more.

As a member of the DNC and a member of Executive Committee of the State Democratic Party, I cannot tell you the last time I heard the word **poor** in any action item. Most special interests don't worry about this element of the community as well. Thus, the California NAACP takes unpopular positions and sometimes diverges from these groups, and they are unhappy because they believe the support of the NAACP to their cause is an entitlement. We usually depart from these groups when we believe it is right thing to do, as was the case when we supported civil liberties and same sex marriage for gays and lesbians. The base screamed, "she has sold out Black folks who bled and died for our civil rights." It did not take Senator Mark Leno long to convince us that a "right is an human entitlement especially and we should oppose all government discrimination." It did not take the California NAACP state civil rights warriors who fight discrimination daily to recognize that simple truth. Yes, we took a lot of abuse, but California holds its head high for leading the national NAACP and other African American groups' leadership to finally support the LGBTQ community. If the Quakers and other abolitionists had looked the other way on slavery, where would we be today?

There is currently some rumbling about our opposition to Proposition 8. This is a case in which we think labor is negotiating its position on the ballot rather than through collective bargaining. We middleclass Blacks love labor and its contribution to the welfare and security of workers, especially African Americans who historically had not been at the top of their agenda. But the truth is without them we would not enjoy the level of materialism and security in the work place. But when you cap a

service like Dialysis—and the most of its patients are African Americans; (my niece and name sake, Alice, just died last year from poor care), who do you think will feel the brunt of cutback services? My people.

Yes, we oppose 8.

We will stand alone from our traditional base on some good government proposals, as our support for the Redistricting Commission which when passed, forced elected officials to pay more attention to their constituents. Most funds they raised were going into leadership fights and safe districts (ours). Voting was down in our community because no resources were dedicated to educating the community. Even though the campaign was led by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The base once again cried foul, not because of the issue, but because we stood with a republican governor, a republican, democrats and some labor groups attacked us. We were on the right side of that issue and we were able, thanks to Senator Hertzberg and California Forward, who funded us, to participate throughout the process, and we believe we were instrumental in keeping our traditional seats even though our population was significantly decreased.

The late Julian Bond, Chairman of the National NAACP was our champion on the LGBTQ issues and provided a buffer for us against hostile board members who threatened to quit. But not so on the opposition of the California NAACP to the first cigarette tax. Most people don't think or know about how regressive taxes and fees affect elements of our community. I don't have to go far from home (I just look at my 54 nieces and 53 grand nieces and 4 great grand nieces from one off shoot of the family clan) to know that if some people must choose between milk and cigarettes, cigarettes will win because of its addiction. Plus, as the staff who provided the leadership on the prop 98 educational ballot measure for CTA, that tobacco tax initiative was circumventing its contribution toward the education fund that we recently won. (I was still in my CTA mode).

The second tobacco initiative was sponsored by SEIU and the California Medical Association. Yvonne Walker, President of 1000 and Dustin Corcoran, President of CMA visited with the NAACP and answered many of our questions and charges. We were assured that most of the proceeds were going to MediCal that serve many low income and African Americans and would not end up in the pockets of executives. Yes, while still regressive, but unlike the past ones, we would see more money going into our community to educate and to motivate our folks to stop smoking. Their rationale carried the day and we supported it. The promise they made may come true in the Central valley where five NAACP branches are applying for to tobacco funds. Yes, we flipped.

More information requires flexibility, which seems to be missing in Congress these days. We don't align with the usual Democratic base on misleading initiatives that will hurt services to those who don't have a voice. They have special interests to protect and we just have our people to protect. Everyone loves to hate PhRMA but they ignore the fact that drug companies serve our community and they must be protected and informed. When people like Weinstein, who funds many initiatives like this one and discount drug initiatives across the country to line his pockets with resale profits gained by defrauding people with HIV/AIDS, we call him out. He is manipulating the ballot process for his own wealth creation and is misleading the voters. **We speak up.** Not only do we speak up, but we attempt to educate PhRMA on community health issues and we educate our community on the facts about prescription drugs and health costs.

We don't hate big business, especially when we find responsible partners that support our objectives as much as possible. We look for areas where we can work together. But as I once told the CPUC on an item corporate America does not have enough money to buy the 100 year-old NAACP (at that time).

Unfortunately, we don't know most of the folks who attack the California NAACP like the Rev who accused us of wanting to send kids to school high because we supported the legalization of

marijuana. His kind could not see the social justice issue that the NAACP saw; too many of our men and women became incarcerated as felons while white kids got a slap on the wrist for the same crime of possessing marijuana. Many missed how pot had destroyed many levels of our community and how the NAACP was able to negotiate the initiative writers away from including language that was bad for our community. Moreover, with the help of Drug Policy Alliance and Lt Governor Newsom the rich guys writing the initiative took our amendments and helped us get \$10 million a year set aside now and it grows up to \$50 million for community base organizations.

Melody Gutierrez, author of the Chronicle article, attempted to be fair, but the fact that hired guns on the other side could generate this thinly veiled negative article about the leadership of the CA-HI NAACP for political purposes put her in a bad light. The fact that the Chronicle allowed this to happen seems very unfair. Dammen Goodman, the main assassin of my character is a hired gun for the “yes” side. Why do hired guns, deserve a public forum to take on an opponent. Does not the Chronicle respect local members of the NAACP like the Honorable Willie L. Brown, Jr, who just received the 103rd NAACP Spingarn Award, or the renown Rev. Amos Brown, who is not only pastor of the 3rd Baptist Church, but also president of the NAACP San Francisco Branch and an NAACP national board member? It might have been better for the story and would have lent it creditability if she had found corroborators on the yes side who were not on some one’s paid staff.

Proposition 10, the Weinstein initiative, reminds me of the Ward Conerly Initiative. It does not do anything they claim but get rid of a state law that offers some protection of single family home owners for rent control. It opens the door for 400 plus cities and 58 counties who can already do rent control; but it will allow them to regulate single-family homes, which will devalue black wealth. Most of us who accumulate wealth through single-family homes, sell them or rent them and use them for collateral to increase our wealth. The NAACP does not oppose rent control for those who have it. We just have too many citizens being pushed out and need reasonable affordable housing now. If citizens are asked to vote on a measure it should do what it says. Prop 10 is a empty promise. The California legislature should step up to the plate and fix this housing problem.

As President of the California NAACP since 1999, and President of my firm AC Public Affairs, Inc. since 1988, it would be ludicrous to oppose legislation or ballot measures against my own beloved organization for profit. ACPA makes sure that the business we solicit does not undermine the NAACP. We love it when campaigns recognize that we can make a difference and invest in a substantial campaign, so we can get the word out.

I cannot tell you the last time that the base saw fit to invest in the African American community. I would have hoped that Melody, a Latina, would applaud a minority woman holding her own economically in a male dominated industry. (Maybe one day we will unite and support each other.)

I would hope that the San Francisco Chronicle would be more circumspect in what it chooses as a front-page story about our nonprofit. There is no salaciousness in this story, no wrong doing, just innuendo, and insult and an attempt to blight our executive committee members who are all volunteers in this 109-year-old organization. This article is political trivia and helps a fraudulent campaign. This is unfortunate. Remember, we are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that fights for social and economic justice, and the California leaders have the courage to stand alone if it is right for our people.