KEN CALVERT
41ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

2205 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0541
(202) 225-1986

400 SOUTH VICENTIA AVENUE
SUITE 125
CORONA, CA 92882
(951) 277-0042

ORACLE PLAZA
73585 FRED WARING DRIVE
SUITE 108
PALM DESERT, CA 92260
(760) 620-0041

UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

CHAIRMAN
DEFENSE

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT

CALVERT.HOUSE.GOV

FACEBOOK.COM/REPKENCALVERT

INSTAGRAM: REPKENCALVERT

November 17, 2026

Riverside County Supervisor Karen Spiegel
Chair
Riverside County Board of Supervisors
4080 Lemon Street, 5th Floor
Riverside, CA 92502

Dear Supervisor Spiegel,

I write to you today because I believe that the protection of our elections' integrity is foundational to maintaining our American democracy. To achieve that goal, we must ensure those responsible for conducting our elections do so in a manner that is fair and impartial. That is why I was alarmed to learn that the Riverside County Registrar of Voters (ROV) office recently placed voter outreach digital advertisements in the weeks leading up to the November 3, 2026, election, targeting Riverside County voters in an inherently biased manner.

The advertisements in question were placed on Meta platforms, which include Facebook and Instagram, starting on September 28, 2026, and ran through November 2, 2026. The ads encouraged voters to cast their ballot early, stating "don't wait for Election Day to make your voice heard. Make your plan and vote early."

A recent article by City Journal found that the Riverside County ROV ads on Meta platforms specifically targeted users linked to a small number of detailed targeting social media tags. According to Meta's public ad transparency database, those tags included "Gangsta rap," "Wiz Khalifa," "Rick Ross," "Kanye West," and "2 Chainz" among others.[1] The complete list of Meta targeting tags utilized by the Riverside County ROV was solely limited to those associated with rap, hip-hop, and R&B music artists. In 2024, a Cornell University study found that hip-hop and rap music streaming online occurs more heavily in Democratic-leaning communities than in Republican-leaning regions.[2] Furthermore, according to a YouGov poll conducted in 2024, Democrats are twice as likely as Republicans to name hip-hop as their favorite genre.[3]

Meta's disclosure database also indicates that more than 10 percent of social media ads placed by the Riverside County ROV were geographically targeted to a single zip code, 92501, located in downtown Riverside.

---

[1] Christopher F. Rufo and Kenneth Schrupp, "California Counties Targeted Get-Out-the-Vote Ads to Users Interested in 'Gangsta Rap,'" *City Journal*, November 9, 2026.
[2] Liaukonytė, Jūra, Daniel Winkler, and Nils Wlömert. "The Political Leaning of Music Audiences." *Cornell University*, 2024.
[3] "The Most Popular, Obscure, Democratic, Republican and Hated Music in America," *The Washington Post*, May 3, 2024.

The Riverside County ROV's mission statement is to: "Ensure the electoral process will be conducted professionally, consistently demonstrating neutrality and non-partisan decision-making, based upon a thorough knowledge of and compliance with all election laws by administering them timely, responsively and with integrity on behalf of those we serve."

Targeting get-out-the-vote ads through a narrow set of keywords likely to reach members of one political party appears inconsistent with the Riverside County ROV's commitment to "non-partisan decision-making." Similarly, directing such ads to a single ZIP code appears at odds with its pledge to "consistently demonstrate neutrality."

I urge the Board of Supervisors to conduct vigorous oversight of the Riverside County ROV's use of tax dollars on these alarmingly partisan and geographically biased get-out-the-vote ads prior to a major political election. I encourage you to determine the following:

- Please detail the approval process for digital get-out-the-vote ads and who has final authority to approve ads?
- How did the Riverside County ROV determine the targeting tags it utilized in building the audience for its ads? Why were other music genres, like country music, not utilized in building the audiences?
- Why did the Riverside County ROV target 10 percent of their Meta ads solely to users in the 92501 zip code?
- Were ads placed on other social media platforms and, if so, what audience targeting information was utilized?
- Did the Riverside County ROV place the Meta ads itself, or was an outside vendor utilized? If an outside vendor was utilized, who determined what audiences would be targeted? How much did the ad placement cost?

I appreciate your attention to this matter. I hope you join me in seeking answers to these troubling questions and in finding ways to ensure that Riverside County residents have faith in those conducting our elections.

Thank you,



KEN CALVERT
Member of Congress