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big gift to  
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# Anti-DEI moves undercutting recent Black business gains

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Black-owned businesses have experienced historic growth in recent years, but that progress is now under threat.

A sharp decline in small business optimism, coupled with sweeping anti-DEI executive orders from the Trump administration, is creating new hurdles—particularly for African American entrepreneurs who remain vastly underrepresented in the U.S. economy.

According to Pew Research Center, the number of U.S. firms with majority Black ownership surged from 124,004 in 2017 to 194,585 in 2022.

Revenues also soared by 66%, reaching \$211.8 billion.

Yet Black-owned businesses still accounted for just 3% of all classifiable firms and only 1% of gross revenues that year, despite Black



With small business optimism waning and federal support shifting away from equity initiatives, many Black entrepreneurs now face a chilling reality. (LexScope / Unsplash)

Americans making up 14% of the population. More than one in five Black adults say owning a business is essential to their definition of financial success, and most of those who own businesses depend on them as their primary income source.

The vast majority—71%—have

fewer than 10 employees, and they are disproportionately concentrated in sectors like health care and social assistance (26%), professional and technical services (14%), and transportation (9%).

However, as the Pew report shows

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## People In The News ...



Pope Leo XIV



Carla Hayden

NDG Quote of the Week:

"There will always be men struggling to change, and there will always be those who are controlled by the past."

- Ernest J. Gaines



## Pope Leo XIV

Black America is taking pride in a truth shaking up the Vatican and resonating through the streets of New Orleans: Pope Leo XIV—formerly Cardinal Robert Prevost of Chicago—has Black and Creole roots.

The Pope's factual anthropological roots are not just symbolic.

According to genealogist Jari Honora, his maternal lineage traces directly to the Black community of New Orleans' 7th Ward, with family ties to Haiti, and census records identifying his ancestors as "Black" or "Mulatto."

"By the Europeans' own



'1/8th' rules, we have a Black Pope," noted author Elie Mystal declared. "Anyway, Pope's grandfather is Haitian. We kind of got a Black Pope. 'End Woke' is not gonna be happy about this."

Further, New Orleans

historian Jari Christopher Honora also speaking to the *National Catholic Reporter* and *Black Catholic Messenger*, detailed how the pope's grandparents married in 1887 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church on Annette Street in New Orleans before migrating north.

His mother, Mildred Martínez, was the first child in the family born in Chicago.

"The Holy Father's ancestors are identified as either Black or Mulatto," Honora said.

The *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Times* also reported on Pope Leo's mixed-race background and Creole lineage, not-

ing that his election marks a defining moment in the Church's evolving identity.

"As a Black man, a proud son of New Orleans, and the U.S. Congressman representing the very 7th Ward neighborhood where our new Pope's family hails from, I am bursting with pride today," said Rep. Troy Carter. "This is history! The first American Pope, with Creole and Haitian roots, rising from the streets of New Orleans to the Vatican. As a Xavier University alum, I know how deeply faith and resilience run in our community. We celebrate this moment—with joy, with prayers, and with pride."

Former New Orleans

Mayor Marc Morial called Leo XIV's background "universal," saying, "Here's an American whose ministry was in Peru, who has roots in the American South and also ancestry in the American Black community."

Leo XIV is a member of the Augustinian Order, named after the African theologian St. Augustine of Hippo. His election came from a conclave in which two other leading contenders—Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana and Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu of the Democratic Republic of Congo—were also men of African descent.

But Leo XIV stood apart—not just as the first

pope from the U.S. but as one known for his outspokenness on racial justice, immigrant rights, gun reform, and the abolition of the death penalty.

*TIME Magazine* reported that his selection represented a Vatican rebuke of efforts by wealthy Americans and political operatives aligned with Donald Trump to influence the papal outcome.

Known in Rome as "The Latin Yankee," Leo XIV used his verified X account (@drprevost) to amplify criticism of Trump-era immigration policies, often reposting commentary from respected Catholic

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## Carla Hayden

President Donald Trump abruptly fired the Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden on May 8.

Hayden made history in 2016 as the first woman and first African American to run the Library of Congress.

Her firing arrived in the form of an abrupt email in the evening hours. There are fears that President Trump may also target a second prominent Black federal official, Smithsonian Chief Lonnie Bunch, for no other reason than the perceived political bias in a position not known for partisan activity.

"Carla, on behalf of President Donald J. Trump, I am writing to inform you that your position as the Librarian of Congress is terminated effective immediately. Thank you for your service," the terse communication to Hayden read.

The Library of Congress confirmed that Hayden had



been informed she was fired by The White House.

According to the Associated Press, Hayden "recently faced criticism from a conservative advocacy group aligned with Trump's political allies. The group, the American Accountability Foundation, accused her and other library officials of promoting children's books with what it called "radical" themes."

Since his return to office Trump's Administration has been focused on removing anyone who may disagree with their policy agenda.

Many of the removals

have introduced a sense of partisanship that Washington hasn't seen in certain sectors such as the Library of Congress.

"This is yet another example in the disturbing pattern of the President removing dedicated public servants without cause—likely to fill the position with one of his 'friends' who is not qualified and does not care about protecting America's legacy," wrote House Democrat Rosa DeLauro in a statement on Hayden's firing.

"President Trump's unjustified decision to fire Dr. Carla Hayden as the Librarian of Congress is deeply troubling and just the latest example of Trump's assault on the legislative branch of government. It's also the latest demonstration of his blatant disregard for public servants who dedicate their lives to serving the American people," wrote U.S. Senator Alex Padilla of California in a statement late on May 8.

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# Cutting Energy Star hurts Americans – and helps no one but polluters



**Ben  
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"Look for the Energy Star." Most Americans know that is excellent advice to anyone appliance shopping. That little blue label saves American consumers roughly \$40 billion a year in energy costs every year.

With the program's modest price tag – less than one percent of the EPA's total spending – Americans save a whopping \$1,250 for every single dollar spent on Energy Star. And Americans know that little blue symbol means less wasted energy and cleaner air. It helps families stretch their paychecks and do right by the planet at the same time.

Since the Energy Star public-private partnership began in 1992, it has helped save American households and businesses more than \$500 billion on energy costs. It has more than 4 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions (roughly the equivalent of annual pollution from 933 million cars). And it has done so while empowering consumers with better information – not by taking anything away. What that looks like at the local level is homes and businesses in a large city like Chicago saving \$116.6 million a year in energy costs, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 539,500 met-

ric tons.

Now, Donald Trump wants to get rid of it. Virtually no one thinks that would be wise.

In March, a large group of manufacturers and industry associations joined a letter calling on Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin to keep the popular EPA program. The US Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, and others said, "eliminating [Energy Star] will not serve the American people," and they pointed out that because of consumers' high awareness of the program – to the tune of 90% brand awareness – the results if it is eliminated would be "decreased features, functionality, performance, or increased costs" of appliances.

Energy Star certified homes typically save around \$450 per year on energy bills. In 2020 alone, the program's emissions reductions amounted to more than five percent of total US greenhouse gas emissions. That year, the program's energy savings also improved health outcomes for communities by preventing 210,000 tons each of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide pollutants, and 20,000 tons of fine particulate matter (PM2.5). The public health benefits from those reductions in air pollution were estimated to be as high as \$17 billion!

Further, the estimated annual market value of

Energy Star product sales is more than \$100 billion. And of domestic energy efficiency jobs, about 35% are in the manufacturing and installation of Energy Star products. As of 2020, that was more than 790,000 American jobs.

In his latest attack on common sense, Trump is trying to eliminate one of the federal government's most successful, least controversial, and most popular consumer protection tools.

Ending Energy Star is not a serious policy move. It is performative politics at its worst. It is "virtue signaling" to fossil fuel extremists from a man desperate to please his donors while punishing regular people for choosing clean, affordable options.

Targeting the program as part of some sort of ideological deregulation agenda doesn't even make sense because it is not a regulation. It does not force anybody to buy or produce anything. It is simply a voluntary, science-based labeling system. It helps consumers compare appliances and other products based on their energy efficiency. It helps Americans cut down their energy bills. And it helps reduce pollution that hurts our lungs and heats our planet.

That is why Americans across the political spectrum support it. It is an example of our government doing something simple, effective, and bipartisan. At least, it used to be.

Donald Trump's push to dismantle this program is a perfect example of how MAGA hardliners have turned their backs on the very people they claim to represent. This is not about freedom or choice. It is about controlling the market to benefit fossil fuel interests. It is about keeping consumers in the dark. And it is about making sure families have fewer tools to protect themselves from rising costs.

Ask yourself: why, in the middle of what Trump and his allies keep calling an "energy emergency," would you go out of your way to kill a program that helps people save so much money energy? The only people who benefit are the fossil fuel executives who profit when homes and appliances waste more of it.

When people waste energy because they unknowingly buy inefficient products, the fossil fuel industry makes more money.

That is the whole ballgame. It is a rigged system that leaves working Americans with higher bills while big polluters cash in. The Energy Star label helps consumers break that cycle.

Cutting Energy Star would be a betrayal of the millions of Americans who are already struggling to afford groceries, gas, and electricity. It would hurt seniors trying to stay warm in winter. It would hurt young families buying their first refrigerator. It would hurt

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# Poor heart health increases risk of dementia for Black Americans

(Newswise) — Diabetes and hypertension could have a domino effect for future health problems like dementia — especially for Black Americans, according to a new University of Georgia study.

The study found that Black Americans diagnosed with both conditions in midlife had significantly higher levels of a dementia-related biomarker more than a decade later.

“This matters. This study shows that chronic conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes, especially when combined together, might start damaging the brain earlier than we thought, especially for this group,” said Rachael Weaver, corresponding author of the study and a graduate student in the UGA Franklin College of



DWG Studio

Arts and Sciences department of sociology.

“When these two conditions show up together in midlife, they might start a chain reaction leading to brain aging even as much as a decade later.”

**Cardiovascular health may be an indicator of degenerative brain diseases like dementia**

Black Americans historically show cognitive de-

cline at higher rates and at earlier ages than white people. Uncovering physical conditions that accelerate this is crucial for improving quality of life and health outcomes, the researchers said.

The study followed more than 250 participants with high blood pressure, diabetes or both conditions.

The researchers found that while one diagnosis

alone did not indicate a dramatic neurological effect, having both led to striking results.

Those with diabetes and hypertension at midlife had elevated levels of a biomarker of dementia. Both of these diagnoses not only contributed to higher amounts of that biomarker but also a greater increase of it over an 11-year period.

“The study sends a clear message: Taking steps early to control high blood pressure and diabetes may help protect African Americans from brain degeneration and lower their risk of dementia later in life,” said Karlo Lei, co-author of the study and an associate professor in the Franklin College department of sociology.

The findings suggest that

health practitioners should place a higher focus on cardiovascular health as an indicator of dementia risk, especially among Black Americans, the researchers said.

“This distinction is important because it suggests that strategies aimed at preventing or slowing cognitive decline in Black Americans may need to prioritize prevention and management of vascular diseases beginning in midlife,” said Mei Ling Ong, co-author of the study and an associate research scientist in the UGA Center for Family Research.

“Early intervention for these chronic health conditions could significantly protect brain health and reduce the incidence of neurodegenerative diseases

later in life.”

**Public health education in at-risk communities needed**

Many of the study participants with cardiovascular issues also reported low incomes. Nearly one in five of the participants also had less than a 12th grade education. This highlights a key relationship between socioeconomic status and health outcomes.

“Health inequities like the ones that we’re exploring are not inevitable. They are very systemic, and they’re potentially preventable. Just as crucial as early screening and treatment is the need for change that addresses the structural inequities putting Black Americans at higher risk in the

**See HEART, Page 12**

## Drug to slow Alzheimer’s well tolerated outside of clinical trial setting

By Marta Wegorzewska

(Newswise) — The Food and Drug Administration’s approval in 2023 of lecanemab — a novel Alzheimer’s therapy shown in clinical trials to modestly slow disease progression — was met with enthusiasm by many in the field as it represented the first medication of its kind able to influence the disease. But side effects — brain swelling and bleeding — emerged during clinical trials that have left some patients and physicians hesitant about the treatment.

Medications can have somewhat different effects once they are released into the real world with broader demographics. Researchers at Washington University

School of Medicine in St. Louis set out to study the adverse events associated with lecanemab treatment in their clinic patients and found that significant adverse events were rare and manageable.

Consistent with the results from carefully controlled clinical trials, researchers found that only 1% of patients experienced severe side effects that required hospitalization. Patients in the earliest stage of Alzheimer’s with very mild symptoms experienced the lowest risk of complications, the researchers found, helping to inform patients and clinicians as they navigate discussions about the treatment’s risks.

The retrospective study, published May 12 in JAMA

Neurology, focused on 234 patients with very mild or mild Alzheimer’s disease who received lecanemab infusions in the Memory Diagnostic Center at WashU Medicine, a clinic that specializes in treating patients with dementia.

“This new class of medications for early symptomatic Alzheimer’s is the only approved treatment that influences disease progression,” said Barbara Joy Snider, MD, PhD, a professor of neurology and co-senior author on the study. “But fear surrounding the drug’s potential side effects can lead to treatment delays. Our study shows that WashU Medicine’s outpatient clinic has the infra-

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# Trump administration moves to eliminate Habeas Corpus

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Senior White House adviser Stephen Miller confirmed the Trump administration is “actively looking at” suspending the writ of habeas corpus — a constitutional right that allows individuals to challenge unlawful detention.

Though framed as a move against undocumented immigrants, historians and legal experts warn the consequences could be far more sweeping, especially for Black Americans.

“The Constitution is clear,” Miller told reporters. “The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus can be suspended in time of invasion.”

Miller cited immigration at the southern border as justification, using language similar to what President Trump has repeatedly described as an “invasion.”



Image via NNPA

But civil liberties advocates and Black historians say suspending this right — a cornerstone of due process — would reopen legal pathways used throughout U.S. history to detain, punish, and silence Black Americans.

From the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 to Reconstruction-era terror and Japanese internment in World War II, the right to habeas corpus has been both a shield and a last resort for marginalized people. Its suspension has consistently led to devastating consequences.

“Black Americans remember what happens when the government

has unchecked power to detain,” wrote historian Amanda Tyler, author of *Habeas Corpus in Wartime*. “This isn’t new. It’s the same mechanism that was used to capture fugitive slaves and suppress Black resistance during Reconstruction.”

In 1850, Congress passed a law that denied suspected fugitives any right to testify in court or even seek habeas relief. Free Black Americans were captured alongside escapees.

“It meant no Black person in the North was safe,” wrote historians James and Lois Horton, who documented how the law turned

states like Massachusetts into hunting grounds for slave catchers backed by federal power.

The parallels are striking.

Today, many of the deportation cases the Trump administration wants to fast-track involve habeas claims — legal challenges asserting that the government has no lawful basis for detention.

One such case involves Rumeysa Öztürk, a Turkish student at Tufts University, who was jailed for 45 days without charges.

A federal judge in Vermont ordered her release after she filed a habeas petition, arguing her detention was based on her political speech and not any crime.

Miller hinted that such judicial checks on the executive branch are part of the reason for considering suspension.

“It depends on whether the courts do the right thing

or not,” he said. That sentiment echoes past abuse.

During Reconstruction, Congress had to pass the Ku Klux Klan Act in 1871 to protect Black citizens from paramilitary terror.

The act allowed President Grant to suspend habeas corpus — not to restrict civil rights, but to crush white supremacist violence.

Now, the suspension is being considered not to protect Black life, but to expand detention powers in the name of immigration control.

Critics say that opens the door to much broader repression.

“The legal history is clear,” said Tyler. “Suspending habeas has often led to the erosion of other rights — especially for Black people.”

The fear isn’t hypothetical. In 1786, a Black father named Cato used a writ of habeas corpus to rescue his

daughter Betsey from enslavement in Pennsylvania.

Their case became one of the first major freedom suits in U.S. legal history.

Even during Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus in 1862, a fierce backlash followed. Lincoln justified it during a rebellion. Critics warned then — as now — that the nation cannot preserve itself by abandoning the very liberties it claims to protect.

Stephen Miller’s comments come at a time when millions of Americans are already concerned about voter suppression, militarized policing, and authoritarian tactics.

For Black Americans, the prospect of suspending habeas corpus rings especially loud.

“When we hear this,” said one civil rights attorney, “we don’t just hear a legal argument. We hear footsteps from the past.”

## Reparations activists to host national reparations rally in Washington, D.C. on May 17 commemorating the 100th birthday of Malcolm X

(Black PR Wire) Washington, D.C. — The National Black Cultural Information Trust, Inc. will officially join the National Reparations Rally as a media partner. On Saturday, May 17, 2025, the National Reparations Network, in close collaboration with the Reparation Education Project, will host the National Reparations Rally in Lansburgh Park, Washington, DC, from 11 am-5 pm. Reparations activists

from across the nation will gather for the National Reparations Rally, advocating for federal and local reparations for Black communities harmed by chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and modern-day systemic racism.

The National Reparations Rally will celebrate key advancements in the movement, including the nationwide growth of state and local reparations task forces and continued ad-

vocacy for federal reparations. The National Reparations Network and the rally were endorsed by over 200 organizations, including the National Black Cultural Information Trust, Inc.

The rally will also commemorate the 100th birthday of Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz), celebrating his enduring influence on liberation while

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# Dallas College celebrates first Bachelor's Degree in Nursing graduates at pinning ceremony

Dallas College will honor the first graduates of its Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-B.S.N.) program during a pinning ceremony at 2 p.m. on May 12 in the Performance Hall at the Eastfield Campus.

The program launched in summer 2024 with 25 students with nursing associate degrees, many of whom were already working in the nursing field. Now, they are all graduating with their B.S.N. degrees — positioning them for broader career opportunities in nursing.

“This pinning ceremony at Dallas College marks a proud milestone in nursing education and a historic



*“Completing my Bachelor of Science in Nursing is more than just earning a degree; it signifies a deeper understanding of nursing as a profession,” said Nancy Kinuthia, student speaker for the pinning ceremony. (Dallas College)*

moment for our graduates,” said Dr. Chiquesha Davis, dean of the RN-B.S.N. program. “Our graduates are not only prepared for the future of health care, but

they are also ready to lead and shape it across communities in Texas and beyond.”

The program offers two study tracks: a fast-track option that can be com-

pleted in 12 months and a part-time option that spans 24 months — ideal for working professionals. The 120-credit-hour degree plan includes a unique pathway for students to become certified Spanish medical interpreters.

“Completing my Bachelor of Science in Nursing is more than just earning a degree; it signifies a deeper understanding of nursing as a profession,” said Nancy Kinuthia, student speaker for the pinning ceremony. “Being equipped with enhanced critical thinking, leadership skills and a broader perspective on health care catapults me to

use my degree to venture into areas like education, leadership, public health or nursing policy.”

Kinuthia earned her associate degree in nursing from the El Centro Campus. She now works as a medical-surgical nurse with the plastics and surgical specialty unit at Parkland Health in Dallas. A professor encouraged her to apply for the new program.

Dallas College’s bachelor’s program addresses the increasing demand for qualified nurses. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 275,000 additional nurses will be needed between

2020 and 2030. Nursing employment is projected to grow by 9% — faster than the average for all occupations.

Dallas College will hold six commencement ceremonies May 15-17 at the Curtis Culwell Center in Garland. The graduating class of 11,001 includes the nursing cohort and 161 students earning Bachelor of Applied Science degrees in Early Childhood Education.

The college awarded its first bachelor’s degrees in education in 2023 and added a Bachelor of Applied Technology in Software Development this year.

## DRUG, from Page 4

structure and expertise to safely administer and care for patients on lecanemab, including the few who may experience severe side effects, leading the way for more clinics to safely administer the drug to patients.”

Lecanemab is an antibody therapy that clears amyloid plaque proteins, extending independent living by 10 months, according to a recent study led by WashU Medicine researchers. Because amyloid accumulation is the first step in the disease, doctors recom-

mend the drug for people in the early stage of Alzheimer’s, with very mild or mild symptoms. The researchers found that only 1.8% of patients with very mild Alzheimer’s symptoms developed any adverse symptoms from treatment compared with 27% of patients with mild Alzheimer’s.

“Patients with the very mildest symptoms of Alzheimer’s will likely have the greatest benefit and the least risk of adverse events from treatment,” said Snider, who led clinical trials for lecanemab at WashU

Medicine. “Hesitation and avoidance can lead patients to delay treatment, which in turn increase the risk of side effects. We hope the results help reframe the conversations between physicians and patients about the medication’s risks.”

Hesitation around lecanemab stems from a side effect known as amyloid-related imaging abnormalities, or ARIA. The abnormalities, which typically only affect a very small area of the brain, appear on brain scans and indicate swelling or bleeding. In clinical trials of lecanemab, 12.6% of participants experienced

ARIA and most cases were asymptomatic and resolved without intervention. A small percentage — approximately 2.8% of participants treated — experienced symptoms such as headaches, confusion, nausea and dizziness. Occasional deaths have been linked to lecanemab in an estimated 0.2% of patients treated.

The Memory Diagnostic Center began treating patients with lecanemab in 2023 after the drug received full FDA approval. Patients receive the medication via infusions every two weeks in infusion centers. As

part of each patient’s care, WashU Medicine doctors regularly gather sophisticated imaging to monitor the brain, which can detect bleeding and swelling with great sensitivity. Lecanemab is discontinued in patients with symptoms from ARIA or significant ARIA without symptoms, and the rare patients with severe ARIA are treated with steroids in the hospital.

In looking back on their patients’ outcomes, the authors found the extent of side effects aligned with those of the trials — most of the clinic’s cases of ARIA were asymptomatic

and only discovered on sensitive brain scans used to monitor brain changes. Of the 11 patients who experienced symptoms from ARIA, the effects largely resolved within a few months and no patients died.

“Most patients on lecanemab tolerate the drug well,” said Suzanne Schindler, MD, PhD, an associate professor of neurology and a co-senior author of the study. “This report may help patients and providers better understand the risks of treatment, which are lower in patients with very mild symptoms of Alzheimer’s.”



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# A Victory in Voting Rights

## A Supreme Court win over the discriminatory redistributing in Alabama

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund is taking a victory lap for a Supreme Court win against Alabama's discriminatory redistricting practices that targeted Black voters there.

Attorney Deuel Ross for the Legal Defense Fund says, "The Supreme Court ruled that Alabama had violated the Voting Rights Act by chopping up that Black population and declining to create two majority Black



Drazen Zigic via NNPA

Districts."

Ross emphasized to BlackPressUSA that Ala-

bama's Black Belt is hundreds of years old with a "very large Black popula-

tion."

Ross, who argued the case in the trial court and the United States Supreme Court, successfully proved that "Alabama had both intentionally discriminated against Black voters" by chopping up the Black Belt, a majority Black population that "runs straight through Alabama."

This victory comes after recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions have undermined

voting rights laws.

"If any case was going to show that the Voting Rights Act was still needed, it was our case," offered Ross.

One of the first major blows to the 1965 Voting Rights Act was in 2013.

The Supreme Court decision then gutted the pre-clearance portion of the act.

The ruling was made in the *Shelby V. Holder* case, throwing out the pre-clearance portions of the law.

That law section was created to prevent discriminatory election practices in "certain southern states" like Alabama. Within that law was a portion called pre-clearance, where the southern states that were found to be practicing discriminatory election practices against Black voters had to get clearance from the Justice Department before they made any changes to the election process or rules.

### RALLY, from Page 5

featuring music, cultural performances, spoken word, and calls to action. The rally will also feature an African Marketplace with vendors offering cultural products, gifts, and memorabilia.

Attendees will hear from activists, scholars, and community leaders speaking on the historical context of slavery, the ongoing impact of systemic racism, and the need for reparatory justice through reparations. Current and former leaders from Congress and state legislatures are among the invitees.

Featured speakers include (virtual) Erika Alexander, Actress and Co-founder of Color Farm Media; Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies at California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director of the African American Cultural Center (Us); and Dr. Ben Chavis, president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and co-author of the new book

The TransAtlantic Slave Trade: Overcoming the 500-Year Legacy.

In-person: Adjoa Aiyetoro, Founding Member & Chief Legal Consultant, N'COBRA & Director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers Reparations Research Project, Robin Rue Simmons, reparations leader and founder of FirstRepair, Omali Yeshitela, Chairman of African People's Socialist Party, Anthony Browder, Cultural Historian, Director of IKG Cultural Resources, Rev. Mark Thompson, political commentator and host of Make It Plain, Miranda Alexandria Queen AF USA, Co-Chair N'COBRA Chicago Chapter, and Salim Adofo, ANC Commissioner.

Featured musical performances include Ras Kass, Afi Soul, Ayanna Gregory, Free Benjamin, Randi Payton, Laini Mataka, Luci Murphy, the Black Workers Center Chorus, and African dancers and drummers.





# The 12 jurors who will decide Sean 'Diddy' Combs' fate

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

As the explosive federal sex trafficking and racketeering trial of Sean "Diddy" Combs continues in Manhattan, the fate of one of hip-hop's most iconic figures now lies in the hands of a diverse jury of 12 New Yorkers, ranging in age from 30 to 74. With opening testimony already revealing harrowing allegations from former partner Cassie Ventura, the jurors will be asked to weigh damning charges that span decades and shake the very foundation of Combs' vast business empire. Already,



Image via NNPA

Ventura has delivered chilling testimony describing the alleged violence and coercion she endured. "He would ... knock me over, drag me, kick me, stomp me in the head," Ventura told the court. She also described "freak-offs"—events she said Combs orchestrated in which she was forced to engage in sexual acts with escorts under his

control. Her account marks the first in what prosecutors suggest will be a long line of testimony detailing a pattern of abuse and control.

However, legal experts have already expressed concern that Combs hasn't been charged with domestic violence, which has been the early theme of prosecutors. Combs, 54, was indicted last year on three

federal counts: racketeering conspiracy, sex trafficking by force, fraud or coercion, and transportation for prostitution. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison. The indictment paints Combs as the ringleader of a criminal enterprise that engaged in sex trafficking, forced labor, kidnapping, arson, bribery, and obstruction of justice from 2008 to the present. Federal prosecutors accuse him of leveraging his wealth, celebrity, and network of employees to abuse women, control their careers, and cover up the alleged crimes. "For years, Sean Combs used the business empire he controlled to sexually abuse

and exploit women, as well as to commit other acts of violence and obstruction of justice," U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said. The jury selected to decide Combs' fate is as varied as the city itself, with jurors hailing from Manhattan, the Bronx, and Westchester. Each has at least a college degree—two hold master's degrees and one a PhD. Their professional backgrounds span deli clerks, massage therapists, bank analysts, and scientists.

Here are some of the jurors now tasked with deliberating one of the most high-profile cases in recent memory:

• A 69-year-old Man-

hattan massage therapist disclosed that a family member was a victim of domestic violence but assured the court of his impartiality.

• A 31-year-old Manhattan-based investment analyst and active church member acknowledged seeing the video of Combs allegedly assaulting Ventura.

• A 51-year-old scientist with a PhD in molecular biology who is only vaguely familiar with the case from media coverage.

• A 30-year-old deli clerk from the Bronx said she rarely follows the news but enjoys hip-hop and reggae.

• A 42-year-old nursing

**See DIDDY, Page 13**

## BUSINESS, from Page 1

gains, the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) paints a far more troubling picture of the broader small business climate.

The NFIB Small Business Optimism Index dropped to 95.8 in April, marking the second month in a row below its 51-year average. Small business owners reported declining expectations for real sales, fewer capital investment plans, and significant difficulties finding qualified labor.

Only 18% of owners said they plan to make capital outlays in the next six months—down from previous months and the lowest level since April 2020.

The policy environment compounds the problem for Black-owned firms. In January, President Trump signed executive orders EO 14151 and EO 14173, effectively dismantling many

federal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

These orders direct agency heads to align all federal programs—including contracts and grants—with so-called "merit-based opportunity," opening the door to deprioritizing race-conscious support programs.

While the administration cannot eliminate statutory set-aside programs like the SBA's 8(a) Small Disadvantaged Business designation without congressional approval, it is already moving to gut enforcement and reducing goals.

SBA Administrator Kelly Loeffler issued a memo in February announcing her intent to reduce the 8(a) contracting goal from 15% to the statutory minimum of 5%, citing alleged disadvantages to veteran-owned businesses.

The administration is also expected to cease auditing

compliance with subcontracting goals for minority-owned firms, which could severely impact opportunities for small and large companies that depend on federal contracts.

These moves are especially worrisome for Black business owners, who are already navigating disproportionate barriers to access to capital and markets. While White-owned businesses make up 84% of all classifiable firms and account for 92% of total revenue, Black-owned businesses remain a small sliver despite their rapid growth. With small business optimism waning and federal support shifting away from equity initiatives, many Black entrepreneurs now face a chilling reality: a promising rise in business creation and growth may be undermined by policy changes designed to erase the very programs that helped level the playing field.

"Uncertainty continues to be a major impediment for small business owners,"

NFIB Chief Economist Bill Dunkelberg said, noting that labor shortages, declin-

ing sales expectations, and inflation remain pressing concerns.



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# 'Black Tea' gets its NYC premiere at the 2025 New York African Film Fest

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*) Even master auteurs have an off day. A premise that doesn't pan out. A vision that others can't see. But because they're so talented, often film buffs find some kind of gold in whatever they do.

Legendary writer/director Abderrahmane Sissako, who was born in Mauritania and raised in Mali, has built a solid reputation on classic African films like *Bamako* and the César award-winning war/drama *Timbuktu*. This time out, his screenwriting instincts, and that of co-writer Kessen Tall, lead him away from a solid premise into an overloaded narrative weighed down by extraneous subplots and characters. What could have been a compelling, cross-



Han Chang and Nina Melo costar in *Black Tea*  
(Olivier Marceney / Courtesy)

cultural romantic drama, goes astray. That said, this modern, international fable does start with a flourish.

An ant climbs up a satiny, white wedding gown worn by Aya (Nina Mélo), a twentysomething-year-old who sits next to her fiancé Toussaint (Franck Pycardhy). They're in a hall in Abidjan, the largest city in Côte d'Ivoire

(Ivory Coast). The room is filled with brides and grooms who're ready to get married. One by one, each couple stands in front of a minister and takes their vows. On what should be one of the happiest days of her life, Aya is having inner conflict. When it's time for her to say "I do" she hesitates. She can't. She confronts her husband-to-

be about his questionable behavior. He's dismissive, "Don't be jealous." Aya, "I'm not jealous. I don't want a future made of lies. You're not happy with me. I'd like you to find happiness and feel free." And so, she flees.

Other movies have tak-

en this panic-at-the-alter scenario and expanded it with great success. Most famously 1999's Julia Roberts-starring rom/com *Runaway Bride*. The infectious humor from that movie is woefully absent here. As the somber storyline develops, Aya walks

through an outdoor market shedding her wedding attire. Almost in a blink, the newly independent woman is in the sprawling port city of Guangzhou, northwest of Hong Kong on the Pearl River in China. It's also

See FILM, Page 16




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FLIP THE SCRIPT ON AGING: MAY 2025



# NAACP and Adobe celebrate the return of the Cinematic Shorts Competition and the launch of the Creative Fellowship

(Black PR Wire) LOS ANGELES – The NAACP, in partnership with Adobe, is thrilled to announce the highly anticipated return of the NAACP Cinematic Shorts Competition and the launch of the NAACP Creative Fellowship. These programs reaffirm the NAACP's commitment to securing equitable opportunities in the entertainment industry and empowering emerging talented creatives. Through these initiatives, the NAACP and Adobe are ensuring that the next generation of storytellers have the resources, mentorship, and visibility needed to thrive.

The NAACP Creative Fellowship in partnership with Adobe, is a 14-week paid program designed to equip emerging post-production professionals with skills in video editing, motion graphics, sound design, and social media content creation. This elevated



Black PR Wire

opportunity is open to individuals with some editing experience who are ready to launch their careers in post-production. After an extensive application process, four talented fellows will be selected to participate in industry mentorships, Adobe Creative Cloud training, hands-on work experience and exclusive networking opportunities.

“Partnering with the NAACP on these groundbreaking initiatives reflects Adobe's unwavering commitment to empowering the next generation of cre-

ators. The Creative Fellowship and Cinematic Shorts Competition provide more than just access to tools — they open doors to mentorship, industry connections, and real-world experience. We're honored to support these talented storytellers as they shape the future of film and post-production,” said Amy White, Global Head of Corporate Social Responsibility & Social Impact Communications at Adobe.

The fellowship will kick off with a week-long retreat in Los Angeles from June

2nd - 6th, where fellows will receive state-of-the-art creative storytelling training from Adobe Trainer Christine Steele and engage in career-building experiences with top industry professionals.

“The talent, passion, and innovation we saw reaffirmed the importance of providing access and mentorship in post-production and filmmaking. We're excited to once again partner with Adobe to continue this work, ensuring that these voices not only have a seat at the table but are empowered to shape the industry's future,” said Kyle Bowser, Senior Vice President, NAACP Hollywood Bureau.

Taking place during the upcoming 116th NAACP

National Convention, the Cinematic Shorts Competition returns with an even greater mission — to provide a platform for young filmmakers (ages 18-29) to showcase their storytelling skills and engage in hands-on production experiences.

Participants will be paired in teams of two, receive video equipment, and work under the guidance of a professional mentor to produce a 5-7-minute short film. During the convention, filmmakers will have 72 hours to conceptualize, shoot, and edit their films, working under the guidance of Program Executive Director, Logan Coles. Their final 5-7 minute short films — whether narrative, documentary, or avant-garde — will explore key

NAACP focus issues such as Race & Justice, Health & Well-Being, Inclusive Economy, and Education Innovation. At the conclusion of the 116th Convention, these completed films will be screened for attendees, who will cast their votes for the most compelling piece.

The winning filmmakers will each receive a \$10K grant to produce a short film in collaboration with the NAACP Hollywood Bureau and NAACP+ Studios, an expense-paid trip to Los Angeles to attend the 57th NAACP Image Awards and surrounding events, and exclusive one-on-one meetings with high-level industry executives to support their career advancement.

## Thurgood Marshall College Fund team member pens new book about artificial intelligence and the culture

(Black PR Wire) A Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) team member recently published a book about the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and what an equitable approach to it could mean for under-represented communities.

Nyjal J. Drayton, webmaster at TMCf, said he knew he wanted to write “AI For The Culture: How Emerging Tech Is Leveling The Playing Field” after recognizing the growing need for accessible education around the technology, and the number of

people asking him how to get started using AI responsibly, ethically and efficiently.

Drayton started experimenting with AI in late 2022, around the same time OpenAI released ChatGPT.

“At the time, I was leading TMCf's MetaScholars program on the I&E team, which gave me early exposure to emerging technologies,” Drayton said.

He said the clear disconnect he saw between access, education and representation inspired him to explore the relationship

between AI and the culture.

“AI is advancing rapidly, but so many people in our communities aren't being included in the conversation because of lack of exposure, lack of literacy or being over-hesitant,” Drayton said. “Our culture has always been innovative, we just haven't always been given the tools or a seat at the table.”

By writing this book, Drayton said he wanted to start to break that barrier down and create something

See BOOK, Page 12



# FY 2026 Budget Plan cuts and guts education dollars and programs

## 'Skinny Budget' continues effort to shutter the agency

By Charlene Crowell

In the first 100 days of the current Trump Administration term, over 250,000 federal employees have had their jobs cut, planned to be cut, or have taken a buyout, according to a recent New York Times tally. With a 46 percent staff reduction – 1,380 employees – the Department of Education is among the hardest hit agencies.

The recently released FY 2026 budget plan underscores the administration's determination to shutter the agency and eliminate programs that support the nation's strides to remain educationally competitive and economically viable in a global economy.

"The President's Skinny Budget reflects funding levels for an agency that is responsibly winding down, shifting some responsibilities to the states, and thoughtfully preparing a plan to delegate other critical functions to more appropriate entities," said Education Secretary Linda McMahon in a related statement. "The federal government has invested trillions of taxpayer dollars into an education system that is not driving improved student outcomes – we must change course and reorient taxpayer dollars toward proven programs that generate results for American

students."

For the fiscal year that begins October 01, an additional 15.3 percent agency cut would drop education funding another \$12 billion from FY 2025' \$78.7 billion. Among these proposed cuts are programs that speak to 21st Century dynamics affecting higher education:

- \$980 million – an 80 percent reduction to the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program;

- \$75 million for Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) for campus-based childcare services to parents of low-income parents enrolled in postsecondary education;

- \$64 million cut to Howard University, only federally chartered Historically Black College and University; and

- \$49 million from its Office of Civil Rights, a 35 percent reduction to the office that investigates claims of race, sex and other discrimination in schools.

These specific and modest programs respond to the needs of today's college students that are quite different from those of yesteryear. The historical 4-year completion rate for an undergraduate degree at a young age has been shrinking for several years. Instead, the growing percentage of college students trend older in age, take longer to graduate,

and in the case of Black students, often have children to care for as well. Even after graduation, today's marketplace demands an ongoing challenge to update skills and education to remain competitive.

According to, Black Student Parents' Access to Affordable Child Care Support at Community Colleges, a recent policy brief by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Development:

"Black college students are more likely to be parents than other racial groups at both community colleges and four-year institutions. Over one in three (36 percent) of Black students enrolled in community colleges in 2020 were parents. Forty percent of Black women in college are raising children. Black single mothers comprise 30 percent of undergraduate students who are single mothers, and nearly 70 percent of Black single-mother students are first-generation college students. Black fathers make up 19 percent of student parents and are less likely to have access to childcare assistance than fathers of other races."

CCAMPIS is designed to address this growing need. Competitive federal grant administered by the U.S. Department of Education, help colleges fund on-campus childcare for Pell-eligible

students. Unfortunately, the program's funding has never been enough to meet student parents' needs. Fewer than 4,000 parent students have benefitted from the program when there are approximately 1.5 million student parents who have children under the age of six, according to the D.C.-based New America.

For now, the popular Pell Grant program continues to serve more than 6 million students from low-income households. But its maximum award per student is \$7,395 for the 2025-2026 school year – not enough to

cover the anticipated family contribution many schools expect for tuition and other expenses.

With this kind of demonstrated need for college assistance, it's hard to understand why the Federal Work Study program would face the budget ax. Through its part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, the monies earned lessen the need to borrow loans, while also encouraging work related to the student's course of study or community service – with a very modest government investment.

ment.

When 78 percent of Black student parents have no family financial support for college, as the Joint Center report found, funding college financial support is not only good for Black America – it's in the nation's long-term interest.

The budget bottom line should recognize the huge difference between a hand-out and a hand up.

*Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at [Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org](mailto:Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org).*



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## ENERGY, from Page 3

renters in cities and homeowners in rural towns alike. No one benefits – except the lobbyists and the oil barons.

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*Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.*

# GOP Medicaid plans would slash health coverage for millions, CBO confirms

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

A newly released analysis by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has confirmed that proposals pushed by Republicans in Congress to slash Medicaid spending would result in millions of Americans losing health coverage.

The analysis arrives just days before the House Energy and Commerce Committee is expected to vote on several of these drastic policy changes.

The CBO report, addressed to Senate Finance Ranking Member Ron Wyden and House Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone Jr., outlines five Republican-backed Medicaid policy options that would significantly reduce federal spending.

The agency estimates that under the proposed changes, as many as 8.6 million people could lose Medicaid coverage, and up to 3.9 million would be-



come uninsured.

“This CBO report further confirms what we already knew – that Republicans in Congress are willing to sell out millions of working families to give their billionaire friends another massive tax break,” said Kobie Christian, spokesperson for Unrig Our Economy. “Republicans in Congress have been gaslighting the American public by claiming to be against Medicaid cuts, while actively trying to take away health care from millions of working-class Americans.”

The proposals outlined in the CBO’s letter are capping federal contributions to Medicaid, reducing the matching rate for states that

expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, and repealing enrollment rules designed to streamline access to Medicaid and CHIP.

Each of the first four policy options would force states to respond by cutting provider payments, reducing benefits, and slashing enrollment. The fifth option alone—repealing the Eligibility and Enrollment final rule—would eliminate coverage for 2.3 million people, most of whom are low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

“Donald Trump and Rubber Stamp Republicans in Congress are lying to the American people about their plans to enact the large-

est cut to Medicaid in our nation’s history,” warned Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries.

The CBO analysis confirms House Democrats’ warnings that the GOP proposals would force states to raise taxes, cut education spending, or push people off health insurance,” Jeffries said.

“Rather than working to improve the Medicaid program, congressional Republicans are continuing a 15-year-old fight to repeal the Affordable Care Act,” noted Andrea Ducas, vice president of Health Policy at the Center for American Progress.

“This new CBO report confirms that each of congressional Republicans’ latest proposals would kick millions of the most vulnerable Americans off their health care, all to pay for tax giveaways for the president’s billionaire donors.”

The report also arrives as Senate Republicans voted 53-47 to confirm

Frank Bisignano—former Wall Street executive and self-described “DOGE person”—as the new head of the Social Security Administration, drawing harsh criticism from Democrats and advocates.

During his confirmation hearing, Bisignano dodged questions from Senators Bernie Sanders and Ron Wyden about the agency’s cuts and the use of cryptocurrency-related tools in sensitive federal databases.

In recent months, under the Trump administration, the SSA has shuttered field offices, laid off 7,000 employees, and made it harder for Americans—especially seniors and rural residents—to access benefits. Reports from outlets including Axios, NPR, and the *Washington Post* highlight the collapse of customer service at the SSA, long wait times, and the inability of many Americans to apply for benefits online or by phone.

“Republicans just handed

over the future of Americans’ Social Security to Frank Bisignano, a Wall Street stooge,” said Ken Martin, Chair of the Democratic National Committee.

“Just like Trump and Musk, Bisignano will gladly put Social Security on the chopping block to line the pockets of billionaires and special interests.”

Democrats argue the Republican strategy—cutting Medicaid and destabilizing Social Security—amounts to an all-out war on working-class Americans. The CBO report estimates the GOP’s Medicaid policy shifts would reduce the federal deficit by as much as \$710 billion over the next decade, but at a devastating cost: loss of care, rising out-of-pocket expenses, and widening inequities in health access.

“Crafting health care policy is not an academic exercise; for tens of thousands of Americans, it’s a matter of life or death,” Ducas noted.

## HEART, from Page 4

first place,” said Weaver.

Highlighting the connection between heart and brain health could also help encourage people to exercise, reduce their stress levels, eat healthier and limit smoking and alcohol, the

researchers said.

*This study was funded by the National Institute on Aging and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Co-authors include Steven Beach, Regents Professor of Psychology*

*in the Franklin College; Yu-Wen Lu, a graduate student in the Franklin College; and the late Ron Simons, Regents Professor in the UGA Department of Sociology, who passed away in March. Additional co-authors include Michelle M. Mielke.*

## BOOK, from Page 10

that could help people understand, engage and lead with AI in ways that feel natural and empowering.

“This book was meant to blow past all the hype AI brought and highlight its potential for empowerment

and impact,” Drayton said. “I wrote it to help our communities understand and lead with AI and not just catch up to it or only be consumers. The goal was to make the technology feel accessible and action-

able, so we can show up in this space with confidence and clarity.”

When he envisions his most hopeful future regarding AI’s impact, Drayton said he hopes it levels the playing field.

“AI For The Culture” is available on Amazon.

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# SBA announces new grant funding to support Made in America manufacturing

(Black PR Wire) WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced a new funding opportunity as part of its Made in America Manufacturing Initiative, the agency’s targeted effort to restore the U.S industrial base, bring back American jobs, and promote our nation’s economic dominance and national security.

The Manufacturing in America Grant Initiative will provide three eligible applicants up to \$1.1 million total to deliver training and technical assistance to support small manufacturers in the SBA’s Empower to Grow (E2G) Program – including those businesses in key industries such as timber, energy, aluminum, and steel. SBA’s E2G Program is designed to provide eligible U.S. small businesses with free business courses, hands-on training,



and one-on-one consulting to support their growth, operations, hiring, regulatory compliance, and government contracting competitiveness.

“The SBA is investing in small manufacturers across the country – arming them with the training and tools to dominate critical industries and drive our industrial comeback,” said SBA Administrator Kelly Loeffler. “With this new grant, the agency will accelerate the return of American supply chains, production power, and economic inde-

pendence. Under President Trump’s leadership, we are rebuilding the backbone of American industry – and with it, the jobs and communities that are at the heart of our nation.”

To be eligible for this funding opportunity, an applicant must:

- Be a for-profit or not-for-profit entity (including, but not limited to small businesses, other-than small businesses, trade and professional associations, and educational institutions).
- Have been in existence continually for at least the

past three years.

- Have experience providing technical assistance, tools, or training, etc. relating to small manufacturing businesses on a regional or national basis; and

- Demonstrate that it has the capacity to provide hands-on manufacturing-related training and technical assistance to small business concerns.

The deadline to submit proposals electronically via <https://www.grants.gov> is May 12, no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT.

The SBA will host a webinar on the following date to inform the public about the grants. Registration is required through the provided link.

- Thursday, May 8, from 2-3:30 p.m. EDT

Additional questions or requests for assistance should be submitted via email to [e2g@sba.gov](mailto:e2g@sba.gov).

## DIDDY, from Page 8

home aide from Manhattan admitted to knowing about the allegations but relies on word-of-mouth for news.

- A 41-year-old Bronx correctional facility clerk who once pleaded guilty to misdemeanor fraud but claimed he could still be a fair juror.

- A 68-year-old retired banker from Westchester who listens to Indian music and enjoys cricket.

- Another 68-year-old retired lineman from Westchester said he watched Combs’ reality show Making the Band and viewed the Ventura video.

- A 43-year-old physician’s assistant from Westchester is involved in women’s advocacy and social

justice theater.

- A 39-year-old Bronx social worker specializing in domestic violence cases who also works as a security guard.

- A 67-year-old bank analyst from Westchester who has previously served on a hung jury in a criminal case.

- A 74-year-old Manhattan-based treatment coordinator who works with people with disabilities and holds a sociology degree.

Six alternate jurors were also selected, though they do not yet know their status. These include a 57-year-old architect, a 35-year-old unemployed former window cleaner, a 40-year-old physician, a 71-year-old non-

profit worker, a 24-year-old site operator, and a 37-year-old administrative officer for an international organization. While some jurors admitted to having seen the Ventura video or hearing details of the case before-

hand, each assured U.S. District Judge Arun Subramanian that they could remain impartial and base their judgment solely on the evidence presented in court. Combs has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

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# Whatever Happened to 'MySpace'

Dr. James L. Snyder

When I was young, one of my life priorities was "My Space." I defended it with everything I had.

In school, I had to defend "My Space." Several times, I even had to go to the principal's office and explain what "My Space" was all about. He didn't seem to understand, and I had to explain it several times.

At home with my siblings, I had to define the parameters of "My Space." Even though I explained it to them several times, they never seemed to get it. Their idea, and I do not know where it came from, was that "My Space" was "Their Space." No matter how often I explained it to them, they never seemed to understand what I was discussing.

One of the great privileges of moving away from home was that I could now defend "My Space" without any interference from anyone. I can't tell you how much I enjoy that freedom.

Then, I thought about it for the first time in, I don't know how many years. Somehow, "My Space" was being violated.

I had to move my office somewhere when I

retired from the church. I had close to 10,000 books, so I needed somewhere to put them. So, we added an office space to our home. It cost some money, but it was a way of establishing "My Space."

Fortunately, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage supervised the construction of my retirement office. There had to be a lot of shelves for all my books, and she could put them all together.

When it was finished, I was so happy to see my books on the bookshelf in my new "My Space" office at the house. I could enter the door, sit at my desk, and be all alone to do what I wanted.

Sometimes, I sit behind my desk and look around at all the books in my office. Except for Bible commentaries and dictionaries, I have read every book in my library. Some I have read several times. And I know just about where I got every one of them. They are the occupants of "My Space."

Then something happened violating "my Space."

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage babysits our great-granddaughter while our granddaughter is work-

ing. We have had our great-granddaughter for about two years now. She's about 2 ½ years old and has more energy than a troop of monkeys at a zoo.

If I had half her energy, I would accomplish a lot in life. Just watching her energy drains me of the little energy I have.

In the morning, I like to watch the news on TV before starting the day. Halfway through watching the news, the great-granddaughter arrives for the day.

She will come into the living room, jump on the couch, and say, "Papaw, George."

I've realized that when she says that, she wants to watch a program called Curious George, a TV cartoon for children. Who gave her the right to "My Space" TV?

For some reason, she believes she can invade "My Space" and turn the TV to the program she wants to watch, regardless of what I'm watching. This is truly an invasion of "My Space."

However, she thinks she deserves to watch whatever she wants on TV, regardless of what I am watching at the time.

At lunchtime, The Gra-

cious Mistress of the Parsonage will have my lunch plate in the refrigerator for me to pick up. I will come to the kitchen, pick up my lunch plate, sit in my chair, and watch the news at noon.

It's my time to relax and enjoy lunch.

Just as I'm beginning to eat my lunch, the little great-granddaughter will come to me and take things off of my plate for herself. Being a great-grandfather, I cannot say that word with two letters, "NO." Who gave her the right to "My Space" lunch?

I don't know whether she understands I can't say that word, or maybe she's just playing me with a cute little giggle, a smile, and puppy eyes. As far as she is concerned, "My Space" is also "Her Space." Where she

got that idea, I will never know. I'm suspicious that maybe she was born with it, or perhaps her great-grandmother taught her how to do it.

In any case, "My Space" has been thoroughly violated. I'm beginning to think the only time I will restore "My Space" is when they put me in my coffin and drop me in the grave.

Pondering this the other day, I wondered how or if it was possible to regain "My Space." What must I do to establish the perimeters that will separate me from everybody else?

I remember reading I the Psalms verses that support my idea of "My Space". David said in Psalm 91:1, 4 - "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the

shadow of the Almighty. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

If I am under the "shadow of the Almighty", nobody can ever compromise my safety. I don't have to worry about my situation because I am not defined by that. I am defined by my abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. If you can compromise the "Almighty" then I'll worry, but not before. Good luck with that.

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## Leo, from Page 2

figures.

The New York Post reported that his last post before his election was a retweet of Catholic journalist Rocco Palmo slamming Trump's alliance with El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele over migrant deportations. Back in 2017, the Roman Catholic leader also reposted a message quoting Chicago Archbishop Blase

Cupich, calling Trump's refugee bans "a dark hour of US history."

Though Trump offered lukewarm congratulations from the White House driveway, his far-right allies were quick to lash out. Laura Loomer tweeted, "WOKE MARXIST POPE," calling Pope Leo "just another Marxist puppet in the Vatican."

"But outside the MAGA echo chamber, in Black communities across the globe, the emotion is pride. "The pope is Black," journalist Clarence Hill Jr. said bluntly. And that means something in the Black neighborhoods of Chicago and the Creole corridors of New Orleans. Many said it means representation, resilience, and the reshaping of history at the highest level of the Catholic Church.

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# A Refiner's Fire



**Sister Tarpley**  
NDG Religion Editor

*“But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.” Malachi 3:2-3 (KJV)*

The Lord has a specific

manner of preparing His people for useful service. God desires to turn His children from rough, hard-edged stones into gems of gold and silver.

The refiner’s fire can only accomplish its purposes when the heat is turned up to extraordinary temperatures. It breaks down the metal in order for it to become moldable and shapeable.

Only when the temperatures reach this level can the work be fully accomplished. So it is in our lives.

Until the Lord completes His refining process, the offerings we make are not made in righteousness and

cannot be acceptable.

Thank God that Jesus is our righteousness and that there is no righteousness apart from Him. Still, the Lord continues to purge all that is not of His righteousness out of our lives.

This comes through trials that bring each of us to the end of ourselves in order that He may only reflect that which is Himself.

When God takes you through the refiner’s fire, be encouraged because it is His overriding commitment to turn you from a rough, hard-edged stone to a precious metal.

He will do this through certain events in your workplace, your relation-

ships, and other circumstances in your life. Our job is to avoid trying to blow out the fire.

This can be done by attributes of a life blessed by God.

*“Therefore thus saith*

*the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”*

**Isaiah 28:16**



**(KJV)**

Whenever God calls a Christian into a consecrated life, it is made up of distinct stages. This can be often compared to building a house. First, a house

**See TARPLEY, Page 16**

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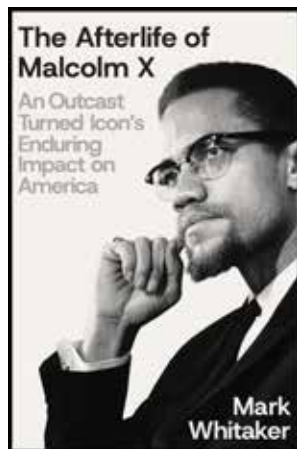
# NDG Book Review: 'The Afterlife of Malcolm X' will absorb readers

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Who will remember you in fifty years' time?

A handful of friends – at least those who are still around – might recall you. Your offspring, grandkids, and greats, maybe people who stumble upon your tombstone. Think about it: who will remember you in 2075? And then read "The Afterlife of Malcolm X" by Mark Whitaker and learn about a legacy that still resonates a half-century later.

Betty Shabazz didn't like to go to her husband's speeches, but on that February night in 1965, he asked her to come with their



daughters to the Audubon Ballroom in New York. Did Malcolm X sense that something bad would happen on that night? Surely he was fully aware of the possibility, knowing that he'd

been "a marked man" for months because of his very public break with the Nation of Islam.

As the news of his murder spread around New York and around the world, his followers and admirers reacted in many ways. His friend, journalist Peter Goldman, was "hardly shocked" because he also knew that Malcolm's life was in danger, but the arrest of three men accused of the crime didn't add up. It ultimately became Goldman's "obsession."

Malcolm's co-writer for The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Alex Haley, quietly finished the book he started

with Malcolm, and a small upstart publishing house snatched it up. A diverse group of magazines got in line to run articles about Malcolm X's life, finally sensing that white America "needed his voice even more than blacks did."

But though Malcolm X was gone, he continued to leave an impact.

He didn't live long enough to see the official founding of the Black Panther Party, but he was influential on its beginning. He never knew the first Kwanzaa or the triumphs of a convert named Muhammad Ali.

Malcolm left his mark

on music. He influenced at least three major athletes.

He was a "touchstone" for a president...

While it's true that "The Afterlife of Malcolm X" is an eye-opening book, one that works as a great companion to the autobiography, it's also a fact that it's somewhat scattered. Is it a look at Malcolm's life, his legacy, or is it a "murder mystery"?

Turns out, it's all three but the timeline for it isn't always smooth and that may take some getting used-to. Just when you're immersed, even absorbed in this book, to the point where you forget about your

surroundings, author Mark Whitaker abruptly moves to a different part of the story. It may be jarring.

And yet, it's a big part of this book, and it's essential for readers to know the investigation's outcome and what we know today. It doesn't change Malcolm X's legacy, but it adds another frame around it.

If you've read the autobiography, if you haven't thought about Malcolm X in awhile, or if you think you know all there is to know, then you owe it to yourself to find "The Afterlife of Malcolm X." For you, this is a book you won't easily forget.

## FILM, from Page 9

known as "Chocolate City" or "Little Africa," due to its large African ex-pat community. Guangzhou becomes her new home.

Aya finds work in a tea shop, owned by Cal (Chang Han), a somewhat older gray-haired man. It isn't long before the boss/worker relationship becomes flirtatious and morphs into a loving partnership. As Cal teaches Aya all the fascinating and historical aspects of tea, from smelling, serving and selling, their romance blooms. As do the implications and complica-

tions of their affair.

Love should fill the air, and its zest should be a driving force that carries the film until the final credits. Instead, other cumbersome aspects intrude. Aya has so many friends it's hard to keep track. Cal has so many family members, former employees and past affairs, it would take ancestry.com to follow them all. What if the plotting had taken the same path as Oscar® nominated screenwriter/director Celine Song's Past Lives? What if this storyline had been a

delicate, tender and unfettered ode to love? It might have helped its cause. Also, though Cal and Aya are courting, there isn't much sparking. No fiery passion, reckless abandonment or bedroom hijinks. The kind that romantics swoon over in theaters or stream at night with a glass or wine and a sweetheart.

As a director, Sissako still displays glimpses of his amazing talent. More so with his staging and managing of a first-rate tech crew. Less so getting emotional performances from the cast. The cinematography (Aymerick Pilarski)

peaks in an eye-catching tea plantation sequence where the verdant landscape and its shrub-like textures surround Cal and Aya. Whether that vision is movie magic or a real location, it's quite beguiling. Armand Amar's musical score is as winsome as the playlist that includes Nina Simone classic hit "Feeling Good," as sung by actress-turned-singer Fatoumata Diawara, who appeared in Timbuktu. Interiors well feign Africa, China and the nation of Cape Verde, where Cal once had an affair, thanks to production designer Véronique Sacrez.

The special attention to colors, shapes, and fabrics attest to costume designer Annie Melza Tiburce's brilliance.

The lengthy footage meanders for 110 minutes, when 90 minutes would have served all better (editor Nadia Ben Rachid). How much does the audience need to know about Cal's history, in-laws and former wife? Why do the characters in a hair saloon matter? Why must audiences hear Cal's father-in-law berate Africans who live in China: "...African snakes ... they must be kept outside our society ... an ex-

hibition about them compares them to animals!" If that character can speak ill of Africans, why don't Africans air their negative feelings about Chinese people? In fact, why was any of that relevant? Most will wish that the production had trusted the love affair to sustain interest and skipped the rest.

If there is a worthy subplot, it's learning how Chinese culture defies tea. Cal relays his love for it reverently, like it's a magic elixir: "First savor the atmosphere the surroundings, second savor the taste and third savor the effect."

## TARPLEY, from Page 15

must be prepared by laying a foundation.

For a Christian that foundation is none other than Jesus Christ Himself. Any foundation other than Christ will not stand.

Second, as the Christian enter a walk of faith with God, He allows each of us to experience trials, be-

ing tested, miracles, and challenges in life that are designed to provide "faith experiences" that demonstrate tangible evidences of His work in our life.

Moses' burning-bush experience, Peter's walk on the water, Joshua's parting of the Jordan River are evidences of trials, miracles

and challenges.

These experiences built the faith of these people. The depth and width of our calling is directly proportional to the faith experiences God allows in each of our lives.

The third stage deals with motives.

*"All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the*

*spirits."* Proverbs 2:16 (KJV).

What is the motive behind the Christian's actions? Is it only financial accumulation? Is it to gain control? Is it to create independence?

The primary motive must be God's leading you to take such an action - it must be obedience. These other factors must be by-

products of the decision.

Finally, the Christian is prepared to take action. The Christian must ask, "Do I have the skill, quality, and ability to enter into this activity?"

Before you begin your next project, ask yourself these four questions. What is the foundation this project is based on? What experiences has God dem-

onstrated in my life that indicates His involvement? What is my motive for entering this activity?

Do I have the skill, quality, and ability to accomplish the task? Answering these questions will tell you whether God will bless your activity.

*(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in May 2014.)*