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Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District

**For Immediate Release
Press Release**

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Courage Triumphs Over Fear

The October 26th Alameda County Board of Supervisors meeting had an item on the agenda which would have eliminated one of the last programs in the state of California which allowed for minority and women owned businesses to get a fair opportunity at getting work with Alameda County and local Governments.

The Alameda County Counsel's office had advised the Board of Supervisors that as a result of the California Supreme Court's decision in a case regarding the City and County of San Francisco's program, that Alameda County should discontinue its current outreach program to assist minority and women owned businesses and only target local businesses, leaving the program race neutral.

The speakers, who included members of the legal community, women, Asian, Spanish speaking and Black business owners and concerned residents, played a significant role leading to the outcome of this important action. If the item had passed, it would have wiped out all civil rights gains as it related to a fair playing field in local government contracts!

The testimony from audience members and questions from Keith Carson, member of the Board of Supervisors, lasted over three hours. One issue central to the discussion was how to interpret the Supreme Court's decision in the case regarding San Francisco's program and what the ramifications are for Alameda County. Some argued that the San Francisco case closed the door on any outreach program that was racially conscious. Others argued that the State Supreme Court decision demanded that the City and County of San Francisco examine their contracting policies to determine if they violated the Federal equal protection laws. If past violations could be demonstrated, the City would be required to implement a racially conscious program to remedy pervasive discrimination.

When it came time to cast their votes, Supervisor Carson eloquently stated, "Achieving equality in this Country in any arena has not come without legal challenge and we need to be prepared to fight in this instance!" The Alameda County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to keep the program.

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