

OAKLAND RELIGIOUS LEADERS SUPPORT FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE CITY BUDGET

Dear City Council members, Mayor Quan and City Administrator Santana:

We, the undersigned religious leaders, know first-hand the **critical need to invest in safe, affordable housing in the city of Oakland**. Our faith traditions call on us to care for people in need and to stand with people seeking basic dignity. And so we call on you to **protect funds in the city budget for housing staff and programs**. We believe it is critical to show that we are committed to our city's housing staff and programs over the long haul. If we don't protect funds for housing staff and the programs they implement, we place their employment in a constant state of uncertainty and send a clear message to the wider community that the city does not prioritize or value affordable housing, the needs of the residents of Oakland and our rich diversity.

We serve congregations filled with people who have to choose between food and rent, who raise children in substandard and overcrowded housing, who have lost their homes in the foreclosure crisis, and who go homeless.

As religious leaders committed to housing with dignity for all, we seek a commitment from you that the Oakland city budget reflect the Mayor's budget and commitment to sustain funding for affordable housing over the next two years, and in future years.

Specifically, we call on you to keep homes affordable for the residents who live, work and worship here by ensuring funding for affordable housing staff and programs in Oakland over the next two years, and in future years with a policy commitment to set-aside 25% of ongoing "boomerang" funds (returning Redevelopment dollars) for affordable housing development and preservation.

Additionally, in order for the religious community to strengthen our neighborhoods and contribute to a safe, clean and deeply connected city, we also seek your commitment to increase the dedicated staff to proactive inspection and clean-up of blight as well as making sure our city's residents are living in safe, healthy and habitable conditions as tenants. We believe this will contribute significantly to our work in reducing crime and in creating healthier communities.

Finally, we recognize the importance of supporting quality affordable housing as essential to larger issues in the community: it is an investment in public safety, and it needs to be undergirded by a commitment in this city to services for families, seniors, and youth; to good jobs with a fair contract for city workers. People of faith are committed to creating an Oakland where our people are safe, where their work is valued and honored, and where they have shelter that is really a home. We need a budget that represents those basic human values.

We call on you to stand with us and with the people we serve who contribute so much to this city and whose future is in peril. Join us in committing to a future of a safe, healthy, diverse city that uplifts all of its residents.

Respectfully,

(Note: Congregational affiliations provided for identification purposes. All leaders listed pastor in Oakland, live in Oakland, and/or lead religious communities whose membership is predominantly based in Oakland.)

Rev. Dr. Donna E. Allen
New Revelation Community Church

Rev. Debra Avery
First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

Rev. Harry Gyokyo Bridge
Buddhist Church of Oakland

Rev. Ken Chambers
West Side Missionary Baptist Church

Rabbi David J. Cooper
Kehilla Community Synagogue

Rev. Dr. George Cummings
Imani Community Church

Rev. Jacqueline Duhart
First Unitarian Church of Oakland

Rev. Dr. John L. Giles
Union Baptist Church

Jean Jeffress, Licensed Minister
First Congregational Church of Oakland

Rev. Sandhya Jha
East Bay Housing Organizations

Rev. Clarence Johnson
Mills Grove Christian Church

Pastor Lucy Kolin,
Resurrection Lutheran Church

Rev. Kurt A. Kuhwald, Faculty
Starr King School for the Ministry

Rev. Phil Lawson
Pastor Emeritus Easter Hill Methodist Church

Rev. Deborah Lee
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice

Rev. Dr. Phil Lewis
Israelite Missionary Baptist Church

Rev. Emily Lin
Chinese Community United Methodist Church

Rev Laurie Manning
Skyline Community Church, Oakland CA

Rev. Nancy E. McKee-Jolda
Tapestry Ministries

The Rev. Elder Jim Mitulski
New Spirit Community Church

Rev. Lois Mueller
Plymouth United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Liza. J. Rankow
Director, OneLife Institute

Wilson Riles
Nafsi ya Jamii

Patricia St. Onge
Seven Generations

Pastor Daniel Schmitz
New Hope Covenant Church

Pastor Tai Amri Spann-Wilson
First Christian Church of Oakland

Rev. Dr. Joan Steadman
Oakland Center for Spiritual Living

Rabbi Andrew Straus
Temple Sinai

Rev. Dr. Martha Taylor
Allen Temple

Nichola Torbett
Director, Seminary of the Street

[John Watkins](#)
[Director for Life and Justice, Roman Catholic](#)
[Diocese of Oakland](#)

Rev. Roy Wilford
Cosmopolitan Baptist Church

Servant BK Woodson Sr.
Bay Area Christian Connection