



Subscribe

[More local news for Birmingham, Huntsville, and Mobile – Start Today for \\$1](#)

Advertisement

Close

NEWS

‘Racial dog whistle,’ ‘Fearmongering’: Mailers inflame Alabama congressional race

Updated: Oct. 31, 2024, 8:18 a.m. | Published: Oct. 31, 2024, 8:06 a.m.



A mailer that was sent out in the 2nd congressional district paid for by the Alabama Republican Party. The mailer attempts to tie Democratic congressional candidate Shomari Figures to Vice President Kamala Harris on the issue of transgender rights. supplied image

MIL001008

21-cv-01530

2/10/2024 Trial

Milligan Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 64



By John Sharp | jsharp@al.com

The head of the Alabama GOP and Democratic congressional candidate Shomari Figures are blasting each other this week over two controversial mailers, paid for by the state political party, circulating through the district in the final week of the campaign.

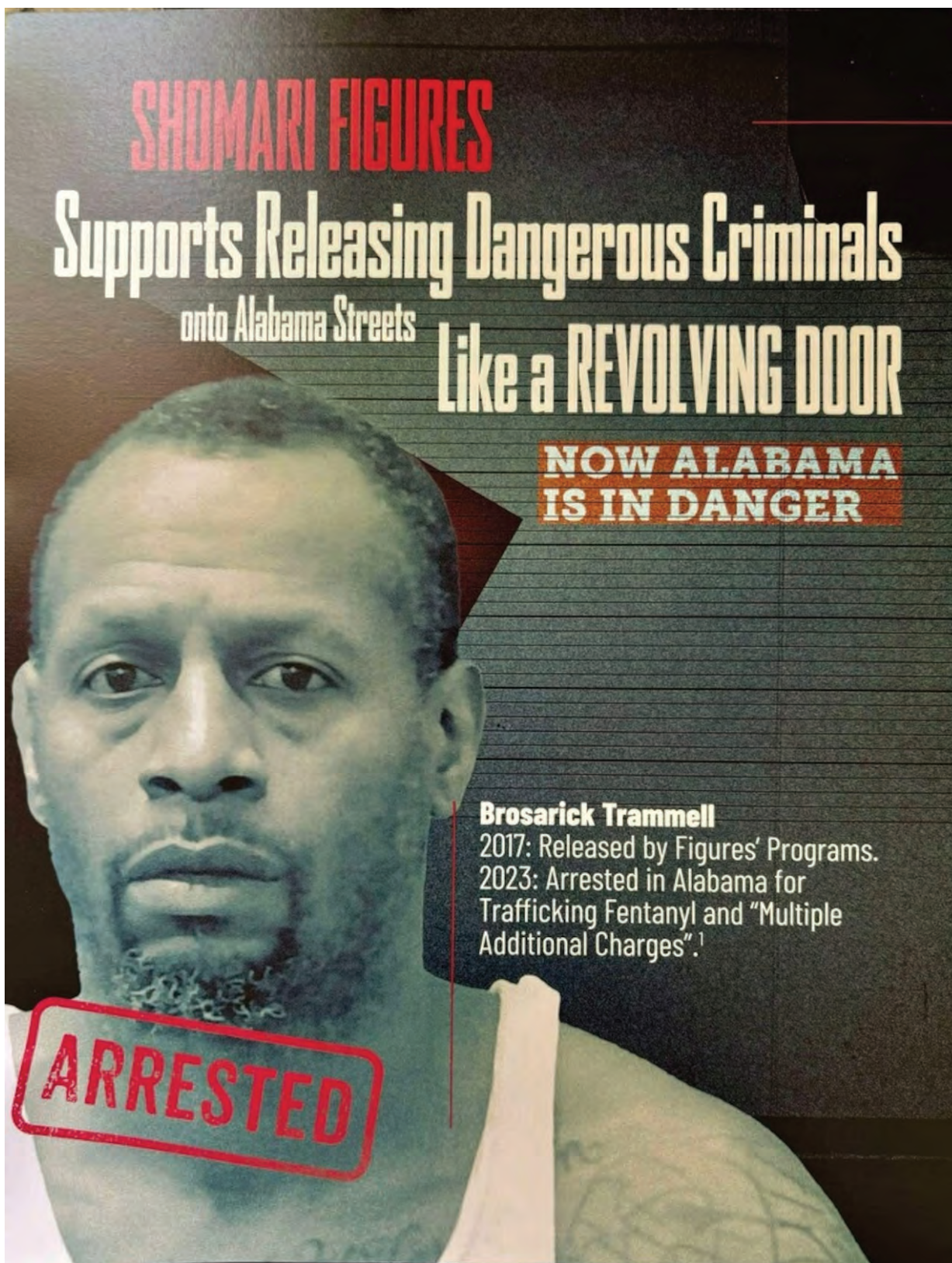
One of the mailers is also drawing sharp criticism from representatives of the LGBTQ community for including a distorted image of Figures' face placed over the distorted image of Vice President Kamala Harris' face with a statement that reads, "Look Closer, Man or Woman? In Their World, It Doesn't Matter. On the Transgender Agenda, Shomari Figures and Kamala Harris are the same."

"These mailers are nothing short of disgusting," said Kaitlyn Burkett, co-administrator with Trans Pride of Mobile. "Focusing your attack on your opponent based on them possibly sticking up for a marginalized, disadvantaged community that deserves constitutional protections not political persecution, is appalling."

The second mailer questions Figures' support of clemency initiatives leading to criminals reoffending includes a picture of a Black man with the message, *"Supports releasing dangerous criminals onto Alabama streets like a revolving door. Now Alabama is in danger."*

Figures called the mailer a "racial dog whistle."

MIL001009



A mailer circulating in the 2nd congressional district paid for by the Alabama Republican Party, that attacks Democratic candidate Shomari Figures on the issue of clemency. supplied image

MIL001010

Figures also blasted the Alabama GOP, saying the past 20 years of Republican leadership in the state has led to one of the lowest life expectancies in the U.S., and low rankings for worker wages, children's literacy rates, and high violent crime rates while the rest of the nation is experiencing a decline.

"Alabama Republicans have been bad for health, bad for workers, bad for education, and bad on crime," Figures said. "They know they can't win on these issues, so they put out race-baiting ads with pictures of a 'scary Black man,' and put out altered images of me and tell lies about my positions."

He added, "They don't talk about local problems because they've only made them worse over the last 20 years they've been in control in Alabama," Figures said.

Crime and race

The mailers first drew a rebuke on Sunday during a Figures campaign event in Montgomery, after Democratic Texas U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett called them "nonsense," and representated a party without a substantive policy platform. Crockett said Republican congressional candidate Caroleene Dobson was nothing more than a "rubber stamp" for presidential candidate Donald Trump.

The Dobson campaign referred comments about the mailers to the Alabama GOP.

In a statement to AL.com on Tuesday, Alabama State GOP chairman John Wahl blasted Figures for his stance on clemency programs and for supporting the Democratic Party's "radical views on transgender policies and the sexualization of our children."



A mailer circulating in the 2nd congressional district paid for by the Alabama Republican Party that attacks Democratic candidate Shomari Figures' position on clemency. supplied image

MIL001011

On clemency, Wahl said it is “incredibly insulting” for Figures to label the message on the mailer as a “racial issue.” The clemency mailers include an image of Brosarick Trammell, who is Black, and who was released from prison in 2017 and arrested in 2023 for trafficking fentanyl and other offense, the mailer reads.

Another mailer includes a picture of Trammell and Joseph Burgos, who is white and was released from prison in 2015 and convicted this year for trafficking opioids.

“Crime affects people of all backgrounds, and every victim deserves justice, regardless of race,” Wahl said.

“Many of these potentially dangerous criminals were released into minority communities that already struggle to get the help they need to control rising crime. Releasing dangerous criminals early is not a racial issue; it’s a commonsense issue, and people of all backgrounds deserve safe communities where they can raise their families in peace.”

Wahl said Figures is “not the leader who will stand up for the Black community” on safety and said that the Alabama Republican Party “views every individual as a child of Almighty God, without regard of color of their skins.”

Clemency stance



Shomari Figures speaks ahead of a panel discussion during a campaign event on Sunday, Oct. 27, 2024, at Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala. John Sharp

MIL001012

Figures, in response, said the Alabama GOP should send out a mailer with Trump's face on it.

"Wait, the party running a criminal as its presidential nominee is concerned about criminals in society?" Figures said. "Go figure."

Figures, a White House liaison for the U.S. Department of Justice for President Barack Obama, said the clemency initiative targeted individuals who had been convicted of non-violent drug offenses under old sentencing laws that had since been changed by the Republican-led Congress.

"Previous laws unfairly treated crack cocaine much more severely than powder cocaine," Figures said. "This resulted in hundreds of thousands of people, primarily Black men, being sent to prison for insanely long prison terms for non-violent, low-level drug offenses, even when they didn't have a long criminal history, or in many cases, no criminal history."

Figures noted that Trump, during his presidency, kept clemency going for past drug offenders.

"I dare them to say that Donald Trump was just releasing criminals back into society," Figures said, accusing the republicans and Dobson for being OK with "just locking up as many Black men in Alabama s possible for as long as possible."

Transgender rights

Wahl also blasted Figures for supporting what he said were "out-of-touch policies" in support of transgender issues, including gender-affirming care. The issue animated the last debate between Figures and Dobson, with the Republican candidate linking him to support of "sex changes."

Dobson, during the Oct. 24 debate, claimed Figures owns the policies of the Justice Department, where Figures most recently served as deputy chief of staff and counselor to U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland, including the agency's challenge of the Alabama law banning gender-affirming care for minors.

"The Democratic Party is clearly pushing policies that allow biological men into girls' bathrooms and locker roomers, permits transgender athletes in women's sports, and even advocate for taxpayer-funded sex changes for inmates in prison," Wahl said. "These out-of-touch policies highlight just how disconnected the Democratic Party has become from Alabama values and Alabama voters."

The Alabama Transgender Rights Action Coalition (ALTRAC), in a statement, said they "don't see much point in getting a statement on something so deeply unserious" other than to agree with Crockett's statement that if the GOP had "substantive policy, the Republicans in this race wouldn't need to attack a minority group."

"We greatly appreciate Figures sticking to the issues that matter to the lives of everyday Alabamians and not getting caught up in the attempts by conservatives to throw transgender Alabamians into their manufactured culture war," the statement reads.

Chance Shaw, executive director of Rainbow Pride of Mobile – like Burkett – called the mailer "disgusting."

"The Alabama Republican Party refuses to stand on actual issues Alabamians care about and instead grandstands with fear-mongering rhetoric like this," Shaw said.

ALABAMA CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 2 RACE

After defeat, Alabama Republicans mull challenging new congressional districts

MIL001013

21-cv-01530
2/10/2024 Trial
Milligan Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 64

MSNBC's Joy Reid: Alabama's newest Congressman among 'biggest stars' of freshman class

'It's huge': How a Democratic flip of an Alabama congressional seat might determine House majority

Dobson concedes Alabama District 2 race: 'We ran a strong race'

Shomari Figures wins Alabama 2nd District in key U.S. House race

If you purchase a product or register for an account through a link on our site, we may receive compensation. By using this site, you consent to our [User Agreement](#) and agree that your clicks, interactions, and personal information may be collected, recorded, and/or stored by us and social media and other third-party partners in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).



▼ About Us

[About Alabama Media Group](#)
[Jobs at Alabama Media Group](#)
[Advertise with us](#)
[About AL.com](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)
[Accessibility Statement](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Online Store](#)

▼ Subscriptions

[AL.com](#)
[The Birmingham News](#)
[The Huntsville Times](#)
[Press-Register](#)
[Newsletter](#)

▼ Already a Subscriber

[Manage your Subscription](#)
[Place a Vacation Hold](#)
[Make a Payment](#)
[Delivery Feedback](#)

MIL001014

▼ AL.com Sections[News](#)[Business](#)[Sports](#)[High School Sports](#)[Alabama Life & Culture](#)[Opinion](#)[Archives](#)[Obituaries](#)[Jobs](#)[Autos](#)

▼ Your Regional News Pages[Anniston/Gadsden](#)[Birmingham](#)[Huntsville](#)[Mobile](#)[Montgomery](#)[Tuscaloosa](#)[Gulf Coast Beaches](#)

▼ On the Go[Mobile Apps](#)[Tablet Apps](#)

▼ Follow Us[Pinterest](#)[Twitter](#)[Facebook](#)[Instagram](#)[RSS](#)

▼ Customer Service[Send us an email](#)[Submit a news tip](#)[Buy newspaper front pages, posters and more](#)

MIL001015

21-cv-01530
2/10/2024 Trial
Milligan Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 64

▼ More on AL.com

[Videos](#)

[Weather News](#)

[Site Map & search](#)

[Sponsor Content](#)

[Post a job](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Ad Choices](#)

ADVANCELOCAL

Use of and/or registration on any portion of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#), (updated 8/1/2024) and acknowledgement of our [Privacy Policy](#), and [Your Privacy Choices and Rights](#) (updated 7/1/2024).

© 2024 Advance Local Media LLC. All rights reserved ([About Us](#)).

The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of Advance Local.

[Community Rules](#) apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site.

YouTube's privacy policy is available [here](#) and YouTube's terms of service is available [here](#).

[Ad Choices](#)

MIL001016

21-cv-01530
2/10/2024 Trial
Milligan Plaintiffs' Exhibit No. 64