

Price Commemorates People and Businesses Along Historic Central Avenue

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

L.A. Councilmember Curren Price led a special presentation during the City Council meeting on Feb. 14, spotlighting a historical walk down Central Avenue in Council District 9.

In celebration of African American Heritage Month, this event paid homage to longstanding local institutions, including Bowers & Sons Cleaners, 27th Street Bakery, and Benjamin J. Bowie American Legion Post 228, recognizing their vital contributions to the South Central community.

Attendees were treated to a special photo exhibition that showcased the area's rich heritage, as well as an insightful presentation by Alison Rose Jefferson, an independent historian and Heritage Conservation consultant.

"Central Avenue holds a story that too few know—a story of fortitude, innovation, and cultural influence that has helped shape Los Angeles," added Price.

"At a time when Black erasure is a growing threat, this occasion underscores the need to educate, empower, and challenge misinformation. Black History Month is about preserving our stories, honoring our struggles, and celebrating our triumphs."



Councilmember Curren Price and historian Alison Rose Jefferson.



Family and staff of Bowers & Sons Cleaners were saluted by Price.



Members of Benjamin J. Bowie American Legion Post 228 were honored for their yearslong impact.



Price presents plaque to Denise Cravin of 27th Street Bakery.

In Unexpected Move, Calif. Republican Lawmaker Bill Essayli Introduces Reparations Bill

By ANTONIO RAY HARVEY
California Black Media

Last month, about 100 reparations advocates met at the State Capitol to build support for bills they backed that didn't make it to the Assembly floor for votes during the last legislative session.

During the day-long event — titled Reparations Education and Advocacy Day (R.E.A.D.) — members of 20 grassroots organizations announced that they were willing to work with any lawmaker, Republican or Democrat, who would help to advance their cause.

Last week, the advocates found support in an unlikely campaigner: Bill Essayli (R-Corona), a Republican lawmaker, who just last year stated he does not support using taxpayer money to pay for reparations.

The drum beat for reparations is growing louder. In 2024, Taylor Swadlow, with the first step and formally recognized the harms of slavery committed by the state of California (even though we were never a slave state). At a joint press conference, Swadlow, had to set the record straight.



In a Feb. 21 press release, the Coalition for a Just and Equitable California (CJEC) stated that the "movement to recognize and support American Freedmen residents is a non-partisan effort" that prioritizes sound "policy over political affiliation."

CJEC is the statewide organization at the forefront of mobilizing grassroots efforts for reparations and reparative justice for "Freedmen," a term used to describe Black Americans who are descendants of slaves in the United States.

"Over the coming days and weeks, additional provisions will be added to further honor the state's responsibility to serve and develop policies for Ameri-

can Freedmen residents directly, such as in areas of business, housing, and education, instead of non-profit organizations with little to no transparency and public accountability," CJEC's release stated.

Essayli, a former Riverside County prosecutor and the first Muslim American elected to the California Legislature, introduced Assembly Bill (AB) 1315

reparations is growing louder," Essayli posted on X last year. "Today's resolution, ACR 135, was the first step and formally recognized the harms of slavery committed by the State of California (even though we were never a slave state)."

Essayli followed that post with this: "I'm very much opposed to CA taxpayers paying reparations."



Feb. 21, legislation that would create the California American Freedmen Affairs Agency (CAFAA). Essayli says he is presenting the bill with the support of members of CJEC. "I have introduced AB 1315 to deliver on a broken promise and engage in an honest discussion about creating opportunities for American Freedmen instead of more empty political rhetoric from the Democrat Party," Essayli shared with California Black Media (CBM) on Feb. 22.

But some political watchers and skeptical Democrats are questioning the motives behind Essayli's sudden and unexpected support of reparations policy.

At press time, Essayli had not announced the introduction of AB 1315 on his website or social media pages.

Some are also pointing out the inconsistency in his position on reparations. For example, the Black LA Young Democrats reposted a screenshot of Essayli's post on X from last year, stating that he doesn't support taxpayer-funded reparations.

"All Black Folks in California are watching y'all getting played," the Black LA Young Democrats wrote, referring to CJEC. "The drum beat for

Essayli made that statement following a floor speech acknowledging an apology for slavery.

In Essayli's new bill, AB 1315, he proposes the creation of the California American Freedman Affairs Agency (CAFAA) a state-level department that would create a genealogy office to process eligibility requests and provide a legal arm to support reparations claims.

The bill mirrors many of the provisions in Senate Bill (SB) 1403 authored by former state Sen. Steven Bradford, who represented the 35th District in Los Angeles County before terming out last year.

Bradford's bill, SB 1403, also called for establishing CAFAA as a state-level department that would administer all reparations activities. However, some members of the CLBC did not support the bill moving to the Assembly floor for a vote because they said it "ceded legislative authority, which is critical given the generational impact this legislation would have."

"We understand the legislative process is complex and does not always unfold as initially envisioned," the CLBC's said in a statement. "However, we remain committed to our long-term goals and recognize that this is a multi-year



effort." CJEC has however blamed the stalling of the bill on the CLBC and expressed their disappointment and outrage.

Bradford said Essayli offered a floor vote on his bills but wouldn't support them, so Bradford declined.

"I seriously wonder if @billessayli will be able to keep a straight face if this comes to the floor. Half the audience will laugh, then protesters will start yelling and boom — the GOP has enough footage of the scene to covers years of campaign ads,"

wrote OakSyder, a commentator on X.

News of Essayli's AB 1315 arrived a day after the CLBC presented a 16-bill package with several reparations and reparative justice priorities. "This bill (AB 1315) does not require further study before it can become operable, instead, it initiates real steps toward progress immediately," CJEC stated in response to the CLBC bill package.

"For too long, the Democrat Party has lied to Black voters and delivered nothing decade after decade," Essayli told CBM. "This was most recently on display with the bait and switch by the California Legislative Black

Caucus which killed SB 1403 in the final hour of the legislative session last year."

Assemblymember Isaac Bryan (D-Ladera Heights) says he looks forward to questioning Essayli when a hearing on AB 1315 is held.

"The author won't publicly claim CJEC's bill, or clarify if he believes all debts owed to American Descendants of Slavery should be paid in full — including monetary compensation," Bryan posted on X.

"There's one Black man on the Judiciary Committee who gets to ask all the right questions," Bryan said, referring to himself.



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