# Alameda County Prosecutors Used Homophobic Slurs Against Potential Jurors in Death Penalty Cases



Newly revealed court records indicate that prosecutors in Alameda County, California, used homophobic slurs to label potential jurors during jury selection in death penalty cases. Handwritten notes from a 2010 case and a 1995 case show derogatory language used by prosecutors to refer to prospective jurors, such as "dyke" and "possible fagot [sic]". These individuals were not selected for the juries.

This revelation comes amidst an ongoing scandal where Alameda prosecutors have been accused of systematically excluding Black and Jewish jurors. U.S. Judge Vince Chhabria has ordered the Alameda County District Attorney's office to review all implicated capital cases. DA Pamela Price announced in April that her office had identified 35 cases for review. This scrutiny was prompted by evidence of bias against Jewish people and Black women, whom prosecutors allegedly perceived as less likely to support the death penalty.

The disclosed files include offensive remarks, such as describing a Black woman as a "short, fat, troll" and questioning the honesty of a Black woman who said race was not an issue. The judge characterized these notes and other evidence as indicative of a pattern of serious misconduct by the DA’s office, dating back several decades.

Defense attorneys have received new files from jury selections in their clients' trials, revealing the homophobic notes. The origin of these notes and whether the prosecutors involved still work in the office remain unclear.

A coalition of advocates is urging DA Price to re-sentence all individuals on death row in Alameda County, reflecting widespread local opposition to the death penalty. DA Price has not commented on these recent developments.