

REPARATIONS ON TRIAL – PART II

The Complaint Against San Francisco, the Truth It Tries to Bury, and a Call for Unity With Mayor Daniel Lurie

By Malik Washington
Destination Freedom Media Group / The Davis Vanguard



In Part I, I explained why San Francisco’s harm against Black residents was not abstract, not accidental, and not “societal.” It was municipal. It was deliberate. It was enforced by policy.

Part II must confront the lawsuit itself — not the headlines, not the spin, but the actual complaint filed in San Francisco Superior Court by Californians for Equal Rights and the Pacific Legal Foundation. Here is the filed complaint for all to view.

<https://onedrive.live.com/?redeem=aHRocHM6Ly8xZHJ2Lm1zL2IvYy9iZDJKYmY1NTNjMGEwMTQ1L0lRQkxwYWVnRVBkalE1NWw1UGJsbjpxdUFjaWw5QnNoT21sQoViVUFmdVAySjBvP2U9ckdsak9O&cid=BD2DBF553CoA1145&id=BD2DBF553CoA1145%21sa0a7a54bf71043639e65e4f6e59d9aae&parId=BD2DBF553CoA1145%21411619&o=OneUp>

Because the language in that document tells us exactly what is at stake — and exactly why this moment demands unity, clarity, and courage from the City, the Black community, and Mayor Daniel Lurie.

WHAT THE COMPLAINT SAYS — IN ITS OWN WORDS

The lawsuit opens with an unmistakable attack on the very idea of reparations. It calls San Francisco’s efforts a:

“sordid and unconstitutional enterprise” that uses “public money, public employees, and public authority” to distribute benefits “explicitly based on race and ancestry.” [Emphasis added.]

That phrase — sordid and unconstitutional — is not neutral legal language. It is designed to delegitimize reparations morally before the court ever rules.

The complaint then claims that San Francisco’s Reparations Plan:

“does not identify specific instances” in which the City violated the Constitution or statutes, “does not consider race-neutral alternatives,” and “does not sunset,”

and therefore, according to the plaintiffs, replaces “individual rights with inherited status.”

This framing is central to their argument. If accepted, it would not just block reparations — it would make any race-conscious attempt to repair historic harm legally suspect.

WHAT THE COMPLAINT ADMITS — AND CANNOT ESCAPE

Here is where the lawsuit begins to contradict itself.

Although the plaintiffs repeatedly insist the Reparations Plan addresses only vague “societal discrimination,” the complaint itself lists specific, documented, San Francisco–based government actions that qualify residents for reparations.

These are not my words. They are taken directly from the complaint’s own description of the Plan.

According to the lawsuit, qualifying harms include displacement caused by:

1. **The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency**

The complaint acknowledges that reparations eligibility includes people displaced by: “actions related to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency between 1954 and 1973,” and redevelopment-related displacement continuing through 2012.

That is not society.

That is a named city agency, operating under municipal authority, carrying out

government policy.
This is the Fillmore.
This is urban renewal.
This is Black removal — acknowledged in the lawsuit itself.

2. Redlining and Lending Discrimination

The complaint lists eligibility tied to:
lending discrimination in San Francisco from 1937 to 1968,
and discrimination in formerly redlined communities from 1968 to 2008.
Those dates matter.
Those policies were government-backed.
And their economic damage did not evaporate with time.

3. Law Enforcement Harm

The complaint also acknowledges eligibility based on:
documented injury, psychological trauma, or loss of life at the hands of law
enforcement.
Again — not societal.
This is state power exercised on Black bodies.

4. Public and Subsidized Housing Conditions

The lawsuit describes eligibility tied to:
substandard or dangerous conditions in public or subsidized housing, supported by
documentation.
Public housing is not a private accident.
It is government responsibility.

So when the plaintiffs argue that San Francisco has failed to identify “specific instances”
of discrimination, the public deserves to ask an honest question:

If these are not specific instances of government harm, what would ever qualify?

WHY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IS THE REAL TARGET

The complaint is explicit about something else: it wants to stop the San Francisco
Human Rights Commission from doing its job.

The lawsuit objects to the fact that a taxpayer-funded agency — the HRC — is assigned
to administer the Reparations Fund and oversee implementation of the Plan.
Let’s be clear about what that means.

Human Rights Commissions exist precisely because “neutral” governance has
historically failed marginalized communities. They exist to confront discrimination that
ordinary bureaucratic processes ignore or excuse.

The lawsuit names Mawuli Tugbenyoh, the Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission, not because he acted unlawfully, but because the Commission represents enforcement.

I want to state this clearly and on the record:

San Francisco's Black community supports Mawuli Tugbenyoh.

We understand that attacking administrators is a classic tactic — isolate them, intimidate them, and weaken the institution by targeting its leadership. That strategy must fail here.

MAYOR DANIEL LURIE: THIS IS A MOMENT FOR UNITY, NOT HESITATION

The complaint itself confirms that Mayor Daniel Lurie signed the reparations funding ordinance into law on December 23, 2025. That matters.

Because signing the ordinance is not the end of leadership — it is the beginning of responsibility.

This article is not an attack on the Mayor. It is a call to collaboration.

The Black community of San Francisco hopes — sincerely and earnestly — that Mayor Lurie will:

Continue to support reparations publicly,
Defend the City's right to acknowledge its own wrongdoing,
Stand with the Human Rights Commission, and
Push back against organizations whose goal is not justice, but paralysis.

Reparations will not survive if City Hall treats them as a liability to be managed quietly instead of a moral commitment to be defended openly.

WHITE ALLIES: THIS IS YOUR MOMENT TOO

This struggle has never belonged to Black San Franciscans alone.

White allies — clergy, labor organizers, attorneys, journalists, educators, and neighbors — have stood with us for decades in the fight for civil and human rights. Now the test is different. Not whether you believe racism existed — but whether you believe repair is legitimate. Reparations are not punishment. They are responsibility.

I SUPPORT REPARATIONS — WITHOUT APOLOGY

I support reparations because the complaint itself confirms the truth it tries to deny:
Black displacement in San Francisco was government-driven.
Black wealth loss was policy-driven.
Black suffering was documented, not imagined.
Reparations are not charity.
They are a ledger.
And a city that refuses to balance its ledger cannot claim moral leadership.

CONCLUSION: ONE CITY, ONE TRUTH, ONE FUTURE

San Francisco now stands at a crossroads.
It can allow outside organizations to fracture its communities and intimidate its institutions.

Or it can choose unity — between the Black community, the Human Rights Commission, and a mayoral administration willing to stand firm.

This is my plea:
Stand together.
Tell the truth.
Defend repair.
Because reparations are not about erasing anyone's humanity.
They are about restoring dignity — and finally paying a debt long past due.

Here's our song/video for this article:

Friday - Stand By Me

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIi8IPDZoCg&list=RDxIi8IPDZoCg&start_radio=



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Malik Washington is a San Francisco-based journalist and co-founder of Destination Freedom Media Group, an independent nonprofit newsroom dedicated to accountability reporting at the intersection of civil rights, public integrity, and community survival. He has been a published journalist for over 14 years.

His work—published in partnership with the Davis Vanguard—focuses on government power, criminal justice, environmental justice, and the human consequences of policy decisions too often insulated from public scrutiny. Washington’s reporting amplifies the voices of impacted communities while insisting on documentary evidence, transparency, and the unvarnished truth—especially when institutions demand silence.

His work appears on platforms such as Muck Rack and Black Voice News, examining the intersection of justice, governance, and community.

You can reach him via email: mwashington2059@gmail.com or call him at (719) 715-9592.

Suggestions or leads on stories are always welcome.

Please follow us on:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/destfreedom13>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/destinationfreedom13/>

X: https://x.com/dest_freedom