



It all started with sitting down during the anthem, which no one noticed at first. Here's how quarterback Colin Kaepernick's anthem protest turned into a pivotal movement for the NFL and its players. Eric Garland - McClatchy



## Capitol Alert

The go-to source for news on California policy and politics

CAPITOL ALERT

# Remove 'The Star-Spangled Banner' as national anthem, California NAACP urges

BY ALEXEI KOSEFF  
[akoseff@sacbee.com](mailto:akoseff@sacbee.com)

November 07, 2017 01:07 PM  
Updated November 08, 2017 03:00 PM

When California lawmakers return to the Capitol in January, the state chapter of the NAACP will be seeking their support for a campaign to remove "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the national anthem.

The organization last week began circulating among legislative offices two resolutions that passed at its state conference in October: one urging Congress to rescind "one of the most racist, pro-slavery, anti-black songs in the American lexicon" as the national anthem, and another in support of former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who launched a protest movement against police brutality among professional athletes by kneeling when "The Star-Spangled Banner" was played before games.

"We owe a lot of it to Kaepernick," California NAACP President Alice Huffman said. "I think all this controversy about the knee will go away once the song is removed."

The kneeling protests have drawn attention to an infrequently-sung third verse from "The Star-Spangled Banner," which includes the passage:

Close Ad

Latest news by email

The afternoon's latest local news



love  
has  
no  
labels

reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

SIGN UP

*Their blood has wash'd out their foul footstep's pollution.*

*No refuge could save the hireling and slave*

*From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave*

Some interpretations of the lyrics conclude that they celebrate the deaths of black American slaves who joined British troops during the War of 1812 to gain their freedom. Francis Scott Key, who wrote the lyrics of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” was a slave owner and fierce opponent of abolition who may have sparked the first race riot in Washington, D.C.

Huffman said Congress, which adopted “The Star-Spangled Banner” as the national anthem in 1931, should find a replacement that is not “another song that disenfranchises part of the American population.”

She drafted the NAACP’s resolutions this fall after President Donald Trump suggested NFL owners should fire any “son of a bitch” who doesn’t stand for the anthem. The second resolution calls on Congress to censure Trump for his remarks, and asks NFL teams to find a spot for Kaepernick, who some believe was blacklisted over the protests.

“Trump got in the middle of it. He blew it out of proportion,” Huffman said.

The California NAACP is still looking for legislative sponsors for the resolutions. Assemblyman Chris Holden, a Pasadena Democrat who chairs the California Legislative Black Caucus, did not respond to a request to discuss the measures.

But at least one lawmaker is already opposed.

“Our flag and national anthem unite us as Americans,” Assemblyman Travis Allen, a Huntington Beach Republican who is running for governor, said in a statement. “Protesting our flag and national anthem sows division and disrespects the diverse Americans who have proudly fought and died for our country. Real social change can only happen if we work together as Americans first.”

**RELATED STORIES FROM SACRAMENTO BEE**



Civil rights icon John Lewis sees pro athletes as new civil rights warriors



Doubt that Trump is hurting America by insisting NFL players stand for the national anthem? Just look around



Kings owner Ranadive opens up about anthem protests, son's Army enlistment





President Trump during a joint press conference Tuesday with Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said the NFL should not allow players to kneel, adding he was "ashamed" of the protests. McClatchy — The White House

Alexei Koseff: 916-321-5236, @akoseff

COMMENTS ▼



SPONSORED CONTENT

### Homeowners Born Before 1985 Are Getting a Huge Reward

If you own a home, you should read this. Thousands of homeowners did this yesterday, and banks are furious! Do this now before it's...

By MorningFinance

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

- Start a Subscription
- Customer Service
- eEdition
- Vacation Hold
- Pay Your Bill
- Rewards

#### SITE INFORMATION

- About Us
- Contact Us
- Newsletters
- News in Education
- Photo Store

#### SOCIAL, MOBILE & MORE

[Text News Alerts](#)

[Mobile & Apps](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)

## **ADVERTISING**

[Place a Classified Ad](#)

[Place a Legal Notice](#)

[Place a Digital Ad](#)

[Place a Newspaper Ad](#)

[Shopping](#)

## **MORE**

[Copyright](#)

[Commenting Policy  
Service](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of](#)