

**Learning How to be  
Anti-Racist: Special Topics  
*Cultural Appropriation*  
10/14/20**

*Slides and materials from the discussion held on 10/14/20*

# COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

- 1) Please change your name in Zoom to include your pronouns.
- 2) Prepare to get uncomfortable and lean into that.
- 3) Use the “raise hand” feature if you would like to speak next.
- 4) Assume good intentions when others are speaking and take a breath before responding.
- 5) Use “I” statements and speak from your own experiences.

# CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

*By Blair Imani*

Cultural Appropriation happens when a group or member of a group, **with relative privilege and power**, takes an aspect of cultural expression from the originating group without consent or acknowledgment of the actual origins.

Sometimes the intentions are malicious and other times, simply uninformed.

# CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

*By Layla F. Saad*

Cultural appropriation does not work the other way round. BIPOC cannot appropriate from white people, because BIPOC do not hold collective power and privilege over white people.

# CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

*By @venetialmanna*

## What does appropriation mean?

*The act of setting apart or taking for one's own use.*

## What is cultural appropriation?

*A modern type of colonization that involves the appropriation and sometimes commercialization of cultural practices, spiritual traditions, hair and fashion styles, speaking styles, and other cultural elements.*

# CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

*By @venetialmanna*

“The line between cultural appropriation and cultural exchange is always going to be blurred, but here’s the thing: Appropriation occurs when a style leads to racist generalizations or stereotypes where it originated, but is deemed as high fashion, cool or funny when the privileged take it for themselves. Appropriation occurs when the appropriator is not aware of the deep significance of the culture they are partaking in. What would the world be like if loved Black people as much as Black culture?”

*- Amandla Stenberg*

# CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

*By @venetialmanna*

“From slang created by Black women, to pumping your lips full of botox until they practically pop all over your jerk rice, Black culture is gawked at, dismissed, and ridiculed, before it’s studied, mimicked, and regurgitated.”

- *Chanté Joseph*

Cultural Appropriation and stereotyping minimizes “the other” as “backward, primitive, or lesser” while demonstrating the dominant culture as “normal, good, and multifaceted.”

- *Lady Izdihar*



# CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

*By @detestermagazine*

Cultural assimilation happens when a minoritized group takes on the culture of the dominant group in the community. One example of cultural assimilation occurs when people immigrate to the US; they will often start to celebrate American traditions such as Thanksgiving to integrate into society. Sometimes people are forced into assimilation as well. For example, Native Americans were highly encouraged or forced by non-Natives to practice colonial tradition, and follow their lifestyle choices and religion.

# **CULTURAL APPROPRIATION: *What it Looks Like***

*By Maisha Z. Johnson*

- 1. Exotifying Other Cultures Because You Think It's a "Compliment"**  
*(themed parties)*
- 2. Creating Your "Own Version" But Calling It By the Same Name**  
*(The Harlem Shake)*
- 3. Creating Your "Own Version" But Presenting It As Normalized**  
*(yoga)*
- 4. Using Appropriation As a "Learning Experience"**  
*(putting yourself in "someone else's shoes")*
- 5. Putting Yourself In Someone Else's Shoes to Make a Political Statement** *(to "raise awareness")*
- 6. Claiming to "Not See Color" At All**  
*(claiming spiritual practices for yourself)*
- 7. Insisting on "Appreciating" When You've Been Told You're Actually Appropriating** *(just apologize and do better)*

Source: [7 Ways "Honoring" Other Cultures is Really Culture Appropriation](#)

# **CULTURAL APPROPRIATION: *Why It's Wrong***

*By Maisha Z. Johnson*

- 1. It Trivializes Violent Historical Oppression**
- 2. It Lets People Show Love for the Culture, But Remain Prejudiced Against Its People**
- 3. It Makes Things 'Cool' for White People – But 'Too Ethnic' for People of Color**
- 4. It Lets Privileged People Profit from Oppressed People's Labor**
- 5. It Lets Some People Get Rewarded for Things the Creators Never Got Credit For**
- 6. It Spreads Mass Lies About Marginalized Cultures**
- 7. It Perpetuates Racist Stereotypes**
- 8. White People Can Freely Do What People of Color Were Actively Punished for Doing**
- 9. It Prioritizes the Feelings of Privileged People Over Justice for Marginalized People**

Source: [\*What's Wrong with Cultural Appropriation? These 9 Answers Reveal Its Harm\*](#)

# How to Avoid Cultural Appropriation

*By Blair Imani*

## Take Responsibility and Be Honest

It's sometimes difficult to admit  
when you are wrong.

Being honest with yourself is necessary.  
When you know better, **do better.**

# How to Avoid Cultural Appropriation

*By Blair Imani*

## Check your Motivations

Cultural practices and expressions are **not trends!**

Don't use other cultures to satisfy needs of belonging, desirability, or uniqueness.

# How to Avoid Cultural Appropriation

*By Blair Imani*

## Is it Accurate?

Cultural appropriation thrives on collapsing multifaceted groups and cultures into **one thing**.

It erases nuance, richness, and complexity while claiming to “**make it better.**”

# How to Avoid Cultural Appropriation

*By Blair Imani*

## Ask: Who is Profiting?

Who is making money from this?

Buy from the originating community.

**Remember**, just because it's on sale doesn't mean it's respectful for you to own.

# **How to Avoid Cultural Appropriation**

*By Blair Imani*

## **Is there a Deeper Meaning?**

Something that appears to you to be an interesting hat, figurine, or dried plant might be part of a belief system.

**Take interest in learning more.**

Respect cultural practices and expressions.



# How to Avoid Cultural Appropriation

*By @soyouwanttotalkabout*

To behave responsibly and sensitively toward other groups, ask yourself a series of questions:

- Why are you "borrowing" this? Is it out of genuine interest? Is it something you feel called to do? Or does it simply look appealing and trendy?
- What is the source? For material items such as artwork, was it made by someone from that culture? Has that individual given permission for the item to be sold?
- How respectful is this work to the culture? Would people from that group object to the piece of art or to it being sold to outsiders?

*Source: Kadra Kareem Nittle via Thoughtco*

# Questions to Ask Yourself

*By @detestermagazine*

- Am I using an object from a culture that is not mine?
- Do I know the significance of this object?
- Am I using the object in an appropriate context?
- Have I educated myself on the meaning of this object?

# More Things to Consider

*By Portia Boston*

## **1. Context + Setting**

We want to be extra careful/discerning when language, imagery, music, etc. are being used for *profit and/or for means of promotion*.

i.e.: fitness classes, marketing + ad campaigns (email/newsletters as well), fashion shows, books...

## **2. Audience**

**Who** is the content for? *Is something borrowed from a marginalized group being presented to a majority dominant or historically-oppressive group?*

# More Things to Consider

*By Portia Boston*

## **3. Tone**

First, we have to know the original context of the content, or history if applicable. Then we can understand the tone and mood, so that it can be sustained and maintained.

(Obviously, we don't want to make light of something that was more serious in its original context)

## **4. Relationship**

It is critical to consider and meditate on our personal relationships to the content we may be using and its history. It's going to inform all of our decision-making thereafter in a good way.

# Can cultural appropriation ever be cultural appreciation?

*By @venetialamanna*

We need to be constantly checking our privilege and interrogating our choices when it comes to the hair styles we choose, the slang that we speak, the fillers we insert, the amount of fake tan that we apply, the clothes that we wear (that includes at festivals), the experiences that we have, and the drugs that we take (and yes, Ayahuasca too).

Are we appreciating, respecting, crediting and financially supporting these cultures? Or are we ripping them off to make ourselves seem cooler, better travelled, or more spiritually minded?

# CULTURAL APPRECIATION

*By @detestermagazine*

Cultural appreciation is when members of one culture seek to learn about another culture to gain a better understanding of their heritage and values.

An example of cultural appreciation: respectfully watching a ceremony or cleansing ritual, and letting one of the monks cleanse you.

# CULTURAL APPRECIATION

*By Portia Boston*

Full and profound understanding, acknowledgement, and understanding of a particular oppressed culture. A reckoning of one's personal relationship to the history of the oppressed culture and peoples.

# Example of CULTURAL APPRECIATION

*By @angryasianamericans*

Respectfully watching a ceremony or cleansing ritual, and letting one of the monks cleanse you.



# CULTURAL EXCHANGE

*By @detestermagazine*

Cultural exchange is when a person shares their culture's ideas, practices, and objects with someone from a different culture. An example of cultural exchange is when students participate in exchange programs to learn about other cultures.

Cultural significance  
is more than  
just an **aesthetic.**

- *Corpus Ren*

# LANGUAGE - AAVE

*By @diversifyournarrative*

It's true, AAVE is found to be spoken on a variety of social media platforms. However, there is an issue with non-Black people adopting AAVE in order to convey **humor** or **imitate Black culture**.

AAVE is often **misrepresented** as “just internet slang.” The fact is that when Black people use AAVE, they are often met with **stigma** and stereotypes of “the ghetto.” However, when rich, white people co-opt AAVE, they are seen as “cool” and humorous.

# LANGUAGE - AAVE

*By @diversifyournarrative*

This shows a pattern of **appropriation** of Black culture while simultaneously “**othering**” the community that created the culture in the first place. Moreover, white people’s use of AAVE can border the line of mocking Black culture, which is why we must be aware of how we speak.

# LANGUAGE - AAVE

*By @soyouwanttotalkabout*

“This cultural ‘borrowing’ of Black language and phraseology happens regularly, allowing non-Black folk to ‘try on’ Black culture through the use of AAVE without having to ‘put on’ the cultural consequences of actually being Black in a culture conditioned to devalue and dismiss it.”

*Source: Robin Boylorn for The Guardian*

# LANGUAGE - AAVE

By @diversifyournarrative

## Examples of AAVE

- The words **“finna,” “fleek,”** and **“chile.”**
- Deleting **“is/are,”** similar to Russian, Mandarin, and Arabic: **“He workin”**
- To show an ongoing action: **“He be working”** instead of **“He is usually working”**

*(Tip: speak the way you were raised to speak. If you find yourself using words/phrases/grammar outside your norm, ask yourself “why?”.)*

# LANGUAGE - AAVE

*By @diversifyournarrative*

There is no doubt that AAVE has a prominent role in the creation of popular slang. But, non-Black folx should consider the following questions if they are to use AAVE:

1. Is it being commercialized for financial gain?
2. Is the usage performative, tokenizing, or mocking?
3. Are you in proximity to the culture that originated the terms?
4. Are you using the language to earn yourself “street cred”?\*

*\*Source: Huffington Post*

# LANGUAGE

## *Other Words/Phrases to Avoid\**

- *Spirit Animal*
- *Tribe*
- *“Pow wow”, “off the reservation”, “Indian giver”*
- *“Gypsy” or “being gypped”*
- *Master/Slave*
- *Ninja*
- *“Open the kimono”*
- *Peanut gallery*

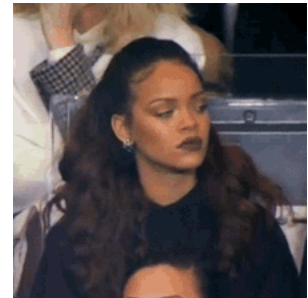
*\*This list is not exhaustive*



# DIGITAL BLACKFACE

The use of images of Black people by non-Black people to express emotions.

Source: [\*We Need to Talk About Digital Blackface in Reaction GIFs\*](#)



# FASHION

*By @soyouwanttotalkabout*

The fashion industry is one of the biggest culprits of cultural appropriation. Just in the past few years, we have seen:

- Gucci showing white models in Sikh-style turbans
- Marc Jacobs sent models down the runway in faux dreadlocks
- Dolce & Gabbana posted videos of a Chinese model trying to eat pasta and pizza with chopsticks
- Comme Des Garcons sent models down the runway in wigs of cornrows

Not to mention the hundreds of BIPOC indie designers that have been ripped off by major labels throughout the years.

*\*Source: vogue.com*



503 Posts 2,422 Followers 345 Following

Phoenix Rogers

Gift Shop

Born and raised island girl hand carving quahogs, conch, and other shells into beautiful jewelry on Martha's Vineyard



Made by @islandgirlphoenix

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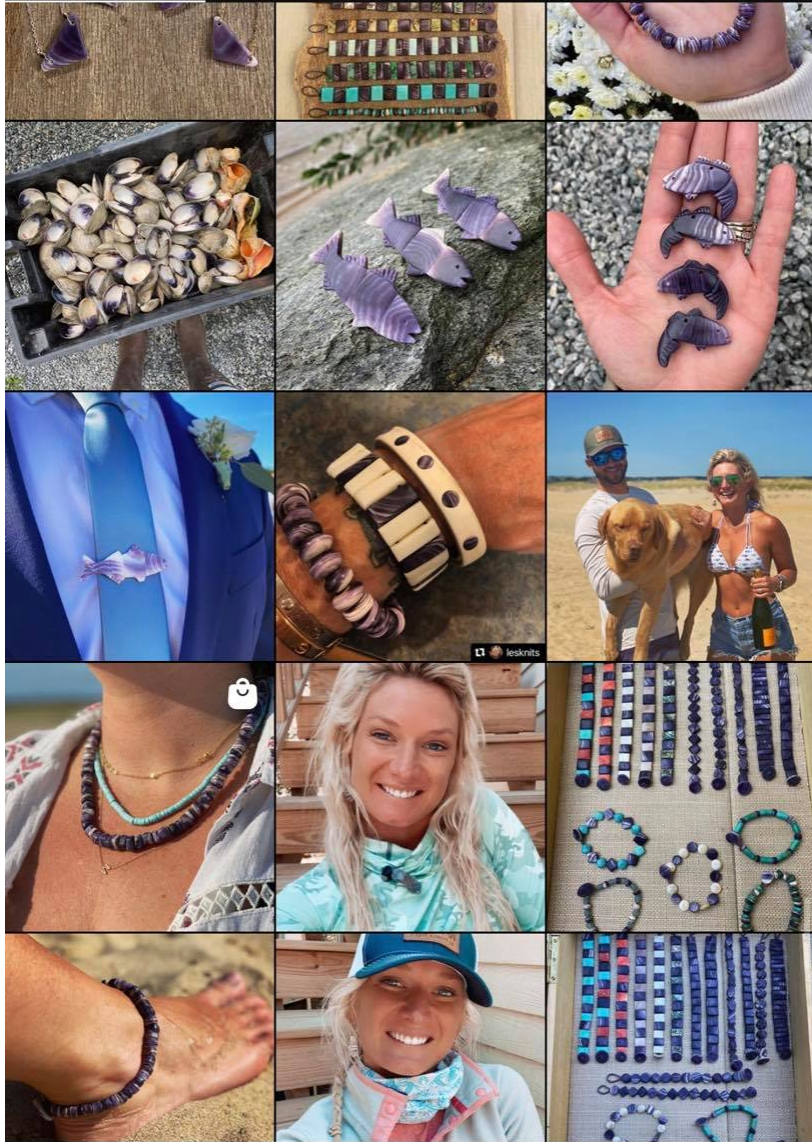
Contact



Shop



POP UP Sh...



# FASHION

*By @venetialamanna*

From luxury brands appropriating Black culture on the runway, to fast fashion companies stealing from the cultures of their garment workers, appropriation is yet another example of how systemic racism is entrenched in fashion and society.

# BEAUTY

By @venetialamanna

## What is "blackface"?

*Blackface is makeup used by non-Black performers for playing a Black role.*

## What is "blackfishing"?

*Blackfishing is when a non-Black person pretends to be Black on their social media by culturally appropriating Black features in an attempt to gain followers and attention.*

This is considered by some to be a modern day version of blackface.



# FASHION & BEAUTY

## Other Examples of Cultural Appropriation\*

Indian Bridal Jewelry/ Henna/ Bindis

Cornrows/ Locs/ Afros/ Bantu Knots

“Chola” style

“Ratchet” or “ghetto” style

“African,” “Native,” or “Tribal” prints

Hijabs

Kimonos

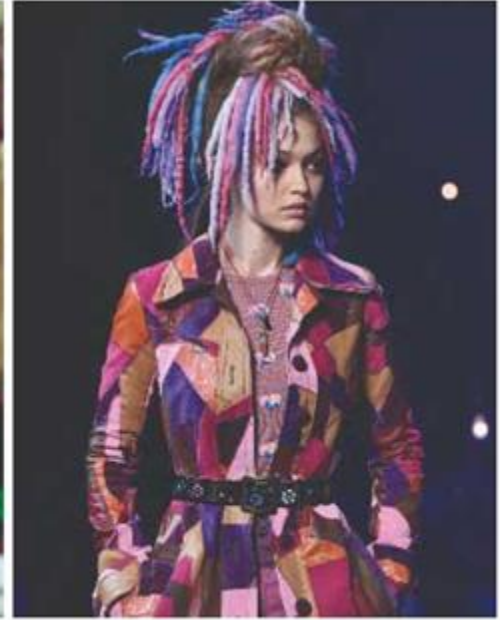
Saris

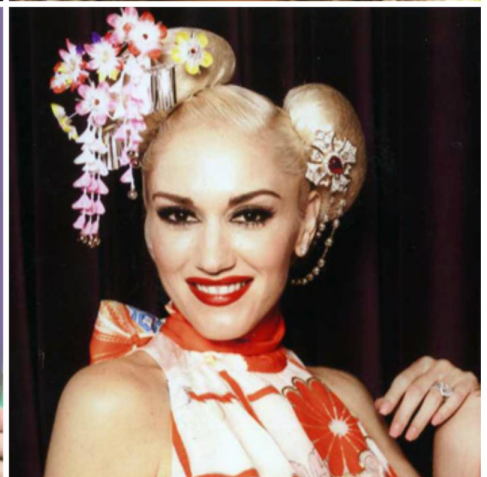
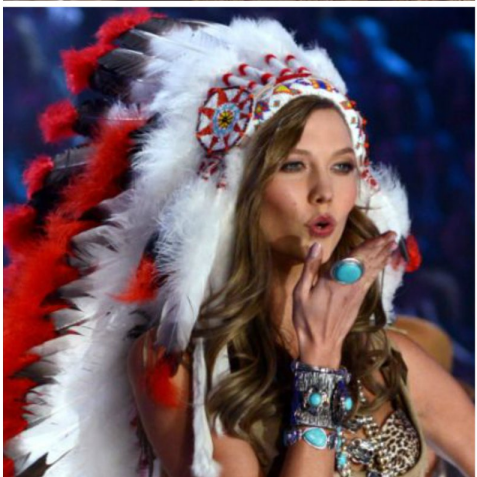
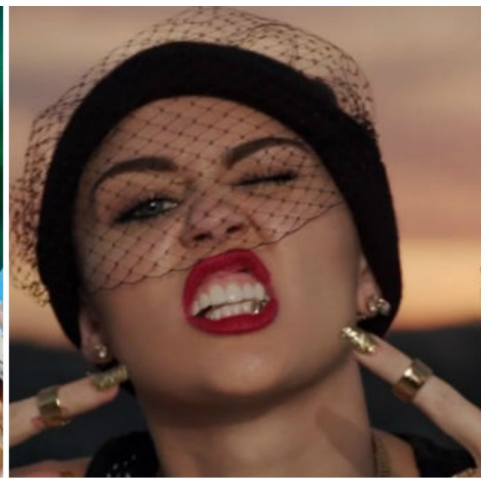
Sombreros

Tattoos – “tribal,” foreign language, “ethnic” imagery

*\*This list is not exhaustive*

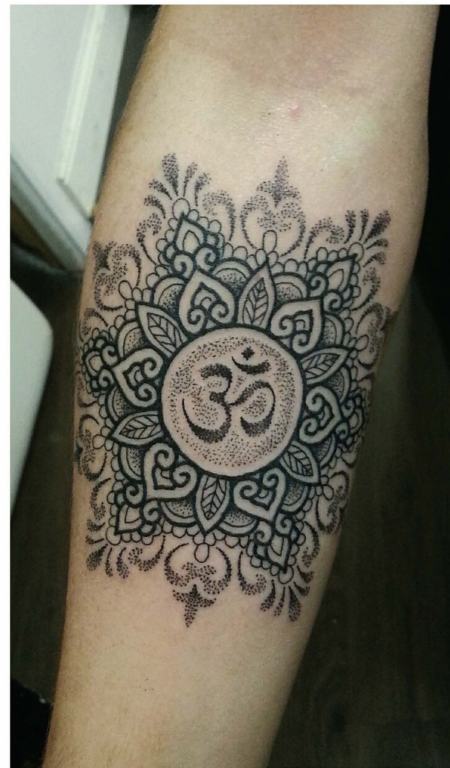












# COSTUMES

Video: *Cultures are not Costumes*

**Is your costume racially, ethnically, or culturally based?**

If yes -

- **Do you belong to that group of people?**
- **Is your costume funny or sexy? Why?**
- **Would you wear that costume around that group of people?**

Source: *Is Your Halloween Costume Racist?*

# COSTUMES

## Other Examples of Cultural Appropriation\*

Day of the Dead make-up/ costumes

Any skin darkening

Make-up to change physical features to imitate a race

"Ethnic" wigs

Gypsy costumes

Geisha make-up/ costumes

Ninja costumes

*\*This list is not exhaustive*









# YOGA

*By Maisha Z. Johnson and nisha ahuja*

If you're white, there's not necessarily anything wrong with you doing yoga. You're probably just doing it for your own wellness, so it might be strange to think you could be hurting anyone else.

**The problem lies not with you doing the practice, but with *how* yoga is commonly practiced and commercialized in Western contexts like the US.**

[Yoga] practices are based on traditions that go back thousands of years in South Asia and other places around the world, including East Africa's Kemetic Yoga. But this context and much of the essence of yoga's meaning has been stripped away.

Source: [8 Signs Your Yoga Practice Is Culturally Appropriated – And Why It Matters](#)



# ***WHITE SAGE***

[White Sage video](#)



# ***CULTURAL APPROPRIATION***

## ***ADDITIONAL RESOURCES***

[Think Before You appropriate: A Guide for Creators and Designers](#)

[Yoga as the Colonized Subject](#)

[5 Trends That Are Actually Cultural Appropriation](#)

[The Difference Between Cultural Exchange and Cultural Appropriation](#)

[Dear White People/Queridos Gringos: You Want Our Culture But You Don't Want Us – Stop Colonizing The Day Of The Dead](#)



[Chola style – the latest cultural appropriation fashion crime?](#)

[Video: 7 Myths About Cultural Appropriation DEBUNKED!](#)

[Video: My Culture is NOT a Costume](#)

[Give Me Back My Language! The Harmful Nature of Language Appropriation for American Minorities](#)

# Black Lives Matter Los Angeles's and Black Lives Matter Long Beach's Voter Guide\*

  <p><b>YES</b></p> <p>Closes corporate tax loopholes and instead invest in schools, community colleges and local services. <b>PROP 15</b></p>	<p><b>YES</b></p> <p>California is 1/9 states that bans affirmative action as a tool to fight discrimination. Prop 16 would end the ban and expand opportunity for all. <b>PROP 16</b></p>	<p><b>VOTERS GUIDE: PROPOSITIONS &amp; MEASURES</b></p>
<p><b>YES</b></p> <p>Allows Californians who will be 18 by the general election to vote in the primary election. <b>PROP 18</b></p>	<p><b>NO</b> If Prop 20 is passed, it can roll back effective criminal justice reforms, waste tens of millions of taxpayer dollars on prisons and contribute to the mass incarceration California is currently facing. <b>PROP 20</b></p>	<p><b>YES</b></p> <p>Amend the California Constitution so that Californians who have completed their prison term can fully participate in our democracy by restoring their right to vote. <b>PROP 17</b></p>
<p><b>NO</b> Allows Uber and app companies to deny their drivers rights and protections like paid sick leave, workers compensation or unemployment benefits. Eliminates safety protections for riders and drivers and any liability these wealthy companies have to consumers. <b>PROP 22</b></p>	<p><b>YES</b></p> <p>Establishes state requirements for kidney dialysis clinic. Requires medical professionals, infection reporting and keeps clinics open. Prohibits discrimination <b>PROP 23</b></p>	<p><b>YES</b> Will limit rent increases and preserve affordable housing to keep CA families in their homes. If passed, it would allow local communities to decide if the city wants to have rent controls <b>PROP 21</b></p>
<p><b>YES</b> LONG BEACH City, Will increase the general purpose Barrel Tax from 15 cents to 30 cents per barrel and apply a CPI to the entire general purpose tax. Only those who have mineral rights and/or produce oil in Long Beach would pay this tax. <b>MEASURE US</b></p>	<p><b>YES</b> Dismantles systemic racism by investing in health, housing and jobs. It will amend L.A. County's charter to permanently reallocate at least 10% of existing locally-controlled revenues to community investment and alternatives to incarceration. <b>MEASURE J</b></p>	<p><b>NO</b> Amends Consumer Privacy Laws. If passed, it will weaken California's 2018 landmark privacy law and create a toothless state bureaucracy with less power to enforce consumer privacy rights. Will cost California consumers and small businesses billions of dollars. <b>PROP 24</b></p>
		<p><b>NO</b> If passed, it will end cash bail &amp; subject defendants to racial profiling by replacing it with racists/classists "risk assessments" algorithms to imprison defendants before trail. <b>PROP 25</b></p>

\*This voter guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute endorsement by the Richard and Karen Carpenter Performing Arts Center or California State University Long Beach