



NAACP Monterey County Branch

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PRESS RELEASE

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52ND ANNUAL FREEDOM FUND BANQUET

It has come to our attention that the recent coverage surrounding the Monterey County NAACP's 52nd Annual Freedom Fund Life Membership Banquet and comments made by Mr. Ben Jealous require a response and further clarification. We believe that the narrative presented in various media outlets is one-sided and may have exaggerated certain aspects that led to a misunderstanding of our intentions and actions.

We are compelled to address Mr. Jealous' remarks about not being invited to be our keynote speaker. Our branch did indeed attempt to connect with him for our 51st Freedom Fund Life Membership Banquet in 2023. Consequently, we DID NOT extend an invitation for the 2024 event. It is vital to understand that this decision was not made lightly, but after thorough consideration of logistical constraints and the importance of aligning our event with available speakers.

We must also address concerns regarding our partnership with Chevron. The decision to partner with Chevron as a sponsor was made after careful deliberation and reflection of our goals and community needs. It is important to stress that this partnership does not disregard community perspectives, rather, we recognize the complexities involved in such collaborations and are committed to engaging in dialogues that resonate with our core values. Chevron has been proud to support the Monterey County NAACP for the past four years, sponsoring the banquet for three of those years. Our partnership is rooted in a genuine desire to uplift and empower communities, and there has never been an ulterior motive behind their financial contributions.

Mr. Jealous' call to reject Chevron's sponsorship outright does not fully encompass the nuanced considerations our organization faces. Our commitment remains to positively impact our community, and we are mindful of the various factors at play in this partnership. We are taking all feedback seriously and will continue to evaluate this sponsorship with an open mind.

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