



Dear Community,

As we imagine and build a prosperous California, a thriving future for our Black communities is an integral part of the vision. Schools & Communities First is a once in a generation opportunity to address structural inequities that have plagued our people and our state for decades. **I am proud to announce my endorsement of Schools & Communities First, and to join the list of more than 100 prominent Black and African American leaders who support this critical initiative.**

Black and other communities of color have been hit the hardest by a long history of disinvestment from our public schools and local neighborhoods. This disinvestment, along with structural inequities in resource distribution, are the foundation of the achievement gap between Black students and peers of other racial groups, and the wealth and income gap between Black households and others.

In *“All About Love: New Visions”*, renowned African American author bell hooks tells us:

“If all public policy was created in the spirit of love, we would not have to worry about unemployment, homelessness, schools failing to teach our children, or addiction. Were a love ethic informing all public policy in cities and towns, individuals would come together and map out programs that would affect the good of everyone.”

We have not only the responsibility, but also the opportunity, to come together and advance love-centered solutions that prioritize the future of our young people; the future of Black folks; and the future of all California students and families.

Schools & Communities First is our opportunity to reclaim \$12 billion every year for our classrooms and local neighborhoods by ensuring corporations and wealthy real estate investors pay their fair share. Black students and families in particular stand to gain from this investment in our future as we restore critical services that our students and families depend on.

With 60% of new revenue going to local communities, we can begin to deeply invest in our local neighborhoods. This means parks and libraries, workforce and job centers, first responders for our elders, and affordable housing. The remaining 40% of new revenue will go to our schools, meaning more classroom supplies, counselors, teachers, improved school facilities, and learning support programs for our kids.

A recent USC study found that 78% of the new revenue will come from only 6% of commercial and industrial properties, meaning that long-time corporate landowners that have overwhelmingly benefited for so long will finally pay their fair share, while homeowners, renters, and small businesses stay protected.

As we celebrate Black History month, we also celebrate, imagine, and work to create thriving Black futures. As previous generations fought for us, it is our duty to fight for the future.

Earlier this week, the Schools & Communities First campaign announced more than 100 Black Leaders for Schools & Communities First – organizers, business professionals, educators, elected officials, thought leaders, and young people who all agree that Schools & Communities First is a critical initiative to help ensure thriving Black futures and a thriving California. I am proud to join this list, to endorse Schools & Communities First, and to help shape a future we can all be proud of.

Stay Woke,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Barbara Lee'.

Congresswoman Barbara Lee