

## OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER TREVA REID

---

**RESOLUTION HONORING PAST AND PRESENT DISTRICT 7 STAFF FOR THEIR DEDICATED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CITY OF OAKLAND UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF COUNCILMEMBER TREVA REID, RECOGNIZING THEIR SERVICE AND COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY**

**WHEREAS**, Councilmember Treva Reid has diligently served the residents of District 7 since 2020, demonstrating unwavering leadership and a deep commitment to improving the community. Her success has been made possible through the dedication and hard work of her past and present staff, who have tirelessly addressed constituent needs, implemented impactful programs, and advanced critical policies with professionalism, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to public service, ensuring the voices of District 7 residents are heard and addressed; and

**WHEREAS**, the District 7 Council Office serves over 65,000 residents, championing initiatives that prioritize community safety, protection, cleanliness, beauty, connectivity, and overall prosperity; and

**WHEREAS**, the achievements of District 7 are a testament to the dedication, excellence, and leadership of its phenomenal staff—past and present, as well as interns and fellows—who have selflessly contributed their time and expertise to prioritize the needs of the district and its residents; and

**WHEREAS**, District 7 staff have spearheaded over 120 pieces of impactful legislation, securing millions of dollars in investments for public safety, infrastructure, economic development, and other critical priorities; and

**WHEREAS**, the collective efforts of these talented individuals have resulted in transformational initiatives, including enhanced public safety measures, beautification projects, and connecting the community to essential resources and services. Their resilience and dedication have fostered inclusivity and collaboration, empowering and uniting the diverse residents of District 7 to improve the quality of life in Deep East Oakland. These incredible individuals include:

*Haley Hester, Chief of Staff*, is a dynamic leader, coalition builder, and Oakland native dedicated to uplifting her community through equitable policy, strategic partnerships, and

transformative leadership. With a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Holy Names University and a master's degree in Public Administration and Policy Analysis from California State University-East Bay, she brings over a decade of experience spanning public administration, nonprofit management, and operations. As Chief of Staff to Oakland City Councilmember Treva Reid, Haley collaborates with local, state, and federal partners to secure resources, advocate for policy reforms, and improve quality of life across critical areas like criminal justice, health, education, and economic security. A lifetime member of Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) and Interim Board Secretary for the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA), Haley is deeply committed to advancing opportunities for marginalized communities. She also serves in her church's young adult ministry and is a graduate of the Dezie Woods Jones Public Policy Fellowship Program. Guided by a bold and courageous spirit, Haley draws daily inspiration from the resilience and transformative leadership of Black women, ensuring her work is impactful, results-driven, and rooted in service.

***Josephine Guzman, District Representative***, is currently pursuing her Master's in Public Policy at Northeastern University. A proud East Oakland native and daughter of Mexican immigrants, she graduated from Mills College with a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Public Policy. As a first-generation Latina, Josephine is deeply inspired by her role in public service. Her career includes youth policy work in food equity, educational support for families, and restorative justice initiatives in East Oakland. She has worked with Oakland Leaf, HOPE Collaborative, the League of Women Voters, and the California State Assembly under Assemblymember Mia Bonta. As an alumna of the East Oakland Youth Development Center (EOYDC), Josephine received congressional recognition from Congresswoman Barbara Lee as a scholarship recipient for three consecutive years. Recently, Josephine contributed to initiatives like the Oakland Youth Vote Coalition, CTE TAY Hub, and broadband digital equity through her work with the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, supporting the Youth Commission. She also served as a post-secondary coordinator, helping low-income, first-generation high school students in Oakland find pathways to success. Currently, Josephine serves as a district representative for Councilmember Reid, focusing on enhancing the safety and beauty of her community, continuing her advocacy for Oakland and commitment to empowering the next generation.

***Nadia Morales-Saleh, Legislative Analyst***, is a recent graduate from UC Berkeley, where she obtained double degrees in Political Science and English Literature. During her time at UC Berkeley, she conducted (and continues to conduct) significant research on public opinion trends in recent presidential elections for the Political Science Department. She comes from a diverse background, being of Mexican and Palestinian descent. Known for her exceptional writing skills, Nadia has been recognized and awarded for her literary talents at the national and international stages. Passionate about making a positive impact on her community, Nadia is deeply involved in nonprofit work and finds fulfillment in contributing to causes that aim to uplift and support those in need. Additionally, she actively engages in and works for Oakland City Council Member Treva Reid's office, leveraging her knowledge and skills to advocate for change and progress. In her free time, Nadia indulges in her love for writing, using it as a creative outlet to express her thoughts and ideas. Her dedication to Oakland-Berkeley nonprofit endeavors, political initiatives, and her personal writing projects showcase her commitment to effecting meaningful change in society. In terms of future career and personal aspirations, Nadia envisions to one day return to Gaza and the West Bank, where she hopes to leverage her academic

training, extensive grassroots organization skills, and local governmental work stemming from her lived experiences in Oakland and Berkeley in order to foster meaningful political change and initiate social (yet peaceful) transformation in the region

***Samantha Motsoe Akwei, Communications Director***, serves District 7, blending her passion for storytelling with public service. As both a poet and dedicated public servant she enjoys helping organizations harness their leadership and creativity to craft impactful narratives. Her experience spans AmeriCorps tutoring, workforce development coaching, and community organizing, where she's built and led strategic initiatives to support diverse communities globally. Her service includes being members of Catalyst 2030, ForbesBLK Local Advisory Council, the Global Shapers Oakland Hub (as Curator), HandsOn Bay Area, and as a Fellow with the New Leaders Council. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Spelman College and a Master of Public Administration from San Francisco State University; and

**WHEREAS**, the legacy of excellence within the District 7 office was built on the remarkable contributions of past staff, including:

***Jocelyn Mapp, former Senior District Representative***, served Councilmember Treva Reid, bringing several years of experience in public service and community engagement. With a deep commitment to enhancing the quality of life for residents, she focuses on local issues such as illegal dumping, public safety, and homelessness. Before joining the District 7 team, Jocelyn worked as an Information Referral Specialist for the Center for Independent Living, where she successfully advocated for housing and other resources for the disabled community. Jocelyn is completing her bachelor's degree in Integrative Biology from Hampton University and is passionate about amplifying the needs of marginalized communities as she advocates for equitable resources in both local government and health systems. In her current role, Jocelyn prioritizes transparency and collaboration, ensuring that community concerns are addressed effectively. Jocelyn is dedicated to building a stronger, more resilient Oakland for all its residents. Outside of work, enjoys spending time with family and further deepening her connection to the community

***Kristal Raheem, former Communications and Public Relations Manager***, is a sociologist, educator, and journalist from Oakland. Her work seeks to resolve inequity among systematically oppressed communities locally and globally. In addition to covering stories about health and public safety in Oakland, she has traveled to the Dominican Republic and South Africa to address issues of colonization and gender-based violence. During her time with the District 7 office, Kristal supported Councilmember Treva Reid in advocating for the Ebony Alert legislation and served on the City's Human Trafficking Advisory Council. She is now the Development Manager at YouthBeat and an Audio Academy Fellow at KALW Radio

***Latashia Perry, former District Representative***, is a dedicated community advocate, realtor, and public servant with a deep passion for uplifting underserved communities. A native of Oakland's District 7, she has spent most of her career working to bring positive change to the area she calls home. As a former District Representative for Councilmember Treva Reid, Latashia has assisted with addressing the needs of one of Oakland's most historically neglected districts. In addition to her government service, Latashia is a

passionate realtor with a mission to empower first-time homebuyers, particularly minorities and first-generation homeowners. Through her work with the Bridge Association of REALTORS® as Chair of the DEI Committee, she continues to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion in real estate, organizing events and campaigns that strengthen community ties and promote homeownership equity. Latashia is also the founder of Perry's Place, an adult residential facility supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. She has successfully built a safe, inclusive environment that fosters independence and growth for her clients. With a life vision rooted in giving back to her community, Latashia exemplifies servant leadership. Her contributions have been recognized not only by her peers but also by the families, individuals, and businesses she has touched through her work. A proud mother of three, Latashia finds joy in reading, attending festivals, and connecting with her community through outdoor activities and advocacy. Latashia's unwavering commitment to Oakland and its people reflects her belief that true progress comes from empowering others to thrive

***Michael Alvarenga, former Legislative Analyst***, is a passionate advocate for at-risk communities. Before joining the D7 office, he served as a project manager for the Saint Vincent de Paul Society of San Francisco's unhoused shelter, where he led the volunteer department to create transformative change. Under his guidance, the facility underwent significant renovations and modernizations, culminating in the launch of the first-ever tech center that provided the unhoused population with access to internet-enabled laptops. For District 7, Alvarenga applied his professional skills to inspire and connect the community by facilitating impactful in-district events, including a resource fair and numerous neighborhood meetings. His dedication and commitment eventually led him to become the legislative analyst for the At-Large office of the Oakland City Council, continuing his journey of service and advocacy

***Oraya Hunter, former Communications Director***, is an Oak Center (West Oakland) native, an art director by training, and a creative at heart. In 2018, she launched her career at the multicultural, award-winning firm, Carol H. Williams Advertising, and helped build campaigns for clients like the 2020 United States Census, Kaiser Permanente, and US Bank, who were serving the Black community life-changing opportunities and resources. In 2022, she transitioned to working for the City of Oakland as the Communications Director for District 7's (Deep East Oakland) City Council Office. Oraya supported events like District 7's Fiscal Year '22-'23 Budget Town Hall the 2nd Annual Community Safety Task Force Day of Action. Today, she uses her love for organizing to help heal people power and foster a more empowering relationship with Ohlone land among her generation as a Development & Grant Writing Associate at the East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative. Oraya holds a B.A. in Advertising from San Francisco's Academy of Art University. In her spare time she enjoys binge watching historical documentaries, spending quality time with her family, and hiking Oakland's Bay Trail

***Mateo Ramirez-Mercado, former District Representative***, was born in Miami but growing up in Natomas, a suburb of Sacramento. Mateo attended Inderkum High School where he ran 4 years of Track & Field and 3 years of Cross Country. Having the opportunity to continue his running career at the collegiate level, he attended the University of California, Santa Cruz and received his bachelor's degree in Political Science and minor degree in Latin American Studies. Upon graduating, Mateo had a short stint living on a boat docked in Alameda, which is where he found his passion to become a public servant. Using the

experience gained from his college degrees, Mateo received the opportunity to serve as a District Representative to Councilmember Treva Reid in the 7th District of Oakland. Overseeing the policy areas of homelessness, housing, and community development, as well as overseeing constituent cases for the majority of the district, Mateo worked tirelessly in the year of 2023 to serve the residents in East Oakland. Using the knowledge gained under Councilmember Reid's leadership, he made the decision of moving back to his hometown and serving the area of Natomas. Under Councilmember Lisa Kaplan's leadership in the City of Sacramento, Mateo serves as District Director in District 1, overseeing policy efforts, constituent cases, and now supervising the youth program he once volunteered in as a high schooler. Mateo credits his time in Oakland, and the opportunity Councilmember Reid presented him with when joining the D7 team, as being a significant part of the catalyst that launched his career in public service and thinks back frequently to all the memories made with Team Peace.

***VaShone Huff, former Chief of Staff***, is a recognized leader in government affairs and community relations. After teaching in Oakland, VaShone spent nearly 20 years in government affairs working at the local, state, and national levels. Her political experience includes work with the California State Democratic Party, California State Senate, Port of Oakland, and former Oakland Mayor Ronald V. Dellums. She has consulted with Secretary Hillary Clinton and Mayor Mike Bloomberg's presidential campaigns as well as Barbara Lee for Congress and the Congressional Black Caucus. Foundation. Her professional experience in higher education includes work with George Washington University, Texas Christian University, and Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government as a New Organizing Institute Fellow. Huff has experience with start-ups and well-established companies in the public and private sectors range of industries including development, health, impact investing, sports, energy, and entertainment. Her specialties include strategic planning, communications, crisis management, and political strategy. VaShone is also known for her effective engagement strategies with people of color, women, faith, college/university, and LGBTQ+ communities. Huff utilizes her diverse, hands-on work experiences, along with strong critical thinking and technical knowledge to help organizations develop and execute effective growth, public affairs strategies, programming, and initiatives. VaShone is actively engaged in the community supporting civic and faith institutions, serving on various nonprofit boards, and serving local ministries. She uses strategic thinking, strong technical knowledge, and hands-on experience to assist companies to develop and implement sound and effective public affairs strategies.

***Rosa Velazquez, former District Representative***, for the District 7 office and is a proud East Oakland native and long-time District 7 resident. Rosa Velazquez has dedicated her career to serving the community through her work in nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and local government. Her commitment to promoting equity, inclusivity, and community development has been a defining aspect of her professional journey. Rosa discovered her passion for empowering small businesses and creating opportunities for growth while working closely with local government leaders. One of her most significant contributions was the development of the Latino Business Network & Allies (LatinoBNA) during her tenure in District 5 under Councilmember Noel Gallo. Her leadership in this initiative connected Latino entrepreneurs to essential resources and opportunities for success. Upon transitioning to District 7 with Councilmember Treva Reid, Rosa helped establish the first Latina Chamber of Commerce, recognized at the

national, state, and county levels. This groundbreaking achievement highlighted the Chamber's pivotal role in fostering Latina entrepreneurship and advancing business development and representation. Rosa is deeply grateful for the opportunities she had working under Councilmembers Reid and Gallo. These experiences ignited her mission to uplift and support the local business community. Today, Rosa continues her impactful work as the founder and president of the Alameda County Latina Chamber of Commerce (ACLCC), further cementing her legacy as a trailblazer and advocate for economic empowerment and equity.

***Kiana Gums, former Communications Director***, skillfully managed messaging to amplify the district's initiatives.

***Brandon Baranco, former Chief of Staff***, now serves as an Area Manager for AT&T Inc. where he represents the Company's interests before City and County elected officials, governmental departments, and agencies in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties. Brandon is also tasked with building stronger community relationships through collaborative partnerships, charitable giving, and utilizing Company resources to demonstrate their commitment to the community AT&T. Before joining AT&T, Brandon served as Chief of Staff to Oakland City Councilmember Treva Reid, Special Assistant to Vice Mayor Larry Reid and Deputy Chief of Staff to Councilmember Sheng Thao. Before joining the City of Oakland, Brandon served as a Field Representative for California State Assemblymember Nancy Skinner and Senior Field Representative for Assemblymember Tony Thurmond who represented the 15th Assembly District. Brandon served eight years in various positions on the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee and served four terms as a Delegate to the California Democratic Party appointed by Congresswoman Barbara Lee. Brandon also was appointed twice to serve as a Member of the City of Oakland's Budget Advisory Commission. Brandon was born, raised, and continues to live in the City of Oakland, and is a product of Oakland Public Schools, graduated with a B.A. in Political Science and a Minor in History from the University of California, Merced, and holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from Mills College, and;

**WHEREAS**, the contributions of interns and fellows have enriched the District 7 office, providing fresh perspectives and invaluable support to the team, including:

***Mansour Taleb-Ahmed*** (meaning "one who is victorious" in Arabic) is a current fellow in the District 7 office and is a relentless advocate, aspiring judge, and social architect dedicated to building a more equitable world. His journey, marked by extraordinary resilience, began with a "far-fetched" dream: to pursue his higher education in the United States.. Arriving in the US in January 2020, Mansour faced the pandemic in complete isolation, navigating a new country and academic system without the support of family or a familiar community. Despite facing challenges and questioning his place in academia as an African student, he turned ambition into action. As a UC Berkeley Campus Ambassador and leader in vital student organizations, including Director of External Affairs for the UC Berkeley Black Pre-Law Association, he tirelessly opened doors for underrepresented communities and fought for equality. His work empowered aspiring law students and built vibrant communities for African students, proving that backgrounds don't limit potential. Mansour's commitment to civic engagement extends beyond campus. He currently serves as a Legislative and Communications Assistant for Oakland District 7 Councilmember

Treva Reid, shaping local policies that improve lives. Right before that he previously served as Engagement Coordinator for the California Democratic Party successfully assisting over 110 candidates, measures and propositions campaigns. Mansour is particularly interested in the criminal justice system, particularly on improving reentry systems for formerly incarcerated individuals. During his internship with Assemblymember Mia Bonta's office, he contributed to legislative initiatives focused on reentry reform in California. This work highlighted the systemic barriers that returning formerly incarcerated face, including limited access to housing, employment, and other social services. Mansour is committed to support reform to reduce recidivism, ensuring that reentry is a pathway to a sustainable and true second chance. Driven by a passion for justice, Mansour is currently researching "*The Role of Amicus Briefs in Shaping Supreme Court Decisions, Legal Doctrine, and Public Policy*," reflecting his aspiration to become a judge. He is deeply committed to leveraging legal tools to better understand the realm he seeks to be a part of one day. As a UC Berkeley graduate with honors in Political Science and International Relations, Mansour's global vision is also evident in his advocacy for neglected humanitarian crises in Africa and his research on Western Sahara. Born and raised in France to a resilient African immigrant mother and an overachieving hard-working father, Mansour's unique fusion of identities fuels his dedication to justice. Witnessing inequalities faced by marginalized communities ignited his desire to dismantle barriers, amplify unheard voices, and bridge cultural gaps. His unique experiences and perspective sharpened through his interactions in the US, allow him to enlighten any room with thought-provoking questions and innovative ideas. Mansour has proven to truly dedicate his work to his family who are far from him by living up to his name, Mansour's legacy promises to echo justice across communities, leaving an indelible mark on the world as a "victorious" champion for a more equitable future.

**Stephisha Ycoy-Walton** was an Urban Leaders Fellow in the District 7 office and is a dynamic leader blending expertise in education, finance, and advocacy. A licensed investment advisor with over a decade of experience, she holds six state and federal licenses and has empowered hundreds of families to build solid financial habits. As Director of Recruitment for Education Justice Academy (EJA) and a Financial Literacy Educator at The Freedom School in Deep East Oakland, Stephisha is dedicated to preparing future leaders and teaching 10th graders. She was honored with the Rachel Willis-Henry award for Parent of the Year and serves on Oakland's Budget Advisory Commission to drive growth and stability in her city. An advocate for equity and education, Stephisha is a parent organizer with Families in Action for Quality Education (FIA) and a board director for Education for Change Public Schools (EFC), working to ensure all children have access to quality education. She also leads financial literacy workshops for individuals aged 13 to 65 and actively addresses broader social issues, including gun violence prevention, LGBTQ+ rights, and the reading and math crises. A retired professional basketball player and California Polytechnic University at Pomona graduate, Stephisha lives in Oakland with her wife of over a decade, continuing to inspire underserved communities with hope and empowerment.

**Samir Ernst** worked for Councilmember Reid as an intern for two summers after his sophomore and junior years in high school in 2022 and 2023. During this time, he worked on a multitude of initiatives, including coordinating multiple District 7 Days of Action and organizing youth volunteer events with other high schoolers. Currently, Samir is a

freshman at the University of Washington, where he studies political science and economics.

*Adriana Overton* was an Urban Leaders Fellow in the District 7 office and is a recent graduate of the Master of Public Policy program at The University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. With a background in teaching through Teach for America, Adriana is passionate about advancing educational equity and reforming the nation's education system to benefit all students, especially those from historically marginalized communities. Originally from California, Adriana has strong ties to the Bay Area and truly enjoyed her time working with local communities. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from The College of the Holy Cross and a Master's in Education from Boston University.

*Tiya Derresse Birru* was an Urban League Fellow Municipal Fellow in the District 7 office, and a current UC Berkeley Student, who contributed to constituent engagement and community outreach.

*Nia Tolbert* was an Urban League Fellow Municipal Fellow in the District 7 office, who played an integral role in advancing the district's priorities; and

**WHEREAS**, the collective efforts of past and present staff, interns, and fellows have championed transformative initiatives and fostered a legacy of excellence, resilience, and service that uplifts and empowers District 7 residents; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Oakland City Council recognizes and honors the past and present District 7 staff, interns, and fellows for their outstanding contributions and steadfast commitment to serving the residents of District 7; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Council expresses its deepest gratitude to this exceptional team for their tireless efforts, which have resulted in transformative investments, legislative achievements, and a stronger, more vibrant District 7 community.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES-FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID,  
AND PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

ASHA REED

City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California