

Housing Is A Human Right - March 2023

Liam Dillon Findings Report

Introduction:

Since [February 2016](#), [Liam Dillon has been a housing reporter](#) for the *Los Angeles Times*. But between September 29, 2016, and February 9, 2023, Dillon has participated in at least 20 real estate industry or real estate industry-related events as a speaker, moderator, or panelist – an industry he must cover as a housing reporter. More than likely, he’s participated in even more. It’s an obvious conflict of interest that damages his impartiality and integrity as a reporter, and, as a result, damages the impartiality and integrity of the *Los Angeles Times*. All of which undermines the public’s trust in Dillon and the *L.A. Times*.

Reporters and newspapers are supposed to be objective about the issues they cover, giving them credibility with the public. When a reporter participates in an event, he or she is lending credibility to that event – the reporter is also lending the credibility of his or her newspaper. Disturbingly, by participating in real estate industry events, Dillon lent the credibility of himself and the *L.A. Times* to numerous real estate groups and institutions and their political agendas since 2016.

In addition, by participating in real estate industry events, Dillon commits other ethical breaches, such as participating in real estate industry lobbying efforts.

Dillon, in the end, created a host of ethical issues just by participating in real estate industry events. This is a very serious matter that must not be swept under the rug. Dillon and his editors at the *L.A. Times* must be held accountable.

[Housing Is A Human Right](#) is the housing advocacy division of [AIDS Healthcare Foundation](#), the world's largest HIV/AIDS medical-care provider. AHF also runs a housing provider division called [Healthy Housing Foundation](#). AHF was founded, in 1987, as a housing provider for terminally ill AIDS patients in the Los Angeles area. In 2017, AHF returned to its roots and has worked urgently to solve the housing affordability and homelessness crises.

EVENT 1

September 29, 2016: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in the [California Apartment Association's California Housing Forum](#) as a panelist. The event takes place in Sacramento. Dillon is the only active journalist participating in the housing forum. Betsy Stark, a former business correspondent for ABC News, is a moderator for two panels.

The [California Apartment Association](#) is the most powerful and politically influential landlord lobbying group in California. It supports or opposes housing and land-use legislation and supports or opposes ballot measures. Contributors to the CAA's political committees include some of the nation's largest corporate landlords, including Essex Property Trust, Equity Residential, Camden Property Trust, and AvalonBay Communities. The [CAA also shells out millions in campaign cash to local and state political candidates](#), and opposes tenant protections all over

the state. The California Apartment Association is a player within any reporter's housing beat, including Dillon's.

That's especially true when Dillon will cover Proposition 10 in 2018 and Proposition 21 in 2020 – Prop 10 will aim to repeal statewide rent control restrictions in California and Prop 21 will seek to reform statewide rent control restrictions. The [CAA, Essex Property Trust, Equity Residential, and AvalonBay Communities](#) will lead the main No on Prop 10 and [No on Prop 21](#) committees. A [broad coalition of housing justice groups](#), social justice organizations, labor unions, and civic leaders will support Prop 10 and Prop 21.

Additionally, the California Apartment Association will officially support two controversial land-use bills, [SB 827](#) and [SB 50](#), which will be introduced by State Sen. Scott Wiener in 2018. Many [housing justice groups will oppose the bills](#). Dillon will extensively cover SB 827 and SB 50 for the *L.A. Times*.

(Disclosure: Housing Is A Human Right and its parent organization, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, will lead the Yes on Prop 10 and Yes on Prop 21 campaigns. Housing Is A Human Right and AHF will also be a leading force in the opposition to SB 827 and SB 50.)

At the CAA's housing forum in 2016, Dillon participates on a panel titled "Barriers to new housing in California. What makes California a unique place to build? What are the challenges to new construction in California cities and how might we learn from other states?" The president of Domus Development is the moderator for Dillon's panel. One of Dillon's co-panelists is a vice president of investments for Equity Residential, the corporate landlord based in Chicago.

There is a good reason why other reporters may have chosen to not participate in the CAA's housing forum. Real estate industry conferences, forums, and other similar functions are not merely informational. They are also, without question, political and economic tools that protect or create financial gains for the real estate industry.

Forums, conferences, and summits provide a public platform for the real estate industry and like-minded academic institutions and think tanks, which often [receive funding from the real estate industry](#), to advocate for and push forward their political and legislative agendas. When those agendas are successful, one way or another, it results in financial gains for companies, experts, organizations, institutions, and other entities in the real estate industry.

The 2016 CAA housing forum is no different than other real estate industry conferences that are political and economic tools.

The overall thrust of the forum is that more homes need to be built to address California's housing crisis, and the state needs to make it easier to build. It's a convenient political argument the CAA routinely uses as a hammer to stop tenant protections, claiming rent control and other tenant rights will harm housing production. Then when the CAA kills a tenant protection, its members can continue to charge excessive rents or carry out other predatory business practices, which result in massive revenues for landlords. In 2019 alone, according to a Zillow report, [tenants in Los Angeles paid landlords a staggering \\$39.1 billion](#) in rent. Huge amounts of money are at stake.

By participating in the housing forum, Dillon and the *L.A. Times* are lending credibility to the event, the CAA, and its political argument – the purpose of which is to create financial gains for the organization’s members. Dillon and the *L.A. Times* also provide credibility to a political argument that harms tenants, who can’t get the protections they need. Lending further credibility to the CAA’s housing forum, [Liam Dillon’s picture is posted on the organization’s Facebook page](#), showing the reporter participating in the CAA panel. The caption for the post mentions Dillon by name and cites his *L.A. Times* affiliation.

Soon after the forum, the CAA releases a [”key findings” report](#). On page 17, the report cites the *Los Angeles Times* as one of the organizations that “attended” the forum – no other major news organization is cited as an attendee. On page 18, the report includes a picture of Dillon sitting next to the Equity Residential executive on his panel. The caption under that picture includes Dillon’s name and *L.A. Times* affiliation. As a result of these citations and the photo, Dillon and the *L.A. Times* are lending credibility to the CAA’s report, which is a political and economic tool to protect or create financial gains for CAA members and to stop tenant protections.

By taking part in the CAA’s housing forum, Liam Dillon and the *L.A. Times* have clearly participated in the CAA’s political and economic agendas. Just as bad, Dillon’s fellow participants at the housing forum are real estate executives and organizations that he must cover as a reporter. And as a panelist, Dillon is providing information to housing forum attendees and participants – many of whom are real estate industry insiders – that can be used for their political and financial gains.

Dillon and the *L.A. Times*' participation in the CAA's 2016 housing forum raises serious conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical issues. It's clear that the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to ethical guidelines created by journalism associations and news outlets. As a result, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper.

To prevent such significant, possibly irreparable damage from happening in the first place, it's why the Associated Press' ["Statement of New Values and Principles"](#) notes: "We avoid addressing, or accepting fees or expenses from, governmental bodies; trade, lobbying or special interest groups; businesses or labor groups; or any group that would pose a conflict of interest."

It's why the American Society of Newspaper Editors' ["Statement of Principles"](#) notes: "Journalists must avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety as well as any conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict. They should neither accept anything nor pursue any activity that might compromise or seem to compromise their integrity."

It's why the Society of Professional Journalists' ["Code of Ethics"](#) states: Journalists should "avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived... avoid political and other outside activities that may compromise integrity or impartiality, or may damage credibility."

It's why The *New York Times*' ["Ethical Journalism"](#) handbook for its news and editorial departments notes: "No staff member may appear before an outside group if the appearance could reasonably create an actual or apparent conflict of interest or undermine public trust in the paper's impartiality."

The *Times* further states, "Staff members may not accept invitations to speak before a single company (for example, the Citigroup executive retreat) or an industry assembly (for example, organized baseball's winter meeting) unless The Times decides the appearance is useful and will not damage the newspaper's reputation for impartiality."

The *Times* also notes: "Staff members should not accept invitations to speak where their function is to attract customers to an event primarily intended as profit-making."

And it's why the [L.A. Times "Ethics Guidelines"](#) state: "The goal of the Los Angeles Times is to publish news and information of the highest quality. This requires The Times, across its entire portfolio of editorial products, to be, above all else, a principled news organization. Making it so is the responsibility of every staff member.

"In deed and in appearance, journalists at The Times must keep themselves – and the organization – above reproach."

The *L.A. Times* adds: "Guidelines cannot cover every conceivable conflict of interest. If doubt exists, staff members should consult a supervisor. Nevertheless, some principles are clear. Any activity, relationship, investment, or affiliation that

reasonably could be perceived as affecting your judgment or indicating a bias may create a conflict of interest and should be disclosed immediately to your supervisors.”

The *L.A. Times* further states: “Journalists at The Times may not use their positions to promote personal agendas or causes. Nor should they allow their outside activities to undermine the impartiality of Times coverage, in fact or appearance.”

And the *L.A. Times* notes: “Times journalists are occasionally invited to speak to organizations or to appear on discussion panels. Before accepting, they should consider the purpose of the event and how it might be perceived. Staff members should avoid situations in which their participation could be construed as endorsement of the sponsoring organization’s interests.”

In the end, a very strong case can be made that by participating as a panelist at the California Apartment Association’s 2016 housing forum, *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon has violated ethics guidelines written by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (now known as News Leaders Association), the Associated Press, the Society of Professional Journalists, the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.

L.A. Times editors also play a role in Dillon’s ethical breaches.

Yet in the years to come, Dillon will continue to participate in similar real estate industry events – over and over. As a result, a disturbing, years-long pattern of ethical breaches by Dillon and the *L.A. Times* emerges.

EVENT 2

Early November 2016: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in a California Association of Realtors' summit as a panelist. The theme is "[Housing Affordability and California's Future.](#)" The event takes place at the [InterContinental Hotel](#), a luxury hotel in an upscale Los Angeles neighborhood called Century City. According to an October 31, 2016, CAR press release, Dillon is the only journalist participating in the event.

[Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in promotional material for the summit](#), lending credibility to the event. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, CAR, and CAR's political agenda.

The [California Association of Realtors](#) is one of the most powerful and politically influential real estate lobbying groups in the state. It supports or opposes housing and land-use legislation and supports or opposes ballot measures. [CAR also contributes major campaign cash to local and state political candidates](#). The California Association of Realtors is a player within any reporter's housing beat, including Dillon's.

That's especially true when Dillon will extensively cover the statewide land-use bills SB 827 and SB 50. CAR will officially support SB 827 and will be a co-sponsor of SB 50.

CAR will also oppose Prop 10 in 2018 and Prop 21 in 2020. In fact, [CAR will be a major contributor to the No on Prop 10](#) and the No on Prop 21 campaigns. Dillon will cover both Proposition 10 and Proposition 21 for the *L.A. Times*.

Same as the California Apartments Association's housing forum, CAR's real estate summit in 2016 is a political and economic tool to protect and create financial gains for the organization's members. (See Event 1)

At CAR's real estate summit in 2016, Dillon participates as a panelist. Other panelists for the event include a vice president of the California Building Industry Association, the CEO of the California Association of Realtors, and the director of the [Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley](#), which is connected to the real estate industry. Housing supply and land-use policies are discussed at the summit.

The CAR press release states that the summit has the "goal of generating action items for the state of California via the valuable input of stakeholders and thought leaders." By participating in the summit, Dillon is also participating in CAR's "goal" to generate action items, such as creating legislation and other policies.

As a panelist, Dillon is providing information to summit attendees and participants – many of whom are real estate industry insiders – that can be used for their political and financial gains. And Dillon's fellow panelists belong to organizations and entities that he must cover as a reporter, including the California Association of Realtors, the California Building Industry Association, and UC Berkeley's Turner Center, which routinely releases reports about housing and land-use policies in California and tries to influence housing and land-use policymakers.

Lastly, Dillon and the *L.A. Times* are participating in a political and economic tool (the summit) used by CAR to protect or create financial gains for the organization's members.

Dillon and the *L.A. Times'* participation in CAR's 2016 summit raises conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other serious ethical issues. It's clear that the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity and impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) As a result, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times'* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Both Dillon and *L.A. Times* editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 3

June 1, 2017: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in a UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation conference as a moderator. The theme is "[Promoting Housing Affordability by Expanding Supply and Lowering Costs.](#)" It takes place in the Crystal Ballroom of [Hotel Shattuck Plaza](#), a luxury hotel in Berkeley. It is an invitation-only event.

New York Times reporter Conor Dougherty and *Wall Street Journal* reporter Laura Kusisto also participate as moderators at this event – and like Dillon, they cover housing issues. As a result, the ethical breaches involving Dillon and the *L.A.*

Times for this event must also be applied to Dougherty and the *New York Times* and Kusisto and the *Wall Street Journal*.

The conference is sponsored by [Citi Foundation](#).

In a separate incident, Dougherty and *New York Times* columnist Farhad Manjoo may have violated a [New York Times policy for “protecting the paper’s neutrality.”](#) It will involve their participation in the YIMBY 2020 Awards held by YIMBY Action and sponsored by real estate companies. Details will come at the end of this item.

The [Turner Center collaborates with the UC Berkeley Fisher Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics](#) to come up with housing and land-use policies that influence the public, the media, politicians, and other policymakers. The Turner Center, for example, routinely releases reports about housing legislation in California, including [SB 50](#) and [Proposition 10](#), both of which Dillon will cover for the *L.A. Times*. In May 2019, in fact, Dillon cites a Turner Center survey and [prominently quotes Turner Center director Carol Galante in an article about SB 50](#). Obviously, Galante and the Turner Center are players in any reporter’s housing beat, including Dillon’s, but it’s important to provide more background about the Turner and Fisher centers and their places within the real estate industry.

The Fisher Center is funded by a policy advisory board, made up of nearly 230 members, that’s filled with many of the most powerful real estate executives in California. The [Fisher Center relies on real estate industry cash](#) to operate, according to its website.

The Turner Center also receives funding from the real estate industry, including Essex Property Trust founder George Marcus and [Prometheus Real Estate Group CEO Jackie Safier](#). In 2023, the California Association of Realtors, the Center for California Real Estate (a project of the California Association of Realtors), the Urban Land Institute, and other [real estate entities will also fund the Turner Center](#).

Over the decades, the real estate industry has built up a nationwide network of research centers and think tanks that aggressively advocate for more housing construction to solve the housing affordability crisis. These institutions include the [USC Lusk Center for Real Estate](#), the [Urban Land Institute](#), [UCLA Ziman Center for Real Estate](#), and others. The Turner and Fisher centers are a part of this network.

The research centers carry out their advocacy by holding summits and conferences and releasing a steady flow of studies. Their research and conferences are then used by the real estate industry to promote policies and legislation that carries out the lucrative “build, build, build” agenda. As a result, the research centers and their studies and conferences are political and economic tools the real estate industry uses to create financial gains.

And whenever necessary, the real estate industry will use studies and reports from its research network to stop rent control and other tenant protections – protecting financial gains.

For example, real estate groups such as the California Apartment Association or the California Association of Realtors will hold up research and claim that a proposed tenant protection will stall housing construction, which will worsen the

housing affordability crisis. Therefore, the argument goes, a proposed tenant protection must be killed.

The real estate industry tries to come off as do-gooders trying to fix the housing affordability crisis. But housing justice activists aren't fooled. They note that the real estate industry's "build, build build" push is a self-serving, ["trickle-down housing" agenda](#) that produces almost exclusively *luxury apartments* for a *housing affordability crisis*, with developers and landlords charging top-dollar rents. The poor and middle- and working-class tenants, who are getting hit hardest by the housing affordability crisis, cannot afford luxury homes.

And rarely, if ever, will real estate insiders make the public argument that rent control and other tenant protections will impact their gigantic profits – the overriding reason why the real estate industry opposes tenant protections.

Interestingly, many journalists go along with the real estate industry's "build, build, build" narrative, and routinely fail to mention, in their articles, the industry's profit motive to kill tenant protections – between 2010 and 2019, [American tenants paid landlords \\$4.5 trillion in rent](#), according to Zillow, the real estate site. A huge amount of the real estate industry's money is at stake, but reporters consistently ignore that key fact.

To further underline the Turner Center's place in the real estate industry, Carol Galante had become a true real estate industry insider by the time of the June 2017 conference. In a [2015 blog post on the Turner Center website](#), Galante wrote that she was "honored to be serving as the co-chair of the [Policy Advisor Board of the Fisher Center of Real Estate and Urban Economics](#)," where she was rubbing

elbows with many of the most powerful real estate executives in California. She was also profiled in the [May 2016 edition of *California Real Estate*](#), the official magazine of the California Association of Realtors.

Galante is clearly a part of California's real estate establishment, and Galante and the Turner Center are players within any reporter's housing beat, including Liam Dillon's, Conor Dougherty's, and Laura Kusisto's, who are described in the Turner Center's promotional material for the conference as [“some of the nation's preeminent journalists on housing and urban issues.”](#)

On June 1, 2017, in the Crystal Ballroom of Hotel Shattuck Plaza in Berkeley, the conference largely examines increasing housing supply, cost-effective housing production, and problematic regulations for housing production – all issues that the real estate industry uses as political and economic arguments to protect and create financial gains for real estate insiders.

Liam Dillon moderates a panel titled “Making New Housing Supply More Feasible and More Affordable.” Conor Dougherty of the *New York Times* moderates a panel titled “Increasing Housing Supply Across High-Cost Regions.” Laura Kusisto of the *Wall Street Journal* moderates a panel titled “Private Sector Innovations for Designing a More Affordable Housing Supply.” Real estate insiders are participants in all the panels and probably make up most of the audience since the conference is not open to the public. Perhaps some students attend as well.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation, Dougherty and his *New York Times* affiliation, and Kusisto and her *Wall Street Journal* affiliation are used in the conference's promotional material, including a [blog post](#) and a [program](#). As a result, the

reporters and their newspapers are lending credibility to the conference – a political and economic tool used by the real estate industry to protect and create financial gains. And by participating in the conference, Dillon, Dougherty, and Kusisto are lending credibility to the Turner Center and its political agenda.

In addition, the Turner Center publishes a blog post on June 27, 2017, with the headline, [“Highlights from the Turner Center Promoting Affordability Conference.”](#) Conor Dougherty and Laura Kusisto are not mentioned in the post, but “Los Angeles Times reporter Liam Dillon” is cited. It also quotes Dillon, noting that he pointed out that the thinking around “environmentalism used to be about stopping things from being built, now it’s about getting things built in particular places.” As a result, Dillon and the *L.A. Times* are further lending credibility to the conference.

Dillon’s participation in the Turner Center’s June 2017 conference raises conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical breaches. The same goes for the participation of Conor Dougherty and Laura Kusisto. It’s clear that the integrity or impartiality of the three reporters’ journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of their newspapers have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) As a result, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times*, Dougherty and the *New York Times*, and Kusisto and the *Wall Street Journal* have been damaged, which undermines the public’s trust in the reporters and their newspapers. The reporters and their editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

To make matters worse, in 2020, *New York Times* reporter Conor Dougherty and *New York Times* columnist Farhad Manjoo may have violated [the newspaper's policy for "protecting the paper's neutrality,"](#) among other ethical issues, by accepting honors at the [YIMBY 2020 Awards](#) for their journalism work. It was a livestream event that took place in October 2020. It was hosted by YIMBY Action and sponsored by such real estate companies as [Build:](#), [Red Oak Investments](#), One Vassar, [Emerald Fund](#), Shopoff Realty Investments, [Vanguard Properties](#), Realtex, SCB, and [DM Development](#). Elected officials also participated in the awards show.

YIMBY Action is a prominent land-use and housing advocacy organization based in California. Like [California YIMBY](#) and other YIMBY groups, YIMBY Action aggressively pushes the real estate industry's "trickle-down housing" agenda by lobbying elected officials to pass local and state legislation. YIMBY Action also receives real estate funding – in addition to the sponsorship for the YIMBY Awards, YIMBY Action accepted money from numerous real estate companies for its ["YIMBY Prom."](#) YIMBY Action, in other words, has become a part of the real estate industry. It's a group that must be covered by any housing reporter, including Dougherty and Manjoo – and Liam Dillon for that matter. That also goes for the [YIMBY movement](#) in general.

The YIMBY Awards was a political event, [sponsored by real estate companies](#), to push forward the agenda of YIMBY Action and the real estate industry. In addition, YIMBY Action was judging news coverage that impacts and informs its work. A YIMBY Action board member, who was the presenter for Dougherty's award, pointed out, "I'm honored to present this award because insightful reporting has certainly helped me make sense of such a complex issue and translate that understanding into action."

A few moments later, [Dougherty accepted the award for “Best Housing Reporting” by appearing in a video](#) and giving a brief speech. Fifteen minutes after that, [Manjoo personally accepted the award for “Best Opinion Piece by a Professional.”](#) He also gave a speech. Both of their articles were published in the *New York Times*.

Dougherty and Manjoo’s presence at the livestream show and their *New York Times* affiliation lent major credibility to YIMBY Action, the YIMBY Awards, and the political agenda of YIMBY Action and the real estate industry. The journalists were also participating in an awards show hosted by a group and sponsored by an industry that are key players in the housing issues they cover. As an example of how cozy everything is, [Manjoo competed against the Turner Center’s Carol Galante](#), a big-time real estate insider in California, for the same YIMBY Action award – Galante had written an op-ed that ran in the *New York Times*.

Manjoo took things a step further in his acceptance speech – he gave political advice to the YIMBY movement and essentially identified himself as a part of that movement. With a big smile, Manjoo said, “Wow. Thank you. I’m thrilled to be awarded.” He added, “I think, in general, we undersell the benefits of YIMBY living. Of fewer cars, living more efficiently, living in a denser place... So I think we should focus on livability as part of the YIMBY movement.”

In the *New York Times*’ handbook of values and principles for the news and opinion departments, under the section of “Protecting the Paper’s Neutrality,” the newspaper has laid out a policy for “competitions and contests.” It starts off, “Staff members may not enter competitions sponsored by individuals or groups who have a direct interest in the tenor of Times coverage. They may not act as judges for

these competitions or accept their awards. Common examples are contests sponsored by commercial, political or professional associations to judge coverage of their affairs.” It runs through a number of other rules and states, “Staff members who win unsought awards from groups that do not meet the criteria established here should decline politely.”

And the *New York Times* has other ethical policies that should be applied to Dougherty and Manjoo’s participation in the YIMBY Awards. The *New York Times*’ [“Ethical Journalism”](#) handbook states: “No staff member may appear before an outside group if the appearance could reasonably create an actual or apparent conflict of interest or undermine public trust in the paper’s impartiality.”

The *Times* further notes, “Staff members may not accept invitations to speak before a single company (for example, the Citigroup executive retreat) or an industry assembly (for example, organized baseball’s winter meeting) unless The Times decides the appearance is useful and will not damage the newspaper’s reputation for impartiality.”

The *Times* also notes: “Staff members should not accept invitations to speak where their function is to attract customers to an event primarily intended as profit-making.”

During the YIMBY Awards, Laura Foote, the executive director of YIMBY Action, said the organization received “hundreds of nominations.” It’s not clear if the nominations were sent by the people who were up for the awards or if members of the public sent the nominations. Either way, Dougherty and Manjoo should have politely declined their awards from YIMBY Action, which clearly had a direct

interest in the tenor of *Times* coverage and whose awards show was a political event that was sponsored by numerous real estate companies.

In addition, people viewing the awards show were asked by YIMBY Action director of development Gillian Pressman to [make donations of \\$10, \\$25, \\$50, \\$125, \\$250, \\$500, or \\$1,000 to her group](#). “We need this movement to grow,” said Pressman. “It is important. I think it’s one of the most important movements of our time, and we need it to grow, and we need your support to make that happen.”

YIMBY Action gave out novelty gifts for people’s cash: “Legalize Shadows” sunglasses for a donation of \$50 or more; a “NIMBY Tears” mug for \$125 or more; a YIMBY picnic blanket for \$250 or more; and a YIMBY kitchen towel set for \$500 or more.

Pressman explained that a YIMBY Action board member would match whatever the viewers donated by the end of the next 90 seconds. A clock went up on the screen and the countdown began. When the clock hit zero, [people had donated \\$42,326](#), which was doubled with the board member’s matching gift. It was an impressive, one-night haul for YIMBY Action.

So Dougherty and Manjoo were not only participating in a YIMBY Action political event, but also a major YIMBY Action fundraiser.

The ethical breaches don’t end there. Dougherty had written a book titled *Golden Gates*, which was published in February 2020. It largely told the story of the YIMBY movement in California, including the work of YIMBY Action and Laura Foote. Perhaps awkwardly, the *New York Times* published an [excerpt of the book](#)

and [reviewed it](#), all of which probably helped Dougherty's book sales – especially among the many readers in the YIMBY movement, which is known for its academic bent. Several months later, in October 2020, YIMBY Action and Foote, who kicked off the awards show with a short speech and acted as a kind of master of ceremonies, handed Dougherty an award for his book excerpt that ran in the *New York Times*.

Even more troublesome, Sonja Trauss, who was one of the main characters in Dougherty's book and was heavily featured in the book excerpt that was published in the *New York Times*, was [part of the awards committee for the YIMBY Awards](#).

Dougherty's ethical challenges don't stop with the YIMBY Awards.

On Tuesday, April 12, 2022, [Dougherty participated as a moderator](#) for a panel at a kind of national YIMBY trade show called YIMBYtown. Its sponsors included the [real estate company Cascadia Partners, Airbnb, the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and the real estate industry think tank Up for Growth](#). And it was filled with key players in the YIMBY movement from all over the country – people and organizations that Dougherty must cover as a reporter. Yet he's participating – elbow to elbow – in the conference with them. [His participation as a New York Times reporter also lent credibility to the event](#), which was a political event to push forward the YIMBY movement's legislative and advocacy agendas – which match up nicely, even lucratively, with the real estate industry's profit-making agenda.

In addition, [YIMBYtown 2022 was held in Portland, Oregon](#), far from Dougherty's home in California, which brings up the question of whether or not the reporter

received a speaker's fee, plane tickets, a hotel room, and meals and drinks for participating in the conference. Even if he didn't get a fee and stipend, Dougherty already turned his appearance into a money-making opportunity to sell more books: on the YIMBYtown website, [Dougherty's biography not only mentioned his New York Times affiliation](#), but also included a link to where *Golden Gates* can be bought.

It's clear that the integrity or impartiality of Dougherty and Manjoo's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *New York Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) As a result, the credibility of Dougherty, Manjoo, and the *New York Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporters and their newspaper. The reporters and *New York Times* editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

At this point, it's hard to understand how Dougherty, specifically, is still covering housing issues for the *New York Times*. Dougherty's ethical breaches involving the YIMBY movement have obliterated his impartiality and integrity, which undermines the public's trust in his reporting and the *New York Times*. Manjoo isn't much better.

It will be interesting to hear what Dougherty and the *New York Times* will say for themselves, and how the *New York Times* will handle Dougherty's ethical breaches. It will also be interesting to hear why *New York Times* editors allowed him to do all of these things, if he told them beforehand. If Dougherty didn't inform his supervisors, that's even more telling.

Dougherty, though, did talk to Dean Baquet, the executive editor of the *New York Times* during this period. In the acknowledgments section of his book, Dougherty thanked Baquet and wrote that the editor “offered a bit of counsel for how to make this book complementary to the *Times*’ daily mission instead of having my time away detract from it.” Dougherty didn’t explain further, but perhaps they hatched a plan for the *New York Times* to be a cheerleader for the YIMBY movement. With everything added up here, it at least appears that way, which is unacceptable. The integrity of the *New York Times* is seriously at stake.

EVENT 4

October 5, 2017: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in the Randall Lewis Seminar Series as a featured speaker. The theme is [“California’s Housing Crisis: Is There a Legislative Solution?”](#) It’s held by the UC Riverside Center for Sustainable Suburban Development, and takes place in Riverside. It’s free and open to the public. [Dillon also participates in a one-on-one discussion, which is videotaped, with Ronald Loveridge](#), the director of UCR’s Center for Sustainable Suburban Development and a former mayor of Riverside. Dillon is the only journalist participating in the event and video.

Dillon and his [L.A. Times affiliation are mentioned in promotional material](#), lending credibility to the seminar. Dillon’s participation also lends credibility to the event and the UC Riverside center.

In terms of sponsorship, the video of the one-on-one discussion between Dillon and Loveridge opens with an acknowledgment: “The following programming is made possible through a generous donation from Randall Lewis, vice president Lewis Operating Companies.” Lewis Operating Companies, also known as the [Lewis Group of Companies](#), is a real estate company based in Upland, California. It is a developer and owner of residential and retail properties.

Randall Lewis, according to his biography on the Lewis Group website, is a major real estate insider. In 2006, the *L.A. Times* named Lewis as one of the top 100 influential people in Southern California; he was inducted into the California Building Industry Association Hall of Fame; he’s been a longtime member of the Urban Land Institute; he’s frequently quoted as a real estate expert by media outlets; and he serves on several executive boards, including the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development – now known as the [USC School of Policy](#) – and the UCLA School of Public Policy.

The UC Riverside Center for Sustainable Suburban Development will later change its name to the Inland Center for Sustainable Development. It holds [events and conducts research about housing and real estate development](#), among other issues.

Lewis and the UC Riverside center are players in any reporter’s housing beat, including Dillon’s. Lewis’ tight connection to the [California Building Industry Association](#) is especially concerning. The organization is a powerful real estate lobbying group based in Sacramento. It aggressively pushes the [real estate industry’s “build, build, build” agenda](#), supporting State Sen. Scott Wiener’s SB 827 and SB 50. The California Building Industry Association will also oppose

Proposition 10 and Proposition 21, which try to undo statewide rent control restrictions.

As the featured speaker at the seminar, Dillon discusses state housing bills. According to promotional material, his “analysis is certain to provide insight on how the housing crisis solutions will be framed in the near future.” He also sits down with Ronald Loveridge for a 29-minute discussion about the housing crisis.

Additionally, Dillon is based in Sacramento, which is more than 430 miles from Riverside, where the seminar takes place. It raises the question of whether or not Dillon has received a speaker’s fee, plane tickets, and other financial assistance so he can participate in the event.

In the end, *L.A. Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in a seminar and video sponsored by a real estate industry executive, Randall Lewis. Dillon may need to cover Lewis as a reporter.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical issues.

The integrity or impartiality of Dillon’s journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) As a result, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public’s trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and *L.A. Times* editors are responsible for the ethical breach.

EVENT 5

February 27, 2018: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce’s [“2018 Leadership Delegation to Sacramento”](#) event as a guest speaker. It takes place over two days at the [Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel](#), a luxury hotel in Sacramento. People must apply to attend the event and pay a registration fee, ranging from \$375 to \$650. [CalMatters housing reporter Matt Levin will participate as a guest speaker with Dillon](#) at the event’s “delegation briefing.” (Levin and Dillon co-host a housing podcast.)

Dillon’s *L.A. Times* affiliation and Levin’s CalMatters affiliation are used in promotional material for the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce’s event. As a result, Dillon and the *L.A. Times* and Levin and CalMatters are lending credibility to the event. Dillon and Levin’s participation also lends credibility to the event, the San Diego chamber, and the San Diego chamber’s political agenda. Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are also mentioned in a post about the event on the San Diego chamber’s website.

The [event is sponsored by Charter Communications](#), Cox Communications, Southwest, Rancho Guejito, Deloitte, and Lyft.

The [San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce](#) is a lobbying group for the business community in the San Diego area. For that fact alone, journalists and news outlets should mostly avoid participating in events hosted by any chamber of commerce – because reporters and news outlets may be participating, one way or

another, in a chamber's lobbying efforts for the business community. That's certainly true in this case.

According to promotional material on the San Diego chamber's website, the organization "heads to Sacramento to bring local, regional and state leaders together to discuss policy priorities." It further states that "this trip provides the opportunity to participate in exclusive high-level meetings, discuss industry-specific issues, and network with regional and state officials and business leaders."

In other words, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce is taking a lobbying trip to Sacramento, and Liam Dillon and Matt Levin are participating in that lobbying effort by speaking at the San Diego chamber's event. "Housing supply and affordability" will be a key issue during the lobbying trip, according to the San Diego chamber's promotional material.

Dillon and Levin's [fellow participants at the San Diego chamber's event are numerous state politicians, including State Sen. Toni Atkins, State Sen. Jim Beall, State Assemblyman Phil Ting, and State Sen. Scott Wiener.](#) Atkins, Beall, Ting, and Wiener are players in any reporter's housing beat, including Dillon's. That's especially true in February 2018. A few weeks earlier, in January 2018, the controversial land-use bill SB 827 had been introduced by Wiener with Assemblyman Phil Ting as a "principal coauthor." Atkins and Beall will become involved later as SB 827 goes through the legislative process. Yet Dillon is participating with them at the same event. Dillon will extensively cover SB 827 for the *L.A. Times*.

On Tuesday, February 27, Dillon and Levin are guest speakers at the San Diego chamber's "[Delegation Briefing & Luncheon](#)," which is sponsored by Charter Communications. Dillon and Levin, in other words, are briefing the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, its members, and other event attendees about housing issues. The reporters' information can be used when the luncheon's attendees lobby state politicians.

In the end, as guest speakers at the San Diego chamber's "delegation briefing," Dillon and Levin are participating in the lobbying efforts of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. The reporters are also providing information that can be used to lobby and influence politicians. And Dillon and Levin's fellow participants at the San Diego chamber's two-day event are state politicians that the reporters must cover, especially during this period with the recent introduction of State Sen. Scott Wiener's SB 827.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical issues – reporters participating in a business organization's lobbying efforts is especially troublesome.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon and Levin's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* and CalMatters have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* and the credibility of Levin and CalMatters have been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporters and their publications. The reporters and their editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 6

March 13, 2018: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in the [Sacramento Metro Chamber State Legislative Summit](#) as a panelist. It takes place at the California Chamber of Commerce in Sacramento, with a reception at the exclusive [Sutter Club](#). People must register and pay to attend the summit – the fee ranges between \$40 and \$175. Dillon is the only journalist participating in the summit.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in promotional material, including a flyer and a [Sacramento chamber Facebook post](#), which lends credibility to the event. Dillon’s participation also lends credibility to the event, the Sacramento chamber, and the Sacramento chamber’s political agenda. [Dillon is also featured in several photos of a Sacramento Metro Chamber Facebook post](#).

The [Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce](#) is a lobbying organization for the business community in the Sacramento area. Again, reporters and news outlets should mostly avoid participating in events hosted by any chamber of commerce – because the reporters and news outlets may be participating, one way or another, in the chamber’s lobbying efforts for the business community.

That’s certainly true in this case. A [flyer for the March 2018 event](#) states that the “Sacramento Metro Chamber’s annual State Legislative Summit supports our ongoing advocacy efforts at the local, state, and federal levels to support a business-friendly economic climate.” “Advocacy” is just another word for

“lobbying.” Either way, journalists should steer clear of participating in the Sacramento chamber’s lobbying or advocacy efforts.

In addition, the Sacramento chamber takes positions on housing issues, including [opposing, in 2018, a proposed rent control ballot measure in Sacramento](#). Later, the Sacramento chamber would oppose statewide rent control ballot measures [Proposition 10](#) in 2018 and [Proposition 21](#) in 2020. The lobbying organization is a player in any housing reporter’s beat, including Dillon’s.

Yet Dillon participates at the Sacramento chamber’s legislative summit as a speaker on a panel titled “Have Housing Costs Reached a Tipping Point?” The reporter’s fellow panelists include real estate insiders such as Kevin Carson, president of The New Home Company, and Nikky Mohanna, partner of Mohanna Development Company. State Assemblyman Jim Cooper is the moderator for Dillon’s panel. The information that Dillon provides as a panelist at the legislative summit can then be used for the lobbying of state politicians.

In the end, as a panelist at the Sacramento chamber’s legislative summit, Liam Dillon is participating in the lobbying efforts of the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce. The reporter is also providing information that can be used to lobby and influence politicians. And since the Sacramento chamber takes positions on housing issues, Dillon is participating in an event that’s hosted by an organization he may need to cover.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical issues – a reporter participating in a business organization’s lobbying efforts is especially troublesome.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 7

May 2, 2018: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates at a [joint luncheon for members of the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors](#), the San Mateo County Association of Realtors, and the Santa Clara County Association of Realtors as a featured speaker. The luncheon takes place in Sacramento. The members of the three realtor associations are visiting Sacramento to participate in the [California Association of Realtors' Annual Legislative Day](#), a major real estate industry event in which realtors lobby state politicians. Dillon is the only journalist participating in the joint luncheon.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in a May 4, 2018, post on the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors website, lending credibility to the event. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, the three associations of realtors, and the associations' political agenda.

The Silicon Valley Association of Realtors, the California Association of Realtors, and the other realtor associations are powerful lobbying groups. They're routinely involved in housing and land-use issues, and they routinely engage politicians. CAR and possibly the other realtor associations also routinely oppose tenant protections. The California Association of Realtors, for example, will spend millions to stop statewide rent control ballot measures Proposition 10 in 2018 and Proposition 21 in 2020. Realtor associations are key players in any housing reporter's beat, including Dillon's.

In addition, the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors and the other realtor associations have traveled to Sacramento for one reason: to lobby and influence state politicians. As a result, any reporter and news outlet should avoid participating in one of their events. Liam Dillon does the opposite.

On May 2, 2018, Dillon stands behind a podium at a luncheon filled with members of the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors, the San Mateo County Association of Realtors, and the Santa Clara Association of Realtors. He gives them information about State Sen. Scott Wiener's SB 827, the housing policies of city councils, and a possible ballot measure that seeks to repeal statewide rent control restrictions, [according to a May 4, 2018, post](#) on the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors website. It's helpful information for any realtor's lobbying work – Dillon is giving the realtors what they need.

In the end, as the featured speaker at a luncheon hosted by realtor associations, Liam Dillon is participating in the realtors' lobbying efforts in Sacramento. He is also providing information that can be used to lobby and influence politicians, especially since the realtors are taking part in the California Association of

Realtors' Annual Legislative Day. And since the realtor associations are active in housing issues, Dillon is participating in an event that's hosted by organizations that he may need to cover.

These are serious ethical breaches – a reporter participating in real estate organizations' lobbying efforts is especially troublesome.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 8

September 12-14, 2018: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in the [National Multifamily Housing Council's Fall Meeting](#) as a panelist. It takes place over three days at the [InterContinental Hotel at The Wharf](#), a luxury hotel in Washington D.C. The meeting is open to all NMHC members, but they must register to attend. For his panel, Dillon is joined by *Wall Street Journal* reporter Laura Kusisto and Politico reporter Katy O'Donnell.

Dillon and his [L.A. Times affiliation are mentioned in the agenda](#) for the meeting and are featured in a [September 20, 2018, NMHC article](#), lending credibility to the

event. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, NMHC, and NMHC's political agenda.

The [sponsors for the NMHC Fall Meeting](#) include Google, Lincoln Property Company, Bozzuto, Zillow Group, JLL, Institutional Property Advisors, Red Capital Group, Greystone, UDR, HFF, Marcus & Millichap, ARA, and Eastdil Secured.

The [National Multifamily Housing Council](#), based in Washington D.C., is one of the most powerful and politically influential landlord lobbying groups in the country. It lobbies Congress, it operates one of the apartment industry's leading political action committees, its members are many of the largest corporate landlords in the country, it runs a research foundation, it holds numerous forums, meetings, and other events, and it runs a [rent control "resource center"](#) to stop rent control policies across the nation. NMHC, in fact, is a national leader in opposing rent control.

NMHC's [top sponsors include major real estate companies and other corporations](#) such as Google, Comcast, J.P. Morgan, Wells Fargo, Capital One, Cushman & Wakefield, CBRE, RealPage, Greystar, Trammell Crow Residential, Apartments.com, CoStar Group, PNC Real Estate, Equity Residential, Marcus & Millichap, Sares Regis Group, and UDR, among many others.

The NMHC's 2018 fall meeting is a major lobbying event for the apartment industry. According to the [promotional material on the NMHC website](#), the attendees will "connect with peers and engage with top-ranking Congressional and Administration leaders." The NMHC also boasts that attendees will take part in

“insider briefings” and “panel discussions featuring top-ranking congressional, administration, and industry leaders.”

With Election Day in November only weeks away, the fall meeting will also put the spotlight on Proposition 10, the California ballot measure that seeks to repeal statewide rent control restrictions. On Thursday, September 13, there will be a session that provides an “overview briefing” on Prop 10 and the nationwide rent control movement. It features NMHC CEO Doug Bibby and Jim Lapidés, a member of the No on Prop 10 executive committee and vice president of strategic communications at the NMHC, which shows NMHC is deeply involved in the No on Prop 10 campaign.

Immediately after that panel, there will be a “housing affordability project update.” It will explain NMHC’s creation of an “engagement playbook” that’s “designed to empower multifamily industry stakeholders (i.e. landlords and lobby groups) when engaging with policymakers to pursue constructive solutions or combat harmful policies related to housing affordability,” according to the fall meeting’s agenda. One of those “harmful policies” is clearly rent control.

The NMHC and the National Apartment Association, in fact, have already developed an [“awareness and outreach plan”](#) and are actively campaigning to stop Prop 10. And both the NMHC and the NAA will deliver campaign contributions to No on Prop 10 committees.

In addition, several sponsors of NMHC’s 2018 fall meeting are real estate companies, or a group of employees from the same real estate company, that have already contributed to No on Prop 10 or will contribute. Employees of ARA,

Eastdil Secured, and HFF, which all sponsored the fall meeting, will end up delivering significant amounts of money to the No on Prop 10 campaign. Marcus & Millichap founder and chairman George Marcus will deliver a total of \$2.3 million to the No on Prop 10 campaign – and another real estate company Marcus founded, [Essex Property Trust, will shell out a total of \\$6.6 million to No on Prop 10](#). And Greystone will contribute at least \$50,000 by the end of the No on Prop 10 campaign while UDR will deliver a total of \$1.2 million.

The real estate industry's opponent in California is a [broad coalition of more than 525 housing justice organizations](#), social justice groups, labor unions, and civic leaders that support Proposition 10. AIDS Healthcare Foundation, the parent organization of Housing Is A Human Right, is the top contributor to the Yes on Prop 10 campaign. Even though the [real estate industry has tens of millions to splurge on TV and radio ads](#), it's still spooked that Proposition 10 could win – a victory would likely put a major dent into corporate landlords' profits.

As this battle between corporate landlords and grassroots activists plays out, Liam Dillon is covering Proposition 10 for the *Los Angeles Times* – he's already written a number of articles involving the ballot measure to repeal statewide rent control restrictions. To maintain his impartiality and integrity, and to maintain the impartiality and integrity of his employer, one would think Dillon would immediately turn down an offer to be a panelist at the National Multifamily Housing Council's fall meeting.

The NMHC, after all, is carrying out a coordinated effort with the National Apartment Association to kill Prop 10 and an NMHC vice president is working on the No on Prop 10 executive committee. In addition, a number of sponsors of the

fall meeting have already contributed to the No on Prop 10 campaign. It's a simple decision: no thanks, NMHC. But Dillon has other ideas – he accepts.

It's important to put this into perspective. As an example, let's say Liam Dillon is covering a presidential campaign as a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*. The campaign is heading into the homestretch, and major supporters and campaign contributors of a presidential candidate ask Dillon to participate in their town hall. These are people and groups that are actively campaigning for their candidate. And they don't want Dillon to cover their town hall as a reporter, but instead participate with them in it. And the town hall will explain things about their candidate.

Normally, any journalist would laugh in disbelief and immediately reject such an offer – it's more than obvious that a reporter shouldn't participate in a town hall with major movers and shakers that are deeply involved in a presidential campaign that reporter is covering. But Liam Dillon goes the other way with it. He gives the candidate's supporters and contributors a resounding yes – he'd be happy to participate with them.

If Dillon ever did that, he would be crucified by the national press and media watchdog groups – and he may even lose his job. At the bare minimum, he would no longer be allowed to cover the presidential campaign – his impartiality and integrity as a journalist has been completely destroyed. In addition, media watchdogs would be demanding that Dillon's editors must also be held accountable. Heads would be rolling all over. Dillon's participation in the National Multifamily Housing Council's fall meeting is no different.

On Thursday, September 13, immediately after the panel about the NMHC's "engagement playbook," Dillon is a speaker for a panel titled "Housing Affordability Through the Lens of the Media." It's one of the "insider briefings" that the NMHC promised the fall meeting's attendees. The moderator is senior vice president of public affairs at NMHC, and Dillon is joined by *Wall Street Journal* reporter Laura Kusisto and Politico reporter Katy O'Donnell – Kusisto and O'Donnell also have some explaining to do about their participation at the NMHC's fall meeting.

With the reporters' participation in the panel, and with their affiliations mentioned in the fall meeting's agenda, the journalists and their publications are lending credibility to the conference.

[According to the agenda](#), Dillon, Kusisto, and O'Donnell will discuss "the state of housing affordability in California as Costa-Hawkins is under debate, in Washington and from a market perspective" – Costa-Hawkins is the state law that Prop 10 is trying to repeal. Clearly, the reporters are providing important information that the real estate heavyweights in the audience can use for their lobbying efforts and political and financial agendas. Just as clear, by participating in the fall meeting, which is a lobbying event, the reporters are participating in the real estate industry's lobbying efforts.

A few days after the fall meeting, a [September 20, 2018, article on the NMHC website](#) about the conference goes into detail about how helpful Dillon and the other reporters had been.

The article notes that the fall meeting “members also had the opportunity to hear the media’s perspective on the [housing affordability] issue. NMHC Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Industry Initiatives Kim Duty moderated a panel with Liam Dillon of the *Los Angeles Times*, Laura Kusisto of *The Wall Street Journal* and Katy O’Donnell of Politico.”

The article continues, “The group explored the topic of housing affordability and how developers are perceived by the public. Kusisto noted, ‘There is a real sense of resentment around the types of development that are happening.’”

The article further states, “The panel emphasized the importance of taking an empathetic approach to questions of affordability and being open to experiences and views different from what the industry may expect. The journalists highlighted ways in which that perception could be altered and also discussed the potential for affordable housing reform at the federal level.”

Without question, Dillon and his fellow reporters have provided useful strategies for the real estate industry. They and their publications are also lending credibility to the findings in NMHC’s September 20 article.

A few weeks later, the [Los Angeles Times publishes an article by Dillon about Proposition 10](#) – by this time, the NMHC has contributed a total of \$50,000 to two No on Prop 10 committees. The election is only days away, and Dillon writes an article about corporate landlords contributing to No on Prop 10, noting that the *L.A. Times* analyzed state campaign finance data.

In the article, Dillon writes that at “this fall’s meeting of the National Multifamily Housing Council in Washington D.C., organizers held a session combating Proposition 10, which they called an ‘existential threat to the industry.’” But Dillon doesn’t disclose to readers that he participated in the NMHC’s fall meeting, which may indicate that he knew his participation would cause an uproar. And by not disclosing it, he gives the impression to the reader that he covered the fall meeting as a reporter for the *L.A. Times* – so he’s misleading the reader. The failure to disclose his participation is another ethical lapse. So is misleading the reader.

And even though Dillon has analyzed state campaign finance data, he doesn’t mention that the NMHC is a contributor to the No on Prop 10 campaign. But Dillon does give the real estate industry the last word in his article, quoting a real estate analyst to end the piece – he has a habit of ending his articles with quotes, giving a person the final say on the matter.

Michael Lewis, the analyst, explains to Dillon that real estate insiders fear the success of Proposition 10 could create a new wave of rent control policies. “It would be like, for example, having a new communist government overseas,” Lewis says. “The U.S. just doesn’t want to see it.” And with that, Dillon has picked a quote that leaves the reader with the final thought that Prop 10 is some kind of communist tool – the real estate industry and business community have already been using the word “radical” to describe [Prop 10](#) and the [activists supporting the Yes on Prop 10 campaign](#). No wonder Dillon is repeatedly invited by real estate heavyweights to participate in their summits and forums.

Lastly, Dillon’s cross-country trip to Washington D.C. from California raises the question of whether or not he accepted a speaker’s fee, plane tickets, a hotel room,

and a stipend for meals and drinks from the NMHC or related entities for participating in the fall meeting.

In the end, Dillon has participated in a real estate industry lobbying event, which means he's participated in their lobbying efforts. He also provides information that attendees of the NMHC's fall meeting can use for their lobbying efforts and their political and financial agendas. Dillon also participates in an event that's hosted by an organization (NMHC) that's deeply involved in a campaign (No on Prop 10) that he's covering, and he participates in a panel moderated by a top executive that works for that organization. Dillon also fails to disclose to readers that he participated in the NMHC's fall meeting when he mentions the event in his article and provides a quote from that event. And, as a result, he misleads the reader. There are also questions of whether or not Dillon received a speaker's fee, plane tickets, and other things to participate in the fall meeting. Lastly, Dillon participates in an event that's sponsored by numerous real estate companies.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical issues – a reporter participating in a real estate organization's lobbying efforts is especially troublesome.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 9

November 8, 2018: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in a UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation conference as a moderator. The theme is [“InnovateHousing: New Ideas on the Future of Home.”](#) The Turner Center and Fannie Mae are the co-hosts. It’s an invitation-only event. Dillon is not the only journalist participating in this conference. *Wall Street Journal* reporter Laura Kusisto and *The Information* reporter Cory Weinberg are moderators for other panels. This is the third time that Kusisto has participated in a real estate industry event with Dillon, which brings up ethical questions about her journalism work.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in a [November 26, 2018, blog post about the event on the Turner Center website](#), lending credibility to the conference. Dillon’s participation also lends credibility to the event, the Turner Center, and the Turner Center’s political agenda.

At the time of the conference, State Sen. Scott Wiener is preparing to introduce a revised version of the land-use deregulation bill [SB 827, which had been stopped in April 2018](#). The new bill will be called SB 50, and Wiener will introduce it on December 3, 2018 – only weeks after the Turner Center conference.

Once again, the housing justice movement will strongly oppose Wiener’s legislation, calling it a [trickle-down housing, pro-gentrification bill that will further enrich the state senator’s real estate campaign contributors](#), but will harm middle- and working-class communities. Housing Is A Human Right will note in a 2019 article that Wiener has raked in nearly 700 contributions totaling \$574,276 from

the real estate industry for his 2016 state senate campaign and has already received \$153,816 from real estate insiders for his upcoming 2020 re-election campaign.

During the SB 50 fight, Dillon and other reporters will rarely, if ever, mention [Wiener's major financial connections to the real estate industry](#), which includes campaign contributions from Equity Residential, the San Francisco Apartment Association, the California Apartment Association, the California Association of Realtors, the California Infill Federation, and the California Building Industry Association.

By late 2018, Dillon has become a regular on the real estate conference circuit, including real estate-related events hosted by chambers of commerce. Since 2016, he's participated in events hosted by the California Apartment Association, the California Association of Realtors, UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation, the Randall Lewis Seminar Series, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors and the San Mateo County and Santa Clara County associations of realtors, and the National Multifamily Housing Council. At these various summits, conferences, and forums, Dillon has participated as a panelist or moderator with numerous power brokers in the real estate industry.

Real estate insiders are obviously comfortable with Dillon. One of the key reasons is that his housing coverage often revolves around one theme: California must build more homes to address the housing affordability crisis. It's the same theme, or political argument, the real estate industry pushes to protect its massive profits, to generate more profits, and to stop tenant protections. And that political argument will be showcased during the battle over SB 50.

We have already provided background information about the Turner Center and its connections to the real estate industry (See Event 3). So let's move into the November 2018 conference.

Dillon moderates a panel titled [“Innovations to Increase Density in Cities.”](#) One of his panelists is State Sen. Scott Wiener – the politician that's a key player in any housing reporter's housing beat, including Dillon's. In fact, Dillon already covered Wiener when the state senator tried to pass SB 827, the predecessor of SB 50. So now Dillon is directly participating with a politician at a real estate industry event that he knows he must cover as a reporter in the coming months.

Even worse, the panel starts off with a seven-minute speech by Wiener, telling the conference's attendees and participants that “we're going to reform zoning, and require that cities actually allow apartment buildings near jobs and near transit. We have to do these reforms, and the state has to have a role.” The speech is essentially Wiener's opening argument for the passage of SB 50.

In fact, the panel comes off as a kind of public relations/political tool to help Wiener push SB 50 through the state legislature – and Dillon is participating in that public relations/political effort by moderating Wiener's panel. It won't be the last time – the reporter will constantly write about SB 50 and Wiener, and Dillon will participate with Wiener at numerous real estate industry events that help promote SB 50.

In the end, Dillon has participated in an event that's a public relations/political tool to help State Sen. Scott Wiener and his bill SB 50, which means Dillon has

participated in that public relations/political effort. Dillon also participates in the same panel with Wiener – a politician Dillon must cover for the *L.A. Times*. And Dillon is participating in an event that's hosted by the Turner Center – an organization he must cover as a reporter.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical issues – a reporter participating in a political effort to pass legislation is especially troublesome.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 10

March 26, 2019: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in a Pepperdine School of Public Policy conference as a moderator. The theme of the conference is [“A Home in California: Are Our Communities Sustainable?”](#) It takes place at the Wilburn Auditorium at Pepperdine University. Dillon is not the only journalist participating in the event. [Planetizen managing editor James Brasuell participates as a panelist](#) and Vox co-founder Matthew Yglesias is a moderator.

The [official program for the conference](#) cites Liam Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation, lending credibility to this event. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, the Pepperdine School of Public Policy, and the School of Policy's political agenda.

The conference is sponsored by [Fieldstead and Company](#), which officially supports [State Sen. Scott Wiener's SB 50](#).

The Pepperdine School of Public Policy is a [research partner of the Center for California Real Estate](#), an institute of the California Association of Realtors. The Pepperdine School of Public Policy, as a result, is a part of the nationwide network of research centers created by the real estate industry. (See Event 3) And the California Association of Realtors, the powerful real estate industry lobbying group, is a co-sponsor of Wiener's SB 50. In addition, panelists at the conference will include a senior vice president of California Association of Realtors and the executive director of YIMBY Action, which officially supports SB 50.

At the time of the conference, Wiener's SB 50 was going through the legislative process and heading towards a number of state senate committee hearings. In fact, SB 50 will be heard by the state senate housing committee on April 2, 2019 – only a week after the Pepperdine School of Policy conference. The [event's panel discussions](#) include such titles as “Sustainable Solutions to Housing Affordability,” “YIMBYism: A New Public Voice for Change?,” and “At What Level Should These Decisions Be Made?” The panels address a number of issues brought up during the SB 50 debate, including localities having control of land-use decisions.

Liam Dillon moderates a panel titled “Sustainable Solutions to Housing Affordability.” One of the panelists is Leslie Appleton-Young, senior vice president and chief economist of the California Association of Realtors, a real estate lobbying group that’s a key player in any reporter’s housing beat, including Dillon’s. (Introducing himself at the start of the panel discussion, [Dillon says he covers “housing affordability issues” for the *L.A. Times*.](#))

In addition, Dillon is participating with a top executive of an organization (California Association of Realtors) that’s co-sponsoring legislation that Dillon is already covering for the *L.A. Times*.

In the end, Dillon is participating in an event that’s sponsored by a company, Fieldstead and Company, that’s an official supporter of SB 50 – legislation he’s covering for the *L.A. Times*. He’s also participating in a panel that includes a top executive from the California Association of Realtors, which is a co-sponsor of SB 50 – legislation Dillon is covering for the *L.A. Times*. In addition, Dillon must cover the California Association of Realtors as part of his housing beat. He’s also participating in a conference organized by the Pepperdine School of Public Policy, a research partner of the Center of California Real Estate – an institute of the California Association of Realtors. Again, CAR is an organization Dillon must cover for the *L.A. Times*.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical issues.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon’s journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be

compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

NOTE: *The following events will now be summarized more concisely, providing key information. Many of the ethical issues raised in the previous events will be repeated again.*

EVENT 11

April 30, 2019: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in the Center for California Real Estate Series as a moderator. The theme for the event is [“Are Californians Saying ‘YIMBY’ to ADUs?”](#) It takes place at the Sacramento Convention Center. The conference is free and open to members of the California Association of Realtors – it is not open to the public. Dillon is the only journalist participating in the event.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in promotional material for the event, lending credibility to the conference. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, the Center for California Real Estate, and the center's political agenda.

The [Center for California Real Estate](#) is an institute of the California Association of Realtors, the powerful real estate lobbying organization that Dillon must cover as a reporter. The California Association of Realtors is co-sponsor of SB 50, legislation that Dillon is covering for the *L.A. Times*.

At the time of the Center for California Real Estate event, State Sen. Scott Wiener's SB 50 is still going through the legislative process. Only a few days before this event, on April 24, SB 50 was taken up by a state senate governance and finance committee. Dillon moderates a panel that includes [State Assemblymember Phil Ting, who is a co-author for SB 50](#). Dillon, in other words, is participating in a real estate industry event with a politician that he must cover for the *L.A. Times*.

In the end, Dillon is participating in an event organized by an institute of the California Association of Realtors – an organization he must cover as a reporter. In addition, CAR is a co-sponsor of SB 50, which is legislation that Dillon is covering for the *L.A. Times*. And Dillon is participating in a panel that features a politician who is a co-author of SB 50 – a politician Dillon must cover.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical issues.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's

trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 12

May 10, 2019: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in an Urban Land Institute summit as a moderator. [The annual event is called “Housing the Bay.”](#) It takes place at the [Hyatt Regency](#), a luxury hotel near the San Francisco waterfront. People must register to attend the event. Dillon is the only journalist participating in the event.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in the official program for the summit, lending credibility to the event. Dillon’s participation also lends credibility to the event, the Urban Land Institute, and ULI’s political agenda.

The summit is [sponsored by numerous real estate companies](#) such as [Sares Regis Group](#), [Boston Properties](#), and [Klingbeil Capital Management](#). UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation, the think tank connected to the real estate industry, is a summit partner.

The [Urban Land Institute](#), based in Washington D.C., is a major real estate industry think tank, with numerous [real estate executives sitting on its Global Board of Directors](#). According to the ULI website, the Global Board of Directors “is the principal policy-making body of the Institute and has the responsibility for managing property, affairs, and strategic direction.” The Urban Land Institute, whose membership is made up of [“more than 40,000 members real estate and](#)

[urban development professionals.](#)” is a key part of the real estate industry’s nationwide network of research centers. ULI is a player in any housing reporter’s beat, including Dillon’s.

Without question, the Housing the Bay summit is an event that pushes the real estate industry’s political agenda, which can create massive financial gains for landlords, developers, real estate attorneys, and others in the real estate industry. Dillon is participating in that political and financial agenda by participating as a moderator at the summit.

In addition, SB 50, the controversial land-use legislation introduced by State Sen. Scott Wiener and co-sponsored by California YIMBY and the California Association of Realtors, is heading to the [state senate appropriations committee for a vote on May 13, 2019](#) – only three days after the ULI summit. Wiener participates in the summit as a speaker for the panel “Produce, Preserve, Protect: How will Our Region’s Compact Transform California?” Housing the Bay is clearly a [public and political platform for Wiener to make the case for SB 50](#). By participating in the event as a moderator, Dillon is participating in the political effort to help Wiener pass SB 50.

At the summit, Liam Dillon moderates a panel titled “Housing Leadership with California Mayors.” His panelists include San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, and Stockton Mayor Michael Tubbs. In an Urban Land Institute Facebook post on May 10, 2019, [Dillon is smiling broadly in a picture with the politicians](#).

Three days later, on May 13, Dillon publishes an article in the *L.A. Times* about SB 50, citing what Schaaf, Steinberg, and Liccardo said during his panel. Once again, Dillon does not disclose his participation as a moderator. And once again, that's an ethical breach. As a result of not disclosing, he misleads readers into thinking he was covering the event as a reporter, which isn't true. That's another ethical breach.

And since Dillon cites Liccardo, Schaaf, and Steinberg in his *L.A. Times* article, the reporter is clearly participating in the same event with politicians he must cover for the *L.A. Times*. In addition, Dillon is participating in the same event as State Sen. Scott Wiener – during this period, Dillon is routinely covering Wiener and his legislation, SB 50.

In the end, Dillon is participating in a real estate industry event that aims to help State Sen. Scott Wiener pass SB 50, which means Dillon is also participating in that political effort. Dillon is also participating in the same event as politicians he must cover for the *L.A. Times*. And Dillon is participating in an event hosted by an organization (ULI) that he must cover. And by not disclosing to readers in an article about SB 50 that participated as a moderator at the ULI summit, Dillon misleads *L.A. Times* readers. Dillon is also participating in an event that's sponsored by numerous real estate companies.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical breaches, such as misleading readers – a reporter participating in a political effort to pass legislation is especially troublesome.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be

compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 13

October 30, 2019: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in a UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation conference as a moderator. The theme is [“Taking Action on Zoning Reform: Lessons for California.”](#) Dillon is the only journalist participating in the event.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in the agenda for the conference, lending credibility to the event. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, the Turner Center, and the Turner Center's political agenda. [Dillon is also featured in several photos of a Turner Center Facebook post.](#)

At the time of the conference, State Sen. Scott Wiener's SB 50 is still going through the legislative process – the California State Senate will vote on the bill on January 30, 2020. Wiener and Assemblymember David Chiu are speakers at the Turner Center conference – Chiu is a co-author of SB 50. The event clearly provides a public and political platform to help Wiener pass SB 50. In fact, [Wiener talks about SB 50 during his “opening conversation”](#) with Turner Center director Carol Galante and Assemblymember Chiu.

The Turner Center is a research partner of the Center for California Real Estate, an institute of the California Association of Realtors. CAR is a co-sponsor of SB 50.

It should be remembered that housing justice groups oppose SB 50, calling it a trickle-down housing, pro-gentrification bill that will further enrich the real estate industry, but will harm middle- and working-class communities.

At the conference, [Dillon participates as a moderator for a panel titled “State and Local Action on Zoning Reform in Oregon.”](#) Since the conference provides a public and political platform to help State Sen. Scott Wiener pass SB 50, Dillon is also participating in that political effort to help Wiener. And once again Dillon is participating in the same event as Wiener, a politician that Dillon must cover for his housing beat, especially now with SB 50 still going through the legislative process. Dillon is also participating in the same event as Assemblymember David Chiu, another politician that Dillon must cover.

In the end, Dillon is participating in a real estate industry event that aims to help State Sen. Scott Wiener pass SB 50, which means Dillon is also participating in that political effort. And Dillon is participating in the same event as two politicians he must cover – State Sen. Scott Wiener and Assemblymember David Chiu. Dillon is also participating in an event hosted by the Turner Center, a real estate industry-connected institute that Dillon must cover as a reporter.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical breaches – a reporter participating in a political effort to pass legislation is especially troublesome.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon’s journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public’s trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 14

January 17, 2020: *Los Angeles Times* reporter [Liam Dillon participates in an online YIMBY Action event](#) as the featured speaker. It’s called “Ask Me Anything.” People must be a dues-paying member of YIMBY Action to attend the event. Dillon is the only journalist participating.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in promotional material for the event, lending credibility to it. Dillon’s participation also lends credibility to the event, YIMBY Action, and YIMBY Action’s political agenda. [YIMBY Action also promotes the event in a tweet](#) that uses Dillon’s Twitter handle and features a picture of State Sen. Scott Wiener – another example of how intertwined Dillon and Wiener have become during the SB 50 battle.

YIMBY Action and other YIMBY groups, such as California YIMBY, have become a part of the real estate industry. YIMBY Action receives real estate industry funding, which has been noted previously in this report. YIMBY Action is also an official supporter of SB 50, the controversial land-use bill that’s still going

through the legislative process. YIMBY Action is a key player in any housing reporter's beat, including Liam Dillon's.

In addition, a [post on the YIMBY Action Facebook page](#) promotes the online event with Dillon in a way that tries to bring in more dues-paying members to YIMBY Action. The online event, in other words, is a kind of membership drive, and Dillon is participating in it.

In the end, Dillon is participating in an event hosted by an organization (YIMBY Action) that he must cover. And YIMBY Action officially supports a bill, SB 50, that's still going through the legislative process – a bill that Dillon is covering for the *L.A. Times*. Lastly, Dillon is participating in a YIMBY Action event that's a membership drive effort.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical breaches.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

EVENT 15

March 2, 2022: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in the [California Association of Realtors' Virtual Legislative Day](#) as a featured speaker. Dillon sits down with CAR President Otto Catrina for a one-on-one interview titled [“Insider Perspective: A Conversation with Liam Dillon of the Los Angeles Times.”](#) People must register to attend the event. Dillon is the only journalist participating in the event.

Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in promotional material for the legislative day, lending credibility to the event. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, CAR, and CAR's political agenda.

The California Association of Realtors is one of the most powerful real estate lobbying groups in the state. It's a key player in any housing reporter's beat, including Dillon's. CAR's annual legislative day is a major lobbying event for the real estate industry that aims to influence state politicians and shape housing and land-use policies. [Attendees will receive a “legislative brief” from CAR's chief lobbyist, Sanjay Wagle.](#) In addition, numerous state politicians will attend the virtual event, including Lieutenant Gov. Eleni Kounalakis, State Sen. Bob Archuleta, State Sen. Rosalicia Ochoa Bogh, and Assemblymember Tim Grayson.

According to the agenda for the event, “CAR President Otto Catrina sits down with Los Angeles Times housing reporter Liam Dillon to discuss the inner workings of covering California's housing policy and the housing crisis at the *Times*.” The title of discussion is “Inside Perspective: A Conversation with Liam Dillon of the Los Angeles Times.”

Dillon, in other words, is providing insider information at a real estate lobbying event that attendees can use for their political and lobbying efforts, which can result in financial gain. By participating in CAR's legislative day and by providing insider information, Dillon is participating in the lobbying efforts of CAR. Dillon is also directly participating in a discussion with the president of CAR, an individual Dillon must cover as a reporter.

In the end, Dillon is participating in an event hosted by a powerful real estate lobbying organization (CAR) that he must cover. And by participating in CAR's lobbying event, and by providing insider information during a discussion with CAR President Otto Catrina, Dillon is clearly participating in CAR's lobbying efforts. Dillon also participates in a discussion with a powerful real estate industry leader (Otto Catrina) that he must cover as a reporter.

These are serious ethical breaches that bring up conflict-of-interest issues and possibly other ethical breaches – participating in the lobbying efforts of a real estate organization is especially troublesome.

As a result, the integrity or impartiality of Dillon's journalism work and the integrity or impartiality of the *L.A. Times* have been compromised or appear to be compromised. Either is unacceptable, according to the ethical guidelines written by news outlets and journalism organizations. (See Event 1) Therefore, the credibility of Dillon and the *L.A. Times* has been damaged, which undermines the public's trust in the reporter and his newspaper. Dillon and his editors are responsible for the ethical breaches.

END NOTE: *Lastly, here are brief mentions of five additional real estate industry or real estate industry-related events that Dillon has participated in. In total, we found that Dillon participated in at least 20 real estate industry or real estate industry-related events between 2016 and 2023. Most likely, there are even more real estate summits, forums, and conferences that Dillon has participated in as a moderator or panelist or featured speaker.*

EVENT 16

July 24, 2019: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates at the [Council of Infill Builders' Annual Infill Conference](#) as a panelist. It's held at UCLA. State Sen. Scott Wiener's SB 50 is still going through the legislative process. Wiener is the keynote speaker at the conference. California YIMBY CEO Brian Hanlon participates with Dillon on the same panel, titled "Update on State Legislation and Regulations Affecting Infill Development." That panel is moderated by Meea Kang, a board member of the Council of Infill Builders and a senior vice president of a real estate company called Related California. California YIMBY is a co-sponsor of SB 50. The [Council of Infill Builders and Related California are official supporters of SB 50](#). The conference is a members-only event. Dillon is the only journalist participating in this event. His participation lends credibility to the event, the Council of Infill Builders, and the council's political agenda.

EVENT 17

November 2019: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates as a moderator at a [“town hall”](#) that’s organized by CalMatters, the Milken Institute, and the *Los Angeles Times*. Sponsors for the town hall included JP Morgan Chase & Co., Edison International, and SoCalGas. This event takes place while SB 50 is still going through the legislative process. State Sen. Scott Wiener is a participant in the town hall, which provides a public and political platform to help Wiener pass SB 50. In January 2020, though, the bill will fail to win enough votes in the California State Senate. SB 50 is stopped.

EVENT 18

February 2021: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates as a [featured guest on the YIMBY Action podcast “Infill.”](#) The host of the podcast is YIMBY Action Executive Director Laura Foote. YIMBY Action is a key player in any housing reporter’s beat, including Dillon’s. Dillon is the only journalist participating in the podcast. Dillon’s participation lends credibility to the podcast, YIMBY Action, and YIMBY Action’s political agenda.

EVENT 19

November 16, 2022: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in the [San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership Housing Summit](#) as a speaker. The SGVEP’s motto is “The Voice of Business.” The summit is held at the Pacific

Palms Resort in the City of Industry. Dillon is the only journalist participating in this event. Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in promotional material for the summit, lending credibility to the event. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, SGVEP, and SGVEP's political agenda.

EVENT 20

February 9, 2023: *Los Angeles Times* reporter Liam Dillon participates in an AIA Monterey Bay lecture titled [“Why California Has a Housing Crisis & What Can Be Done to Fix It”](#) as a speaker. It takes place in Sand City, California. He is the only journalist participating in the event. [AIA is the American Institute of Architects](#), a national lobbying organization for architects. [AIA Monterey Bay's sponsors](#) include various players in the real estate industry. Dillon and his *L.A. Times* affiliation are mentioned in [promotional material](#) for the lecture, lending credibility to the event. Dillon's participation also lends credibility to the event, AIA Monterey Bay, and the AIA Monterey Bay's political agenda. Dillon lives in the Los Angeles area. It appears he had to travel to Sand City to participate in the event. That's a trip of 318 miles. If Dillon did have to travel, it brings up the question of whether or not he received a speaker's fee, plane or train tickets or transportation money, a hotel room, and meals and drinks.