

Gray Panthers of San Francisco
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BART Board of Directors
BART General Manager
344 20th Street
Oakland CA
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Gray Panthers of San Francisco is very disturbed on hearing that BART management is pursuing heavy criminal charges and some \$70,000 restitution against 14 Black Lives Matter activists who courageously chained themselves to trains at West Oakland BART on November 28, 2014. We believe, and virtually everyone we have spoken with believes, that these people are heroes, and deserve a medal. We cannot believe how out of touch you are with community feelings.

Your website states "The tragic death of Oscar Grant will remain a painful memory for all of us. While we cannot alter the past, we have been using the lessons learned as a catalyst to change our future. We on the BART Board have been continuously taking the actions needed to improve the BART Police Department to ensure our officers are better-trained and better-equipped and we're working with the community and our customers to earn their trust and confidence by keeping them safe and secure."

Safe and secure? In January 2014, BART police attacked and tasered an unarmed Black man twice, then dragged him off the train. In March, BART police beat and arrested Nubia Bowe, a 19-year old student and a Black woman suspected of dancing on the train; and in September BART police slammed a Black woman to the ground and charged her with resisting arrest. These events are well-documented, two on video. These are not isolated cases. A Black friend of the daughter of one of our members was racially profiled, beaten, and arrested by BART police.

On your website, you justify your punitive actions against the Black Lives Matter activists by saying "As a public agency fully funded by riders and tax payers, we must never lose sight of the agency's mission to provide public transportation to the citizens we serve." We agree. Your mission is not to profile, harass, beat, arrest, and even kill Black and Latin passengers.

The Black Lives Matter people were not disrupting BART for racist events in faraway Ferguson, or New York, or Cleveland. They were sending a message that right here, BART is endangering Black and Latin passengers. Interrupting service when Black and Latin passengers are endangered is as proper as interrupting service when broken equipment endangers any other passengers.

You should be listening to these men and women because they represent the feelings of a large proportion of the citizens you claim to serve. Drop the charges and the restitution demands.

Patricia Jackson, Convener
Denise D'Anne, Secretary
Michael Lyon, Treasurer