



NATIONAL BLACK POLICE ASSOCIATION, INC.

3251 MT. PLEASANT STREET - NW
SECOND FLOOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20010

OFFICE (202) 986-2070
FAX (202) 986-0410
nbpanatofc@worldnet.att.net
www.blackpolice.org

5 April 2007

**NATIONAL OFFICERS
2006-2008**

MARCUS G. JONES
National Chairman

CYNTHIA PARKER-FERGUSON
National Vice Chairperson

VALERIE CUMMINGS
National Secretary

EDWARD A. HAMPTON
National Fiscal Officer

MELVIN D. MAXWELL
National Parliamentarian

CHARLES A. DREW
Sergeant at Arms

Senator Gloria Romero
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 2031
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attn: Mary Kennedy, Committee Staff

RE: Support for SB 511, 609, and 756

Dear Senator Romero:

On behalf of the National Black Police Association, I am writing to express our support for SB 511 (requiring electronic recording of interrogation), SB 609 (requiring corroborations for jailhouse informants), and SB 756 (requiring new guidelines for eyewitness identification procedure).

The National Black Police Association is a 35 year old advocacy organization involved in the examination of criminal justice policies and practices that have a negative impact on people and communities of color. These are issues that fall directly in the scope of concerns of the National Black Police Association.

DNA evidence has proven that innocent people are being convicted and sentenced to prison in far greater numbers than we ever imagined. Each time an innocent person is wrongfully convicted, the harm falls not only on that person but also on the community and the crime victims, as each wrongful conviction leaves the true perpetrator on the streets to hurt more people. Convicting the guilty while protecting the innocent is the most fundamental goal of our criminal justice system yet, all too often, we fall short.

The California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice was established by California State Senate Resolution No. 44 "to study and review the administration of criminal justice in California, determine the extent to which that process has failed in the past," examine safeguards and improvements, and recommend proposals to ensure that the administration of criminal justice in California is just, fair and accurate. Chaired by John Van de Kamp, the former Attorney General and former Los Angeles County District Attorney, this bipartisan commission is composed of a victims rights advocate, prosecutors, law enforcement officers and defense attorneys.

REGIONAL PRESIDENTS

HORATIUS "RAY" PETTY
Western Region

LARRY POTTS
Midwest Region

WILLIE L. WILLIAMS, III
Eastern Region

BOBBY J. WESTBROOK
Southern Region

ROGER L. ABEL
Northeast Region

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOB E. ALEXANDER
DENISE L. AIVIS
MALIK AZIZ
SEFTON BURKE
PRISCILLA GREEN
VERNON HALE, III
EDWARD L. HANNSBERRY
STERLING HAUSER
JOHN HAYES, JR.
WALTER L. HOLLOWAY
SHERRI LOCKETT
CHRISTOPHER B. LYNCH
DEBORAH M. MOORE
MACKOVIS PEEBLES, III
ROBERT RIVERS, JR.
LESLIE J. SEYMORE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RONALD E. HAMPTON

LEGAL COUNCIL

TED J. WILLIAMS

ADVISORY PANEL

PRESTON K. GILSTRAP
DORIS M. BYRD
WENDEL F. FRANCE
LESLIE J. SEYMORE

CHAPLAIN

RITA HALL

JUDGE ADVOCATE

RON E. STALLING

Page Two (2)
Senator Gloria Romero

The Commission has conducted hearings, reviewed scientific evidence, consulted experts, and listened to personal testimonials. Based on this evidence, the Commission has issued a series of unanimous recommendations for reforms needed to prevent wrongful convictions in this state. These three bills will implement the most basic and most urgently needed reforms. Specifically,

- SB 511 will require electronic recording of custodial interrogations in violent felony cases. Research has shown that recording of interrogations is the best method to detect and prevent false confessions.
- SB 609 will require corroboration of testimony by jailhouse informants. We know that informants often lie to get out of jail. Thus, we should require some evidence to show they are telling the truth.
- SB 756 will require the Attorney General to issue guidelines for eyewitness identification procedures. Scientific research shows that there are better ways to conduct lineups than are now used.

The National Black Police Association strongly supports the legislative reforms recommended by the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice and urges timely passage of SB 511, 609, and 756.

Sincerely,


Ronald E. Hampton
Executive Director

Cc:

Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas via fax 916/ 951-4026

Senator Elaine Alquist via fax 916/ 324-0283

California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice via fax 408/
554-5026

Francisco Lobaco, ACLU Legislative Office via fax 916/ 442-1743