

Testimony

Witness Panel, entitled "The Wealth Gap".

This panel is scheduled to be presented from 1:40-3:00 pm. With regard to your testimony, which is scheduled for ten minutes, the Task Force is interested in not only your background:

My name is Paul Austin and I am a direct descendant from grandparents who migrated from the south in the 1940's to work in the Marin shipyards. Everyone who worked in the shipyards lived in Marin city which at the time was all government housing. When The War ended black people had no choice but to settle in Marin City due to Redlining where they weren't able to buy property outside of Marin City. Marin County is arguably one of the richest Counties not only in California but in the entire United States. However, it has the largest disparities according to the Race Counts data.

My paternal grandparents were able to buy a home in the neighboring city of Mill Valley which is just 2 miles away from Marin City. The house was in the Hills but you could not see it from the street. The driveway was 90° straight down which was able to avoid people's eyesight. One of my grandfather's white friends got them the lumber that they needed to build the home and another white friend sold them the deed to the house. In order for my grandparents not to be discovered that they were building this home, my grandfather and a few of his friends built the home at nights and weekends because blacks were not allowed to buy in the area. The realtor who sold my grandparents the deed ended up getting black balled once word got out that she sold to a black family.

My other set of grandparents settled here in Marin City where they built a beautiful home for their family which included my mom and her siblings. Later, three of my mother's five siblings also bought homes and settled in Marin City. Our community was once a predominantly black community but it is no longer. Marin City, like most predominantly black communities, continues to face gentrification.

but is specifically interested in the economic impact of disparity you encountered as a result of discriminatory practices employed against your property and thereby against you; and the impact of those practices on you and your family.

- In 2019 we got two Appraisals done within 30 days of each other.
- The first appraisal came in underneath a million dollars.
- This was after we had done an additional 1300 square feet plus upgrades to our home.
- At the time I was home and met with the appraiser. She was the older white woman.
- The second appraisal came in at almost 1.5.

- 500 thousand dollar difference.
- What changed? We staged our home to resemble our white friends and even had her to act as if she was Tenisha when the second appraiser came.
- Jan came over and sat at our kitchen island with her laptop and with a picture of her family in plain sight.
- We were angry, frustrated, mad, and upset for months. I still get upset and can physically feel it in my body (stomach and headaches).
- Stress