

**BEN BARTLETT**

CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 3

CONSENT CALENDAR

February 24, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Author)

Subject: Relinquishment of Council Office Budget Funds to Support the Berkeley Unified School District Historical Study

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution approving the expenditure of funds, including \$500 from the discretionary Council office budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett, to support the Berkeley Unified School District Historical Study. The funds will be relinquished to the City's General Fund from the discretionary Council office budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett and the discretionary Council office budgets of any other Councilmembers who wish to contribute, and granted to the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, which is serving as fiscal sponsor for the study.

BACKGROUND:

In recent years, jurisdictions across the country have undertaken historical studies and truth-telling efforts to better understand how past public policies and institutional decisions contributed to racial inequities and ongoing disparities. These efforts are increasingly recognized as a necessary foundation for informed, defensible reparations-related policymaking.

In Berkeley, this work is at a critical juncture. The Berkeley Unified School District completed a Reparations Task Force process in 2024, which articulated the need for reparative action affecting Descendants, defined as individuals who are descendants of persons enslaved in the United States. The District is now moving from recommendations to implementation and requires a rigorous, well-documented historical record to inform policy decisions, resource allocation, and program design.

The Berkeley Unified School District Historical Study is designed to document how the District functioned both as a site of direct discrimination, through educational decisions and actions, and as an institution shaped by discriminatory municipal policies, including housing segregation, redlining, and land-use decisions. The study integrates archival research, quantitative data, and community testimony and will produce public-facing materials intended for use by district leadership, the Board of Education, policymakers, and the community.

Council office discretionary funds may be used to support this work because it serves a

clear municipal public purpose: advancing public understanding of local history, informing education and equity policy, and supporting transparent, evidence-based decision-making that affects Berkeley residents. In addition, the Historical Study will generate a research framework and set of practices that the City of Berkeley may leverage in the future to inform its own historical study or reparations-related work.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

No negative impact.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

No General Fund impact; \$500 is available from the discretionary council office budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett.

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ATTACHMENT:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF SURPLUS FUNDS FROM THE OFFICE EXPENSE ACCOUNTS OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR A DONATION TO THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM TO SUPPORT THE BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HISTORICAL STUDY.

WHEREAS, Councilmember Ben Bartlett has surplus funds in his office expenditure account; and

WHEREAS, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform will receive funds in the amount of \$500 from Councilmember Ben Bartlett's office expenditure account; and

WHEREAS, the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, through the students and researchers leading this effort, will support the Berkeley Unified School District Historical Study in documenting the District's role in direct educational discrimination, as well as the ways in which the District was shaped by discriminatory municipal policies; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of such a study would fulfill the municipal public purpose of providing community members with a framework of educational tools and practices that the City of Berkeley may use in the future to inform its own historical study or reparations-related work;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that funds relinquished by the Mayor and Councilmembers from their office budgets, of an amount to be determined by each Councilmember, shall be granted to the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform for the purpose of supporting the Berkeley Unified School District Historical Study.

