

JANUARY 2025

**MAYOR CHOKWE ANTAR LUMUMBA DEFENSE  
FUNDRAISING APPEAL**

**INTRODUCTION**

Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba of Jackson, Mississippi, was indicted on false, politically motivated charges of bribery on November 7, 2024. The federal indictment of Mayor Lumumba is part of a nationwide attempt by federal prosecutors to stifle Black political power and undermine Black leadership that is working in the interest of Black communities. The indictment serves to bolster state government efforts to undermine Mayor Lumumba's exercise of his mayoral duties. It is a stunning waste of taxpayer dollars, and comes after nearly a decade-long effort by the Mississippi State government to undermine the progressive leadership of Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba and the former Mayor Chokwe Lumumba, his deceased revolutionary father.

Mounting the criminal defense of Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba is a financially costly endeavor. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT! We cannot allow the federal government and the MAGA Mississippi State government to destroy the progressive, people-oriented work led by Mayor Lumumba. Under his leadership:

- The city implemented more infrastructure improvements than any administration in more than 3 decades;
- The School District was saved from a State takeover;
- A 90-million-dollar settlement was obtained for the city with Siemens to recoup losses related to incorrect billing of residents, metering and water infrastructure issues;
- A "*Dignity Economy*" was established with community partners and businesses, ending city employee furloughs, establishing full healthcare coverage for city employees, including firefighters for the first time in the City's history, and a commitment to building an economy with higher wages, respect for human rights and one where no person or community is treated as disposable has been emphasized;

- \$800 million in federal funding was secured, working with partners, to repair and modernize Jackson's infrastructure; and,
- Oversight of the police was strengthened, including establishing Mississippi's first policy to release the names of officers involved in shootings;

## THE FINANCIAL COST OF DEFENDING MAYOR CHOKWE ANTAR LUMUMBA AGAINST THESE FALSE CHARGES

In discussions with defense teams for other people/community focused political leaders who had to defend against false criminal charges we have arrived at a potential cost of \$750,000 to provide the high-quality legal defense necessary to maximize the chances of obtaining an acquittal.

These costs are itemized as follows:

- **Securing high quality local and nationally recognized criminal defense attorneys** who will devote a significant amount of their practice time to obtaining an acquittal (a non-guilty verdict).

**Thomas J. Bellinder** attended Florida International University School of Law, Belhaven University and Mississippi College Bellinder worked several years under the mentorship of Dennis C. Sweet, III before founding the Bellinder Law Firm in 2012. He is a highly respected and community involved Mississippi attorney whose practice includes criminal defense, transactions and civil litigation.

**Michael T. Sterling**, an experienced trial lawyer, is a former Assistant United States Attorney and former Senior Advisor to the Mayor of Atlanta. He is committed to representing clients in criminal matters, civil rights, discrimination, complex commercial and contract cases, and other litigation matters. Sterling has represented numerous political figures, celebrities, and has handled high profile cases with intense media coverage. He is committed to obtaining the best results for his clients and takes on each case as a personal battle to do the absolute best for those who have entrusted him with their representation.

**Linda Ashford** has practiced law for over 46 years. A graduate of Syracuse University College of Law, Attorney Ashford is admitted to practice law in the United States

## COMMITTEE TO DEFEND CHOKWE ANTAR LUMUMBA

Supreme Court and has litigated over 500 criminal appeals and post-conviction proceedings in state and federal courts. She was elected to serve as Chairperson of the Criminal Law Section Council of the Michigan State Bar. The Council included approximately 2,500 Michigan criminal defense attorneys and prosecutors at the time of her service. Attorney Ashford is well respected in the legal community and amongst her clients.

**Gerald Evelyn** has practiced law for more than 40 years specializing in criminal defense. Mr. Evelyn has trained lawyers on trial advocacy techniques and is a founding faculty member of the Detroit/Wayne County Criminal Advocacy Program and a member of the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan. In the 1980s he served as co-counsel with Chokwe Lumumba, Jeffrey L. Edison and other lawyers, representing community activists in Battle Creek, Michigan, who organized against police brutality. He continued to work in association with Chokwe Lumumba after Lumumba relocated to Jackson MS. Mr. Evelyn was given the Leonard R. Gilman Award in 2016 by the Federal Bar Association, which is given annually to an outstanding practitioner in criminal law who exemplifies excellence, professionalism, and commitment to public service. In 2019, Mr. Evelyn was given the Right to Counsel Award by the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, which is awarded to a member who has provided outstanding legal representation to defendants and to the criminal justice community.

**Jeffrey L. Edison** has practiced law for more than 40 years. His practice is largely criminal defense. He has successfully represented a number of persons who were charged because of their political involvement. Mr. Edison's relationship with the Lumumba family began fifty-one (51) years ago, when he met Chokwe Antar's father, Chokwe Lumumba, at Wayne State University Law School, where they were members of the Black Legal Alliance. He and Chokwe represented indigent persons as student-attorneys, and later, after passing the Bar, worked at the Defender's Office; representing indigent persons charged with felonies. Mr. Edison and Chokwe Lumumba, were law partners in various formations from 1980 to 1989, when Chokwe Lumumba moved to Jackson, Mississippi. Lumumba remained associated with Mr. Edison's practice until 2014. Edison also served on the NCBL legal team that represented Chokwe Lumumba in efforts by the state to disbar Lumumba, the first of which was a

charge, successfully defended, that Lumumba believed in “the peaceful overthrow of the United States government.” Mr. Edison trained lawyers in trial advocacy techniques in the Detroit/Wayne County Criminal Advocacy Program; with the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan; and, in CLEs organized by the National Conference of Black Lawyers. He has appeared in various state and federal jurisdictions in Michigan, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia.

- **Obtaining Legal Research and Paralegal Support**

The legal team will need the support of persons skilled in legal and factual research as well as document requests, review and organization. It is anticipated that if the federal government prosecutes this case to the fullest there will be a need to engage in significant document discovery to be used during depositions in pre-trial discovery as well as at trial.

- **Obtaining Experts**

The legal team will need to consult with various experts, most notably experts in jury selection. Other experts may be required depending on the results discovery and more information is learned of the government’s case against Chokwe Antar Lumumba.

- **Communication fees, including Crisis Management and other media fees**

Defense efforts for other similar cases of responding to false, politically motivated charges of criminal conduct required extensive efforts to respond to negative and false information circulated broadly by the government. It is critical that the reputation of Chokwe Antar be protected as best as possible by timely circulation of accurate information about his character and performance in support of the Jackson, Mississippi residents. This requires securing the services of those who specialize in media crisis management as well as the payment of other media fees.

As we enter the new year, we ask you to consider contributing to the legal defense of Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba. We urge you to contribute to join those saying no to the government’s use of the criminal legal system to undermine Black leaders who stand with and for their communities. We urge you to contribute to defeating the continuing efforts to deny justice and self-determination to the residents of Jackson, Mississippi, a city with an 86% Black population.

**COMMITTEE TO DEFEND CHOKWE ANTAR LUMUMBA**

If you are able, please donate to the Lumumba Defense Fund. Every contribution, no matter the amount, will make a meaningful difference.

**Donation Instructions:**

Make checks payable to:

**Community Aid Development**

Memo: Lumumba Defense Fund

Address: P.O. Box 361270, Decatur, GA 30036-1270

**Online Donations:**

You can also make a secure online donation to the **Lumumba Defense Fund** by clicking on the below link:

<https://buy.stripe.com/7sI8wG9CC1M0eoUbJk>

***Thank you for your generosity and support. Your donation will help defeat the false charges against Mayor Lumumba and enable him to continue his important work in the community.***