



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2025

**LOREN TAYLOR DENOUNCES TOKENIZATION OF BLACK PEOPLE,
CALLS ON BARBARA LEE TO CONDEMN BEHAVIOR FROM ENDORSER**

“I am deeply troubled by Sheng Thao’s Chief of Staff, Leigh Hanson’s, notes documenting their anti-recall strategy of tokenizing Black people for political optics. Black Oaklanders are not props or political pawns—we are leaders and changemakers. To reduce our community to performance is not just disrespectful—it’s exploitation.

I condemn this behavior and call on Barbara Lee, who publicly featured Leigh Hanson as an endorser and supporter, to also condemn her supporter’s conduct and behavior. Silently removing Leigh Hanson from the endorsement page on her website without being transparent and vocal about Hanson’s actions sends the wrong message.

This behavior reflects a broader failure in Oakland where leadership often talks about equity but engages in performative progressivism. The Black community deserves more than just photo ops and slogans—we need authentic inclusion and respect.

As mayor, I will not tokenize our Black voices, or any other constituency. I will authentically center Oakland’s diverse communities in every room, every policy, and every decision. Oakland deserves leadership that leads with integrity and takes real action to eliminate this kind of behavior inside City Hall.”