



**Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans - Hearing on The History of Policing
March 30, 2022**

Overview of Testimony of
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The History of Policing in San Diego

My name is Geneviève Jones-Wright. I am a co-founder and the Executive Director of Community Advocates for Just and Moral Governance (MoGo). I served San Diego county as a deputy public defender for 13 years and am currently a practicing criminal defense and civil rights attorney in San Diego.

As this body considers proposals for reparations to African Americans¹ in the state of California, you must take into account the racist history of our criminal legal system — which necessarily includes our policing systems — and its lingering effects.

In my testimony, I will discuss how the biased and over policing we see in Black communities across our state, and specifically in San Diego, is rooted in the historical treatment of enslaved and formerly enslaved African people. I will make the case that law enforcement’s discriminatory treatment of African Americans today directly correlates with the whitelash the Black community experienced after the end of slavery.

¹ I will use the terms “African Americans” and “Black people” interchangeably during my testimony

Accordingly, I will discuss the case of *Kolender v. Lawson* to highlight how California's vagrancy and loitering laws were spawns of the Black codes and Jim Crow laws that were prominent in southern states and were a means for police "forces" to maintain and exert control over Black bodies. I will also discuss the Sagon Penn case, which was seminal to San Diego's efforts to address the police violence and other police misconduct the Black community was all too often victims of. It's important to note that both Lawson's and Penn's cases are also emblematic of the harassment that Black San Diegans were and still are routinely subjected to at the hands of law enforcement. Finally, I will tell the heroic story of San Diego Police Department Detective Johnnie Williams to further illustrate how the history of policing is firmly rooted in white supremacy.