



"Proudly Serving Our Community"

An Open Letter to Mayor Schaaf and the Oakland Community:

The members of the Oakland Black Officers Association (OBOA) would like to respond to recent events at the Oakland Police Department connected to the on going Facebook Sex Scandal investigation, the Racist Texts investigation; the loss of three Chiefs of Police in seven days, and recent statements made by the Mayor.

The Oakland Black Officers Association condemns the exploitation of minors and human trafficking, as well as any violations of law, department policy, or unprofessional conduct. Any police officers who violates the oath of their office; brings shame upon the City of Oakland; the Oakland Police Department; and the law enforcement profession, should be held accountable.

On Friday June 17, 2016, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf held a press conference regarding the release of Acting Police Chief Paul Figueroa. Rather than lead with Mr. Figueroa's stepping down, Mayor Schaaf started off the press conference by stating that she and the Department had become aware of some Racist Texts and that the matter was under investigation. Ms. Schaaf has repeatedly asserted that she is prohibited by California State Law from divulging personnel information, and that she does not want to in any way impede an investigation by releasing too much information. Yet, during the June 17th press conference Mayor Schaaf stated the "Racist Text" investigation involved African American Commanders and a Sergeant.

Mayor Schaaf's statement was offensive at best, factually incorrect, and was not consistent with past releasing of information regarding administrative investigations.

Mayor Schaaf's statements subjected the African American commanders to unnecessary negative scrutiny and can possibly have adverse impact on their ability to lead.

Mayor Schaaf's statement suggests the possibility of additional commanders being involved in this investigation and that is factually untrue. Further, there are a finite number of African American Command staff. By identifying the alleged racist textors as African American, Mayor Schaaf virtually released the names of all African American Command officers.

Moreover, in all of the investigations to date, Mayor Schaaf has not seen fit to identify the race of the officers involved. It is unclear why Mayor Schaaf sought to inject race in the instant revelation. The OBOA is against any and all racial discrimination in any form and those involved in this type of conduct should face the appropriate discipline.

The OBOA has been in existence for 46 years serving the citizens of Oakland, fighting for equity and justice for all its members, while building trust with the community through strong long lasting partnerships.

The statements made regarding the race of the officers involved in the Racial Texting scandal were disturbing; given the race of the officers involved in other scandals have never been mentioned as a factor in any of those investigations. The suggestions of other African American commanders possibly being involved does not direct the responsibility for these violations toward those who need to be held accountable, but places a dark cloud over all African American commanders.

The OBOA on behalf of its hard working men and women is requesting an apology and retraction of these compromising statements made by Mayor Schaaf during the Friday, June 17th, press conference regarding the race of those involved in the investigation. We are requesting that all future statements remain race neutral and that the Mayor ensures equity and justice for all officers.

The OBOA will continue to support the City of Oakland and the Oakland Police Department during these very difficult times, but will not sacrifice the hard work and dedication of our members. Our members have been at the forefront of the Department's trust building effort with the community, through volunteerism, mentoring, and financial contributions for scholarships awards for Oakland students.

The OBOA believes the City of Oakland and the Oakland Police Department needs to be unified in its efforts to rebuild the public's trust. We are committed to working with the City of Oakland and the Mayor's office to ensure all members and professional staffs are treated fairly during this challenging time. The unspeakable behavior of some officers should not cast judgement on all members of the organization.

Sincerely,

OBOA Executive Board

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