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Education Department unveils disturbing disparities in pandemic-era schooling

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education has released a wealth of data from the 2020–21 school year in a revealing exposé that reveals significant disparities in education access that the coronavirus pandemic challenges have exacerbated. The findings paint a stark picture of inequality in the nation's educational landscape, prompting urgent calls for comprehensive reform.

"In America, talent and creativity can come from anywhere, but only if we provide equitable educational opportunities to students everywhere," U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona emphasized in a release.

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), a mandatory survey of public schools serving preschool to grade 12 students, counts as a critical instrument in assessing equal educational opportunities mandated by federal civil rights laws.

The 2020–21 CRDC, the first since the 2017–18 collection was delayed due to the pandemic, draws from over 17,000 school districts



The findings paint a stark picture of inequality in the nation's educational landscape, prompting urgent calls for comprehensive reform. (Photo via NNPA)

and 97,000 schools, unveiling concerning disparities in education access nationwide.

"These new CRDC data reflect troubling differences in students' experiences in our nation's schools," Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Catherine E. Lhamon remarked. "We remain committed to working with school communities to ensure the full civil rights protections that federal law demands."

Key Data Points from the 2020–21 CRDC:

Harassment or Bullying:

- K–12 students reported over

42,500 allegations of harassment or bullying based on sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, or religion.

- Racial and gender disparities were evident, with Black students reporting 37% of race-based harassment, while white students reported 68% of sex-based and 70% of disability-based incidents.

School Offenses:

- Districts reported approximately 274,700 incidents, with 78% being threats of physical attack without a weapon.

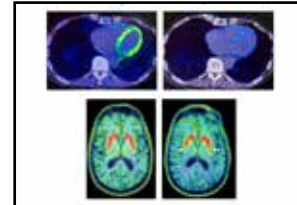
- Public schools reported over

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Thanksgiving beyond Black Friday

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PET scans can be a game-changer

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Fighting disruption and displacement

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Connecting with hard to reach kids

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People In The News ...



Rosalynn Carter



James 'Bun' McCoy

NDG Quote of the Week: "Life has two rules: number 1, never quit! Number 2, always remember rule number one."
— Duke Ellington

Rosalynn Carter

By Stacy M. Brown
The Washington Informer

In a wave of condolences, political leaders and public figures expressed their grief and admiration for the late Rosalynn Carter, former first lady and tireless advocate for various social issues. President Joe Biden, visibly moved, shared his sentiments with reporters as he boarded Air Force One in Norfolk, Virginia, on Sunday night.

Habitat For Humanity, the Georgia-based charity closely associated with the



Carters, expressed sadness at the news. The organization described Carter as a "compassionate and committed champion" who worked tirelessly to help families worldwide.

The late First Lady and her husband co-founded the Carter Center, which expressed its sorrow in a statement by highlighting their global initiatives to strengthen democracy, settle disputes, advance human rights, and eradicate crippling diseases. The center announced that, instead of flowers, contributions in Carter's memory could be made to the Carter Center's Mental Health Program or the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers.

"He had this great integrity and still does. And she did too," Biden remarked. "God bless them." After

speaking with the family, Biden learned that Jimmy Carter's children and grandchildren were by his side during his final moments. The White House later issued an official joint statement from President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden, lauding Rosalynn Carter's inspirational impact on the nation.

Former President George W. Bush and former First Lady Laura Bush also paid their respects, praising Carter's dignity and strength. "There was no greater advocate of President Carter, and their partnership set a wonderful

example of loyalty and fidelity," Bush stated.

U.S. Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff of Georgia emphasized Carter's compassionate nature and commitment to various causes. "The State of Georgia and the United States are better places because of Rosalynn Carter," Ossoff stated. "May Rosalynn Carter's memory be a blessing."

Vice President Kamala Harris acknowledged Carter's redefinition of the First Lady's role and her life of service, faith, compassion, and moral leadership. "Her legacy will be a beacon for generations to come," Har-

ris asserted.

Former first lady Melania Trump expressed her condolences, noting Carter's meaningful legacy and servant's heart. "May she rest in peace," Melania Trump conveyed on X, formerly Twitter.

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi described Carter as a "saintly and revered public servant," highlighting her historic diplomatic missions and advocacy for mental health. Pelosi offered condolences to the Carter family.

Bill and Hillary Clin-

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James 'Bun' McKoy

By Stacy M. Brown
The Washington Informer

@StacyBrownMedia

Funeral services for James "Bun" McKoy, a member of the civil rights and political prisoner group The Wilmington Ten, were held on Friday, Nov. 17. McKoy died on November 10th, at the age of 69.

The cause of death was not immediately disclosed. McKoy's life was forever changed on Feb. 1, 1971, when Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. arrived in Wilmington. Chavis made the journey at the invitation of a



local preacher who wanted the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. disciple to lead a boycott of the desegregated high schools that refused to acknowledge King, who had been slain just three years earlier.

By 1969, the city had only three high schools: all-white New Hanover and Hoggard, and all-Black Williston Senior High School. Officials eventually relocated Black students and teachers to New Hanover and Hoggard and closed Williston, and African Americans faced increased racially motivated name-calling, physical attacks, and threats in the schools, while riots occurred virtually daily.

Chavis, McKoy, Connie Tindall, Marvin "Chilly" Patrick, Wayne Moore, Reginald Epps, Jerry Jacobs, Willie Earl Vereen, William "Joe" Wright, Jr.,

and Ann Shepard comprised the Wilmington Ten, and the group advocated for Black history classes, respect for Martin Luther King Jr. and all Black people, and equality.

However, tensions reached a boil in Wilmington, with the Ku Klux Klan and other white nationalists firebombing buildings and

shooting at Black pupils, and then on a cold February night, the popular Mike's Grocery Store was firebombed, leading to more chaos.

As police and firefighters approached, a sniper fired at members of the Wilmington Ten, striking one of the officers. "Chilly" Patrick, one of the Wilmington Ten,

stood in front of a sniper's bullets to save Chavis. Police ultimately arrested the group and falsely charged them with firebombing the grocery store.

Racist prosecutors forced witnesses to go against their court-appointed lawyers during the trial and

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Netnael Belay

By Dwight Bachman

An Ethiopian proverb fits Natnael Belay '20 like a glove. It reads, "One who learns will eventually teach." The proverb speaks to Belay's personality, creativity, happiness, love, and zest for life. More importantly, it references his inquiring mind and love for education, and his strong sense of social responsibility. Belay's life journey began in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, where he was born and raised. He fondly recalls viewing himself as a "nerd" in elementary and high school. Today, he is a widely respected and well-



loved, leading Technology Program Manager for Google's Android Jetpack Program in Cambridge, MA, where he shares his wisdom and keen knowledge of one of Google's most significant products with colleagues and people across the nation.

"As a youngster, I spent

most of my time in the library. I had a deep question about what reality is, and how our planet and universe came about. I wanted to become an astronomer. People made fun of me because they did not even know what an astronomer was. Nonetheless, I spent all of my time in the library reading, university-level physics and astronomy books." Belay also credits his success in becoming the highest version of himself to date, to the emotional support of Mom and Dad. "My parents have instilled in me a deep sense of integrity and taught me to do everything that I do with passion. They have also

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972-509-9049**Editorial Department:**

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Published by

Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

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The North Dallas Gazette, formerly Minority Opportunity News, was founded in July 1991, by Mr. Jim Bochum and Mr. Thurman R. Jones. North Dallas Gazette is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

Thanksgiving Beyond Black Friday



Dr. John E. Warren
Publisher,
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First, we give thanks to God for those of us who remember the true spirit of this holiday we call Thanksgiving.

While so many of us trace its origins back to 1621 when a few surviving Pilgrims shared a meal with the Native Americans who had helped them survive their first winter in this

land, on October 3, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation of Thanksgiving designating the last Thursday in November, with some exceptions, as a day of Thanksgiving.

Fortunately the majority of Americans not only celebrate the occasion, but also find it in their hearts to share meals and service to others.

For this we are truly thankful. However, the occasion has been commercialized, like all other holidays. And while many

are giving to and feeding those among us who are less fortunate, let us also remember the empty chairs at so many family tables as the result of the death of loved ones. Let us offer prayers for those grieving such losses and let each of us count our blessings beyond the tables of food set before us.

There are so many other places we could have been born. There are global conflicts, famine, and hardships that we have been spared. For this and many other reasons we are blessed.

But let's not be so thankful that Black Friday becomes more important than the good we have discussed above. The issue is not how much money we will spend on things that we really don't need, but how wisely we handle our funds.

Black Friday is not named after "us". The word "Black" refers to the profits expected or actually made on that day after Thanksgiving. Being Thankful for our blessings does not mean we have to spend the blessing foolishly. Happy Thanksgiving.

Biden's Dance with the Black Press: A Forgotten Rhythm?

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

With his campaign flailing, then-presidential candidate Joe Biden knew his fate hinged on African Americans.

Like many successful campaigns, political and otherwise, Biden looked to the Trusted Voice of Black America during what had become a critical, if not grave, moment of reckoning. On a brisk morning, Feb. 26, 2020, Biden received an essential reminder of the historical significance of the Black Press and how its backing could sway the all-important Black electorate.

However, just one year before the critical 2024 presidential election, where he'll likely face a rematch with Donald Trump, the question arises: has the President forgotten the rhythm that drew him to the dance?

On that crisp February morning in 2020, a chartered bus rolled into historic downtown Charleston, carrying over a dozen Black Press publishers and leaders. The Mills House

Wyndham Grand Hotel on Meeting Street hosted a critical gathering between Biden, his team, and the stalwarts of the Black Press. The stakes were high, and South Carolina held the key to the fate of Biden who trailed badly in the polls as rumors began to fly that he contemplated suspending his campaign.

The strategy was simple: connect with the "Trusted Voice of Black America," a legacy that spans nearly two centuries when Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm boldly proclaimed, "We wish to plead our own cause," and started the Black Press in New York.

The boldness of Russwurm and Cornish's statement lies in the fact that they started Freedom's Journal with those daring words before slavery ended. From Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Mamie Till, the Black Press has been the conduit for crucial messages that have reverberated globally.

Biden's interview with NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. broadcast over the expansive social media channels of the Black Press, became

a lifeline for his campaign. His words could now reach over 30 million people, particularly African Americans. A subsequent national feature article about the get together ran in many of the more than 230 Black-owned newspapers and amplified Biden's message to the African American electorate.

"The Black vote will determine the nominee... and hopefully the next president and The Black Press is the heart and soul as to why I got involved," Biden acknowledged during the interview, recognizing the pivotal role played by African American voters.

His promises were explicit, and a breath of fresh air in comparison to Trump:

- Addressing housing discrimination
- Investing \$640 billion over a decade for affordable housing
- Dismantling redlining
- Creating opportunities for first-time homebuyers

Those commitments voiced through the Black Press resonated with the Black community, a critical demographic that would propel Biden to victory. And it certainly didn't hurt

Biden that shortly after his sit down with the Black Press, and after he promised to appoint the first Black woman to the U.S. Supreme Court, the kingmaker, South Carolina Democratic Rep. James Clyburn, formally endorsed him.

Today, Biden's dance seems to have lost its rhythm. Despite numerous policies benefiting African Americans, his messaging remains non-existent. With the 2024 election looming, polls indicating major declines in Black support, Biden's campaign has ignored, as Biden once said, "What brought me to the dance," the Black Press.

The recent Biden-Harris ad campaign, "History," showcases the administration's investments in rural Black communities. While commendable, it raises questions about excluding Black-owned media in those advertising buys. Biden's campaign boasted a 16-week, \$25 million ad buy targeting Black voters, yet the Black Press, with its unmatched influence and historical significance, is

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Revolutionary study explores heart PET scans as game-changer for early Parkinson's and Lewy Body Dementia detection

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has released a major study showing how positron emission tomography (PET) scans of the heart could be used to find people likely to get Parkinson's disease or Lewy body dementia. Health officials said the research, the brainchild of specialists from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), marks a significant advancement in the early detection of these crippling neurodegenerative disorders.

This discovery, led by scientists from the NINDS

and published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation, could change how early these crippling neurodegenerative conditions are found.

In the pioneering investigation, scientists delved into neurotransmitter levels by employing PET scans on the hearts of 34 individuals with known Parkinson's disease risk factors. The scans gave new information about the people who later were diagnosed with Parkinson's disease or Lewy body dementia. Lewy bodies—abnormal alpha-synuclein protein deposits—are the

root cause of both conditions.

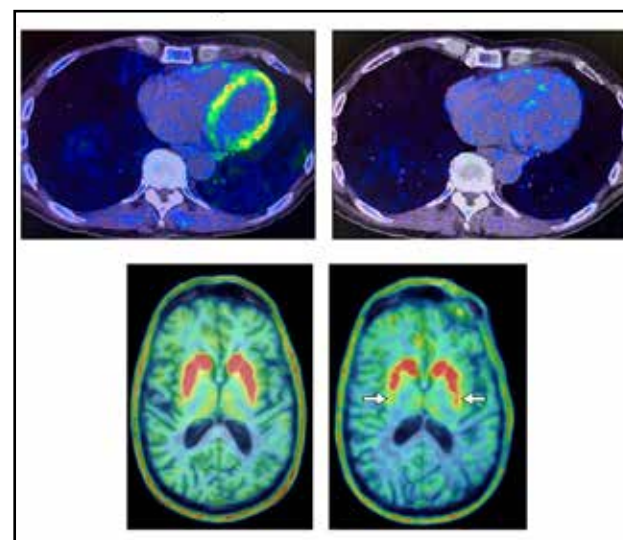
The research took place at the NIH Clinical Center; currently the sole facility offering 18F-dopamine PET scanning. PET scans employ a radioactive tracer to visualize metabolic or biochemical processes within body organs.

Norepinephrine, derived from dopamine, is notably deficient in the brains of people living with Parkinson's, health officials explained in the study. Dr. David S. Goldstein, the principal investigator for NINDS, has previously

shown that people with Lewy body diseases have very little cardiac norepinephrine. He explained that nerves that supply the heart typically release this neurotransmitter.

The new study, led by Dr. Goldstein, found that people who were at risk and had low 18F-dopamine-derived radioactivity in the heart were much more likely to develop Parkinson's or Lewy body dementia over time than people who had the same risk factors but normal radioactivity.

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Health officials said the research, the brainchild of specialists from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), marks a significant advancement in the early detection of these crippling neurodegenerative disorders. (Images via NNPA)

BELAY, from Page 2

been my biggest supporters with whatever endeavor caught my imagination." Belay recalls a time when his mother would print research papers at her work and bring them home for him to read.

"We did not have an internet or a computer at home, so I would ask my mother to use her work computer at the Ethiopian Civil Service Agency to print articles discussing topics such as the theory of special relativity coined by Albert Einstein. On the weekends, my father would take me to one of the bookshops in a town called 4 Kilo, which was a prominent destination for books due to its proximity to Addis Ababa University. I firmly believe that experience of reading and inquiring gave me the framework to digest extremely complex topics and contribute to the advancement of those topics." In 2015, Belay's parents sent him to the United States, where he enrolled as an international student at Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, CT.

"All the odds were against me—a new country, new language, and new culture. I felt isolated and homesick for Ethiopia. It took me a while to come out of my shell and get involved on campus. When I finally did, I met some amazing colleagues and friends."

Belay got accepted into the University Honors Program, which enabled him to receive a full tuition scholarship. "The program is reserved for a small number of students, and I was the only international student in the program at the time. In the Honors Program, I authored a technical thesis, titled, "Network and Sentiment Analysis on Enron Emails." The thesis used Python and Network Science Concepts to examine the public emails of Enron to perform Sentiment and Network Analysis. The research built a social network of Enron and helped understand the change in the flow and characteristics of information through time. Belay presented his research at the 2018 Council of Public Liberal Arts

Colleges (COPLAC).

At Eastern, Belay studied Computer Science and Business Information Systems, and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a 4.0 GPA in both majors! He also assisted with the development of the University's web page. In addition to his academic achievements, Belay is also a great photographer. Belay always gave back to his fellow students, serving as a Mathematics tutor, mentor, and resident hall assistant. He won numerous awards at Eastern and was a member of prestigious honor societies, including the International Computing Honor Society and the National Leadership Honor Society. Belay had so many job offers from high-tech companies across the nation that he didn't know which one to take. In April 2020, he settled in Boston, where, after a competitive process, he secured a position as a program manager at PTC, Inc., a company with \$1.93 billion annual revenue growing in the industrial CAD, IOT, and PLM segments.

Belay was hired as the

lead program manager for the team among numerous candidates due to his program management and deep technical skills. He provided end-to-end support to the enterprise architecture team to define, initiate, scope, and deliver all software architecture programs early in the Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC). "The architecture team was responsible for designing critical software that is used as part of the software supply to produce physical items that are part of the physical goods supply chain," said Belay. "We were also responsible for innovating next-generation architectural improvements critical to client enterprises."

In May of last year, Belay moved on, landing his current position across town at Cambridge-based Google Inc., a company with \$256.7 billion annual revenue operating in the internet software industry. He is the lead Technical Program Manager of Google's Android Jetpack program. Android Jetpack provides tools to allow Android app developers to write attrac-

tive, performant, and quality applications. Due to the criticality of Jetpack libraries in the mobile ecosystem, Google expanded to invest in creating more Jetpack libraries aimed at solving critical pain points experienced by developers. As part of the scaling, an experienced program manager with deep technical expertise was required to lead the Jetpack program end to end. Belay was chosen after a rigorous interview process that had 10 stages, where more than 20 other candidates were interviewed.

"I am responsible for spearheading the critical end-to-end pipeline of more than 200 Android Jetpack libraries to both internal teams (e.g Google Search, Youtube, Gmail, and Google PlayStore), and millions of external developers (e.g Whatsapp) to build mobile applications that reach billions of end users." As Jetpack's lead Technical Program Manager, Belay has introduced numerous process improvements through automation. Among them, the most impactful is the

mapping of Jetpack library releases with critical bug fixes included in them. The Python script Belay wrote analyzed all the changes submitted in the code base and mapped them to the issue ticket they correspond to. The script made that mapping easily discoverable, where developers can know what library version fixes their pain point with only one click.

Belay demonstrates deep technical and process innovation, along with superior communication management skills by effectively conveying the progress to 50+ senior leads, and devising risk mitigation plans accordingly. Of the more than 180,000 Google and Alphabet employees, only 5.3 percent are Black. Belay is breaking barriers in the tech industry and inspiring the next generation to do the same. He shares his opinions on different prestigious forums such as Dzone, and on podcasts like the InfoQ podcast (click on links), to discuss how to improve technology organizational efficiency and have a supportive and inclusive culture.



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Neighborhood groups fight to protect marginalized communities from disruption and displacement

By Lori Lee
NDG Contributing Writer

As large-scale developments push through cities across the country, central neighborhoods suffer, neighborhoods like San Francisco's historically Black Bay View Hunter's Point and Chinatowns in major cities.

Chinatowns, which historically developed due to labor and housing discrimination, isolated the populations within their own neighborhoods, explained Sissy Trinh, executive director of the Southeast Asian Community Alliance in Los Angeles. A hundred years ago, these neighborhoods were very undesir-



Asian American United is helping the community to fight a displacement model that is disrupting cultures and communities across the world. (Cajee Zhang / Unsplash)

able, but now, they are near industrial districts, often converted to high-end lofts, she said.

Though people have fought hard for these com-

munities, they have been hurt by disinvestment. Long-term residents have pushed, as developers build on these sought-after sites and as rents rise. Restau-

rants that have served the neighborhood for decades are being replaced with uses that fall short of serving their communities, explains landscape architect Ernie Wong.

In Philadelphia, three major real estate developers have been working together to build an arena in the city's core at Chinatown's backdoor. Neeta Patel heads up a grass-roots organization that is pushing back to preserve the irreplaceable neighborhood.

The Philadelphia Chinatown neighborhood is a thriving place of living, worshiping and celebrating, said Patel, a community that has survived 150 years because people have fought

for it.

Asian American United is helping the community to fight the displacement model that is disrupting cultures and communities across the world, said Patel, interim executive director of the organization.

The developer's model has a tendency to fail to benefit the people living in these neighborhoods, said Patel. It commodifies lives. Though the model does extract value from the community, it does so for monetary gain, while failing to recognize community as representing value.

These places, homes and communities matter to people. They have value, said Patel. We create value that

is beyond money," she said. "We give it life. We make it go. We put down memories."

Patels warns, the developers' model will disrupt the places where people come together and erase the culture of families and neighbors.

Vibrant areas with diversity have become a desirable amenity, as developers recognize the benefits they can offer. Being near a Chinatown is almost like lakefront property," explained Wong, and there is the risk that Chinatown will become like a tourist destination.

As these places cater to outsiders, residents can no

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Senate considers House passage of continuing resolution to temporarily keep government open

House lawmakers on both sides of the aisle rallied behind newly elected Speaker Mike Johnson's bill to avert a government shutdown, deferring the GOP's fight for deep spending cuts until after the holiday season. On Capitol Hill, the heated debate reached fever pitch, underscoring the importance and pressure surrounding the legislative maneuver.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, addressing the chamber before the vote, criticized far-right MAGA Republicans, who opposed the bill. "If you don't believe in governance, you're okay with this. When we had the three weeks of no action on the floor because... we didn't have a speaker, they were okay with that because they don't believe in governance," Pelosi said in slamming Republicans.

Far right hard-liners reportedly pushed for Johnson to include budget cuts as part of his two-tiered continuing resolution plan. GOP Rep. Chip Roy of Texas denounced Johnson's

bill. "It's a 100% clean. And I 100% oppose," Roy tweeted. "My opposition to the clean CR just announced by the Speaker to the @HouseGOP cannot be overstated. Funding Pelosi level spending & policies for 75 days — for future 'promises.'"

Democratic Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi of Illinois emphasized the potential consequences of a government shutdown, highlighting that it would result in no pay for federal workers, including military personnel, slower TSA security checks ahead of Thanksgiving, and a lack of funding for critical programs like SNAP. "This must be averted," Krishnamoorthi asserted.

The day's events were as high on controversy as they were on tension, with recently ousted Republican Speaker Kevin McCarthy allegedly engaging in a physical altercation with Rep. Tim Burchett of Tennessee in the halls of Congress. "It was just a cheap shot by a bully," Burchett said. "And then I chased af-

ter him. And we had a few words." Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Florida), who orchestrated McCarthy's removal, called for an investigation by the House Ethics Committee into McCarthy's actions.

In a separate incident, Senator Markwayne Mullin (R-OK) challenged the Teamsters president to a brawl during a Senate hearing, prompting Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) to intervene and demand Mullin to "sit down."

Ultimately, House Democratic leadership endorsed Speaker Johnson's two-step continuing resolution in a statement, describing it as "devoid of harmful cuts and free of extreme right-wing policy riders." They pledged their support, urging Congress to unite in advancing supplemental national security and domestic policy funding requested by President Joe Biden.

The two-step continuing resolution extends funding for part of the government, including the Departments of Agriculture, Transporta-

tion and Veterans Affairs, through Jan. 19. It also funds the Department of Defense and other remaining parts of the government through Feb. 2.

The U.S. government faced the risk of running out of funds at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday if the House failed to pass a continuing

resolution. The potential shutdown would impact publicly funded agencies, causing work stoppages and leaving employees without pay.

"I want to cut spending right now, and I would like to put policy riders on the bill," Johnson demanded. "But when you

have a three-vote majority — as we do right now — we don't have the votes. So, what we need to do is avoid the government shutdown."

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told reporters he wanted the Senate to vote on the bill "as soon as possible."

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Connecting with kids who don't want to engage

(Newswise) Angry Birds, Mario Kart, or Animal Crossing – they're popular digital games that have captured the attention of children the world over. But in a pre-school environment, games like these could distract kids from engaging in the curriculum, unless you have a teacher who is willing to bend the rules, new research explains.

In a new paper, researchers from the University of South Australia explored how a group of early childhood teachers successfully connected with children who were not engaging in learning, finding that tuning in to children's interests can be a gamechanger when it comes to motivating learning.

Working with 20-25 preschoolers (who were disengaged with learning activities), the study found that teachers who could connect learning with children's culture, language, motivations,



Craig Whitehead / Unsplash

and interests were more likely to create engaged and active learners.

It's an important finding, particularly now, as teachers across the country fight for recognition and support amid an unprecedented teacher workforce shortage and retention challenges.

UniSA researcher and Deputy Director of the Centre for Research in Educational and Social Inclusion

(CRESI), Dr Jamie Sisson, says we need to recognize that teachers across all levels are striving to personalize student learning and maximize engagement.

"We're at a critical point for Australia's education system. Teachers are crying out for more support amid heavy workloads and a crowded curriculum. And those who are teaching, are still striving to deliver the

best education experience possible," Dr Sisson says.

"In this study, we showed how a standardized and pre-planned curriculum – something that is often put forward as a solution to relieve the teacher workforce – does not always attract children's interest, leading to a disengagement from learning.

"Here, a team of preschool teachers were struggling to engage with a group

of 20-25 young children who were disengaged with the prescribed learning, instead choosing to run about the yard all day.

"While running seems a positive thing for preschoolers, the teachers – even at pre-school level – felt a lot of pressure to ensure that the children met their developmental milestones, including learning phonics, so that they could become 'school ready.'"

"But rather than limiting or deterring what the children wanted to do, the teachers shifted the curriculum so that it flexibly addressed the children's interests, culture, and motivations. And the result was that these children became more engaged, involved, open and confident in their learning."

While Angry Birds and other digital games formed the basis of these children's interest in this case study, teachers across all levels of education regularly adjust

class plans and teaching approaches to better meet the individual needs of their students.

Dr Sisson says that the ability to reimagine traditional learning practices and bend the curriculum to meet individual needs should be prioritized and valued in today's challenging teaching environment.

"Our research shines a light on the important intellectual work that early childhood teachers do every day to create engaging learning experiences," Dr Sisson says.

"When learning experiences are built from children's strengths and connected with their life experiences, they're not only more likely to attract children's engagement and build their skills, but also enhance teachers' work satisfaction. And in a world where we are struggling to do both, this should be a number one priority."

SCANS, from Page 4

"Imagine the scans are frames of a movie. The frame at 8 minutes during the first evaluation is already enough to identify the people who are likely to go on to develop a central Lewy body disease years later," Goldstein stated.

For the research, 34 individuals at risk for Parkinson's were engaged, and subjected to cardiac 18F-dopamine PET scans every 18 months for up to approximately 7.5 years or until diagnosis. Those who

took part had at least three things that put them at risk for Parkinson's – a family history of the disease, anosmia (loss of smell), dream enactment behavior (a sleep disorder), and orthostatic intolerance symptoms, like feeling dizzy when standing up.

Eight of the nine participants who had lower cardiac 18F-dopamine-derived radioactivity on their first scan were later diagnosed with Parkinson's disease or Lewy body dementia. Re-

markably, only one of the eleven participants with normal initial radioactivity developed a central Lewy body disease. All nine participants who developed a Lewy body disease exhibited low radioactivity before or at the time of diagnosis.

Researchers noted that the study supported the idea that synuclein disorders, including Parkinson's disease and Lewy body dementia, affect the nerves that control automatic body functions like blood pressure and heart rate. Officials

said Goldstein's extensive work, among others, showcases synuclein aggregation in nerves related to gastrointestinal organs, skin, and glands in both conditions.

"We think that in many cases of Parkinson's and dementia with Lewy bodies, the disease processes don't actually begin in the brain," Goldstein remarked. "Through autonomic abnormalities, the processes eventually make their way to the brain. The loss of norepinephrine in the heart predicts and precedes the loss

of dopamine in the brain in Lewy body diseases."

Health officials declared that finding biomarkers for diseases before they show symptoms, in the "preclinical period," is very important for testing that can help with early intervention. Parkinson's motor symptoms do not show up until dopamine-producing neurons in parts of the brain that control movement are severely damaged or lost.

"Once symptoms begin, most of the damage has already been done,"

Goldstein emphasized. "You want to be able to detect the disease early on. If you could salvage the dopamine terminals that are sick but not yet dead, then you might be able to prolong the time before the person shows symptoms."

The study concluded, "Using PET scans to find people with preclinical Lewy body diseases could lead to testing preventative measures like changing your lifestyle, taking dietary supplements, or taking medicine."

SCHOOLS, from Page 1

3,000 incidents of rape or attempted rape and sexual assault.

Student Discipline:

- About 786,600 K-12 students received in-school suspensions, with Black boys nearly two times more likely than white boys to receive out-of-school suspen-

sion or expulsion.

- Students with disabilities, representing 17% of K-12 enrollment, accounted for 29% of students with one or more out-of-school suspensions.

Restraint and Seclusion:

- Approximately 52,800 K-12 students were sub-

jected to physical or mechanical restraint and seclusion, with boys, Black students, and students with disabilities overrepresented.

Access to Advanced Courses:

- More than half of high schools nationwide do not offer calculus or computer science, disproportionately

affecting Black and Latino students.

- Black students, representing 15% of high school enrollment, accounted for only 10% in AP computer science and 6% in AP mathematics.

Access to Teachers and Other School Staff:

- Approximately 522,400 students attended schools

where fewer than half of the teachers met state certification requirements, with 66% being Black and Latino students.

- Four percent of high school students attended schools with no school counselors.

Access to the Internet and Devices:

- Students' Internet ac-

cess varied by state, with Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia reporting 99% or more of their schools connected to the Internet.

- Florida (66%) and Alaska (52%), respectively, reported the lowest percentage of schools connected to the Internet.

Plano Receives fifth National Excellence Award for Parks and Recreation

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) at its annual conference in Dallas today announced the City of Plano's Parks and Recreation Department as the 2023 National Gold Medal Award, marking a fifth national recognition for the Department.

The prestigious award recognizes agencies that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation



through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and

community engagement.

"Winning the National Gold Medal for a fifth time is an amazing feeling," Director Ron Smith said. "Throughout the years, we have remained strategic, thoughtful and deliberate, re-affirming the Department's commitment to delivering outstanding services, facilities and programs to Plano residents every day. This award also reflects our efforts to help

achieve and maintain City Council's vision for Plano, in which all residents experience an unparalleled quality of life."

The Department received its first Gold Medal Award in its population class in 1979, with three more awarded in 1987, 1997, and 2015. Agencies are judged on their ability to address the needs of those they serve through the collective energies of citizens, staff

and elected officials.

Accredited since 1994 and ranked #1 in Texas by the Trust for Public Land, Plano Parks and Recreation provided more than 7,000 health, wellness and recreational programs in 2022, enrolling nearly 58,000 participants of all ages, backgrounds, income levels, and abilities.

Its collaborations with schools, businesses and non-profits have also cul-

tivated community-wide advocacy for quality parks and recreation in Plano. Integrated work order and asset management software has also enabled the Department to track work orders, inspections and community requests, resulting in faster response rates and cost savings.

For more information on the Gold Medal Awards, visit nrpa.org/GoldMedal or aapra.org.

FBI seizes NYC Mayor Eric Adams's electronic devices amidst investigation

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

FBI agents confiscated electronic devices belonging to New York City Mayor Eric Adams earlier this week, intensifying a criminal inquiry into potential collaboration with the Turkish government, among others, in an alleged scheme to funnel funds into Adams' 2021 campaign

coffers.

According to a New York Times report, the incident unfolded after an event at New York University, where agents approached the mayor and requested his security detail to step aside. Armed with a court-authorized warrant, the agents joined Adams in his SUV and seized at least two cellphones and an iPad.

The Times said the electronic devices were re-

turned to the mayor within days of the Nov. 6 encounter. It is common practice for law enforcement investigators armed with a search warrant to make copies of data from seized devices for further analysis.

Boyd Johnson, a lawyer representing Adams and his campaign, issued a statement asserting the mayor's cooperation with federal authorities. Johnson stated that Adams had al-

ready "proactively reported" at least one instance of improper behavior upon learning of the federal investigation. "In the spirit of transparency and cooperation, this behavior was immediately and proactively reported to investigators," Johnson added.

Emphasizing that authorities had not accused Adams of wrongdoing, Johnson reiterated that the mayor swiftly complied

with the FBI's request and willingly provided them with his electronic devices.

However, not all reactions to the news were supportive. Curtis Sliwa, a former New York City mayoral candidate, called for Adams's resignation. "He's too distracted by the multiple investigations into his fundraising to lead New York City," Sliwa insisted.

Chris Sosa, a member of

the New York Democratic Committee, echoed similar sentiments, urging Adams to step down immediately.

"Our leaders need to demand that he step down for the health of our city," Sosa wrote on X. "I'm not suggesting anything about the outcome of investigations. But the mayor cannot execute his duties effectively under these escalating circumstances."

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Honorable discharges for 110 Buffalo Soldiers convicted in aftermath of 1917 Houston riots

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Army Secretary Christine Wormuth formally gave the greenlight to overturn the court-martial convictions of 110 Black soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, popularly known as the Buffalo Soldiers. The Army said in a news release that officials made the decision based on a suggestion from the Board for Correc-

tion of Military Records and to atone for the unfair treatment of soldiers after the 1917 Houston Riots.

"After a thorough review, the Board has found that these Soldiers were wrongly treated because of their race and were not given fair trials," Secretary Wormuth stated. "By setting aside their convictions and granting honorable discharges, the Army is acknowledging past mistakes and setting the record straight."

The Houston Riots,

which erupted on August 23, 1917, stemmed from racial tensions and provocations against members of the 24th Infantry Regiment. The catalyst for the riots was the violent arrest and assault of two Black Soldiers, leading to a group of 110 soldiers seizing weapons and marching into the city. Clashes ensued, resulting in 19 deaths.

The subsequent trials of the soldiers were marred by irregularities, according to historians, culminating

in the largest mass execution of American Soldiers by the U.S. Army. The Army's immediate regulatory change, prohibiting future executions without proper review, followed the initially secretive executions.

The South Texas College of Law, in October 2020 and December 2021, petitioned the Army for a review of the court-martial. Retired general officers also submitted petitions re-

See **SOLDIERS**, Page 10



The Houston Riots, which erupted on August 23, 1917, stemmed from racial tensions and provocations against members of the 24th Infantry Regiment. The catalyst for the riots was the violent arrest and assault of two Black Soldiers, leading to a group of 110 soldiers seizing weapons and marching into the city. (Photo via NNPA)

PROTECT, from Page 5

longer afford to frequent neighborhood establishments, and as this happens, the neighborhood starts to lose its appeal. Patel explains that when developers build facilities like malls that don't meet the needs of the existing residents, they not only displace people, but they are also taking away the places that people want to be.

And this is not just about Chinatown, said Patel. The development will impact the entire regional community, destroying the diversity that makes the city interesting and which draws people to the core.

The City of Philadelphia is not at all involved in the private development, explained Patel, so there are none of the levers or control mechanisms that would have been involved in a public or semi-public development.

The organization has been working with young volunteers, which cross the generations to get the word out. It is a communications strategy that has been successful, said Patel, but the billionaires are pushing back. Recently, stories coming out of the community have been blocked from the media.

Patel's story of Philadelphia's Chinatown demonstrates that low-income, non-English speaking com-

munities can band together with multiracial allies to form a front-line and defend their communities from large scale developments that threaten them.

A number of organizations support the Asian community in helping them to overcome some challenges of being in the minority. Dianara Rivera, with Asian American Resource Workshop, is a Pilipino, Puerto Rican woman committed to building community power in Asian American communities.

Asking for help is always political and has everything to do with the world around you, said Rivera, but healing can be collective. Their organization provides workshops that help Asian populations tell their stories and find healing. Using the written word and photos, the organization helps people in marginalized communities make sense of the world. Using an interpreter, they sort through issues and find antidotes to barriers like the fear that comes with being marginalized and helping participants get away from a capitalist mindset. Their narratives are archived at aarw.org.

Through these workshops, younger generations have been able to connect with elders and come to better understand how cultural and political struggles have

affected them.

Jessica Eckerstorfer is a 2nd generation, Filipina-American who grew up in the twin cities, home to over 100,000 diaspora members stemming from the Vietnam war. Her work has recently focused on telling the stories of elders and connecting younger Asian generations to their histories and traditions.

A key part of this effort comes in book launchings that tell of their rare experiences. Her organization worked with 17 story collectors, who were able to understand the ins and outs of story collecting. They used programming to bring in aspects of the elder's childhoods outside what they would normally discuss. They also collaborated with six local community partners to use memory mapping to learn about the elders, while navigating moments of highs and lows, such as the pandemic.

Their process builds trust in the first-generation, important because this age group is not always comfortable with traditional systems like government and education. Therefore, using programming in non-traditional spaces helps them bridge the gap between second and third generations who are active on social media.

Kalani Tonga-Tukuafu, director of Pasifika Enriching Arts of Utah (PEAU),

tells a similar story, illustrating how they have used a lens that considers systemic oppression to avoid conflicts. Grounding our people in our own traditions has been very healing, she explained.

Benny Lai, executive manager for National Asian Pacific Center on Aging has

also been working to help the Asian community. Their website offers a snapshot into what caregiving is like for a South Asian family in Cedar Park, Texas and a Tai family in Addison, New Jersey. Their organization wants to bring awareness about the needs that exist in these communities. Their

stories and more information can be found at napca.org.

Lori Lee holds a Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Public Policy from the University of Texas in Arlington, with work focused on neighborhood revitalization, sociability, and environmental management.

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Film Review: 'Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project'

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(***) "A lot of things I don't remember, I choose not to remember. I make up the rest. That's what storytelling is all about," says poet/writer/activist/educator Nikki Giovanni.

In this very enlightening homage, by documentarians Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson, the icon and intellectual gets the respect she deserves. Years of speaking truths, reflecting on her life and discussing racism, sexism, classism and other social issues, with the intelligence of a scholar and the wit of a genius, brought her to this place.



Nikki Giovanni in *Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project*.
(Photo via NNPA)

Clips, interviews and photos are well assembled and paced (editor Terry Long). The low-key format doesn't expand the doc genre on any level, but that's a good thing in this case. The filmmaking is never a distraction. Everything the directors

do supports and surrounds Giovanni with the tools she needs to tell her life story. A portrait painted in words that are as evocative as those in any Toni Morrison or Bernice McFadden novel.

See MARS, Page 14

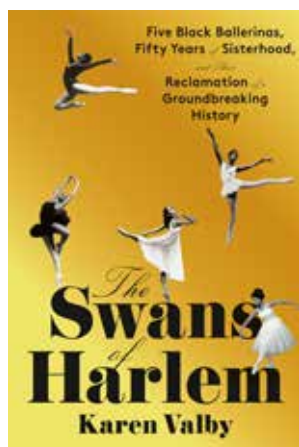
Newly released book chronicles the struggle of early Black ballerinas

"The Swans of Harlem" tells the forgotten story of a pioneering group of five Black ballerinas, the first principals in the Dance Theatre of Harlem, who traveled the world as highly celebrated stars in their field and whose legacy was erased from history until now.

Misty Copeland, the Black ballerina who has soared into the limelight in recent years is one of the book's biggest fans.

"Karen Valby's 'The Swans of Harlem' brings to life the stories of Black dancers whose contributions to the world of ballet were silenced, marginalized, and otherwise erased," Copeland said. "Karen introduces readers to important figures of our past, while inspiring us to courageously chase our dreams. This is the kind of history I wish learned as a child dreaming of the stage!"

At the height of the Civil Rights movement, Lydia Abarça was a Black prima ballerina with a major in-



ternational dance company—the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She was the first Black ballerina on the cover of Dance magazine, an Essence cover star, cast in The Wiz and on Broadway with Bob Fosse. She performed in some of ballet's most iconic works with her closest friends—founding members of the company, the Swans of Harlem, Gayle McKinney, Sheila Rohan, Marcia Sells, and Karly Shelton—for the Queen of England and Mick Jagger, with Josephine Baker, at the White House, and beyond.

Some forty years later, when Lydia's granddaugh-

ter wanted to show her own ballet class evidence of her grandmother's success, she found almost none, but for some yellowing photographs and programs in the family basement. Lydia had struggled for years to reckon with the erasure of her success, as all the Swans had. Still united as sisters in the present, they decided it was time to share their story themselves.

Captivating, rich in vivid detail and character, and steeped in the glamor and grit of professional ballet, The Swans of Harlem is a riveting account of five extraordinarily accomplished women, a celebration of their historic careers, and a window into the robust history of Black ballet, hidden for too long.

Author Karen Valby is a writer living in Austin, Texas. Her work has appeared in *Vanity Fair*, where she is a frequent contributor, the *New York Times*, *O Magazine*, *Glamour*, *Fast Company*, and *EW*, where she spent 15 years writing about culture.

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NDG Book Review: 'Iconic Home' is a comfy little read

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The sofa will go over there.

Sitting slightly forward from the edge of a rug, flanked by two chairs at an angle to the fireplace, it'll be the focal point of the room. Add the right paint and that plushy blanket you bought on vacation last year, and you'll never want to leave. Making your home a welcoming retreat is always a goal and in the new book "Iconic Home" by June Reese, BID, you'll welcome some fresh ideas.

As a young girl growing up in Texas, June Reese wished for a way to make her passion for art



into a career. Few opportunities existed, "not many career paths," but she saw design school as a way to her dreams. Still, it was hard and she thought about picking a different career until she met designer Kimberly Ward, founder of the Black Interior Designers Network, and every-

thing fell together. Reese began to meet and collaborate with other Black designers, fifty of whom she profiles in this book.

Designer Leah Alexander says scale and size are of the utmost importance when decorating a room. Alvin Wayne adds: take it easy with throw pillows.

Arianne Bellizaire decides the color of a room after she notes "any historical and geographical parameters that are integral to the design." Elaine Griffin says that "color reigns supreme..." Christopher Charles believes that "paint samples are a homeowner's best friend."

What you hang on a wall

is important, and Danielle Colding recommends "dynamic art!" Layer the room, say several designers here. Some advocate having a focal point, while others say it's unimportant. Choose lighting carefully and bring nature inside. Mix texture, but remember functionality. Catasha Singleton says that accessories should be the "very best" part of any room.

Justina Blakeney reminds readers to "have an open mind."

Byron Risdon says, "Don't overthink it."

Amhad Freeman says, "Don't over do it."

Delia Kenza says, "Have fun, don't be afraid to try,

and make sure the space tells a story."

To paraphrase designer Linda Hayslett here, for many decades, the assumption has been that Black homeowners didn't have taste, sophistication, or need for interior design. Absolutely, "Iconic Home" proves the opposite.

The feature you'll notice first about this book is the abundance of gorgeous pictures. Author and compiler June Reese includes many elegant examples of her subjects' work in full-color photos that will satisfy anyone looking for ideas, wishing for their own special room,

or merely hoping to satisfy home voyeurism. Beware, they're addicting.

When you're done with the photos, turn back to the beginning and start reading about design as a career and the legacies these designers hope to leave. It's here where you'll find plenty of hints on deciding what to add or subtract from your space, and tips to make any room in your home a place you'll want to be.

This is the kind of book for dreaming, the kind in which you'll find something different every time you open it. Get "Iconic Home" and take it to the sofa over there.

SOLDIERS, from Page 8

questing clemency for the soldiers.

"We cannot change the past; however, this decision provides the Army and the American people an opportunity to learn from this difficult moment in our history," Under Secretary of the Army, Gabe Camarillo, said in the release.

At the Secretary's re-

quest, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records meticulously reviewed records related to the court-martial cases, officials affirmed. The unanimous decision was that significant deficiencies permeated the proceedings, rendering them fundamentally unfair. The board recommended setting aside all

convictions and characterizing the soldiers' military service as "honorable."

"It is a long time coming, but it is justice that is finally achieved," John Haymond, a historian, told the *New York Times*.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs said it actively supports family members affected by the correction of records, offering assistance upon receipt of the amended documents.

Family members of the 110 Soldiers may be entitled to benefits, and guidelines for applying to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records can be found online or through mail to Army Review

Boards Agency (ARBA), 251 18th Street South, Suite 385, Arlington, VA 22202-3531. Applications should include documentation proving a relationship to one of the 110 formerly convicted soldiers.

Family members and interested parties can request a copy of the corrected records from the National Archives and Records Administration, following the NARA Archival Records Request procedures.

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UNEXPECTED

Nearly 5.5 million borrowers lower student loan payments with SAVE Plan

By Charlene Crowell

Nearly 5.5 million borrowers have applied for the newest federal program for student loan debt relief since it was announced about three months ago. Nearly 3 million borrowers who enrolled in the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan completely eliminated their monthly loan payments.

“Under President Biden, the Department created the SAVE Plan so that young people and working families can climb the economic ladder without unaffordable student loan debt weighing them down,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “I’m thrilled to see that in less than three months, nearly 5.5 million Americans in every community across the country are taking advantage of the SAVE Plan’s many benefits, from lower monthly payments to protection from runaway student loan interest.”



Nat'l Education Association

The bulk of these loan savings benefit students with the greatest financial need – those eligible for federal Pell grants – including Black, Latino, Native American and Alaskan Native borrowers. Most SAVE borrowers will see their lifetime loan repayments cut in half.

As long as SAVE participants maintain their regular payments, their loan balances will go down due to the Education Department no longer charging interest.

Further, the SAVE program creates lower payment rates for both undergraduate and graduate

loans. Required payments for undergraduate loans will be cut in half to five percent from the previous 10 percent. Borrowers who incurred both undergraduate and graduate loans, under SAVE, will now pay a weighted average of the original principal balances on their loans. The payment range for the combination borrowers is from 5-10 percent of income.

The \$0 payment remains available for borrowers who earn less than \$32,800 per year or those in a family of four making less than \$67,000. Borrowers earning more than these an-

nual amounts also benefit with an estimated savings of \$102 a month (\$1,224 a year), compared to earlier income-driven repayment programs.

Geographically, every state and congressional district has SAVE participants. California and Texas each have more than 450,000 borrowers enrolled in SAVE, while congressional districts in Missouri, Ohio, and Michigan have the highest identified enrollment. Additional data can be found here.

Consumer advocates are emphasizing the program’s targeted reach.

For example, this October, the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan research and policy organization noted, “Payment reductions and larger loan forgiveness benefits under the SAVE plan will occur broadly across racial and ethnic groups but are skewed toward programs enrolling more Black and Hispanic students.”

Even earlier this year, the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) stressed to the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development how the escalating costs of higher education surpassed the financial capabilities of many Americans.

“Education was sold to working-class families as the great equalizer, giving unlimited opportunity to those who would seize it” wrote CRL. “Yet, according to the Federal Reserve, every \$1,000 increase in student loan debt lowers the national homeownership rate by about 1.8 percentage points for public 4-year college students.”

“Between 2009 and 2022, median household income grew from \$63,011 to \$70,784, or about 12 percent,” CRL continued. “Comparatively, the average student loan debt grew nearly 32 percent, from \$27,874 to \$36,096, during that period.”

Student loan borrowers who have financially struggled to keep up with monthly payments may still enroll online at: <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/save-plan>.

“The SAVE Plan will significantly cut monthly bills for most borrowers, reduce loan default, and ensure that students loans don’t need to come before life necessities,” said Under Secretary James Kvaal. “With nearly 5.5 million people enrolled after only two months, it’s clear how much borrowers need a plan like SAVE. President Biden and our Administration remain committed to giving borrowers breathing room on their monthly payments and ensuring student loans aren’t a barrier to opportunity.”

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

Hip Hop Icons and Entrepreneurs T.I. and Tiny Open Affordable Housing Complex in Atlanta

Hip-hop power couple T.I. and Tiny celebrated the grand opening of their long-awaited affordable housing complex, The Intrada Westside, during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Atlanta. The complex is in the northwest of the city. According to HipHopDX.com, it shows how committed the couple is to community development, and it has personal meaning for T.I. because it was once a grocery store where her grandmother shopped.

The Intrada Westside boasts 143 apartments and 25 unique units to house homeless youth. T.I., known for hits like “Whatever You Like,” expressed gratitude for the support from the arts and entertainment industry, citing its profitability to offer much-needed resources to the community.

In a nod to the project’s

roots, T.I. shared, “The arts and entertainment industry in this city has been able to collaborate and be, I guess, profitable enough to offer the community so many things that are much needed.”

This venture is reportedly not the first time T.I. has invested in revitalizing his Atlanta community. In 2020, he urged his social media followers to shift their focus from luxury items to real estate. The rapper highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer behavior and encouraged responsible spending.

HipHopDx.com said T.I. had been actively involved in community initiatives through his Buy Back the Block initiative, investing over \$2.7 million since 2017 to acquire six properties and plots of land in his Center Hill neighborhood.

The website said his philosophy emphasizes the potential for individuals to thrive financially while positively contributing to their communities.

“The Black Press of America salutes both the creative genius of T.I. and his concrete commitment to the economic development of Black communities,” National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. proclaimed. The NNPA is the trade association of America’s more than 230 Black-owned newspapers and media companies. “The affordable housing development in Atlanta is an innovative and positive pathway forward,” Chavis declared. “I know T.I. personally, and his character and integrity are impeccable.”



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Vice President Harris announces commitments exceeding \$900 million for the Women in the Sustainable Economy Initiative

By Stacy M. Brown

Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday announced the Women in the Sustainable Economy (WISE) Initiative, which the White House says supports the 2023 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) theme of “Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All.” Its goal is to strengthen women’s economic empowerment globally.

The initiative contains over \$900 million in commitments from governments, private sector companies, foundations, and civil society. The funds will bolster women’s economic participation in key sectors such as clean energy, fisheries, recycling, forest management, and environmental conservation.

The WISE Initiative is a core element of the broader Biden-Harris Administration’s dedication to advancing



The funds will bolster women’s economic participation in key sectors such as clean energy, fisheries, recycling, forest management, and environmental conservation. (Photo via NNPA)

women’s economic empowerment globally. The commitment aligns with the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality and the U.S. Strategy on Global Women’s Economic Security. Notably, it builds on the administration’s previous announcement in Ghana, where \$1 billion was pledged to empower women

globally and bridge the digital gender divide.

According to a White House Fact Sheet, the initiative operates on three foundational pillars:

1. Promoting Well-Paying Jobs: Ensuring women have the necessary skills, training, and access to decent jobs in energy, land, and water use and management.

2. Supporting Women-Owned Businesses: Facilitating increased access to banking, financial services, networks, markets, and technical assistance for women in critical sectors

3. Eliminating Barriers: Advancing STEM education for girls and addressing obstacles to women’s economic participation in

energy, land, and water use and management.

Under the WISE umbrella, flagship initiatives include the Engendering Industries program, focusing on creating economic opportunities for women in sectors like water, agriculture, energy, and information technology.

The Climate Gender Equity Fund (CGEF), a public-private partnership under the direction of USAID, promotes financial inclusion for women-led organizations in climate finance for long-term economic growth.

Global commitments from governments include Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, and Norway, each contributing significant funds to support women’s economic participation and empowerment.

Administration officials confirmed that the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and civil society

are active participants. Major players such as Amazon, CARE, Citi, LinkedIn, Mastercard Impact Fund, PepsiCo, Reckitt, Unilever, and the Visa Foundation commit substantial financial resources to promoting women’s economic empowerment.

In reinforcing the U.S. commitment, Harris announced a contribution of \$163 million to advance women’s economic security domestically and globally. Collectively, partners are pledging over \$900 million, marking a historic step towards fostering women’s participation in the sustainable economy. “This initiative not only aligns with the APEC theme but also represents a bold stride in the global pursuit of gender equality, economic empowerment, and sustainable development,” administration officials said in a release.

McKoy, from Page 2

give false testimony accusing McKoy and others of arson and violence towards law enforcement.

When it became clear that 10 African Americans would be seated for jury duty, Prosecutor Jay Stroud pretended to be ill during jury selection. A second trial included only two African Americans, and the Wilmington Ten were convicted.

McKoy and the other defendants received a total of 282 years in prison. At the age of 19, McKoy’s 29-year sentence was the third-longest handed down to any of the members. Chavis, the then-24-year-old commander, was sentenced to 34 years in prison, while Tindall got 31 years. The Wilmington 10, consisting of nine Black males and one white woman, spent nearly a decade in jail before their convictions

were overturned by federal appellate courts because of prosecutorial misconduct.

In 1976, Amnesty International took over the group’s defense. The London-based human rights organization declared the Wilmington Ten to be “prisoners of conscience.” They were arrested not for the crimes they were charged with, but because of their political activities. Amnesty International’s proclamation about the Wilmington Ten upset some and embarrassed others, especially when they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize that year, as reported by The New York Times.

“Soon the charge was repeated and amplified by the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, who contended in an interview with a French newspaper

that the United States harbored ‘hundreds, perhaps thousands of political prisoners,’” according to the newspaper.

“The Wilmington Ten, for example, are innocent,” Young stated. He later reiterated that the charges against the group were “trumped up,” according to the Times.

In December 1980, the convictions of the Wilmington Ten were finally overturned. Timothy Tyson, a North Carolina history, and Duke University visiting professor, told CNN that he was handed

the Wilmington Ten prosecutor’s handwritten notes before 2012, when the NNPA and NAACP called for pardons of innocence for the Wilmington 10. “It was pretty shocking stuff,” Tyson said of the incident.

He mentioned at least six potential jurors who had “KKK Good!!” scribbled next to their names. It said next to a woman’s name, “NO, she associates with Negroes.”

The prosecutor, Jay Stroud, had written the benefits and drawbacks of a mistrial on the back of the legal pad, according to

Tyson. One of the benefits was a new jury and a fresh start.

In 2012, 40 years after they were wrongfully convicted, the Wilmington 10 were pardoned by North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue.

“These convictions were tainted by naked racism and represent an ugly stain on North Carolina’s criminal justice system that cannot be allowed to stand any longer,” the state’s governor stated at the time. “Justice demands that this stain finally be removed.”

Responding to McKoy’s

death, Chavis reflected on the group and his fallen comrades. “Once again, I am saddened at the passing of another freedom fighting member of the Wilmington Ten,” Chavis remarked. He said McKoy was dedicated to the freedom movement in Wilmington and globally. “He was also a master base guitarist who would always play the right beat with the inspiring music of freedom,” Chavis recalled. “May James ‘Bun’ McKoy rest in power and in peace, and may his memory and uplifting spirit live on for generations to come.”



Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Becomes First Divine Nine Sorority to Raise \$1 Million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. – a historically Black sorority – has completed a historic pledge made in 2021 to raise \$1 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®. This achievement comes days before the international collegiate and nonprofit community service organization's 101st anniversary, marking over a century of commitment to helping those in need.

At the time of the original announcement, Sigma Gamma Rho had already raised nearly \$500,000 for St. Jude. As part of the push to reach \$1 million, Sigma Gamma Rho pledged a three-year sponsorship for the annual St. Jude Walk/Run, held during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month each September.

Since then, Sigma Gamma Rho has reached its goal in large part through its participation in the St. Jude Walk/Run. In 2023, the organization entered



Rasheeda S. Liberty, International Grand Basileus of Sigma Gamma Rho stated, "Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated is grateful for the opportunity to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital's work to find cures and help save the lives of children all over the world. (Photo via NNPA)"

more than 200 Walk/Run teams in cities across the United States, helping it cross the fundraising finish line this year.

Rasheeda S. Liberty, International Grand Basileus of Sigma Gamma Rho stated, "Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated is grateful for the opportunity to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital's

work to find cures and help save the lives of children all over the world. I am proud of the mobilization of our global membership to reach this \$1,000,000 milestone, and to have done so just prior to our 101st Founders' Day. This accomplishment aligns with our sorority's motto, "Greater Service,

Greater Progress". We look forward to continuing our partnership with St. Jude in the years to come."

Support from organizations like Sigma Gamma Rho helps ensure that families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food – so they can focus on helping their child live.

"We're so grateful for and honored by the incredible heart and dedicated service shown by Sigma Gamma Rho," said Richard C. Shadyac Jr., President and CEO of ALSAC, the fundraising and awareness organization for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. "This is a milestone accomplishment by Sigma Gamma Rho and its members all over the world that will help St. Jude continue making progress in improving survival rates for children with cancer and other life-threatening diseases."

Join Sigma Gamma Rho in helping St. Jude accelerate research and treatment for children around the world with cancer, sickle cell and other diseases.

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. was founded on November 12, 1922 on the campus of Butler University in Indianapolis by Seven African-American Women Educators. Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated has welcomed more than 100,000 collegiate and professional women from every profession. The sorority has more than 500 chapters in the United States, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Ghana, Germany, Japan, South Korea, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the United Arab Emirates. The organization also has active

affiliate groups devoted to empowering women at different stages in life. The Rhoer Club Affiliates (teenage girls) and Philos Affiliates (friends of the sorority) also assist chapters with various service efforts and programs.

Sigma Gamma Rho's commitment to service is expressed in its slogan, "Greater Service, Greater Progress." The sorority has a proud history of providing positive and proactive community outreach nationally and internationally. The programs, partnerships, and sponsorships represent Sigma Gamma Rho's commitment to promoting the greater good in education, service, and leadership development.

DANCE, from Page 3

conspicuously absent.

As most understand, and the Biden campaign apparently does not, there's a massive difference between Black-targeted and Black-owned. While to the campaign's credit, they are running an ad with Byron Allen's TheGRIO, a Black-owned entity, they haven't done so with the Black Press — despite televised promises from various individuals in the Biden camp, including DNC Chair Jai-

me Harrison.

That's also despite the ever-dwindling support of the Black electorate.

As the President gears up for a potential rematch against Trump, the question lingers: has Biden forgotten the rhythm that brought him to the dance, a rhythm inscribed in the ink of the Black Press? Only time will tell if the President can return to the beat that secured his place in the Oval Office.

CARTER, from Page 2

ton, in a joint statement, referred to Carter as a champion of human dignity. They praised her advocacy for mental health and childhood immunization and her work with the Carter Center and Habitat for Humanity.

Former first lady Michelle Obama shared a

personal connection, revealing that Carter offered advice during their periodic lunches at the White House. "Today, Barack and I join the world in celebrating the remarkable legacy of a First Lady, philanthropist, and advocate who dedicated her life to lifting up others," Obama stated.

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Out to Pastor: Another Turkey in the Oven

By Dr. James L. Snyder

What would Thanksgiving be without a turkey? I read somewhere that over 45 million turkeys are purchased during the Thanksgiving holiday. I'm unsure if that's correct, but I believe it comes close to the mark.

Thanksgiving is always my favorite time because the focus of Thanksgiving is food. Nobody loves food more than I do. I am always anxious for our Thanksgiving dinner to come.

This year I had a bit of apprehension before Thanksgiving. The kitchen is just next to the living room, and I was in the living room taking a little snooze, and just as I was waking up, I heard from the kitchen, "I'm going to put that turkey in the oven today."

I didn't hear the conversation leading up to that phrase, but it was a little troublesome. Am I in trouble? What did I do to get in this kind of trouble?

My goal for the day was to find out why she would stuff me in the oven. Then, maybe I can figure out how to avoid that kind of a encounter.



Throughout the years, I know I have been somewhat of a turkey. I'm not exactly sure what that means, but it has been referred to me quite often by The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. But the resemblance I have with the turkey is above my pay scale.

Nevertheless, I will play this out as best I can, and if I end up in the oven, so be it.

Cautiously, I got up and tiptoed out to the kitchen, and looking at my wife, I said, "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

Looking at me suspiciously, she asked, "What did you have in mind?"

"Anything," I said, "that would help you getting our turkey ready for Thanksgiving."

Looking at me for a moment she burst out laughing. Then she said something that has troubled me to this very day. "You want one turkey to help another turkey?"

I had no idea what she was talking about, and for the life of me, I refused to ask her what she meant. If I would've asked her what she meant, the chances are pretty good she would've told me. If I had known what she meant, I probably would have been in deep trouble.

Slowly, I went back into the living room and set up my chair to ponder what had just happened. I then heard from the kitchen, "Yes, he said that." Then, there was a burst of laughter. I wished I knew who she was talking to.

Despite this negativity, I decided I would live this Thanksgiving time with a great deal of positivity. After all, it might be my last Thanksgiving.

It's easy to get down about something, particularly if you don't have all the facts. I often hear somebody say something and misinterpret it because I don't hear everything they say. That can get a person like me into trouble.

I can't recall all the times I got in trouble with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage because I didn't hear everything she said. She often tells me, "I know, my dear, you can hear but can't listen."

She's right on that one. It has cost me a lot down the years not being able to listen. I can hear words, but sometimes I misinterpret them to mean something altogether different and what they mean.

That was a little over a week ago, and we had a wonderful Thanksgiving with the family. The turkey on the table was very delicious. I don't think I've had

a better turkey all my life.

Cautiously, as I took a bite of that turkey, I glanced over at The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I was trying to find out a clue as to what I heard on the telephone this past week. She was paying me no attention and just enjoying the family around the table.

The next day, after it was all over and all the family had gone home, I sat in the living room relaxing and watching a little TV. On my mind was that turkey we had yesterday. Then, a thought just got a hold of me at that time.

I thought that the center of our Thanksgiving dinner was the turkey. Everybody was talking about the turkey and how delicious it was. That got me thinking about my situation.

If the Thanksgiving turkey is the center of our family get-together, perhaps when my wife refers to me as a turkey, it means I'm the center of our family. That never occurred to me before. I didn't want to test it with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage,

I thought better.

Sometimes, what you don't hear can be a blessing.

Thinking about this later that day I was reminded of what Jesus said. "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given" (Mark 4:23-24).

I have an obligation to listen to what I am hearing. This has a degree of obedience that is important in my Christian life. I will be held accountable to what I am hearing. That means it is important to hear everything. If I miss a word I could get the whole thing wrong which would have consequences in my life.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, 1471 Pine Road, Ocala, FL 34472. He lives with his wife in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail jamesnsnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com.

MARS, from Page 9

The characters that revolve around her seem larger than life, though they may just be family, friends or colleagues to her. The issues she discusses seem monumental, as if told from a pulpit. They crescendo in moments like the footage that captures James Baldwin and her exchanging tales and opinions like griots preserving history. As Giovanni reflects on her time on this earth, she expresses her experience in cadences, sermons and anecdotes that seem almost biblical. Or newsworthy. Or reverent. Or all of that.

When she gets personal. When she recollects her abusive dad and tough

times the outer world seems in the distance and the inner Giovanni comes into view. Deep in thought and expressing hurt. She's learned to persevere or at least cope and has lived to tell the tale: "You have to love people who say to themselves I'm going to find a way to smile." She's woefully truthful about her challenges raising her son. Alarmed about Martin Luther King's assassination: "An act of war." A resigned mother. A prophet too.

Then there are the precious times when the Fisk University graduate and American Book Award-winner shows why she's a world-famous poet. Some-

one with the keen ability to distill the most complicated thoughts down to simple, winsome proclamations: "I believe the most beautiful poem ever heard is your heart racing."

In *Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project*, the spotlight shines magnificently on Giovanni. This perceptive doc makes that so as its brilliant archivists give Black America's poet laureate her flowers, now. While she is still here. Still able to smell, hold and see them.

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Four Levels of Thanksgiving



Sister Tarpley
NDG
Religion
Editor

There is turmoil in America today, people marching in the streets over the November elections, disasters (hurricanes, terrorism, mudslides, earthquakes, wars world-wide, life's uncertainty, etc.) many people are in a state of despair.

November is set aside for our Nation's Thanksgiving Day. The Scriptures says,

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." **2 Chronicles 7:14.**

It has been stated that there four levels of thanksgiving: Grammar School, Thanks to God for what He gives us. High School Level, Thanks to



God for what He does through us. College Level, Thanks to God for what He has done for and in us.

The Fourth Level of Thanksgiving is the Graduate Level. The highest level is when we give 4) Thanksgiving to God for what He is to us.

When you reach this level, you are a "Born Again Christian." You know that you are saved by HIS grace.

You must first ask, "What is God to me?" Serle, an author, over 100 years ago wrote over 600 pages that

deal with 41 names of our Lord that is in the Bible.

Later author Charles J. Rhoades wrote 84 names of our Lord in the scriptures. Each of these writers gave us an idea of what God is. I am going to talk about six names that can be found in the Bible.

"The Lord is my inheritance." (Psalms 16:5.) He is my wealth, my source, my bank, my reservoir, my supplier. David, the King, who was wealthy in his own right, said that he would by-pass all of his earthly

wealth for Christ because God was his source.

"The Lord is my shield." (Psalms 28:7.) He is a protector, a safety net. David, a warrior, said that God was his strength and shield; he knew the value of a shield.

In David's day there was an arm shield and a body shield, both for protection. Life is a battle ground. But in the end time, it will be God's, He is a protector.

"The Lord is the health of my countenance." (Psalms 43:5.) He is my make-up artist, meaning, what I am. I have peace with God which results in the peace of God within me which results in the glory of God on my face.

And, a God's satisfied face means there's something on the inside that is affecting my outside. It's good to know that God's peace is reserved power.

"The Lord is my helper." (Psalms 54:4.) He gives me His promise, His love, His power, His presence; He is with me all of the

time, and has delivered me out of all trouble.

"The Lord is my refuge and fortress." (Psalms 91:2-4.) Moses declared that from generation to generation that God has always been, is now, and will always be God to His people.

Refuge implies deliverance, read and study (Exodus 6:6 and 19:4.) He will bring you out, bring you up, and will bring you in.

"God will deliver you from an environment, from bondage, from a strong enemy, fear, lust, danger, or whatever has you bound." (Psalms 18:16-19.) "He has the power. Faith in

God is the price you have to pay for His blessings." (Psalms 18:20 - 22.)

"The Lord is my strength (Isaiah 40:29.) When I need God, He is there for me." (Deuteronomy 32:12-14.)

The four levels of Thanksgiving brings my favorite scripture to mind:

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the powers that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory . . ." (Ephesians 3:20-21.)

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in November 2016.)

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