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PUBLISHER'S PAGE



I woke up on Monday of this week thinking about a meeting that I was invited to attend approximately two years ago by invitation of City Council President Shannon Hardin and the African American elected officials here in Franklin County. Feeling somewhat like an outsider (because of my retirement status from public service) I was more observant than participatory. To make a long story short, I was very pleased to find the meeting to be inclusive, focused, collegial, respectful, and results-oriented.....and why should I have expected anything to the contrary? Far too often we operate on prejudices, false perceptions, shallow observations, and the biases of others. Some of the "Elder Statesmen and Stateswomen attending the meeting were Judges Janet Jackson and Yvette McGee Brown, along with Mayor Michael Coleman and others. I share that particular meeting because the manner, protocol, and vision, illustrated, in very definite terms, how we must comport ourselves and plan strategically if we are to continue the upward climb toward fairness, justice, and equality.

Lesson #1. Draw your conclusions about leaders from facts and demonstrated behavior, not from the prejudices and surface knowledge of a few.

To further contextualize this framework, I was reminded of an article penned thirty-nine years ago by Mike Curtin and published on June 12, 1983 for *The Columbus Dispatch* newspaper. The title of the article read as follows: "IS COLUMBUS READY FOR A BLACK MAYOR? The main interviewees were City Council President Jerry Hammond, Councilman Ben Espy, Attorney Larry James, Representative Otto Beatty, Jr., Dr. John H. Rosemond, and myself, at that time a young elected Member of the Ohio House of Representatives. Hammond and I were consistent in our beliefs that the prospect of electing an African American as our Mayor in 1983 was highly achievable and statistically sound. Could the real strategy of the downtown establishment have been a scare tactic to frighten the White community into believing that if an African American were to win electorally, they would lose in fact. Translation: Plant fear and uncertainty in the minds of the masses. I had no interest in serving in a local office and Jerry Hammond was more interested in becoming the City's first African American Council President. So, what happened? Michael Coleman was elected consistently for 16 years as the Mayor of Columbus. What's the message? The "Downtown Establishment" is often completely out of touch with where the public is on matters of fairness and equality.

Lesson # 2. Stay in touch with the masses!

Again, this is why I was so encouraged by the young, thoughtful, African American elected officials and leaders who joined together in a serious, respectful, business like manner to advance our goals of true justice and equality for all. What we must stay on guard for are those individuals with nefarious motives who are resigned to "subtraction and division, rather than addition and multiplication. In other words, achieving greater helpful outcomes for more people versus consistent behaviors that illustrate one's desire for the ol' mantra, "I've got mine and you've got yours to get." None of us truly advances with the kind of self-serving behaviors that so many have embraced as their predictable and consistent means of operation.

My words of advice are don't be afraid or surprised to see negative consequences when you chastize and criticize with impunity. Compliment your associates and mean it. And, always celebrate your successes. Too often, the leaders think that you simply want to be seen. One does not always have to seek the stage to bring about meaningful change. Lift as you climb--there's room at the top of the mountain for everyone who wants to get there.

In conclusion, what I am suggesting is this--Lesson # 3:

- Take a hard look at the Columbus City Council-- particularly, the work of President Shannon Hardin, Councilman Nicholas Bankston, Councilwoman Shayla Favor, and Councilwoman Lourdes Barroso de Padilla. I believe you will conclude as I have that they are all serving us well. In addition to these Members of color, I am very appreciative of the fine service being provided by Elizabeth Brown and Emmanuel Remy. I don't know Councilman Rob Dorans as well.....yet.
- Please take the time to meet and get to know the three African American Members of the Reynoldsburg City Council--Council President, Angie Jenkins; Ward 1 Representative, Shanette Strickland; and Ward 4 Representative, Meredith Lawson-Rowe.
- We have an excellent County Board of Commissioners with President Erica Crawley, Kevin Boyce, and John O'Grady as Members, and Ken Wilson as our County Administrator.
- Our State Legislators, Senator Hearcel Craig, Senator Tina Maharath, and State Representative Latyna Humphrey are making their mark. I am personally looking forward to working with and being of assistance to our two new Somali State Representatives--Ismail Mohamed and Munira Abdullahi; and we should never forget all of the local School Board Members who are serving our communities; and Judges, such as Judges Kimberly Cocroft, Stephen McIntosh, Jaiza Page, James Green, and Terri Jamison who continue to serve us well, and finally;
- Congresswoman Joyce Beatty and U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown are highly respected Members of the U.S House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Congresswoman Beatty has distinguished herself as an active Member of Congress serving with distinction as the elected Chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I remember well when we had just a handful of African American elected officials serving in the halls of government. Much has changed and so much for the better

During these very difficult times let us join hands and put our most thoughtful efforts forth as we work collectively to serve our communities to the best of our abilities.

With Appreciation and Respect,

Ray Miller
 Founder & Publisher

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PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS



By William McCoy, MPA

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (Preamble to the Declaration of Independence).

These words are indelibly etched into America’s collective consciousness, along with the legal and social conventions that govern our daily lives. Many, if not most, Americans can recite this phrase on command or cue. While these words easily roll off our tongues, we struggle to put them into practice in our day-to-day lives.

Take note, the Preamble makes it plain: Americans (indeed, all people) have an *inalienable Right to the “pursuit of Happiness.”* Happiness, itself, is neither promised nor predicted. We are free to chase happiness without any guarantee of finding it. Happiness is an elusive illusion for far too many people.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines happiness as, “a state of well-being and contentment: joy; a pleasurable or satisfying experience.” Happiness International goes further, saying “Happiness is when your needs are met, you feel satisfied and fulfilled—that life is as it should be.” Happiness can be described as an emotional state characterized by positive emotions and life satisfaction.

2021 marks the tenth anniversary of the World Happiness Report, which ranks over 150 countries, according to its “happiness criteria and scale.” The report names Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, and Netherlands as the five “happiest countries” in the world. The United States ranks 16th in “happiness” behind Israel, Ireland, Canada, and others. The USA has become “less happy” since 2007, when it was ranked as the third “happiest” country in the world.

The Gallup Organization has been tracking Americans’ satisfaction with their personal lives and direction of the country since 2001. Megan Brennan wrote 85% of Americans are satisfied with their personal lives, according to 2022 polling. This is just below the record high (90%) set in 2020.

While Americans are generally satisfied with our personal lives, the same cannot be said about our views on America’s direction. Gallup found that the political party a person identifies with is the primary factor in their assessment of how the country is faring. Not surprisingly, partisans are more likely to say they are satisfied when the president’s party matches their own. Accordingly, 30% of Democrats say they are currently satisfied, while majorities of Republicans (72%) and Independents (54%) report they are “very dissatisfied.”

Have you heard the expression, “Money can’t buy happiness?” Turns out there is some truth to that proverb. Carol Graham cited an



“unexpected reality: the people who are most optimistic about their future are the most disadvantaged- poor Black Americans.” Poor Black people reported being happier than rich Blacks, Whites, and other racial groups. Go figure.

Given the collective historical and contemporary experience of Black Americans, it would be understandable if African-Americans were angry, anxious, and perpetually despondent. Paradoxically, this is not the case. Perhaps, the happiest people do not have the best of everything, they just make the best of everything.

Closer to home, WalletHub ranked the “happiest” 182 cities in the United States, based on “various findings of positive-psychology research.” Columbus is Ohio’s “happiest” city, according to WalletHub. Five Ohio cities made WalletHub’s 2021 list, led by Columbus (#110) and followed by Cincinnati (#149), Akron (#154), Toledo (#178), and Cleveland (#181). No other Ohio city appeared on that list.

What, then, are the keys to happiness? The answer to that question remains elusive. Some scientists say the “key ingredients” to happiness include a positive mental state, healthy body, strong social connections, job satisfaction, and financial well-being. Researchers working with various cultures around the world point to four qualities they believe bring satisfaction and peace to people everywhere: friendliness, cheerfulness, compassion, and gratitude.

My personal experience requires me to emphasize the importance of having a spiritual connection or belief in a higher power. The African-American journey from property to the presidency can be attributed to a God or higher power that has “brought them a mighty long way.” Yes, we’ve come this far by faith.

There is a direct link between optimism and happiness. Optimistic people see and

appreciate what they have and tend to be happier than pessimists. The lens through which we look at life events can be positive or negative. Is the glass half-full or half-empty? People who see the brighter side of life seem to be happier.

It is easier to have confidence in the future and the prospects for achieving your goals (e.g. happiness), if you begin by making a conscious decision to be happy. Abe Lincoln said, “Folks are usually about as happy as they make their minds up to be.” Each of us should articulate and embrace our vision of happiness. Strategic thinking and action will help you in your quest.

In conclusion, the *pursuit* of Happiness is an *inalienable Right* endowed by our Creator. The emotional state of contentment, fulfillment, and joy we call happiness is not guaranteed, but it is attainable. Black people are blessed with a DNA and psychological makeup that allows them to laugh when others cry, celebrate when others contemplate suicide, and find hope in seemingly hopeless situations. In closing, as you continue your personal pursuit of happiness, remember Duke Ellington’s advice: “Life has two rules: number 1, never quit! Number 2, always remember rule number one.”

William McCoy is founder and principal consultant of The McCoy Company- a world-class personal services consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, economic development, and training. The McCoy Company helps clients articulate and achieve their visions, solve problems, and capitalize on their opportunities. Mr. McCoy serves all levels of government, foundations, nonprofits, and private enterprise. He also works on issues related to race, gender, power dynamics, and other topics. Mr. McCoy holds BA and MPA degrees, has authored over 150 publications, and is profiled in Who’s Who in the World. You can call William McCoy at (614) 785-8497 or e-mail him at wmccoy2@themccoycompany.com.

SEIZED BY TENDERNESS



By Rev. Tim Ahrens, DMin

In Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship, Jesuit priest, Father Greg Boyle tells the story of Jose,

one of the street gang members who came to Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles. Jose was a trainee and had been with Homeboy Industries a short time when Father Boyle (affectionately known as “G”) took him to speak at a conference with 600 social workers. G asked Jose to tell his story – a story G had truthfully never heard before.

Jose began, “My mom and me didn’t get along so good. When I was six- years-old, she said to me, “why don’t you just kill yourself – you’re such a burden to me.” As everyone gasped at these opening words, Jose continued, “Don’t worry, it sounds much worse in Spanish.” His mother would beat him constantly. When he was nine, she drove him into the Baja desert and dropped him at an orphanage, saying that she found this boy along the road. He was there for six months until his grandmother was finally able to find out where her daughter had left him. Grandma came, got him and brought him home.

When he returned, the beatings began again. He continued, “My mother beat me every single day. It was so bad that I wore three t-shirts to school – the first to seep up the blood, the second to catch any blood that might seep through the first shirt and then the third – where you couldn’t see the blood. The kids would make fun of me because I was wearing three t-shirts in 100 degree heat. But I didn’t care. I had to.”

Then he paused to catch his breath through his tears. He continued, “I wore three t-shirts

well into my adult years because I was ashamed of my wounds. I didn’t want anyone to see the wounds and my scars. One day, I came to realize my wounds are my friends. After all, how can I help heal the wounded if I can’t heal my own wounds? I learned that my own compassion comes down to this: If I don’t welcome my own wounds, I may be tempted to despise and hate others who are wounded.”

In his 2021 book, “The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness,” Fr. Boyle calls us all to speak and live the whole language of God which means we need to embrace the power of extravagant tenderness. Tenderness is the highest form of spiritual fluency. In our tenderness, we go to the margins and meet people in their woundedness. In our tenderness, we get to stand with the demonized so the demonizing will stop. You can’t demonize people you know. In tenderness, we are present with the disposable so they will no longer be thrown away. You can’t throw away people you know. When you go to the margins, other voices end up getting heard. And if it is true that a traumatized person is more likely to find their ways to traumatize others, it is equally true that a cherished person will be able to find their way to cherish themselves and then cherish others. When we use the whole language of love, we embrace these truths.

Years ago, Fr. Henri Nouwen was asked, “What is ministry?” He thought about it and then responded, “Can you receive people?” Each of us is called to ministry wherever we are, whoever we are, however we are. Each of us gets to answer in our own ways and in our own places, “can I receive people?” And we will find in living fully into the tenderness of God that we will experience

God’s comfort. As God comforts us, there is no time left for judgment.

Congressman John Lewis once said, “We all live in the same house.” I believe that is true. No one assigns us places in the house. We all live in this house together. If we think of this way, that means, we all come to the dinner table together. We all sit at the table together. We all receive God’s blessings here - together. We all meet God together in our house. We find, when do, that Jesus shows us again what really matters – Inclusion really matters. Nonviolence really matters. Unconditional love really matters. Compassionate acceptance of one another really matters. These four elements are what Jesus is all about – inclusion, nonviolence, unconditional love and compassionate acceptance – all connected by tenderness.

Getting to tenderness can be really hard when we are stressed out, fearful or closed off to others. Think about this – we can’t make room for tenderness when we are trying to get something just for ourselves or protecting something for ourselves. We have to be open to get to tenderness.

Like the mustard seed, tenderness grows in us from something tiny to something great. I pray that tenderness grows within you. I pray that, like Jose, our wounds become our friends. And as we heal, we will find that we will be able to embrace the wounds in others as well. I pray that you are seized by tenderness.

Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens is the Senior Minister of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in downtown Columbus. A church known for its witness to social justice since its birth as an abolitionist congregation in 1852. Rev. Ahrens is the fifth consecutive senior minister from Yale Divinity School and is a lifelong member of the United Church of Christ.

BLACK VOTERS COULD PUSH STACEY ABRAMS TO VICTORY IN GEORGIA. WILL THEY?

Democrat Stacey Abrams knows by exactly how many votes she narrowly lost to Republican Brian Kemp in the Georgia governor's race four years ago -- and, to hear her tell it, she knows exactly who can help her win in their rematch this fall.

"One-point-six million new voters are added to the rolls after 2018. The margin in the 2018 election was ... 54,723 votes. We've got 1.6 million opportunities to cover a 54,000 vote spread," Abrams told reporters at a campaign stop in Athens on in late September.

As Abrams -- a former state lawmaker-turned-voting rights advocate who would be the first Black woman governor in the country's history -- works to mobilize Georgians, she is focusing, she has said, on untapped communities: Asian Americans, Latinos and more.

She has also increasingly emphasized outreach to Black voters, particularly Black male voters, whose crucial support has been wavering, according to some polls.

"If Black men turned out in their numbers and support me at the level they are capable of, I can win this election," Abrams said at an event in Atlanta earlier this month alongside popular radio host Charlamagne tha God, rapper 21 Savage and civil rights attorney Francys Johnson.

Before her event with Charlamagne and 21 Savage, Abrams campaigned at a Caribbean restaurant with Atlanta-native rapper Yung Joc.

"If you wanted a group of Black man to mobilize, you would not only want to kind of reach out to him and mobilize him but you want to also reach out to the people around him who are his kind of people," Chryl Laird, an associate professor of government and politics at the University of Maryland at College Park, told ABC News.

In 2018, Abrams won 93% of Black voters, who make up 30% of the Georgia electorate. Black men comprised 14% of voters and chose Abrams over Kemp 88% to 11%, according to exit polling data from ABC News.

Black women made up 16% of Georgia voters and went for Abrams 97% to 2%.

That pattern may not repeat in November -- a shift that, given Abrams' close defeat in 2018, could be decisive.

Kemp led Abrams 50% to 48% according to a poll last week of likely voters conducted by Quinnipiac University. Quinnipiac found that Black men supported Abrams over Kemp 87% to 12%, a 1-point shift, and Black women backed Abrams 94% to 5%, a 3-point drop.

Black conservatives say the reason for the change is clear: They cite Kemp's COVID-19 response and the state's economic performance.

"For the Black Georgians who vote and have watched [Kemp] over his last four years, they understand that he's been a good governor. And



Stacy Abrams, candidate for gubernatorial candidate for the state of Georgia speaks at a campaign event. (Photo by Getty Images)

if it's not broke, why do you need to fix it?" Camilla Moore, chairman of the Georgia Black Republican Council, told ABC News.

Out on the campaign trail, Kemp emphasizes that history in his appeal to voters of color.

"I told people from day one what I was gonna do when I ran in 2018. A lot of people didn't really know who I was then. I got defined by a candidate that had twice as much money as I did, had the national media in her back pocket and never could really fight through that. And it's a different story now. Because I have a great record that I think resonates with all Georgians," Kemp said at a campaign stop at the University of Georgia on Sep. 10.

Abrams downplayed concerns about the polling while at an event over the weekend, arguing that the disengaged and newly registered voters were key to persuade.

Still, she acknowledged there was space to drive up Black voter turnout -- and she linked their potential apathy to the state's recent decades under GOP leadership.

"We know that there are still thousands and thousands of voters who are not engaged, especially Black voters. And we know that that is in part because of 20 years of Republican rule convincing Black voters that we've gotten everything we're going to get," she said.

'If you show up, things really will change'

In recent weeks, as Abrams works to expand her base of support, she has hosted events with Asian-Americans, Latinos and voters with disabilities, among others.

"I'm not going to leave any community untouched and unconnected with," she told reporters at the event with Charlamagne that was geared toward Black men.

On Sunday, Abrams led a fireside chat focused on gun violence in the Asian community, a group that has become the fastest-growing population of eligible voters in the country.

She was joined alongside families who've lost loved ones to gun violence, with much of the event centered around the Georgia spa mass shootings in March 2021.

"What is dismissed as a cultural conversation but must be understood as an issue of health care, of economics, of morality. We have the responsibility in the state to protect our people, and that protection should not be limited," she said.

Abrams also spoke at Atlanta's yearly celebration of Mexican Independence Day, attended the Asian Student Alliance Conference and has hosted several Latino-owned small business roundtables across Georgia.

Her campaign plans to use these events as an opportunity to earn the votes of communities that they feel have been left out of the political conversation, treating them as persuasion communities which, speaking to the 19th at the Buckhead Theater, Abrams described as people who need to be convinced to show up to the polls -- not who to vote for.

"If you show up, things really will change," said Abrams.

She is right on the reality of Georgia's changing electorate, which has given her campaign an opportunity to court new or infrequent voters.

Though Black voters still make up a significant share of voters, the number of active voters who are Hispanic and Asian grew in recent years to 4% and 3% respectively, according to a report from Georgia's secretary of state.

In the upcoming weeks, Abrams plans to hold a reproductive rights event focused on AAPI women, a Vietnamese roundtable, and speak at the Georgia Latino Film Festival.

"This is one of the first times that we've really had an opportunity to sit down with someone who was running for a major seat and talk about these issues," Rhea Wunsch, a Georgia college student and gun reform activist told ABC News, during Abrams' event with Asian Americans on Sunday.

While Abrams may downplay the polling, surveys show her push to persuade voters has some limits that Kemp doesn't face: A Monmouth University poll released Thursday found that she has a smaller ceiling to gain swayable voters' support compared to her opponent. Kemp had a lower unfavorable rating,

Continued on Page 8



Attendees listen to Georgia Democratic candidate for governor Stacey Adams at a campaign event in Atlanta. This is one of a series of events that Abrams has done to appeal to Black men in her race against Republican incumbent Brian Kemp. (AP Photo/Jeff Amy)

Continued from Page 7

according to Monmouth, and more Georgia voters had definitely ruled out voting for her (46%) over him (37%).

However, that poll showed Abrams has greater support from her party than Kemp does from his: 83% of Democrats said they will definitely vote for Abrams while 73% of Republicans said they will definitely back Kemp.

Abrams also sees a pathway to victory through infrequent voters and has been working for years on the ground to register voters -- efforts that other Democrats have credited, in part, with driving up turnout in the 2020 election cycle that saw both Senate seats flip blue.

"It's not about whether they're voting Republican or Democrat. It's whether they believe voting can work for them. And I want them to know that if they vote for me for governor, things are going to be different," Abrams said Saturday.

Low-propensity voters are who, some experts say, will make the difference in the gubernatorial election, and it's a bloc that may not be reflected in polls.

"This race is going to come down to a few thousand votes. And so when you look at which candidate is going granular and finding -- literally meeting -- every eligible voter, it is

Stacey. And the polls aren't going to represent that granularity," said Hillary Holley, executive director of Care in Action, a nonpartisan group advocating for domestic workers.

But Black voters -- and Black male voters -- remain key

Some advocates emphasize that courting Black voters will also be crucial for Abrams

"I don't want voters of color, Black voters and brown voters, to carry that weight by ourselves like the fate of democracy is just on Black voters here in Georgia," Cliff Albright, co-founder of Black Voters Matter, told ABC News.

"You could not have seen the 'Georgia miracle' in the last election cycle without the turnout and participation from Black voters," Albright said, referring to the victory of Democratic Sens. Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock.

"It's going to take Black voters to have large turnout in order for this state to continue on the Democratic path," he said.

Throughout her campaign, Abrams has sought to energize Black male support through "Stacey and the Fellas" events and by touting policies geared toward them such as expanding Medicaid and establishing a small business investment fund in her "Black Men's Agenda" (The campaign also plans in the coming weeks to release agendas for Georgia's Latino and Asian

American and Pacific Islander communities.)

At Abrams' event with Charlamagne and others, crowd of mostly Black men packed a production studio warehouse, filled with food, music and apparel. Community members cheered Abrams as she discussed a host of topics, from free technical college to supporting Georgia's booming entertainment industry.

"What Stacey has done as far as mobilizing people and bringing people together to come out and vote has been incredible," Charlamagne said.

Some voters said they, too, were encouraged.

"She understands the challenges of Black men in America but especially here in Georgia," said Paul Grant, a teacher in Lawrenceville. "And I think of all the candidates running, I don't know of anyone who will have a better understanding of what's needed to help Black men in Georgia. I know it's a priority."

Dontay Palmer, a nursing student at Georgia State University, agreed in lauding Abrams' efforts but noted that it may not translate to more ballots bearing her name.

"I like it. I think it's really cool. It's just getting everybody out," Palmer told ABC News of the outreach.

"We just don't have the information or access," Palmer continued. "So I love it that even if they're not going to vote for her, she's like, 'Hey, get information about the election.'"

Article from www.MSN.com.

GERRYMANDERING CASE THREATENS THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT



By Michael Li & Yurij Rudensky

On October 4, the Supreme Court will hear an Alabama redistricting case, *Merrill v. Milligan*, that could sharply limit the ability of communities of color to use the Voting Rights Act to fight discriminatory electoral maps.

For four decades, minority voters have been able to challenge discriminatory maps under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act using a legal framework first laid out by the Supreme Court in 1986. The result has been increased representation of minority communities at every level of government.

But Alabama has asked the Supreme Court to radically rewrite the rules for Section 2 claims. A decision from the Supreme Court agreeing to Alabama's far-reaching relief could make it harder for minority voters to challenge maps that dilute their political strength and deprive long disadvantaged minority communities of strong advocates on critical public investments and issues like healthcare, education, and criminal justice.

What is at issue in the Alabama case?

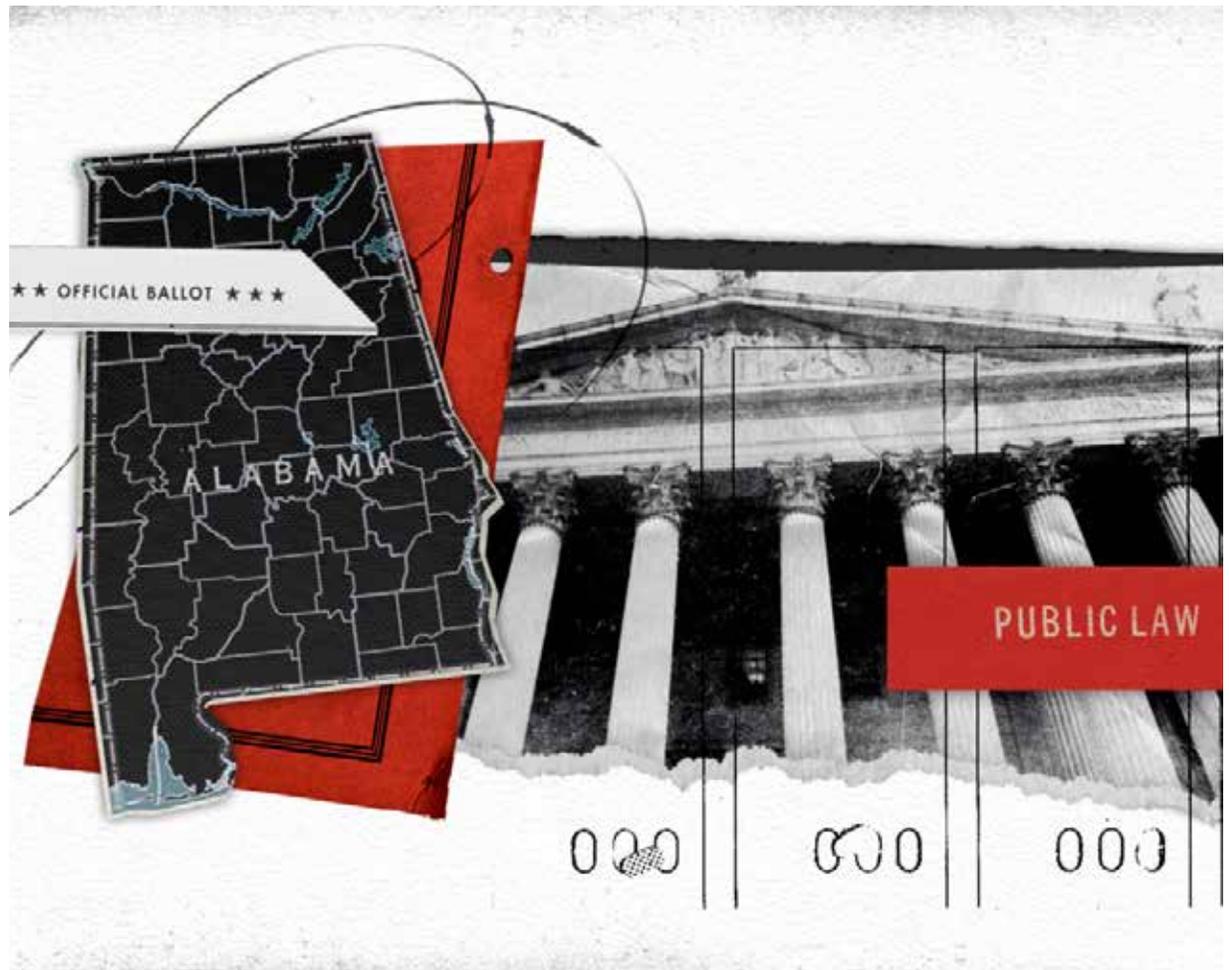
Federal lawsuits filed by Black voters contend that the state violated the Voting Rights Act because its new congressional map failed to create a second Black majority or plurality district in the state's "Black Belt," an 18-county, mostly rural region characterized by stark socioeconomic disparities and some of the nation's highest rates of poverty.

Instead, Alabama lawmakers drew a map that continues a policy of dividing the Black Belt among four congressional districts, ignoring the request of Black constituents to be kept together in two districts for better representation as well as significant demographic changes in the region over the last couple of decades.

Because of the division of the Black Belt, the region's Black voters have an ability to elect their preferred candidates only in the 7th District, a sprawling district with a tenacle stretching to Birmingham that the plaintiffs say is packed with far more Black voters than needed to elect a Black-preferred candidate.

Meanwhile, in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Districts, the Black share of the population in each district is held to 30 percent or less thanks to surgical line-drawing choices like placing Montgomery and next-door Tuskegee (both heavily Black cities) in separate districts.

The small Black population of these three districts, combined with exceedingly high racially polarized voting, mean white voters will always be able to use their numerical



superiority to block attempts by Black voters and their preferred candidates to put together a politically effective coalition.

Indeed, all three districts have consistently elected white representatives whose votes and priorities in the House are not well aligned with the needs and interests of the region's Black voters. For example, the white representatives representing the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Districts all recently voted against legislation that would have capped the cost of insulin at \$35 a month, despite the fact that the region has a high rate of diabetes and a high number of people without health insurance.

What is the legal basis for the lawsuits?

The lawsuits seek relief under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which requires that states' electoral processes provide minority voters with an equal opportunity "to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice."

In redistricting cases, application of Section 2 takes place using a highly fact-intensive, multi-part test first laid out by the Supreme Court in 1986 in *Thornburg v. Gingles*.

To prevail under this well-established test, the plaintiffs in a case must show that the interaction between a state's decisions about where to draw district boundaries and high levels of racially polarized voting and other adverse conditions on the ground combine to ensure that minority voters are perpetually shut out of power. Plaintiffs must also demonstrate that there are reasonable alternative configurations of districts that map drawers ignored or purposely avoided that would produce different outcomes for voters of color.

What did the trial court rule?

In January, a panel of three federal judges, including two Trump appointees, unanimously ruled that the state's congressional map violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and ordered lawmakers to redraw it in time for the 2022 midterms to include a second Black majority or plurality district in the Black Belt.

The court's opinion found that the evidence of racially polarized voting in the Black Belt was stark — on average, only around 15 percent of white voters in the region are willing to support the same candidates as the Black community. This low level of crossover support from white voters means that in the three Black Belt districts where the Black population is 30 percent or less, white voters are guaranteed to control who wins elections for the entire 10-year lifespan of the map, no matter how politically cohesive Black voters are or how hard they work to put together a winning cross-racial coalition.

The opinion also found there was "substantial and undeniable" evidence of lingering socioeconomic disparities in the region that "hinder Black Alabamians' opportunity to participate in the political process," including poverty levels rarely seen in developed countries.

Critically, the court also found that all of the disadvantages Alabama imposes on Black voters could have been easily avoided. The opinion noted that the plaintiffs' experts had presented multiple non-discriminatory

Continued on Page 10



maps with districts, like the ones below, that are “at least as geographically compact as those in the [state’s] Plan, respect traditional boundaries at least as much as the Plan, protect important communities of interest, [and] protect incumbents where possible.”

However, before the map could be redrawn, Alabama filed an emergency request for a stay at the Supreme Court, which was granted.

What is Alabama saying the trial court got wrong?

Alabama makes two main arguments in its effort to overturn the lower court’s judgment, both of which would significantly restrict the reach of the Voting Rights Act.

The state’s principal argument is that Section 2 imposes no liability because it is impossible to draw a second Black opportunity district on a “race blind” basis. According to Alabama, since the plaintiffs’ experts had to consider race and deviate slightly from the state “race neutral” districting rules in order to create demonstration plans with a second Black majority district, race “predominated” in the design of the maps, making them unconstitutional racial gerrymanders.

This is a radical argument that rewrites not only Section 2 precedent but also the Supreme Court’s racial gerrymandering jurisprudence to effectively prohibit any consideration of race in map drawing.

Under current Supreme Court precedent, race is one factor among many that map drawers may take into account. The only prohibition in the Supreme Court’s racial gerrymandering line of cases is that race cannot predominate over non-racial considerations in a way that results in racial essentializing, for example, by joining far-flung minority voters on opposite sides of a state who have nothing in common besides their race. But while map drawers cannot adopt arbitrary racial quotas or put voters in a district solely because of their race, there is no ban on keeping a politically cohesive racial or ethnic community together if there are also good non-racial reasons for doing so.

That mix of racial and non-racial justifications for a second Black Belt district is exactly what the trial court found in Alabama, describing the Black Belt as a well-defined and universally accepted community of interest of “substantial significance” with a long “shared history and common economy” dating back to the region’s days as the heart of Alabama’s 19th century cotton economy. While the population of the Black Belt is overwhelmingly Black, the court also found that region had multiple commonalities across “many, many more dimensions than skin color.” As the court pointed out, Alabama itself has a policy of keeping the Black Belt intact in its state board of education map.

Accepting Alabama’s argument that state districting rules must be strictly followed would resolve any conflicts between state and federal law in favor of state policy preferences, essentially rendering the Constitution’s Supremacy Clause meaningless. Worse, it would be an open invitation to state and local governments to design “race neutral” criteria that deliberately frustrate the fair representation for minority communities protected by the Voting Rights Act. A state, for example, could adopt hard and fast rules that districts must be maximally compact or avoiding ever pairing incumbents, having the effect of making it impossible to create a minority opportunity district.

Alabama’s second major argument is an even more sweeping invitation for the court to rule that Section 2 does not apply to the drawing of single-member districts but only to multimember districts and challenges of at-large election systems. Under this argument, Section 2 could be used to strike down discriminatory use of at-large elections or multimember districts, but would offer no safeguards against similar discrimination in the resulting single-member district scheme. This is an extreme misreading of the Voting Rights Act that would require the Supreme Court to ignore the legislative history of Section 2 and overrule longstanding precedent allowing Section 2 challenges to redistricting plans.

One far-reaching argument, however, that Alabama is not advancing on appeal is its argument at the trial-court level that Section 2 claims can only be brought by the U.S. Department of Justice and not by individual voters. Although it raised the issue below, it did not include the argument in its briefing before the Supreme Court, and most observers think the high court is unlikely to take up the question of a private right of action on its own.

What would be the impact if the Supreme Court agrees with Alabama?

Even a modest reworking of the Section 2 framework could have significant ramifications for the ability of minority voters to use the Voting Rights Act to fight discriminatory redistricting. Depending on how the court decides, Section 2 could become harder to use or even completely inapplicable in redistricting cases.

The most immediate impact would be on cases in Georgia and Louisiana, where courts have already found that Section 2 requires redrawing of congressional maps to create additional Black districts. Cases in Texas, North Dakota, Washington, and other states where voters have filed lawsuits seeking the creation of additional minority opportunity districts for legislative or congressional offices would also be adversely impacted.

But the consequences are likely to be even graver at the local level, where Section 2 has been a powerful tool to ensure that bodies such as school boards, city councils, and county commissions are fair. In fact, since the Supreme Court laid out the Gingles test nearly four decades ago, Section 2 has played a far more transformative role in ensuring that voters of color have equal opportunities to participate in the political process and elect their candidates of choice at the local level than it has at the congressional or legislative levels. Just this past decade, for example, Section 2 litigation opened the door for the first time to Black representation on the city council and school board in sharply racially divided Ferguson, Missouri.

The ripple effects also could be significant. By ensuring that minority communities are not shut out of the political process, Section 2 plays an important role in guaranteeing that minority communities receive their fair share of public resources. Indeed, research on the transformative power of the Voting Rights Act shows that in jurisdictions where minority voters have successfully challenged discriminatory electoral districts, gaps in economic opportunity have narrowed and that investment in basic infrastructure like roads and schools has improved.

The Voting Rights Act has helped transform American democracy, helping minority voters pry open doors that had long been sealed shut. If the Supreme Court goes where Alabama wants it to, the onus will be on Congress and the states to find new ways to protect the country’s emerging multiracial democracy.

Article from www.brennancenter.org



Taking Medicare Personally



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June 18: 1905 Parsons Ave
June 25: 3433 Agler Rd.
July 16: 1180 E. Main St.
July 23: 2300 W. Broad St.
August 20: 1905 Parsons Ave.
August 27: 3433 Agler Rd.
September 17: 1180 E. Main St.
September 24: 2300 W. Broad St.
October 15: 1905 Parsons Ave.
October 22: 3433 Agler Rd.

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For more information on infant safe sleep and parenting resources, contact Franklin County Children Services at 614-275-2523 or visit our website at www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services

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Banker, pastor, musician.



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POLITICS

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

2022 GENERAL ELECTION - NOVEMBER 8, 2022



By Senator Charleta B. Tavares (Ret.)

The 2022 General Election will determine the winners of the statewide offices in Ohio.

The Gubernatorial race will pit Gov. Mike DeWine against Democrat, Nan Whaley, former Mayor of Dayton, Ohio, the U.S. Senate open seat being vacated by Senator Rob Portman and the statewide offices of Attorney General, Auditor, Secretary of State, and Treasurer. In addition, all fifteen (15) seats of Congress (Ohio lost one seat due to the loss of residents according to the U.S. Census), all 99 Ohio House of Representative seats and ½ of the Ohio Senate Seats will be voted on in the November 8th General Election.

As of this date, the current Governor and his opponent have not agreed to a single debate. Debates provide each candidate with an opportunity for the media and/or academic moderators to pose questions and the people of Ohio, their voters, to hear their opinions, accomplishments and positions on hot topics. In fairness to the challenger, Nan Whaley, former Mayor of Dayton, she has agreed to debate her opponent, current Governor Mike DeWine. DeWine however, has not agreed to participate in any debate.

In the race for U.S. Senate (the seat currently occupied by Sen. Rob Portman (R-Cinc.) who is retiring), Congressman Tim Ryan (D-Youngstown) is running against J.D. Vance, a Republican author and venture capitalist who currently lives in the Cincinnati area. According to the Statehouse News Bureau, Ryan and Vance will participate in a total of two regional debates: Oct. 10 in Cleveland, Ohio hosted by WJW and Nexstar; and Oct. 17, 2022 in Youngstown, Ohio hosted by WFMJ. In addition, NBC4 and Cleveland sister station Fox 8 will be hosting the first and only statewide debate between the two candidates on October 10, 2022 at 7:00pm.

Statewide Ballot Issues

Issue 1 – would require Ohio judges to "use factors such as public safety, including the seriousness of the offense, and a person's criminal record" when setting amounts and conditions of bail.

Proponents: Proponents say it would make it clear in the Ohio Constitution that a judge is required to, when setting the amount of bail for a criminal defendant, consider public



safety, including the seriousness of the offense, as well as a person's criminal record, and the likelihood a person will return to court.

"Look, the first function of government is to keep our streets safe," Attorney General David Yost said. "It doesn't matter how good your parks and your schools are if you're afraid to go out on the street. And for a long, long time in America, we've had this system of bail that makes sure that dangerous people are held on charges pending their trial. This is just a matter of public safety."

Opponents: Opponents of the amendment said our criminal justice system is broken and unfairly impacts poor people and people of color. They said it keeps them in jail despite the constitution saying people are innocent until proven guilty. They said Issue 1 would only positively impact the bail bonds industry.

"What is happening is some elected politicians did not like a Supreme Court ruling that came out in January called Dubos V. McGuffey. This constitutional amendment is an attempt to overturn that Supreme Court decision," said Kevin Werner from the Ohio Justice and Policy Center. "What Issue 1 wants to do is say that you're guilty until proven innocent, and therefore, you have to pay all of this money in order to be released, or, more likely, what happens is the judge will set that bail amount, that money amount so high, that there's no way the person is going to be able to pay it. So therefore, they're detaining them pretrial."

Issue 2 – is a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution that would prohibit local governments from allowing noncitizens to

vote in municipal elections or those who lack the qualifications of an elector to vote in local elections. **Proponents** say the amendment preserves the value of U.S. citizenship. **Opponents** say it is an unnecessary, and racially coded policy that could threaten the voting rights of some 17-year olds who are currently eligible to vote.

The last day to register for the November election is October 11, 2022. Early voting for the November 8th General Election starts on October 12th.

Former Sen. Charleta B. Tavares, D-Columbus, is the 1st Democrat and African American woman to serve in the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate from Franklin County. She is also the first African American woman to serve in leadership in the history of Ohio and the 1st Democrat woman to serve in leadership in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate (House Minority Whip and Senate Assistant Minority Leader).

The Legislative Update is focused on educating and empowering our African American people specifically and communities of color generally with information in order to advocate for the policies, funding and programs that will improve economic/employment, business, health, education, housing, justice and environment for our residents.

If you are interested in testifying on any of the bills introduced in either the House or Senate, please contact the Chair or Ranking member of the committee who can be found at www.ohiosenate.gov or www.ohr.gov.

Additional Contacts

UPDATE: The Ohio General Assembly sessions and the House and Senate Committees are televised live on WOSU/WPBO and replays can be viewed at www.ohiochannel.org (specific House and Senate sessions and committee hearings can be searched in the video archives).

If you would like to receive updated information on the Ohio General Assembly and policy initiatives introduced, call or email your state Representative or Senator. The committee schedules, full membership rosters and contact information for the Ohio House and Senate can be found at www.ohiohouse.gov and www.ohiosenate.gov respectively.

COTA BOARD APPROVES FREE FARES FOR VETERANS/ACTIVE MILITARY ON ELECTION & VETERANS DAY



COLUMBUS, Ohio – During its September meeting, the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) Board of Trustees unanimously approved two resolutions to waive all transit fares for all customers on Election Day and waive fares for veterans and active military members on Veterans Day.

To help improve access to polling locations, customers can board any COTA Transit vehicle on Tuesday, Nov. 8 at no cost to them. This includes COTA’s fixed-route system, COTA Mainstream, Mainstream On-Demand and COTA//Plus.

“Polling locations should never be a barrier for our customers to exercise their right to vote,” said COTA Board of Trustees Chair Craig Treneff. “I am proud that our board recognizes that voting access includes the need for mobility and continues to waive fares during general elections. Equity and accessibility are crucial to our election process.”

Voters can check their polling location on the Franklin County Board of Elections Website. Once voters find their polling location, they can plan their trip at COTA.com or the Transit app on their smartphone.

On Friday, Nov. 11, all veterans and active military service members can board any of COTA’s services at no cost to them. For customers to receive this benefit, they can provide military-issued identification to the transit operator when boarding, wear a veterans hat or article of clothing, or they can verbally identify as a veteran or member of the military.

“Each of us owes our nation’s veterans and active military members our deepest gratitude and COTA is proud to celebrate veteran’s service by offering access to our entire system at no cost on Veterans Day again this year,” said COTA President/CEO Joanna M. Pinkerton. “I am thankful to the COTA

Board of Trustees for continuing to support this annual tradition. Veterans Day also provides us with an opportunity to educate our community about how COTA honors our heroes every day with our permanent discount program that helps veterans save on every transit trip.”

Veterans are eligible for a 50% discount on all fares every day. Veterans can apply for this benefit at the COTA Customer Experience Center, 33 North High Street during business hours. The benefit can be added to their Transit app account or they can be provided with a COTA Smartcard. Proof of veteran or active military status is required when applying for the benefit.

Anyone can plan their trip at COTA.com or by calling COTA Customer Care at (614) 228-1776. The call center will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day and Veterans Day

LOSING A HOME FOR UNPAID TAXES OFTEN MEANS LOSING YOUR EQUITY, TOO



By Elaine S. Povich

Last year, Massachusetts Democratic state Reps. Tommy Vitolo and Jeff Roy saw a newspaper story about two brothers in their state who had almost lost their home due to unpaid property taxes. That was followed by another article this year featuring a New Bedford woman, recovering from COVID-19, who slept in her car when her home was taken for the same reason.

While relatively rare, the plight of the homeowners highlighted in those stories is not confined to Massachusetts.

About a dozen states allow homeowners who don't pay their property taxes to lose not only their houses, but also the years of payments they have made on the property, known as equity, according to the Pacific Legal Foundation, a libertarian group that has filed suit on behalf of many homeowners in this position, including those in Massachusetts.

Sometimes the local governments take over the properties; other times the municipalities sell the liens on those unpaid bills to private investors who can then foreclose.

To the lawmakers, it didn't seem fair.

"This seemed like the kind of thing we could fix," Vitolo said in an interview. He and Roy filed a bill to increase the required notices to homeowners — some, in person — to make it harder for a notice to slip by, or at the very least give the homeowner the opportunity to collect their equity in the property after a sale, provided all the taxes, fees and interest have been satisfied.

The bill got little traction this year amid more pressing priorities spurred by the pandemic, Vitolo said, but the two lawmakers plan to revive it in January.

In many states, homeowners who are evicted and lose their homes for failing to pay property taxes are given the profits of the home's sale, after taxes and interest are taken care of. But in others, homeowners walk away with nothing.

Opponents of the practice include AARP and conservative groups such as the National Taxpayers Union, the American Legislative Exchange Council, known as ALEC, and the libertarian Pacific Legal Foundation.

"At the heart of the matter, it's the government taking more than it's owed from citizens it's supposed to be serving," said Gretchen Baldau, ALEC's director of its commerce, insurance and economic development task force. "People owe property taxes, they should pay their property taxes, but this is an issue of fairness." But advocates fear such changes are far down legislatures' to-do lists, and the investment firms that buy up tax liens defend the action as protective of taxpayers' interests.

There have been some changes in the past decade. After extensive reporting by The



Karen Pitchford-Knox stands in front of her Kansas City, Kan., home that was for sale when she fell behind on her property tax payments. (Photo by Charlie Riedel/AP)

Washington Post in 2013, the District of Columbia changed its laws to protect at least some equity of tax-delinquent homeowners.

And in a related case, and after reporting by numerous outlets including The Baltimore Sun and Stateline, Baltimore was stopped from seizing homes due to unpaid water bills after the legislature and Republican Gov. Larry Hogan enacted a law to end the practice.

The U.S. Supreme Court is deciding whether to take up two Pacific Legal Foundation suits in Minnesota and Nebraska.

In most of the tax lien cases, residents who lose their homes don't have mortgages but own the homes outright. Usually they are longtime owners — often retirees — who have paid off their 30-year note, or folks who inherited the home from relatives, mortgage free. The Maryland Department of Taxation, for example, reported that almost all tax lien sales are on properties with no mortgage.

Unlike property taxes wrapped into mortgage escrow accounts, which are part of the monthly payment, taxes for homes owned outright are billed less frequently, sometimes only once a year. If homeowners haven't saved up, the big tax bill could prove problematic.

"Many of the people who find themselves in this circumstance are juggling," Vitolo said. "They don't have enough to pay their bills. They start taking guesses on what they can pay now, which ones they can skip a few months. Often, they are folks who are older, who have a disability or dependents. Maybe they are disorganized, and they did get a bill, but [it] fell between the cushions of the couch."

Selling the Liens

Local governments may conduct tax lien sales

after property owners are delinquent for a year or more.

The frequency varies, and sometimes if the owners can't be reached, the pending sale must be advertised in a newspaper. If an investor buys the lien, the local government gets the past-due money from the investor and often is done.

Investors then charge homeowners for both the delinquent property tax and additional interest, turning a profit. And in some states, if homeowners don't pay, the investor can foreclose, evict the residents and sell the property.

Advocates for investors say buying tax liens can be a good investment because most homeowners eventually find a way to pay the taxes, plus interest, making profits for the investors. Sometimes, the homeowners can sell the house or find friends or family to lend them money to cover the tax bill, according to Dan Hill, an attorney for the Massachusetts tax lien investment firm Tallage, which was involved in the two headline cases.

The towns, cities and counties benefit too, by selling the tax liens.

Brad Westover, executive director of the National Tax Lien Association, which represents investors' interests, stressed that municipalities and counties are the beneficiaries of the tax lien sales. He noted that every jurisdiction "has to pay for police, fire, and parks and rec."

When the municipalities sell the tax lien, they benefit from the transaction, said Ralph Clifford, a professor at the University of Massachusetts

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School of Law, who has studied the issue. “It’s obviously very lucrative for the towns. It can provide quite a windfall, especially in towns that are more economically distressed because they have more foreclosures.”

But for those homeowners who can’t make the payments, the results can be devastating.

The story that first got the Massachusetts lawmakers’ attention involved the Mucciaccio brothers, Mark and Neil, in their 50s, who inherited a home worth about \$60,000 in 2019, though it sits on land that in 2021 was valued at about \$225,000. They fell on hard times and hadn’t paid the taxes since 2016, according to *The Boston Globe*, and owed \$30,000.

Tallage bought their tax lien. With some help from the Pacific Legal Foundation, the brothers negotiated a deal when a relative stepped up to take out a loan to pay the taxes.

But earlier this year, another case hit the headlines, piquing the lawmakers’ interest further. Deborah Foss, then 67, lost her home after Tallage bought her lien and then foreclosed for the lack of tax payment of roughly \$30,000. She, too, was denied her equity, according to her attorney, Christina Martin of the Pacific Legal Foundation.

“They foreclosed, took the house, evicted her, just as she was recovering from COVID,” Martin said in an interview. “She became homeless and was sleeping in her car in February.”

As a result of the lawsuit, Foss got \$85,000 and is getting back on her feet, Martin said.

The press reports have rallied other lawmakers to take notice and support the bill.

Massachusetts state Sen. Mark Montigny, a Democrat, said the practice allows “private, profit-driven companies to prey upon the

misfortunes of homeowners, robbing them of every cent of their equity.” In an email, he called it “unconscionable.”

“Pushing out senior citizens, people with disabilities, and those facing tremendous personal challenges is atrocious,” he said. “The legislature should act immediately to implement a statewide ban.”

Westover, of the National Tax Lien Association, said the group has drafted model legislation that he said would benefit four groups: local governments, current taxpayers, delinquent taxpayers and investors.

Massachusetts, he said, is a small market that doesn’t carry much weight in the industry. He said the Bay State appears to be one of the bad actors, as it is one of the dozen or so states that don’t allow homeowners to recoup some or all of their equity. “Some of that Massachusetts negative press is earned.”

Fighting in Court

The Pacific Legal Foundation has brought similar cases in several other states. Two cases are now awaiting consideration by the U.S. Supreme Court, including a case from Minnesota, *Tyler v. Hennepin County*.

In that case, attorneys for Geraldine Tyler argued that when Hennepin County took her condo in Minneapolis for unpaid property taxes and sold it, keeping the profit while not paying her for her equity, the act was an unconstitutional violation of the Fifth Amendment’s “takings” clause. That clause states that private property shall not “be taken for public use, without just compensation.” Further, the Pacific Legal Foundation argued that the procedure violated the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against “excessive fines.”

Tyler lost in a lower court, which said Minneapolis gave Tyler ample time to either pay the taxes or sell the property to recover her investment, and therefore didn’t violate her rights.

A similar case from Nebraska, *Fair v. Continental Resources*, also is on appeal to the high court on similar grounds, except that the tax lien was sold to a private company. Again, a lower court in Nebraska ruled against the homeowners.

Taking anything more than the taxes owed (with fees and penalties), especially a homeowner’s equity, “is either is a form of theft, a taking without just compensation, or an excessive punishment for the non-criminal offense of failing to pay property taxes,” Martin said.

“When something like this stands out so starkly — people having their biggest investment ball taken from them for an outstanding tax as little \$9 — it’s a powerful rallying call that all groups of all persuasions and beliefs realize is not fair to people,” ALEC’s Baldaou said.

But industry leaders dispute the claims of unconstitutionality. Hill, the Tallage attorney in the Massachusetts cases, said buyers wouldn’t invest in a process considered unconstitutional. He pointed to the lower court decisions upholding the practices.

“Consider the source,” he said of the Pacific Legal Foundation in an interview. “It’s coming from a libertarian, anti-tax organization based out of Sacramento running around the country essentially trying to gut tax laws and make it harder for municipalities to collect taxes. What gets lost in the cases that Pacific brings are that property taxes pay for schools, firefighters, police and other municipal services.”

In response by email, Martin wrote: “PLF is not anti-tax; we are anti-injustice. PLF has consistently argued that the government is entitled to take what it is owed in taxes, interest, fees, and reasonable costs, and sometimes that means it must seize property to collect the debt. But what the government cannot do is take more than it is owed.”

Elaine S. Povich covers consumer affairs for Stateline.

POLICY MATTERS OHIO URGES OHIOANS TO VOTE NO ON ISSUE 1



By Piet Van Lier

Policy Matters Ohio issued support for a coalition working to defeat Issue 1 — a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution which would double down on inhumane and ineffective wealth-based detention. Senior Researcher Piet van Lier released the following statement:

“Most Ohioans believe that liberty and justice for all means everyone, no matter their race, gender, or income. But under Ohio’s cash bail system, people accused of a crime can be held in jail for days, weeks or months while awaiting trial simply because they can’t afford to buy their freedom. In fact, on any given day, more than 12,000 Ohioans are incarcerated before their trials, the majority not because they pose a threat to anyone but because they can’t afford to pay their way out of jail.

“Ohio lawmakers from both sides of the aisle recognized that holding people in jail simply because they cannot afford bail is not only unjust, it actually places more stress and strain on our communities. That’s why a group of legislators proposed a bipartisan plan to end wealth-based detention in our state.

“Our current cash bail system goes against the idea that people are innocent until proven guilty; Issue 1 seeks to perpetuate this unjust system. By placing Issue 1 on the ballot, some cynical politicians are trying to protect the profits of their backers in the bail industry. They want to make us fear one another so we won’t demand proven approaches to safety.

“Proponents of this constitutional maneuver are creating an issue where none exists. Judges already have — and will continue to have — options to keep people accused of violent crimes off the streets.

“The best way to keep our communities safe and healthy is to reform cash bail, as proposed

by House Bill 315 and Senate Bill 182, currently under consideration in the state legislature. According to our review of the research, these bills would mean that fewer individuals accused of crimes but still awaiting trial would lose their jobs, housing, or custody of their children because they can’t afford bail. Research clearly shows the traumatic impact pretrial detention has on the mental and physical health of people held even for short periods of time.

“Ohioans who want truly safe communities should vote no on Issue 1 and push their legislators to pass House Bill 315 and Senate Bill 182 instead.”

Piet van Lier is a Senior Researcher focused on justice reform and education.

Policy Matters Ohio, is a non-profit policy research institut. They create a more vibrant, equitable, sustainable and inclusive Ohio through research, strategic communications, coalition building and policy advocacy. To learn more about us, visit www.policymattersohio.org

BALLOT ISSUE 10: FOR MANY - FRANKLIN COUNTY SENIOR OPTIONS LEVY RENEWAL IS A LIFE SAVER



Almost everyone in Franklin County has seen the commercial “Help I’ve Fallen and I Can’t Get Up” or knows that Meals on Wheels is what many seniors rely on every day. But what they don’t realize is that Franklin County Homeowners fund the program – and it is up for renewal on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

It’s not a tax increase. It’s just a renewal of the existing levy.

Without it, crucial services for over 60,000 Franklin County seniors will end.

Franklin County Senior Options provides services and programs designed to help residents remain safely at home. Services such as meals-on-wheels, transportation to the doctor and emergency response buttons. The program includes services for caregiver relief, adult day services, and case management to keep seniors in their homes.

And the cost to taxpayers of keeping seniors safely at home is much less than the costs of institutional or nursing home care. This program is a win-win. It keeps families happy with their seniors in their homes and it cuts down on the cost of expensive nursing home and hospital care.”

And the Senior options program of the Franklin County Department of Aging also supports the demand for safe housing services of seniors on fixed incomes like home repair and modifications, and safety products which allow seniors to stay both happily and economically in their homes.

Funding for the current Senior Options programs will expire at the end of 2022. The ballot issue, Ballot Issue Number 10 is the sole funding source for Senior Options programs. Without passage of this levy, Senior Options will shut down and access

to valuable services will be lost to over 60,000 of our seniors in Franklin County. As Co-Chairs of the Levy Committee, we know it is clearly one of the most needed, most used, most appreciated and most economical taxpayer funded programs Franklin County voters have had.

So, we ask as we head to the polls on November 8, for your vote to renew the Franklin County Senior Options Program – Ballot Issue 10.

It’s not a tax increase, it saves taxpayer money and most of all it literally saves and prolongs the lives of our seniors.

Marilyn Brown, Co-Chair
Nana Watson, Co-Chair

For more information visit www.senioroptionslevy.com

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Franklin County
Public Health

COVER STORY

OYAUMA GARRISON

DEDICATED TO LIVING A LEGACY AT MARYHAVEN



Maya Angelou directed us to remember that “What you learn, teach. What you get, give.”

Oyauma Garrison, the new CEO of Maryhaven, Central Ohio’s oldest and most comprehensive behavioral health and addiction treatment provider, embraces Angelou’s philosophy. He defines a life well lived as one of constant self-improvement that ensures you can consistently pay it forward.

“I have never shied away from joining any leadership program that could sharpen my skills or add tools to my tool kit,” Garrison says. “I love to explore new ideas and constructs, enhance workplace culture, motivate people and see us realize our goals. But, the point of all that education, the heartbeat of every experience, is to deepen your positive impact on other people’s lives.”

Garrison’s personal and professional history and experiences well prepare him for the complexities and opportunities of managing a large, multi-location behavioral health care facility.

He acquired strategic and operational management expertise during a 20-year stint in the insurance industry, starting with

State Farm after graduation from Denison University. “My first work engagement helped me develop the ability to navigate halls and walls, understand leadership and live out a vision and mission,” he explains.

He found mentors like Eschol Curl, one of the regional officers for State Farm, who pushed him to explore the language of the boardroom and earn his master’s in business administration. Volunteering for leadership roles with organizations, like the National Black MBA Association, added to his knowledge and networking base and led him to a new role at Nationwide Insurance.

As Chief of Staff to the Chief Marketing Officer, he immersed himself in innovative thinking and how to create a great workplace culture as well as make a profit.

“What was great about the insurance industry is that it taught me how to navigate politics and bureaucracy, while also deepening my appreciation for just how incredibly valuable people are,” he says. “When people understand and align themselves to a shared purpose, the sky is the limit.”

He entered the nonprofit world as CEO five years ago, turning a local entity that serves

families and children with severe illnesses into a national organization. “I’ve never looked for easy jobs,” he says. “I’m always interested in challenges that stretch my intellectual muscle and make a meaningful difference for other people.”

Garrison’s LinkedIn profile includes 24 entries that summarize his professional accomplishments and volunteer commitments. Among them are stints on the boards of St. Vincent Family Center, Impact Community Action, Build On, the National African American Insurance Association, Buckeye Insurance Group and The Jacobson Group, an insurance industry-centric executive placement firm.

Not a surprising pace for a man who, when staring down the COVID epidemic, decided to run literally every day starting on January 1, 2020. By the time you read these words, he will have hit his stride 1,000 consecutive days.

His determined approach began in boyhood, growing up in inner city Baltimore. The lessons of his early years left indelible images of the realities of addiction. “I saw many people on the streets of Baltimore with similar stories and circumstances to the clients we serve,” he explains. “I



know the struggles of maintaining sobriety all too well, as my father, a veteran who served his country honorably and who was an incredibly strong man, lived with alcoholism.”

He sees his new role at Maryhaven as a blessing and a calling, rather than a job. But that calling is focused and tempered by data-driven strategy, business acumen and an acute understanding that Maryhaven will do the most good if it is also the best-operated, most innovative provider of its kind.

“First and foremost,” he says, “we have to change how we describe who we are and why we do what we do. We are a social service agency but, after nearly 70 years, Maryhaven is also an economic backbone. We’ve generated more than a \$1 billion in positive economic impact to Ohio. We stabilize lives and families, help people return and stay productive in the workforce, find housing and function as taxpayers and consumers. At the same time, we are a nonprofit. It’s not just about revenues and the bottom line, we focus on people—those we serve and the staff that serves them. Our staff are compassionate, dedicated experts. They need all the resources and support we can offer as they go about the essential work of truly restoring lives.”

What Maryhaven does matters more than ever. As Garrison points out, he came to the agency at a time in which there has been a 44% increase in overdose rates in the African American community.

“We have to innovate and collaborate to beat those sobering numbers,” he states.

“So, in addition to a continuum of care that reflects best practices for treatment, we also are focused on prevention to avoid relapse moments and crises and collaboration to provide wrap-around services that people can easily navigate and rely upon. A woman in our women’s center engagement program should easily be able to access work clothes through Dress for Success, food for her family through the Mid-Ohio Food Collective or Local Matters, and employment and training options through local companies or other nonprofits.”

Garrison also wants to be sure that Maryhaven is seen as a vital resource for all Central Ohio communities. “Addiction tears at all fabrics of our society, affluent suburbs, inner city neighborhoods, and rural communities. It exists everywhere, no one is immune. The difference is that not everyone has the same access to treatment and resources that are critical to long-term recovery. “

While he is leading change to make sure Maryhaven’s services are universally accessible across its eight urban and rural sites, he sees diversity as a continuous thread in the organization’s history.

“Maryhaven exists because of some wonderful folks in 1953 who wanted to reach a group of people who were not being served—women battling alcoholism,” he says. “The focus at the time was on treatment for men. The same thinking has to guide us today. Our mission must include being seen as accessible by people of color. We intend to build bridges with great organizations already in the urban community, partner with other community

leaders and join into an open and honest dialogue about what is truly happening in our families and neighborhoods.”

This calls for appropriate treatment protocols too, as he notes: “In certain markets, heroin is no longer the drug of choice. Crystal meth dominates, because it is cheaper, and more readily available. Our treatment practices have to track with these realities and offer the right level of care for all types of substance use disorder. Crack didn’t disappear because of the opioid crisis.”

He’s calling for honest dialogue too. “We also must address the misperceptions about drugs like marijuana,” he points out. “It may seem less harmful, but for many people it is a gateway drug. Just like we didn’t talk about women drinking alcohol in the 1950s, we can’t afford to sidestep these hard conversations today.”

Maryhaven is on the move, adding a longer-term hybrid residential unit where people can transition after their initial recovery. “It’s critical that we offer more partial outpatient programs so people have stability in housing and treatment while they return to work or start a workforce readiness program,” he explains. “We also intend to hire our former clients as employees, so they can bolster their resume and continue working for a brighter and better future.”

Garrison is a former marathon coach and DJ who worked at parties and receptions throughout his college career. It isn’t a surprise that he concluded every event with a favorite song: “Lean on Me.”

That’s what it means to try to live a legacy.

FRANKLIN COUNTY
SENIOR
OPTIONS
FOR ISSUE 10

ELECTION DAY • NOVEMBER 8, 2022

- This levy funds Franklin County Senior Options which provides services and programs designed to help seniors remain safely at home. Services such as meals-on-wheels, transportation to the doctor and emergency response buttons.
- Passage of this levy will mean that Senior Options will continue to serve over 60,000 seniors in 2023 with a 3% increase each year of the levy cycle.
- A request has been made to put a 1.75 mill senior services **levy renewal** on the November 8, 2022 ballot. **This is not a tax increase.**
- The costs for helping seniors, age 60 and older, maintain independent living is far smaller than the costs of institutional or nursing home care.
- The levy also supports the demand for safe housing services such as minor home repair modifications, and other safety products, to allow seniors to live in their home free of barriers and unsafe conditions.
- Given the certainty of increased demand for services, a larger safety net is needed for our community to avoid seniors getting into crisis.
- The current senior services levy will expire at the end of 2022. The senior levy is the sole funding source for Senior Options programs. **Without passage of this levy, Senior Options will end access to valuable services.**

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Meet Our 2022 Healthcare Justice Award Recipients!



*Sponsor our
November 10
Evening Gala!*

For tickets or sponsorship information, visit primaryonehealth.org/2022-justice-awards

"Lauren is an individual who has demonstrated resilience, perseverance, and excellence. She exuberates dedication and benevolence..."

"Lauren provides exemplary, quality care for each of her patients, without regard to circumstance."

"Dr. Muñoz has been actively involved in promoting the health and wellness of the Asian community... Those who know Dr. Muñoz often share her unwavering passion for the health and wellness of diverse communities."

"Dr. Muñoz advocates for quality services for all communities."



RECOGNIZING LEADERS IN HEALTH EQUITY: 2022 HEALTHCARE JUSTICE AWARDS



By Charleta B. Tavares

PrimaryOne Health (P1H) will celebrate its 25th Anniversary this year. The organization is the oldest and largest federally qualified health center (FQHC) also known as a Community Health Center (CHC) in central Ohio and one of the largest in the state. This year's anniversary is being celebrated along with the 8th Annual Healthcare Justice Awards (HCJA) at COSI on November 10, 2022.

The HCJA was created by the Chief Executive Officer in 2015 as a signature fundraising event to raise money for unexpected patient needs. In addition, the HCJA program selected two recipients for the Healthcare Justice Award. The inaugural event in 2015 was titled, "Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Future". PrimaryOne Health honored the Congressman Louis Stokes, posthumously for his lifetime commitment and support of FQHCs, creation of the Federal Office on Minority Health and support for health care for medically underserved and racial and ethnic populations. His daughter, Angela Stokes former judge in Cleveland accepted the award. The committee surprised former PrimaryOne Health CEO, Thomas (Tom) Horan with the internal Healthcare Justice Award. This event marked the official launch of the event and PrimaryOne Health's fundraising efforts.

Annually, one award recipient is identified as an internal PrimaryOne Health team member nominated by their peers. The other HCJA award recipient is either an external individual or agency/organization. The leadership of the organization established a Charity Fund at the Columbus Foundation in 2015 to deposit the net proceeds for each year's event. In 2021, the CEO worked with the HCJA Planning Committee to establish a new focus of the event – to launch the Healthcare Justice Scholarship Fund to support racial, ethnic and cultural underrepresented populations enter or advance in health professions. The Healthcare Justice Scholarship Fund has been instituted at the Columbus Foundation.

PrimaryOne Health is intentional in identifying, educating and grooming current and future health professionals who are entering or advancing their careers from underrepresented racial, ethnic and cultural populations. This fund will enable the organization to continue to diversify their staff and other health organizations to improve health outcomes with individuals who represent the communities in which they serve. In addition, P1H was purposeful in creating an endowment at the Columbus Foundation to seed and grow the funds to invest in this proposal to provide more

scholarships to increase the number of healthcare professionals from these communities.

This year's Healthcare Justice Awards will once again honor two recipients who exemplify why the award was created – to recognize an individual or a partner organization/agency who embodies the traits of an advocate for healthcare justice—dedication, determination, leadership, and courage. The award criteria further celebrates individuals and partners in our community who work to:

- Expand access to healthcare & wellness services;
- Eliminate health disparities and promote healthcare justice;
- Promote cultural & linguistic competence in healthcare; and/or
- Break down cultural & social barriers to quality healthcare.

Healthcare Justice Award Recipients: 2015 – 2022:

Thomas Horan, former CEO PrimaryOne Health – 2015

Congressman Louis Stokes – 2015 (posthumously)

Dr. Quinn Capers, IV Associate Dean for Admissions, The Ohio State University College of Medicine - 2016

Ms. Kelly Miller, RN for PrimaryOne Health's Healthcare for the Homeless Program staff – 2016

Reed Fraley, former COO PrimaryOne Health – 2017

Angela Dawson, Director Ohio Commission on Minority Health – 2017

Brian Hall, P1H Community Health Outreach Coordinator, - 2018

Dr. Pat Gabbe, Founder, Moms2Be and Professor OSU – 2018

Dr. Greg Graves, P1H Director Vision Services – 2019

Debera Diggs, Community Activist – 2019

Cherry Mack, RN, P1H Director Clinical Nursing and Quality at PrimaryOne Health – 2020

Dr. Amy Acton, former Director, Ohio Department of Health – 2020

Priscilla R. Tyson, former Columbus City Councilwoman – 2021

Tina Vamos, P1H Site Manager – 2021

This year's award recipients are: **Dr. Lauren Russo**, CNP at PrimaryOne Health and **Dr. Cora Muñoz**, Psych CNP. Read more about the HCJA recipients on the following page. Tickets, tables and sponsorships are still available.

Dr. Cora Muñoz is a Professor Emeritus and Adjunct Professor at Capital University. She is an author, academic scholar, and consultant, national and international

speaker, Fulbright Scholar, diversity trainer, health advocate and a community worker. Her clinical specialty is Psychiatric Mental Health and Transcultural Nursing with expertise in Cultural Competence, Education and Teaching Nursing. She completed her masters in nursing education at Columbia University, Teachers College in New York City with post masters courses in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing and her doctoral degree in Counselor Education with minor in Nursing at the Ohio State University.

She is currently the President of the Ohio Asian American Health Coalition. She has served for many years as the Governor appointed commissioner and served as Vice-Chair of the Ohio Commission on Minority Health. She is also a member of the Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Council to the Governor where she has served as Chairperson of the Health committee. In 2020, she was appointed by the Governor to serve in the Minority Health COVID-19 Strike force and was the only Asian and the only RN represented in this Strike force Workgroup. She is currently the President of the Asian Festival Corporation and coordinated Health screenings and Health education and community outreach for the Asian community. She was the founder of the Philippine Nurses Association of Indiana and the Philippine Nurses Association of Central Ohio in which she is a current board member in good standing. She has served as Vice-president for Culture of the Philippine American Society of Central Ohio and also served as board member of this organization.

Dr. Muñoz has received numerous accolades and awards as an outstanding nurse educator and community leader. She has received three Fulbright scholarships for the specialist program. She continues to teach Transcultural Nursing and provides trainings for cultural competency in health for various health disciplines. She was a nationally certified trainer for Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) a Stanford University evidenced based curriculum. Currently she is a certified trainer for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards and the C.A.R.E curriculum through Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competency. She continues to be a nationally certified trainer for Mental Health First Aid certified by the National Behavioral Health Council both in Live, Blended and Virtual curriculum.

Dr. Muñoz is currently an adjunct professor at Capital University and Mt. Carmel College of Nursing in Columbus, Ohio. She has been a nurse educator for over 40 years and a

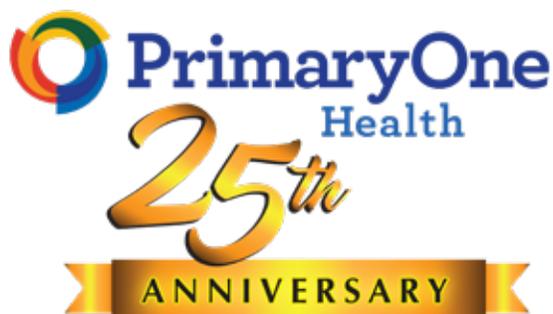
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national trainer in areas of Transcultural Health, Mental Health, Global Health, Psychiatric Nursing and Psychosocial Issues, Cultural Competency and Diversity.

Dr. Lauren Russo grew up in Colorado with loving parents and two sisters. At a young age, her parents instilled values that would carry her through life. Dr. Russo moved to Ohio in 2001 to start a retail management career with a local design and furniture company.

After having a child with cerebral palsy, Dr. Russo wanted to join the healthcare field to focus on helping children and adults like her son. She worked in various healthcare settings as a registered nurse, focusing on complex care patients at Nationwide Children's hospital. In 2018, Dr. Russo graduated from Chamberlain University with her master's degree as a Nurse Practitioner and in 2020 with her Doctorate in Nursing Practice. Dr. Russo joined PrimaryOne Health in 2019 and has built a diverse patient population.



Dr. Russo is well-respected and admired by her peers, patients and team members. She is always willing to assist where needed and prides herself in being team-focused and patient-driven. She is compassionate, committed, respectful and service-oriented.

Dr. Russo has five wonderful children, a devoted husband, supportive parents, sisters, and friends. She has a great passion for treating patients with drug and alcohol addictions and she has a strong compassion for the homeless population. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Dr. Russo is

often seen passing out socks, t-shirts, and coats to homeless men and women. She also offers her healthcare services to any homeless person needing care.

PrimaryOne Health is celebrating its 25th Anniversary and Healthcare Justice Awards on November 10, 2022 at COSI. For more information contact susan.brewer@primaryonehealth.org or visit www.primaryonehealth.org

Charleta B. Tavares is the Chief Executive Officer at PrimaryOne Health, the oldest and largest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) system in Central Ohio providing comprehensive primary care, OB-GYN, pediatric, vision, dental, behavioral health and specialty care to more than 42,000 patients at 12 sites and four Mobile Health Centers. The mission is to provide access to services that improve the health status of families including people experiencing financial, social, or cultural barriers to health care. www.primaryonehealth.org.

IDHINI PLATFORM CHANGING CLINICAL TRIAL PARTICIPATION IN BIPOC COMMUNITIES ONE STUDY AT A TIME



By Stacy M. Brown

To capture the voice of the BIPOC community and their unique needs, Idhini boasts that it provides access and equitable rewards for participation in health research. “The main reason is trust,” Gerard Charlot, a principal at Idhini, a national database of BIPOC individuals available to participate in clinical trials, told the National Newspaper Publishers Association’s Let It Be Known live morning news show. Officials designed the platform to provide health information and resources and assist in the health and financial outcomes associated with health literacy.

Recent studies have revealed that approximately 5% of Black Americans participate in clinical trials. Unfortunately, that number proves lower in the overall BIPOC community, and an organization called Idhini works to help improve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color participation.

To capture the voice of the BIPOC community and their unique needs, Idhini boasts that it provides access and equitable rewards for participation in health research.

“The main reason is trust,” Gerard Charlot, a principal at Idhini, a national database of BIPOC individuals available to participate in clinical trials, told the National Newspaper Publishers Association’s Let It Be Known live morning news show.

Officials designed the platform to provide health information and resources and assist in the health and financial outcomes associated with health literacy.

“Our vision is to have medical research reflect the population it serves,” Charlot stated.

“If we are successful, increased access to healthcare and equitable rewards for participation will create positive health and social outcomes, a more diverse healthcare workforce, and higher financial rewards for health organizations.”

Idhini wants to close the gap in health research within the BIPOC community.

Charlot said the organization reduces the cost of acquiring health-related data and insights from Black and minority communities while increasing the lifetime value of each community member’s interaction with medical research.

He said it’s 100% virtually.

“Why not make the community successful,” Charlot stated.

“The main reason there’s a problem is the lack of trust, not just from Black people, but the BIPOC community in general.”

Idhini has partnered with There Goes My Hero, a national registry that recently launched the “Color the Registry” initiative to secure more African American donors to help save lives.

Idhini helps recruit and screen individuals to ensure suitable patients participate in trials. In addition, the platform captures attitudes and sentiments toward research and converts sentiments into analysis and reporting.

A Chicago Sun-Times study revealed that patients — particularly Black and Latino Americans — now look for pharmaceutical companies to act as information brokers.

“Across social media channels, podcasts, and other outlets, they want these companies to take three major actions: help distinguish between false and accurate health care information; be realistic and honest about the realities of diseases and treatments and show what goes on behind the scenes at pharma companies,” the study authors wrote.

The authors concluded that people are reachable in a new way, and the newfound awareness of and interest in the makers of drugs and vaccines offers a pathway to learning.

“People want to hear from pharma companies,” the study authors wrote. “They’re listening and learning. They then bring this information with them to their doctors’ appointments.”

Charlot said that’s the point of Idhini.

“Major pharmaceutical companies use our stuff because it works,” Charlot stated.

“Our approach is not the Gerard way – it’s the right way.

“You have patient-centered research where it’s now all about community research. If you’re not engaging the community, there’s no value.”

Charlot concluded:

“The future of our families is not just about you; it’s about everybody you love. And the reality is that by learning more about it, by having awareness, you empower yourself to be better. You empower your community which makes you feel like you belong, and for yourself to note that you matter.”

Article from www.blackpressusa.com

ARE WE READY FOR THE RENAISSANCE OF PSYCHEDELICS?



By Suzanne Parks, MEDL

“In psychology, what do we pathologize?” Dr. Erica Baiden, MD

Recently, my son tagged me in a Facebook post, usually something humorous. We are robust laughers who enjoy laughing with gusto. When I got the notification that I had been tagged, I clicked on the link, ready to get my chuckle on. I was woefully unprepared for what lay ahead.

The link directed me to a Red Table Top episode on psychedelics. RTT host, Jada Pinkett-Smith stated in an almost conspiratorial tone against the “po-po” that they were going to discuss Magic Mushrooms. Instant dread for why my son tagged me was epic! Emotionally escalating, I immediately called him. I demanded to know why he had tagged me!

As he started to explain, I had what in hindsight I figured out was the wrong reaction. I kept interrupting him and was argumentative. Closed-minded, I was not listening. All I heard were my panicky thoughts of fear that he was actually telling me he was interested in using a dangerous drug.

He was patient with me. But he also started to backtrack on what he had just confessed and started saying what he thought I wanted to hear instead of the truth. I finally heard what he was trying to say when he told me that my reaction was similar to Adrienne Banfield-Norris, Jada’s mother who after a heroin addiction has been drug-free for the past 29 years. For members of our “Age of Aquarius” generation, psychedelics meant recollections of recreational usage, “bad trips,” and a gateway to more addictive drug use.

I made the decision to be unbiased. I clicked on the play arrow and watched the episode.

Psychedelics are plant-based fungi compounds that are being used to treat mental disorders, like depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder with amazing outcomes. The list of prescribed pharmaceuticals is Psilocybin (Magic Mushrooms), LSD, DMT, Ayahuasca, and Mescaline.

The New York Times described the re-emergence of turn-on therapeutics as “The Psychedelic Revolution.” John Hopkins University Hospital said psychedelics were four times more successful in treating major depression than traditional antidepressants. Of the 40 million people who use Prozac and therapy, 35% reported that it was unsuccessful. Psychedelics, not only make people feel better but help solve the problem of why they were in the pit of terrible in the first place. Enthusiastic proponents believe they have experienced more than just relief, but a turnaround.



Mescaline, the first psychedelic is a biosynthetic derivative from peyote and some other cacti. Archeological research hypothesizes that human consumption of peyote and other cacti dates back more than 5,000 years. Ancient indigenous peoples of South America, Mexico, and Northwest Texas have used it during ceremonial rituals. They are still used by groups in the Native American Church.

The first scientific documentation of ingesting peyote was by Dr. John Raleigh Briggs in 1887, who used himself as the guinea pig. In 1954, in Aldous Huxley’s book *The Doors of Perception*, he documented his first-hand experience after being medicated by Dr. Humphry Osmond who coined the word ‘psychedelic’ or ‘mind manifesting.’

By 1962, LSD which was discovered in the 1940s by Dr. Albert Hofmann came into prominence. The journey from “sacred plant to psychotherapy” was in full swing.

Harvard researcher and author of *How to Change Your Mind*, Michael Pollan is the leading expert on psychedelics. According to him, the feel-good mood-stabilizing serotonin is triggered in the brain and brings us a sense of well-being, awareness, and understanding. Psychedelics are not addictive because they take you places where you may not want to go ever again since common side effects are hallucination and vomiting. Psychedelics dredge up memories. Individual reactions vary from finding Nirvana to hellacious experiences. Guided use, according to Pollan is, “hard work,” but effective.

Pollan explained that like a single traumatic experience can change you in the negative, a mystical remarkable experience after taking a psychedelic makes you yearn for that experience to remain.

Habitual destructive thoughts can be replaced with good experience vibes and optimistic mindsets because new connections form in your brain. The rewiring removes destructive

self-judgments (ego) that lead to addiction, depression, and anxiety.

If the roots of the problem are identified, it ushers in a better understanding. You no longer just ask, “what is wrong with me,” you are able to start to understand why.

Mental illness disorders in the black community presumably were actualized during our cruel treatment in slavery times. Racial trauma transcends through the generations as bad thoughts are manifested. Racialized mistreatment continues and there is evidence to support that hate crimes are on the rise.

Mental illness has been misunderstood as Christian-Judeo demon possession, stigmatized, ignored, or closeted. Stoicism and or shame replaced a willingness to seek help. Simultaneously, non-traditional treatments of our ancestors were replaced by Western practices.

Racially marginalized individuals are often misdiagnosed and improperly treated. There is a case being made against the practice of forced psychiatry and psychiatric abuse as a form of discrimination and control whereby the subjects are African Americans, including children. Previous research has led to physical, mental, and emotional atrocities that have contributed to mistrust of western medicine within the black community.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), where the social and psychological clinical research is enshrined is based on the study of 20-something-year-old white male college students versus a wider swath of the population. Until recently, DSM considered homosexuality a mental disorder.

Psychology Today has weighed in on the potential benefits of using psychedelics as a treatment but lacks a diverse voice.

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Developing a healthy mind, body, and spirit cannot be achieved when also dealing with a lack of purposeful diversity, equity, and inclusion in the health field. Since we have not participated in any of the studies, research on how psychedelics benefit us as the controlled group is non-existent.

Dr. Erica Baiden, who practices family primary care, and behavioral health medicine in West Valley City, Utah is an advocate of inclusion, equity, and diversity in psychedelic medicine. An immigrant from Ghana, West Africa her mother experienced a mental health break while living in Connecticut. Her mother's treatment in a mental health facility was inhumane and lacking in cultural competency

Dr. Baiden through her studies concluded that psychedelics have been used curatively for centuries, yet we have been removed from the treatment of our ancestors in favor of traditional medicines, which do not always work for Black folks because they are not meant for us.

As psychedelic treatment becomes more popular and mainstream, Baiden challenges the whitewashed westernized term "psychedelic," in favor of the more appropriate reclassification, "entheogens" as a way to uphold the sacredness and to disassociate plant-based medicines as something bad, which baby boomers have been conditioned into believing.

Baiden advised that "It is important that in the psychedelic space to that, we recognize that it is an extension of western medicine. So, we have to be cautious. We must be cautious how its inception may or may not perpetuate certain systemic inequities. I am excited, but I proceed with caution." [Sic]

The use and sale of psychedelics are unlawful, a valid reason why we as black people need to be wary of using them, unless in a clinical trial. The War on Drugs has and continues to negatively plague black families. The newest tragedy of that injustice is the ever-widening gap in seeking mental healing due to an aversion to incarceration because of illegal drug use.

Psychedelics are going through decriminalization in California and are legal in some US cities. Legislation has been introduced in Congress to legalize psychedelics. If legalized, psychiatrists will be able to prescribe it as a treatment.

The optional way to explore plant medicine as a treatment for mental illness is to participate in a clinical study. Psychedelics are not recommended for persons who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia, personality disorder, or mania.

Treatment using psychedelics should always be supervised by a therapeutic guide to help one navigate the 4-6-hours process and continue with analyzing beyond the experience. Dosage regulation is essential. Overdosing is one of the reasons why people have bad experiences.

Seek medical advice first if you are interested in psychedelics to boost mental wellness. A clinical trial registry can be accessed at www.clinicaltrials.gov.

Suzanne Parks is a contributing writer for the news journal.

MAJORITY OF PREGNANCY-RELATED DEATHS CAN BE PREVENTED, CDC



By Tyisha Blade

Eighty percent of pregnancy-related deaths, including those caused by opioid overdose, excessive bleeding, heart problems and infections, are preventable, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Many of the pregnancy-related deaths occur up to a year after a woman gives birth, the report said.

It is important to continue to see an obstetrician after having a baby because they are trained to look for problems that may arise, said Dr. Kelly Gibson, director of maternal fetal medicine at MetroHealth.

"Four to six weeks after delivery, many of these patients are not coming primarily to obstetricians," Gibson said. "They're seeing their primary care doctors or, they're being seen in emergency rooms. It's important for all providers to recognize that when a patient has had a recent pregnancy some of their underlying conditions may have changed."

The Ohio Department of Health figures show that between 2008 and 2016 there were 24 pregnancy-related deaths in Cuyahoga County and eight pregnancy-related deaths in Summit County.



Providing better access to insurance coverage and transportation to follow up appointments can also prevent deaths, she said.

"It's incredibly important that patients have extended Medicaid so that all patients with chronic illnesses can come in and get the care that they need," Gibson said.

Gibson said there is also a need to break down structural barriers in order to make pregnancy safer for Black women and other people of color.

"Persons of color have about three times the risk of mortality from pregnancy compared to white patients," Gibson said. "Those are things that we are working on here at Metro, in terms of improving access and reducing bias among health care providers."

The CDC also recommends that healthcare systems, communities, families and other support systems be extremely aware of serious pregnancy-related complications that happen during and after pregnancy.

Article from WOSU.org

BOOK BAGS & READERS

By Ray Miller

The Annual Celebration of the Freedom to Read began in 1982. There continues to be a push to ban books from libraries and schools that deal with issues of race. Below is a partial list of books by Black authors that are frequent targets of conservatives.



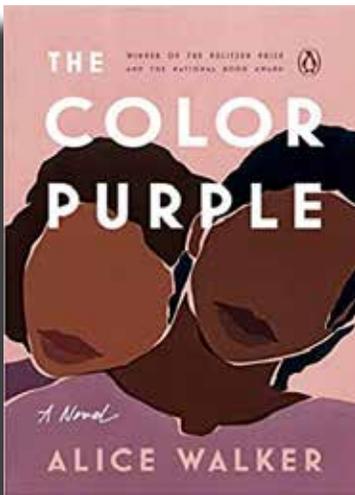
The Hate U Give

By Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

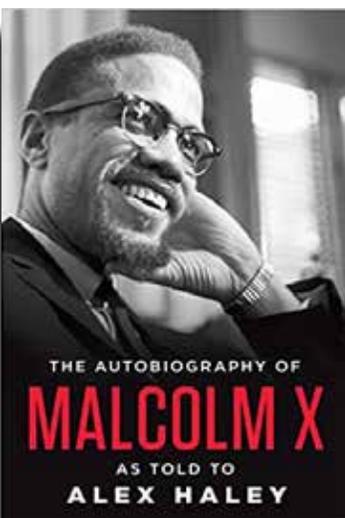


The Color Purple

By Alice Walker

A powerful cultural touchstone of modern American literature, *The Color Purple* depicts the lives of African American women in early twentieth-century rural Georgia. Separated as girls, sisters Celie and Nettie sustain their loyalty to and hope in each other across time, distance and silence. Through a series of letters spanning twenty years, first from Celie to God, then the sisters to each other despite the unknown, the novel draws readers into its rich and memorable portrayals of Celie, Nettie, Shug

Avery and Sofia and their experience. *The Color Purple* broke the silence around domestic and sexual abuse, narrating the lives of women through their pain and struggle, companionship and growth, resilience and bravery. Deeply compassionate and beautifully imagined, Alice Walker's epic carries readers on a spirit-affirming journey toward redemption and love.



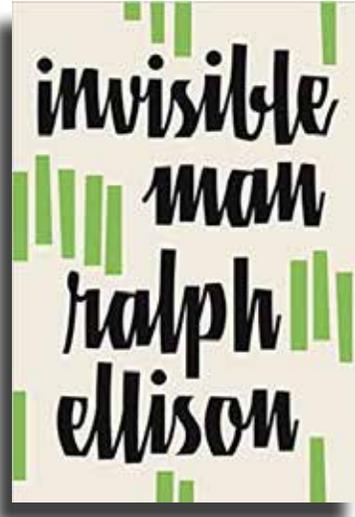
The Autobiography of Malcolm X

By Alex Haley

In this searing classic autobiography, originally published in 1965, Malcolm X, the Muslim leader, firebrand, and Black empowerment activist, tells the extraordinary story of his life and the growth of the Human Rights movement. His fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American dream and the inherent racism in a society that denies its non-White citizens the opportunity to dream, gives extraordinary insight into the

most urgent issues of our own time.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X stands as the definitive statement of a movement and a man whose work was never completed but whose message is timeless. It is essential for anyone who wants to understand the African American experience and America as a whole.

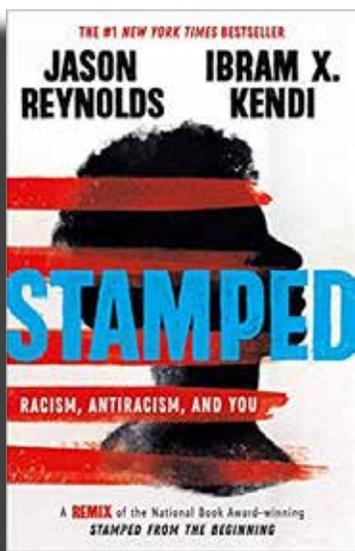


Invisible Man

By Ralph Ellison

He describes growing up in a Black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood," before retreating amid violence and confusion.

Originally published in 1952 as the first novel by a then unknown author, it remained on the bestseller list for sixteen weeks and established Ralph Ellison as one of the key writers of the century. The book is a passionate and witty tour de force of style, strongly influenced by T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, James Joyce, and Dostoevsky.



Stamped - Racism, Antiracism and You

By Ibram X. Kendi

This is NOT a history book.

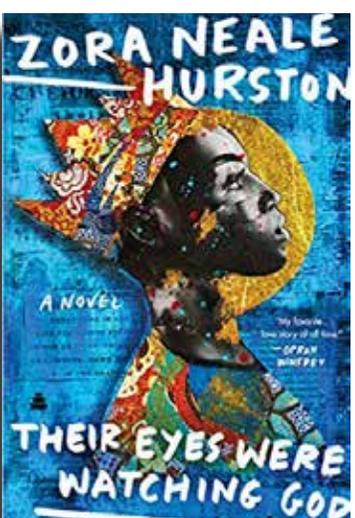
This is a book about the here and now.

A book to help us better understand why we are where we are.

A book about race.

The construct of race has always been used to gain and keep power, to create dynamics that separate and silence. This remarkable reimagining of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning *Stamped* from the Beginning reveals the history of racist ideas in America, and inspires hope for

an antiracist future. It takes you on a race journey from then to now, shows you why we feel how we feel, and why the poison of racism lingers. It also proves that while racist ideas have always been easy to fabricate and distribute, they can also be discredited.



Their Eyes Were Watching God

By Zora Neale Hurston

Originally published in 1937, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* has become one of the most important and enduring works of modern American literature. Written with Zora Neale Hurston's singular wit and pathos, this Southern love story recounts Janie Crawford's "ripening from a vibrant, but voiceless, teenage girl into a woman with her finger on the trigger of her own destiny."

A tale of awakening and independence featuring a strong female protagonist driven to fulfill her passions and ambitions, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a classic of the Harlem Renaissance and perhaps the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of literature.



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CELEBRATEONE HOSTS FIRST BIRTHDAY PARTY BASH



Families with babies celebrating their first birthday attended the event. Participants were welcomed with entertainment, food, face painting, early childhood education resources and a special gift from CelebrateOne.

Approximately 135 babies dug into a cupcake to celebrate their first birthday while parents and grandparents snapped lots of photos.

The celebration was hosted by CelebrateOne Saturday at Dorrian Green Park at COSI. The festivities included music, food, costumed characters, face painting, early childhood education resources and a special gift from CelebrateOne for families.

“The purpose of the CelebrateOne First Birthday Party is to celebrate the monumental event of babies in our community reaching their first birthday and to connect parents with early childhood education resources so that their toddlers can thrive,” said Maureen L. Stapleton, executive director of CelebrateOne.

In 2021, approximately 17,500 babies were born in Franklin County and a total of 138 babies did not make it their first birthday. “We have specific Columbus neighborhoods which continue to experience unacceptably high rates of infant mortality, with rates being



disproportionately higher among African American infants,” Stapleton added. Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday.

In addition to connecting families with early childhood education resources, individuals learned the ABCs of infant safe sleep habits by completing a 30-minute training session. “Sleep-related deaths are a leading cause of death for babies who are one month to one

year old and a major reason for Franklin County’s high infant mortality rate,” she added.

CelebrateOne was created in 2014 to reduce the infant mortality rate in Franklin County. In addition, CelebrateOne is also addressing the disparity among white and Black babies. Access to adequate housing, proper medical care, food and transportation play a role in this disparity.

In 2021, CelebrateOne and its partners developed a five-year strategic plan to focus on these inequities and it can be viewed on the CelebrateOne website, <https://www.columbus.gov/celebrate-one/>.

To learn more about CelebrateOne, follow us on Facebook and Twitter, @CelebrateOne and Instagram, Celebrateone_Columbus

For more information contact Frances Russ - Communications Manager at FMRuss@columbus.gov.

Coalition to End

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SAVE THE FLAVORS FOR CANDY.

Columbus, it's time to end the sale of flavored tobacco.

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Eight in 10 of all current youth tobacco users report using flavored products, many in kid-friendly flavors such as gummy bear, cotton candy, cherry dynamite and menthol.

The tobacco industry has **targeted the Black community** for decades to get people hooked on menthol cigarettes. Menthol makes it easier to start and harder to stop using tobacco products.

A law to end the sale of flavored tobacco would be enforced by Columbus Public Health not law enforcement, and would not prohibit possession or use of such products.

Ending the sale of **flavored tobacco products** would save lives and protect the health of kids, families and communities.

In Ohio, the high school tobacco use rate is 36.7%.

(Source: 2019 High School YRBS Tobacco and Electronic Vapor Product Use Report)

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Paid for by the Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund

LOW VACCINE BOOSTER RATES CONTRIBUTE TO RACIAL DISPARITIES IN COVID-19 DEATHS



By Beth Daley

More than 450 people are dying of COVID-19 in the U.S. each day as of late August 2022.

When COVID-19 vaccines first became available, public officials, community organizations and policymakers mobilized to get shots into arms. These efforts included significant investments in making vaccines accessible to Black, Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native populations. These groups experienced exceptionally high COVID-19 death rates early in the pandemic and had low initial vaccine rates.

The efforts worked. As of August 2022, vaccination rates for the primary series – or required initial doses of COVID-19 vaccines – for Black and Hispanic people exceeded those of white Americans.

But boosters are a different story. Comparable booster vaccine promotion efforts have been lacking. Confusion in the public health messaging surrounding boosters and limited federal funding for rolling out vaccination campaigns have resulted in slow booster uptake across the country.

As a result, divides have once again emerged. A recent study of COVID-19 booster rates found that 45% of white adults and 52% of Asian American adults had received boosters by January 2022. But only 29% of Black adults and 31% of adults who reported another racial or ethnic identity, such as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander or multiracial, were boosted.

As of late August 2022, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 36.3% of white adults in the U.S. 50 years or older and eligible for a second booster shot had received one. This is compared to only 28.4% for the Black population, 31.3% for American Indian or Alaska Native populations, and 25.1% for the Hispanic population.

New boosters aimed at the currently dominant omicron subvariant are expected to become available in early September 2022. But the benefits of this new booster will be limited if it is not widely used.

Booster rates predict mortality rates across counties

We are a team of population health researchers at Boston University and the University of Minnesota. We have been tracking COVID-19 mortality rates since the beginning of the pandemic. Our team uses demographic methods to identify social and structural factors that influence health and contribute to evidence-based reforms of public health and health care systems.

Vaccine studies suggest that adults age 50 and older who receive a booster shot have 90% lower death rates from COVID-19 than those who receive only the initial vaccine regimen. But the extent to which boosters have translated into health gains at the population level remains unclear.

Preliminary analyses by our team indicate that people in the U.S. living in counties with low booster uptake are dying from COVID-19 at higher rates than people living in counties with high booster uptake. In particular, in comparing the counties in the bottom 10% of booster rates with those in the top 10%, the COVID-19 death rates for residents of the bottom 10% of counties were 64% higher. Our analysis applies to the period from January to June 2022. It also adjusts for residents' ages.

This difference in death rates may in part reflect the fact that counties with greater booster protection also tend to have higher rates of primary-series vaccination. Nonetheless, these findings suggest that at the population level, booster rates are now a key factor behind COVID-19 deaths.

A prior study found that vaccination strategies that target high-risk geographical areas save more lives than strategies based on age alone. Thus, the evidence suggests that limited federal funding for COVID-19 booster promotion

should be sent to geographical areas that are currently reporting high rates of COVID-19 deaths.

Learning from the community

An effective booster campaign could build on lessons learned from prior vaccination campaigns. Specifically, this involves bringing vaccines directly to people. From the earliest days of vaccine distribution during the pandemic, partnerships with faith-based organizations, housing communities and trusted community organizations have been successful in reaching populations with low vaccination rates.

Other strategies to make boosters more accessible include increasing access to vaccine centers via public transit and outside of typical working hours. In rural areas, evidence-based strategies to promote vaccination include education of community ambassadors, use of social media and operation of mobile vaccination sites.

In the absence of federal funding, community efforts have aimed to make boosters more accessible. A New Yorker documentary filmed in 2021 explored the challenges that one rural community in Alabama – Panola – has faced with vaccination. It highlights community leader Dorothy Oliver as she promotes vaccination with little to no support from the government. Her efforts included door-to-door campaigns, discussions with residents about their fears and concerns and coordination of vaccination logistics, including scheduling and transport.

In a similar way, Minneapolis' Seward Vaccine Equity Project increased booster shots among East African immigrant families by having volunteers call members of their own communities and offer them a booster appointment and a ride. The volunteers were also available to answer residents' questions and address any concerns. Successful efforts like those could be carried out by health departments on a much wider scale.

Beth Daley is a contributing writer for The Conversation. Article is from www.theconversation.com.

BUSINESS

FINDING FINANCIAL PEACE IN TURBULENT TIMES



By Lisa D. Benton, MD,
MPH

I like everyone, want to reduce the stress, and worry in my daily life. In the recent days we've just experienced what feels like worse than ever before storms, hurricanes, and changing weather, looming pandemics, recession, inflation, economic, and political turmoil. When it feels that what is the worst is coming your way, you're wondering how and where you can find peace of mind.

Science supports that getting your finances and wallet under control is a proactive way to reduce stress. Learning how money works empowers you make choices now that you'll be glad you did in years to come. While planning won't solve every problem, rebuilding after a loss will be less stressful and remind you that you are stronger than you think.

I'm an advocate of being reasonable and practical and taking steps to get your physical, mental, and financial house in order, and sharing news of how to better prepare can't hurt.

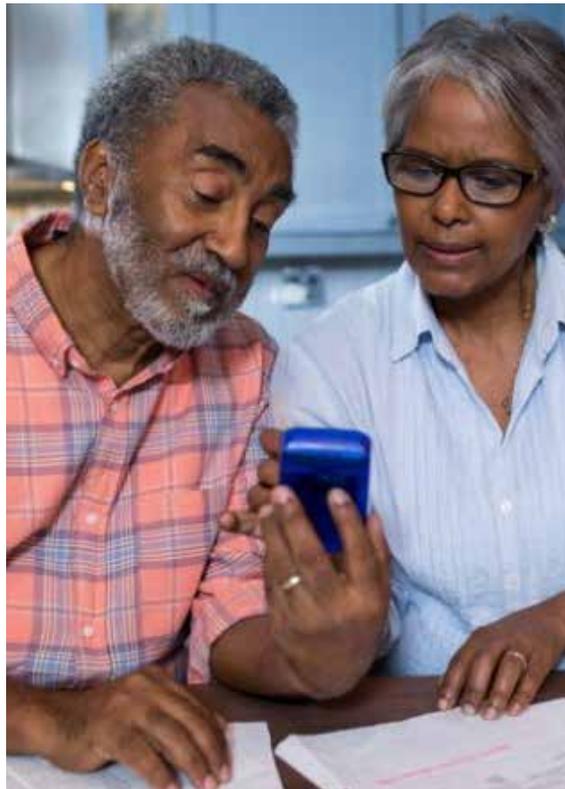
At times when I think about what it takes to get ready for any life storm or bad news, I hear the replays of the wisdom of my mom, dad, and other elders and ancestors, poured into me. I realize how blessed I was to receive their truths. Their wisdom of old continues to make sense now more than ever.

Even though you may think saving is hard to do, especially in rising inflation and an impending recession when you already feel like you don't even have two nickels to rub together, you must start somewhere. Today, more than ever before are free and inexpensive resources around to help you get your money in check.

One tip that my father gave me was join AARP, originally known as the American Association of Retired Persons.

Don't worry if you don't think you're not old enough. The benefits offered along with their newsletters, magazines, programs, and discounts are worth the pride and vanity of denying that you're getting older every day. Don't be like me on this one. When I turned fifty and my dad told me to join. I refused stating I was too young for it.

Regretfully I missed years of worthwhile benefits. Of course, I can now report that



AARP has quite a few free and helpful resources for when it comes to managing your money in the context of aging and especially what to do before you get there.

Another tip for reducing your financial stress is not run from your creditors and the bills. Even if you can only pay back \$25, that can stop the constant annoying phone calls, texts and keep them from seizing your paycheck, a good night's sleep, and peace of mind. For example, paying \$25-50 back on a student loan may be enough to raise your credit score in some instances and let you get a lower interest rate the next time you need a loan.

Having survived the pandemic, lockdown, unemployment, and social isolation, means there is no shame in letting others, within reason, know if you're struggling and less than 100%. That conversation can open the relief valve on the anxiety, depression, frustration, and disappointment you have so you can start to move forward and feel better. Some of the places and programs I recommended before for learning about managing money and finances are Crown.org, and Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University. They have a biblical foundation in their approach to managing money.

You can get most of their teaching and tips for free through watching YouTube sites and following their Facebook and social media pages if prefer not to register for the programs.

If you prefer books which are free from any library, I recommend anything by Suze

Orman for guidance on managing money from when you're young and fabulous to any age, and Get Good with Money by Tiffany Aliche, The Budgetnista.

For timely financial news with an intent on motivating and empowering you as a Black wealth builder check out Dr. Boyce Watkins on YouTube. He delivers business news with a current yet edgy perspective that will make you think and keep you on your toes. He shows you in real time getting your financial house in check is no small matter and never boring.

Wisdom has taught me that everybody is waiting on God for something, and when you're down to nothing God is up to something. Often your help and blessing come from a casual or unplanned mention of a need. As a bonus, it is better for your mental, spiritual, and physical health and lowers your stress and high blood pressure when you let out what's troubling you.

Knowing some of the disturbing statistics about African Americans and wealth, it's hard not to get discouraged. We are living the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, and discriminatory practices, such as redlining, predatory lending, and policies. On one hand we can celebrate the Black Wall Streets of America, but at the same time know some of the historical policies put in place by our government kept us behind and set us up to fail.

As part of our healing and need to have physical and mental health we need a greater understanding of the roots of the inequity of Black generational wealth and how to overcome the barriers to financial health and success individually and as a people.

I've been selected as a Goldschmidt Federal Reserve Economic Data Fellow. As a health writer and reporter this opportunity will give me specialized training and access to resources to better understand what is happening with our money.

To do my part to leave a legacy of wealth I want to share what I learn in this experience about managing and growing my money along the way with younger family members, and apply the practical wisdom from my elders, to retire healthy and well. I invite you to join and share in the rewards of this journey too.

Lisa D. Benton, MD, MPH (*The Doctor is In*) breastsurgeonlb@gmail.com, Twitter: @DctrLisa (415) 746-0627

BET CO-FOUNDER SHEILA JOHNSON IS A LUXURY HOTEL CREATOR



By Deborah Bailey

Sheila Johnson, co-founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET) has been exceptionally busy over the past 10 years.

These days, she can be found serving as founder and C.E.O. of Salamander Hotels and Resorts, a luxury brand of resorts started in Middleburg, Va., an hour from the nation's capital.

Johnson's longtime fans and followers know she is a businesswoman who has long contributed to the Washington, D.C. area, as the first Black woman serving as a principal shareholder in three local professional sports teams: the Washington Capitals of the National Hockey League, and the professional basketball teams for men and women, the Washington Wizards, and the Washington Mystics, respectively.

When Salamander Hotels hung its shingle on a property in The District's newly remodeled Southwest waterfront this month, the crowds came out to welcome Johnson "home."

"Together with Henderson Park, we will create a gathering place for the community in a relaxing and refined setting," Johnson said to a crowd of hundreds gathered at the new Salamander Washington, D.C. hotel.

The former Mandarin Hotel was acquired through a partnership formed between Salamander and Henderson Park, a

leading global private equity property firm headquartered in the United Kingdom.

The Mandarin had operated at a low 30 percent occupancy rate. The sale of the property went for an estimated \$139 million, according to Hotel Management.net.

"Welcome home to Sheila Johnson," said Mayor Muriel Bowser, who has on hand for the grand opening of the Salamander Hotel, Washington.

"We too are in the hospitality business," Bowser said about the city. "Hospitality is also about jobs for our Washingtonians. We hope that the Salamander will be a huge and vocal member of our business community."

"It is important to celebrate this achievement because it is important for people to know that we are 700,000 people—we have great neighborhoods and great destinations," Bowser continued.

The mayor concluded by saying visitors to Washington, D.C. generated more than \$8.2 billion in revenue for the city and contributed to 80,000 jobs in the hospitality industry. She said she is confident Johnson will add to the life of the city through the acquisition of the Salamander Washington property.

Johnson is already contributing toward the 80,000 jobs in D.C.'s hospitality industry by announcing that Salamander has decided to retain all employees of the former Mandarin Oriental hotel who wish to remain with Salamander.

"We are also delighted to welcome the hotel's employees into the Salamander family and

introduce our unique style of service to this exceptional property," Johnson added during her remarks.

Jason Wright, president of the Washington Commanders Football team talked about the person behind the business leader as he spoke about her leadership of the hotel.

"She is a bold visionary. You don't go buy the Mandarin unless you have a bold vision," Wright said.

"Sheila knows her value. It's that quiet and steady confidence that I wish I had. I try to absorb it from her every chance I can," he said.

"She's led business ventures that feature Black excellence. It's a special gift she has to create this atmosphere of family and luxury at the same time," Wright said of what Johnson will bring to Washington, D.C.

Johnson said she hopes to serve the community by offering a hospitality apprentice program through the resort as well as activate the hotel's unique outdoor space overlooking D.C.'s waterfront.

"We intend to introduce the warm and inviting feeling that guests enjoy at other Salamander properties," Johnson said.

Salamander Washington, D.C. joins the company's unique collection of iconic properties in storied destinations, including Jamaica and Anguilla.

Article from www.afro.com.

SMART COLUMBUS & RISE TOGETHER INNOVATION LAUNCH NEW PROGRAM

Exchange Increases Care Coordination across Community-Based Organizations to Benefit Residents

(Columbus, Ohio) Franklin County Board of Commissioners approved a \$2 million grant of Federal Recovery Act dollars to establish Central Ohio's Community Information Exchange (CIE), a data infrastructure project that enables health and human service agencies across Central Ohio to streamline access to care and resources for Franklin County residents in need. A coalition of 16 direct service providers, as part of United Way's Economic Mobility Coalition, developed the vision for the CIE over the course of multiple years, with the leadership and support of the Mid Ohio Food Collective. Design and development for the CIE will be led by Smart Columbus and RISE Together Innovation Center.

"The County's investment to initiate the Community Information Exchange lays the foundation for how we deliver coordinated and pro-active care in the future, ultimately improving the resident experience accessing services," said Kenneth N. Wilson, County Administrator, Franklin County Board of Commissioners. "The community's vision for the CIE takes into account best practices from counties across the country, and also introduces cutting-edge capabilities that will drive health and human services enhancements in a way that creates transformational benefits for the residents of Franklin County for years to come."

The CIE will:

- Provide transparency and increase the ability for residents to access the services they want and need in real-time
- Increase care coordination across community-based organizations
- Deliver services to those in need more proactively
- Make investment decisions based on future community needs and in accordance with data findings

The establishment of the CIE directly aligns with the 2021 Recovery and Resiliency Committee's recommendation to direct funding toward the development of a human services referral and information exchange. RISE Together Innovation Center is the lead convening partner to help establish the CIE.

"Launching this information exchange and collaborating with organizations across Franklin County is pivotal to addressing poverty in our region," said Danielle Sydnor, CEO of RISE Together Innovation Center. "We recognize our residents are our most valuable community assets and identifying ways to reduce systemic burdens and barriers to navigating services will provide people more time to focus on achieving their own



personal goals. Our human service agencies are doing significant and critical work to support families in our community; the CIE will allow for greater synergies among these agencies and support improved delivery of services to residents in need," she continued.

Smart Columbus has evolved its operations to focus on anticipating and advancing what is new and next at the intersection of technology and community good to achieve economic and social prosperity. As a collaborative innovation lab, Smart Columbus will take a human-centered approach to the implementation of the CIE.

"The Community Information Exchange is a big idea that leverages the power of data to deliver more coordinated, holistic and human-centered care for our residents who need it most," said Jordan Davis, Executive Director, Smart Columbus. "The pandemic exposed the fundamental digital access and infrastructure that is required for survival and 21st century delivery of care. The CIE along with meaningful efforts to close the Digital Divide will help us ensure every resident can be a part of our community's future."

Federal Recovery Act dollars are being used to accelerate these efforts in Franklin County. The establishment of the CIE will propel Franklin County to address poverty more holistically and allows Franklin County to be more competitive among peer counties across the country. This innovative tool will enable the community to leverage national best practices that benefit Franklin County residents by providing a service delivery model designed to:

- Increase residents' understanding of what services are available, determine services for which they qualify, and those services previously used
- Empower residents to initiate requests for services and records progress
- Generate faster and more relevant responses from service providers

- Enhance residents' trust in services and organizations

Initial participants in the CIE include: The Mid-Ohio Food Collective, United Way of Central Ohio, Columbus State Community College, YWCA, Siemer Institute, ADAMH, Columbus Urban League, Community Shelter Board, Catholic Social Services, Primary One Health, COTA, Reeb Avenue Center, Celebrate One, IMPACT Community Action, Goodwill Columbus, Alvis, and YMCA.

About RISE Together Innovation Center

RISE Together Innovation Center implements innovative ideas to disrupt poverty in Franklin County. Our mission is to harness the collective power of people and systems to disrupt structural racism and issues of poverty to achieve equity for all Franklin County residents. Our vision is that every Franklin County resident has the resources and opportunities to thrive and prosper.

About Smart Columbus

Smart Columbus is an agile, collaborative innovation lab that serves the Columbus Region by anticipating and advancing what is new and next at the intersection of technology and community good. By promoting thought leadership on the future of cities, fostering an ecosystem of regional partners and delivering human-centered technology deployments in the areas of mobility, sustainability, digitalization and emerging urban technologies, Smart Columbus seeks to offer residents a more frictionless experience with Columbus' infrastructure, systems and services, increasing access to opportunity and improving quality of life. A non-profit organization co-led by the City of Columbus and Columbus Partnership; Smart Columbus was founded in 2016 when Columbus won the first-ever Smart City Challenge.

For more information, visit smartcolumbus.com.

PUTTING BLACK AMERICA TO WORK: THE NEW SKILLED TRADE WORKFORCE



On the issue of helping Black people take a role in the modern workforce, especially the trade industry, Rep. Brenda Lawrence set the tone.

Rep. Brenda Lawrence was the opening speaker for a recent panel discussion that she sponsored entitled “Putting Black America to Work: the New Skilled Trade Workforce,” at the 47th annual Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference.

“We are building a new bridge from Detroit to Windsor (Canada),” Lawrence (D-Mich.) said at a recent panel organized by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. “I’ve been told we are bringing in welders from Vietnam to help build it.”

It seems unfathomable that the United States, a country with a population of approximately 330 million, has to import welders from another country—especially when some of those unionized trade jobs pay \$30, \$40 or \$50 an hour. However, as Lawrence said, “One of the trade skills in big demand now is for welders.”

Lawrence noted that the average age of skilled trade workers is 53, and said that the trades are one industry that needs an infusion of youth, especially from the Black community.

Lawrence was the opening speaker for a recent panel discussion that she sponsored entitled “Putting Black America to Work: the New Skilled Trade Workforce,” at the 47th annual Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference, held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Northwest D.C.

Moderator Ed Gordon, a popular television and radio talk show host, quickly pivoted and asked the panel members to address two issues:

Why are young Black folk seemingly shying away from the trades, such as welding, plumbing, construction, electricity, heating and air conditioning, post office positions, railway occupations, etc?

How do Black folks overcome the perception that the U.S. economy provides only two tracks for young Black people: athletics and entertainment?

“We have to stop demonizing trades,” said Tyra M. Metoyer, manager of External Mobilization for the American Petroleum Institute. “These skills pay well; you can build your life around a skill you use in a trade. But some parents say, ‘I didn’t work hard all my life to not send my children to college.’”

Trades are a practical approach for an individual to ride a blue-collar occupation into the middle-class world.

“In Washington D.C., we have the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program,” said Odie Donald II, director of the D.C. Department of Employment Services. “With these young people, I don’t think it’s that they don’t want to work in the trades, it’s more about them knowing how to find where the work is.”

In this computer and digital age, young workers often need more than just a high-

school diploma, but without the burdensome mountains of debt incurred from earning a degree at a four-year colleges.

“General Motors has a special program for young people, to teach high school students how to get into the area of service technology,” said Maurice Williams, general manager of GM Sales Support Functions. “It’s for that student who doesn’t want to go to college but has that mindset to get into skills they are good at.”

Damien Hooper-Campbell, Chief Diversity Officer at eBay in San Jose, Calif. said that showing youth how trade occupations can benefit their language skills may make getting a trade more attractive to them.

“Maybe we can get some of our artists who can have a great influence on young people,” Hooper-Campbell advocated. “Artists like Jay Z. I’m a hip-hop head, even at 39 years old. Our young people can learn from Jay Z about other areas of music. Maybe not become a rapper but work on the technical side of music. These hip-hop artists can speak to that.”

Gordon said he tries to introduce young people to the world behind the microphones and behind the cameras to show them other possibilities.

“When kids come into our studios,” Gordon explained, “I let them see our control room. To let them see the technicians as well as the camera people—the people behind the scenes.”

Article from www.afro.com

DAWN WRIGHT BECOMES FIRST BLACK PERSON TO REACH DEEPEST PART OF THE OCEAN



Dawn Wright is an American geographer and oceanographer. She is a leading authority in the application of geographic information system (GIS) technology to the field of ocean and coastal science. She became the first African American to travel to the deepest part of the ocean.

In the waters of the Western Pacific, a sea of blue surrounded oceanographer Dawn Wright, who was a little blue herself. Her mother died last December and would not be there to watch Wright take on the challenge of reaching the deepest place on Earth.

"She wanted to be able to live to see this, but she is watching from heaven," Wright told "CBS Sunday Morning" correspondent Lee Cowan.

Wright, a specialist in marine geology and geography at the Environmental Systems Research Institute, is the first person of any gender of African descent to go to Challenger Deep — the deepest-known point of the seabed of Earth.

Wright's love of the ocean started in her home in Maui, Hawaii. She said she knew she wanted to be an oceanographer by the time she was 8.

"It was partly fueled by the Apollo 11 mission," said Wright, who is nicknamed Deep-Sea Dawn. "If those men could land on the moon, I thought, 'Well, why can't I go the opposite direction and explore the oceans?'"

But back in the 1970s and 80s, there weren't many oceanographers who were women — and fewer were Black.

"I spent several years at sea as a marine technician. And there were men on the ship that I was on who didn't believe that women should be there. ... That is the story, an age-old story. It's still an issue," she said.

But all of that was eclipsed by her arrival at a place void of judgment and prejudice — a journey that took her four times deeper than she'd been before. At the bottom, she experienced more than 100,000 tons of pressure on the outside of her submersible.

Challenger Deep is seven miles beneath the surface and more than six times deeper than the Grand Canyon. It's almost triple the depth of the Titanic — and has only been seen by a few.

The reason why? It's not sinking down that's hard, but going back up without being crushed. Only one manned vehicle in the world can do it: Limiting Factor, which is the brainchild of Texas adventurer and explorer Victor Vescovo. He financed the two-person submersible's design and construction.

"If it can work here, it can work anywhere on the seafloor," said Vescovo, who was with Wright on the deep-sea journey.

Ocean trenches are largely a watery black hole in terms of research, but they have much to tell us — like Earth's reaction to climate change, and how to better predict earthquakes and tsunamis.

Wright's task was to bring back the first high-resolution mapping of Challenger Deep. Currently, less than a quarter of the global sea floor is mapped "to sufficient detail," she said. Last year, the United Nations pledged to change that and set a goal to have at least 80% of the seabed mapped by 2030.

But one of the best tools to do that is side-scan sonar, and typically the instruments can't survive the harsh environment.

This time, though, a first-of-its kind- side-scan sonar worked.

After 10 hours beneath the land of sunlight, Wright emerged and returned to the pitching deck of her research vessel where the real work of analyzing her research had only just begun.

Article from www.cbsnews.com.

COLLEGE BOARD TO DEBUT ADVANCED PLACEMENT AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES CLASS AT 60 U.S. HIGH SCHOOLS

By C. Mandler

The College Board has announced it will begin offering an Advanced Placement (AP) African American Studies course at 60 unnamed high schools across the U.S. this fall, CBS News has learned.

The AP program, which gives high school students an opportunity to take college-level courses before graduation, currently covers 38 subjects, including English literature and composition, U.S. government and politics, statistics, and art history.

The AP African American Studies course is the College Board's first new offering since 2014, according to TIME, and will cover over 400 years of African American history. The curriculum will span several topics, including literature, political science and geography.

This summer, teachers involved in the the pilot program's rollout met at Howard University — a historically Black institution — to review the framework of the course and prepare for launch.

Marlon Williams-Clark, a social studies instructor at Florida State University schools, has taught one of the first classes in a state that has banned teaching critical race theory in public K–12 institutions.

"You can tell there is a thirst [students] have to obtain this knowledge," he said in an interview with CBS News' Elaine Quijano and Lana Zak. "I think that this course will be the forerunner for other histories on... marginalized people."

On why AP European history courses have been offered for years with no African American history counterpart, Williams-Clark said, "What we have to understand is that history is told from the perspective of the winner."

"I'm very proud of the College Board for taking this step and the work that they have put in to create this course. It is really historic, but it is also something that is very much needed," he added.

Henry-Louis Gates, Jr., one of the country's foremost experts on African American history, helped develop the AP African American Studies program. He told TIME that the class "is not CRT. It's not the [New York Times'] 1619 Project. It is a mainstream, rigorously vetted, academic approach to a vibrant field of study, one half a century old in the American academy, and much older, of course, in historically Black colleges and universities."



In a statement to CBS News, the College Board said it has been working on this course for nearly a decade, and that it is "designed to offer high school students an inspiring, evidence-based introduction to African American Studies."

The course will be offered in 200 schools next year, before it's offered to all interested U.S. high schools starting in the 2024-25 school year. The College Board says the phased rollout will give colleges and universities time to establish accreditation policies that allow students to apply these course credits to their higher education requirements.

The new course comes at a contentious time for race-based education in America. A report from PEN Education found that 137 "educational gag order" bills — which the organization defines as "state legislative efforts to restrict teaching about topics such as race, gender, American history, and LGBTQ+ identities in K–12 and higher education" — have been introduced in 36 states this year. That's more than double the number of bills introduced last year, when 22 states introduced 54 bills. Six of the seven bills passed this year specifically included race as an impacted educational topic.

Last year, dozens of Republican senators, including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, wrote a letter to Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona criticizing the Biden administration's proposed priorities

for teaching diverse American history courses in schools, one of which was titled, "Projects That Incorporate Racially, Ethnically, Culturally, and Linguistically Diverse Perspectives into Teaching and Learning."

According to the senators, the proposed priorities "double down on divisive, radical, and historically-dubious buzzwords and propaganda."

"Americans never decided our children should be taught that our country is inherently evil," the letter read.

While the general public cannot yet view the curriculum itself, the College Board plans to post the course framework in its entirety on the AP Program website in spring 2024.

In a statement, Trevor Packer, the senior vice president of AP and Instruction at the College Board, said the class "will introduce a new generation of students to the amazingly rich cultural, artistic, and political contributions of African Americans."

"We hope it will broaden the invitation to Advanced Placement and inspire students with a fuller appreciation of the American story," he added.

Article from www.cbsnews.com

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Columbus, Ohio

Current – January 3, 2023 (Sundays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays)

The Center of Science & Industry presents the Doc McStuffins exhibit. This highly interactive English and Spanish bilingual experience will transport kids and families from Doc's backyard clinic to the McStuffins Toy Hospital. There, families are invited to help Doc perform check-ups and diagnose toy patients, while learning about healthy habits, compassion, and nurturing care.

Riley Children's at Indiana University Health, the state's only comprehensive pediatric health system, has partnered with The Children's Museum of Indianapolis to provide an opportunity for children to become comfortable in a healthcare setting. Disney Junior's Peabody Award-winning "Doc McStuffins" is an imaginative animated series about a six-year-old girl who communicates with and heals stuffed animals and broken toys out of her backyard playhouse clinic and in the magical McStuffins Toy Hospital. Created and executive produced by Humanitas Prize and Emmy Award-winning Chris Nee, the series has been lauded globally for its modeling of good health practices and imparting to young viewers the importance of taking care of oneself and others.

Location: COSI
Address: 333 W. Broad Street 43215
Time: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Admission: Included with admission
Contact: (614) 228-COSI

October 12, 2022

Urban One Columbus & Columbus Urban League Job Fair. At the event you will gain onsite information and participate in one-on-one interviews with potential employers in the fields of healthcare, restaurant, manufacturing, and others. Meet and INTERVIEW with top employers who are considered "background friendly," or "second chance," employers- meaning they hire people with records. Get the opportunity to connect with community resources, such as record expungement, rental expungement, rental assistance, and professional clothing & suiting vouchers.

Location: King Arts Complex
Address: 735 Mt. Vernon Ave. 43203
Time: Noon – 4 p.m.
Admission: Free (Registration required)
Contact: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/urban-one-columbus-and-the-columbus-urban-league-job-and-recruitment-fair-tickets-419827283707?aff=ebdssbcitybrowse>

October 13, 2022

Join us for the Central Ohio Small Business Resource Fair. This event is jam packed with a vendor expo of entrepreneurial support services, networking opportunities, rapid fire workshops and more. Resource Fairs in past years have drawn more than 200 entrepreneurs, so don't miss out! Various local entrepreneurial resource partners will be on-site to help with your business needs.

Location: Economic & Community Development Institute
Address: 1655 Old Leonard Ave. 43219
Time: 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Admission: Free
Contact: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/central-ohio-small-business-resource-fair-tickets-401380609207?aff=ebdssbcitybr owse>

Dayton, Ohio

October 12, 2022

Sinclair Community College, Diversity Office's Visiting Scholar's Series presents: Eli Saslow, Pulitzer Prize and Dayton Literary Peace Prize Winner, Journalist, Author. Join us as Eli discusses his new book, *Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist*. This is a powerful story of charting the rise of white nationalism through the experiences of one person who abandoned everything he was taught to believe.

Location: Sinclair Community College
Address: Smith Auditorium, 444 W. Third St.
Time: 6 p.m.
Admission: Free
Contact: <https://www.sinclair.edu/student-life/diversity-on-campus/>

October 20, 2022

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center's annual Educator Open House. This year's Educator Open House allows educators, students, parents, and community leaders to come together to learn about available resources pertaining to the field of education—specifically social studies—for the new school year. Learn about educational initiatives at the Freedom Center including distance learning opportunities, workshops, and the Freedom Foods initiative.

The evening will also feature a discussion on the use of picture books in teaching with special guest Dr. Ebony Joy Wilkins. Dr. Wilkins is an English professor and writer whose education research centers on African American children's literature and written responses. She is the author of *Claudette Colvin Refuses to Move*, *Malcom X: Meet the Civil Rights Activist*, and more. Her stories aim to highlight marginalized voices and engage young minds with a greater perspective of the American narrative.

Location: National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
Address: 50 E. Freedom Way 45202
Time: 6 -8 p.m.
Admission: Free (registration required)
Contact: 513-333-7500

Current – November 27, 2022

When Is Justice Served? The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center presents *Beyond Guilt* a compelling visual experience that tells the powerful and redemptive stories of those impacted by over-sentencing and over-punishment. In their stories—captured in a collection of candid photographs taken by local Cincinnati artist and activist Harriet Kaufman; six short films by students at Northern Kentucky University; and a curatorial research team from The Ohio State University—we learn about the human consequences of second chances and the ethical necessity to see and treat people beyond their guilt.

Location: National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
Address: 50 E. Freedom Way 45202
Time: Contact organizer for times
Admission: Included with general admission
Contact: <https://freedomcenter.org/beyondguilt/>

Please note: Information for this section is gathered from multiple community sources. The Columbus & Dayton African American is not responsible for the accuracy and content of information. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. **If you have an event that you would like to feature in this section, please call 614-826-2254 or email us at editor@columbusafricanamerican.com. Submissions are due the last Friday of each month.**



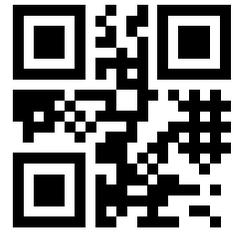
New Opportunities to Save on Health Care Coverage

Learn about new financial help to keep you and your family healthy

If you lost your health insurance during the pandemic or have been unable to pay for coverage in the past, you may now be eligible to save money on your health care.

Because of changes in the law, you could now pay as little as \$0 for your premiums, or you could save up to thousands of dollars a year.

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To learn more, call
1-888-OUR-AARP or
visit aarp.org/ACA.



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