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## JOURNALISM IS FACING AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT FROM TECH GIANTS



Media people are speaking  
out through the Save  
Journalism Project

Facebook online impacts legacy media, resulting in less revenue to hold those responsible to the public trust accountable for their statements and actions, *page 3*

# Racially Discriminatory Legislation and Policies Must Be Stopped

## The Unintended Consequences of a Menthol Cigarette Ban to Black America

From pro-slavery laws to Jim Crow, to Prohibition, to racial profiling, to Stop-and-Frisk, history is clear: racist laws and discriminatory bans have been devastating for Black America.

Today, Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) and National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) have joined together with other African-American law enforcement executives to call on you - our readers in Black communities across the nation - to see the warning signs of yet another proposed racially discriminatory law: the menthol cigarette ban.

It is a well-known fact that over 85 percent of African Americans who smoke prefer menthol cigarettes. There is no factual basis to assert that a menthol cigarette ban will stop African Americans from smoking. In fact, the unintended consequences of such a racially-discriminatory ban will set the stage for more negative and more likely counterproductive interactions between law enforcement and African Americans.

While proponents argue that a menthol cigarette ban could encourage menthol cigarette smokers to quit smoking cold-turkey, another possible outcome could be extremely dangerous—the creation of an illicit market. If this happens, illegal sales of menthol cigarettes will likely be concentrated in communities of color, leading to a greater police presence, citations, fines, and arrests for selling a product that for the past 50 years has been legal.

Possible bans on menthol cigarettes are now being considered throughout the United States as add-ons to e-cigarette bans. It must be said that while FDA has deemed teen vaping an “epidemic,” there is no teen menthol cigarette epidemic. The fact is teen cigarette use has steadily been on the decline over the past decade.

Recently in New York, the mothers of Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner courageously issued a public statement warning against the consequences of a proposed menthol cigarette ban. Sybrina Fulton and Gwendolyn Carr stated, “When you ban a product sold mostly in Black communities, you must consider the reality of what will happen to that very same over-represented community in the criminal justice system.”

Law enforcement leaders like Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP), National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Grand Council of Guardians, and National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers (NABLEO) have stated countless times that a ban on menthol cigarettes will have unintended negative consequences, especially for African Americans.

Over the past 30 years, we have reduced tobacco consumption overall across this country by about 40 percent. And we did not do that with the criminal justice community. We did that with education, we did it with treatment, we did it from a health and educational perspective. Let’s continue with that. Let’s not do something that’s going to end up with these unintended consequences of increasing interaction between police and community members.

Major Neill Franklin (Ret.), Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP): “I dedicated 34 years of my life to public safety, enforcing the laws that our legislators placed before me. That’s what cops do, and we trust that those laws are well thought out, studied and based upon sound data and evidence. As we begin to mirror the days of alcohol prohibition with tobacco bans, expect the violence and corruption that comes with the illicit market and add something else, the over criminalization of the black community.”

Jiles Ship, President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives – New Jersey (NOBLE): “Banning menthol cigarettes would be a 21st Century attempt at Prohibition, a past failure of government to restrict a previously legal product. As we learned with Prohibition, every time the government tries to ban something, it seems to cause other problems. And unfortunately, a menthol cigarette ban would be another example of government action that disproportionately disrupts the Black community.”

Charles Billips, National Chair Person of Grand Council of Guardians, “The first question I asked is how are they going to implement this ban on menthol cigarettes, knowing that a large number of Black and Brown people smoke menthol cigarettes? It would be best to educate the communities on the affect it has on our health instead of a ban enforced through Law Enforcement.”

As The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once prophetically said, “The time is always right to do what is right.” And the right thing to do for our families and communities and for all who stand for freedom, justice and equality is to speak out against all forms of racial discrimination and disproportionate law enforcement, as well as the systems, laws, bans and policies that perpetuate them.

Speak out against racism. Stand up against discrimination. Let your voices be heard.





# Journalists blast Facebook's Zuckerberg for 'Free expression' speech

By Stacy M. Brown,  
NNPA Newswire Senior  
Correspondent

Approximately 7,200 jobs in the news industry were lost in the past year.

Journalism in America is facing an existential threat from the monopolistic control of tech giants like Google, Facebook, and Apple.

A growing group of publishers, news gatherers, journalists, photographers, and other professionals, the Save Journalism Project's is to educate and activate journalists across the country to tell the story of big tech's threat to journalism.

The leadership at the Save Journalism Project scoffed at Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's recent Georgetown University speech, where he touted his popular social media site as a "champion of free expression."

"Given the sensitivity around political ads, I've considered whether we should stop allowing them altogether," Zuckerberg stated in defending Facebook's decision to allow misinformation in political advertising.

"But political ads are an important part of voice – especially for local candidates, up-and-coming challengers and advocacy groups that may not get much media attention otherwise. Banning political ads favors incumbents and whoever the media covers," Zuckerberg stated.

He reportedly invoked Frederick Douglass, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Black Lives Matter as a means of positioning Facebook as a champion for freedom of speech.

"The Facebook news tab is a shiny new object to distract from the damage Zuckerberg has done to journalism and a ploy to steal journalists' content without compensating us," said Laura Bassett, the co-founder of the Save Journalism Project and the former senior politics editor for HuffPost.



"This initiative will only further his agenda to derail the journalism industry so that Facebook can be the bearer of all the news, stated Bassett, who was laid off from her HuffPost position in January.

John Stanton, another co-founder of the Save Journalism Project and a former fellow of Georgetown University, called Zuckerberg's speech "a joke."

"Mark Zuckerberg is the antithesis of free expression," stated Stanton, who until January worked as BuzzFeed's DC Bureau Chief.

"He's thrown pennies at programs to 'help' journalists that, in actuality, are little more than PR stunts intended to provide cover as he puts countless journalists out of work, strips the industry to the bone, and reaps billions in ad revenue. He's thrown free speech, public education, and democracy to the waste side in his quenchless thirst for power and profit," Stanton noted.

He added: "Instead of providing a platform for Zuckerberg propaganda, how about we rein in this monopoly and save journalism?"

Efforts by NNPA Newswire to reach officials at Facebook for a response were unsuccessful.

Facebook's version of free

expression has also hurt minority-owned newspapers and media outlets, stated Nick Charles of the Save Journalism Project.

"Local, regional, ethnic, and specifically, African American news media, have always had thin margins and been under threat from majority media consolidation, diminishing ad revenue, and the hemorrhaging of newsroom resources. If small businesses in African American communities decide to advertise with monopolists such as Google and Facebook online, that impacts legacy media, which in turn now have less revenue for journalistic pursuits, like informing their communities and holding elected and public officials to account," Charles stated.

To that end, African American media needs to stand with the Save Journalism Project and others who have been sounding the alarm around platform domination and advertising monopoly, he added.

"Big Tech needs to be checked, and the corrosive way they utilize content addressed. Editorializing and reaching out to local, state, and federal officials who should be looking at these issues is a start," Charles said.

# Kamala Harris proposes legislation to extend school day to 6 p.m.

Philadelphiaobserver.com

On Tuesday, Kamala Harris introduced legislation seeking to have schools extend the public school day from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The bill would propose a pilot program aimed at helping working parents. The Family Friend Schools Act would help to "align the school day with the workday to better support working families," according to the Democratic senator from California and presidential candidate.

"With the vast majority of schools closing at or around 3 p.m., two hours short of the standard full-time work day, parents are often left in a bind," Harris said in a press release. "Additionally, summer breaks present a challenge; in fact, three in four parents report at least some difficulty finding child care during that time period."

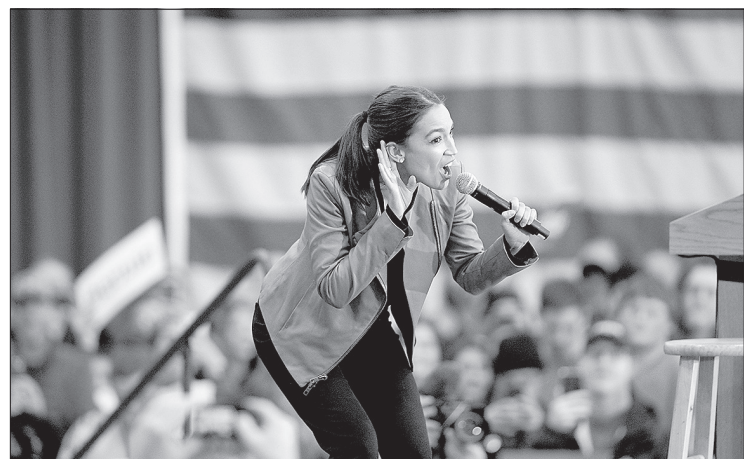
The bill would provide \$5 million in funding to 500 elementary schools over a 5-year period.

The funding would be used "to develop high-quality, culturally relevant, linguistically accessible, developmentally appropriate academic, athletic, or enrichment opportunities for students from at least 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday during the school year, with no closures except for Federal holidays, weekends, and emergencies" says Harris' senate website.

"My mother raised my sister and me while working demanding, long hours," said Harris. "So, I know firsthand that, for many working parents, juggling between school schedules and work schedules is a common cause of stress and financial hardship. But, this does not have to be the case. My bill provides an innovative solution that will help reduce the burden of child care on working families. It is time we modernize the school schedule to better meet the needs of our students and their families."



# AOC brings star power to Iowa for Sanders



Philadelphiaobserver.com

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa — Gabriela Barajas' friends dragged her to the rally with Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

The 19-year-old had never gone to a campaign event before, and she had no idea who she'd support in the Democratic primary. But by the time she left, she was with Sanders.

"I'm speechless right now," she said as her friends bolted toward her with a freshly snapped selfie with Ocasio-Cortez in hand.

"Seeing how passionate he is, how passionate she is, it just amazes me. ... She's inspirational to all Latinas, to all women."

Ocasio-Cortez's star power was put to the test in Middle America this weekend — and she and Sanders drew thousands of excited fans to three stops across Iowa. Audience members donned purple shirts emblazoned with the Bronx congresswoman's name and shouted "I love you!" to her.

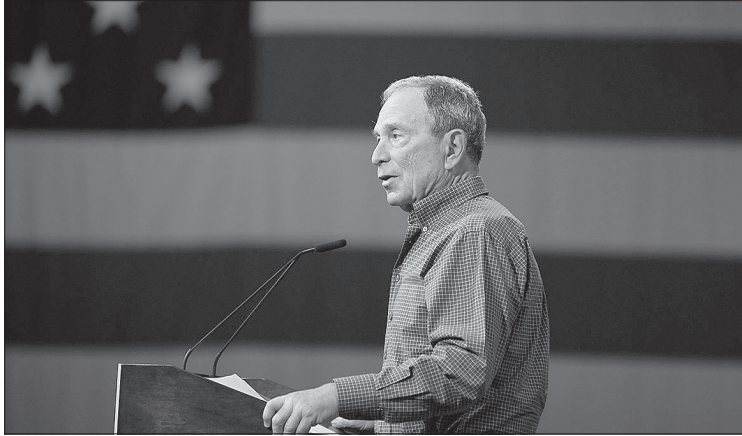
The raucous crowds demonstrated that Ocasio-Cortez can boost excitement and win media attention for Sanders' campaign in

the early-voting states, even if she comes with the downside of turning off some moderate voters. All three stops this weekend were larger than any Sanders had previously held in Iowa this year, bringing between 2,000 and 2,400 people each, according to the campaign. Sanders aides said the Council Bluffs rally drew more people than any other presidential campaign event in the state in 2019.

"Some campaigns struggle to make 1,000 face-to-face contacts in a week," boasted Misty Rebik, Sanders' Iowa state director. "We just tripled that in 24 hours."



## Bloomberg makes preparations for 2020 run



Philadelphiaobserver.com

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is preparing to file paperwork to qualify for the Democratic presidential primary in Alabama, ahead of a Friday deadline. The move would be a first step toward a national campaign, though Bloomberg has not made a final decision to run.

"We now need to finish the job and ensure that Trump is defeated — but Mike is increasingly concerned that the current field of candidates is not well positioned to do that," longtime Bloomberg aide Howard Wolfson said in an email. "If Mike runs he would offer a new choice to Democrats built on a unique record running America's biggest city, building a business from scratch and taking on some of

America's toughest challenges as a high-impact philanthropist."

Bloomberg has engaged in a will-he-or-won't-he routine for over a decade about running for president, but declined to jump in each time. Earlier this year he was exploring a bid, only to bow out after former Vice President Joe Biden made clear he would run.

"I believe I would defeat Donald Trump in a general election," Bloomberg wrote in March. "But I am clear-eyed about the difficulty of winning the Democratic nomination in such a crowded field."

"He's tired of being the almost-ran," said one former Bloomberg adviser on Thursday after the New York Post reported news of his moves. "Mortality is weighing heavily on him. This is the last time that he can run."

## Trump launches campaign to win Black support, promising to make 2020 a 'year of change'

In a turn some may find ironic, Donald Trump's team has kicked off an election season effort called "Black Voices for Trump," — in the Black cultural magnet city of Atlanta.

According to The Washington Post, on Friday, the campaign launched the "Black Voices for Trump" initiative, directing efforts toward recruiting African American Trump supporters, which kicked off with an elite, invitation-only event with a crowd of mostly Black conservatives, some of whom wore "Black Lives MAGA" hats.

Amongst the hundreds in attendance were former presidential hopeful Herman Cain, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s niece Alveda King and former state legislator Melvin Everson. After boasting about the economic gains and criminal justice reform that's taken place under his administration, Trump mused about how the Democratic party is a bad habit that Black Americans need to free themselves from.

"It's amazing that you've stayed so long, to be honest," he quipped. "It almost becomes a habit, right?"



Like it's, 'Oh, we vote for a Democrat. Nobody knows why they vote for a Democrat.'

"Under Democratic politicians, African Americans have become forgotten— literally forgotten—Americans," Trump continued, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "Under my administration, they've become forgotten no longer."

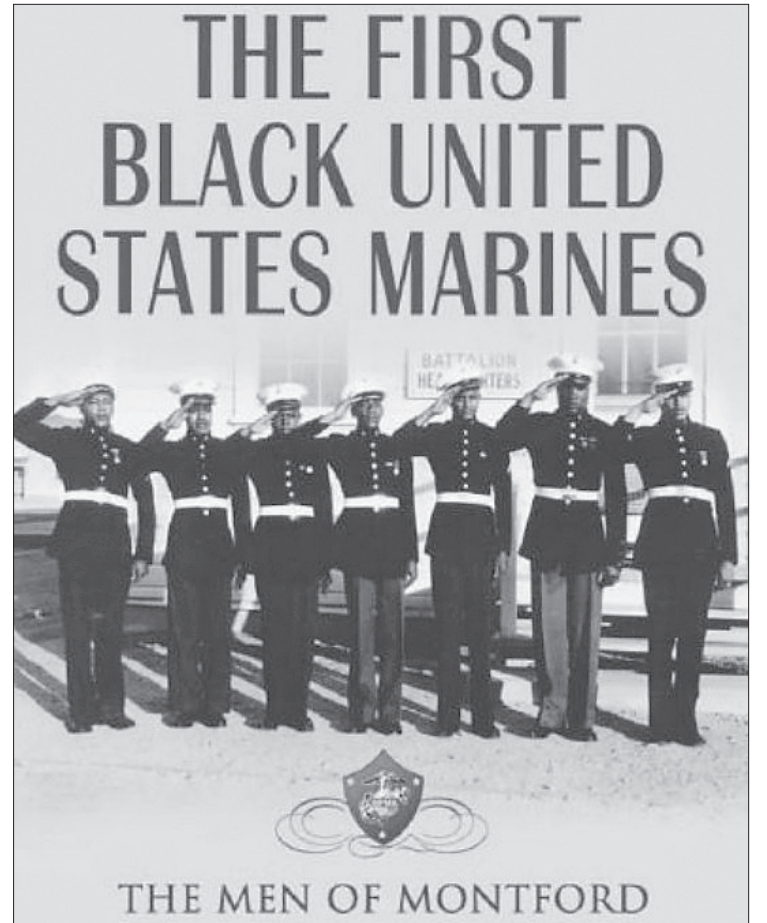
"To keep America great, we need all of you to lend your voice," Vice President Mike Pence chimed in at one point. "African Americans and every American need four more years of President Donald Trump in the White House."

## A salute to all who serve(d)

Every Veteran's Day, we salute our heroes and commemorate traditions that define those called to serve. This Veteran's Day, I commend and salute members of all branches of the US Armed Services for their exceptional service to our country and the tremendous sacrifices they continue to make each day to guarantee the safety of this great nation. Because of their sacrifice, we, the people of the United States, will not succumb to fear, be held hostage by threats terror, or attacks on our cities or government.

It is important that we recognize the tremendous sacrifices that the families of these men and women make every day. They, too, are heroes in service to our country as they endure the journey of those perilous roads with their unflinching dedication and commitment to their loved ones. These families stand as a testament to the power of the human spirit and this great nation.

I salute as well as add my voice to the collective celebration of the 244th Birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps, the 54th Anniversary of the National Montford Point Marine Association, and the 52nd Anniversary of the New York Metropolitan Chapter—of which I am a proud member. After a lifetime in public service, my experience as a Montford Point Marine has never failed to serve me. In the words of General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr, USMC



of the 24th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps: "The footprints of the Montford Point Marines were left on the beaches of Roi-Namur, Saipan, Guam, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. The tides and winds have, long ago, washed them out into the seas of history; but, "The Chosen Few"

in field shoes and canvas leggings, also left their marks in the firm concrete of Marine Corps history. And as new generations of Marines learn to march in those footprints, their cadence assumes the proud stride of the men of Montford Point.»

God Bless America and Semper Fidelis!



## Black Facebook workers write we are treated every day 'As if we do not belong here'

One year after a Black Facebook employee accused the social media giant of failing its Black employees and users, a group of Facebook employees published an anonymous memo saying the culture at the company has only gotten worse for nonwhite workers.

Published on Medium last week, an open faced letter documents a variety of micro- and full-blown aggressions employees say they have endured over the last year from managers, HR, and their white colleagues. The memo was co-written by 12 current employees, including black, Latinx, and Asian women workers.



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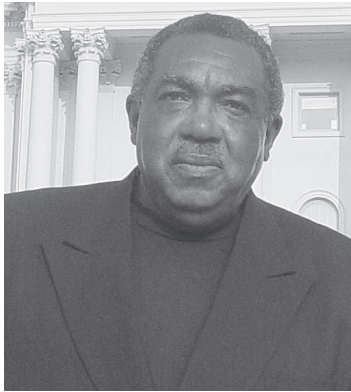
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# Editorial

# Philadelphia Observer



By A. Peter Bailey (EdneyWire.com) –

## We as Black folks must use our common sense in 2020 and beyond

As we enter the last quarter of the 400th anniversary of our African ancestors being forcibly brought to enslavement in North America, here are my suggestions for 2020 and beyond:

That we as a people stop trying to claim people who don't want to be claimed. We are not so lacking in quality people that we have to lay claim on people who regularly insist that they are not Black artists, writers, scholars, etc. but ones who just happen to be Black. It's time we let such people be what they want

to be and call them whatever they want to be called.

That Black people speak out in a loud voice against those writers, singers, film makers, playwrights and rappers who pass off their crude, sleazy and vulgar products as shining examples of being "Black." They're being "American" to sell their creations with crudeness, sleaziness and vulgarity—not being Black.

That we recognize that our collective economic resources are a potentially powerful weapon on the struggle for equal justice and equal opportunity that we rarely, if ever, use effectively. For instance there was much talk recently about banks that seldom provide loans to Black applicants. Immediately there was a call from some for a big, loud protest. Much more effective than that would be for 500 Blacks to turn up at that bank one morning and withdraw all of

their money. That's the proper use of economic power.

That Black folks will realize that we are sitting on top of a gold mine of Black history which, if properly mined, can be very productive for us both educationally and financially.

That Black people recognize that there is no more valuable member of any community than a master teacher. Much more needs to be done to show such a person how much he or she is appreciated for taking on the absolutely essential task of educating our children.

That those Black folks who are insensitive to the attempts of Native Americans to change the name of the Washington Redskins ask themselves how they would feel if the team was called the Blackskins.

That we recognize that predatory street criminals and selfish me, myself and I Black professionals

are equally destructive to efforts to build politically, economically and culturally powerful Black communities throughout the country.

That Black students reject any notion that striving for academic excellence is somehow trying to be white. The fact that even a few Black students believe such stupidity is a victory for our enemies.

That Black people refuse to attend any conference or seminar dealing with "The Problem of the Black This or That." They should attend and participate in such events that focus on "How to Build Stronger Black Families, Communities, Schools, etc." That way they will be discussing possible solutions rather than weeping and wailing and moaning and groaning with "can-you-top-this" horror stories as so often is the case in the first set of gatherings.

That we let the whole nation

know that the emphasis on Black self-help did not begin with the so-called Black conservatives. People such as Martin Delaney, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, among a host of others, were emphasizing self-help long before it was discovered by Clarence Thomas, Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell. One of the major differences between the approach of those like Malcolm X and the latter is that while advocating self-help, they didn't believe in letting the government off the hook. Black people pay much more in taxes than they get back in goods and services so they have a right to demand their share of public monies.

Finally, that we remember what my grandmother once told me when I was over-complicating a problem. "Use your common sense, Boy," she said. We as a people need to use our common sense in 2020 and beyond.

## America's veterans deserve better from for-profit colleges



By Charlene Crowell

Every year, the 11th day of the 11th month is observed as Veterans Day. It's a time to honor the 18.2 million men and women still living who served in at least one war. Though observances vary across the nation, each celebrates the American ideal of service to country.

It's also a time to remember that our nation makes promises to these patriots that must be kept.

From health care to home loans and educational benefits, our nation supports the well-being and financial security of those who have served and their families. For example, VA (Veterans Administration) home loans enable vet-

erans to have their own American Dream. And who wouldn't want a federal assurance that the nation would pick up the tab on health care?

When it comes to the transition from military to civilian life, many veterans rely upon GI benefits to financially support their efforts to receive higher education and better incomes without incurring thousands of dollars of student debt.

So why is it that veterans seeking to gain updated and marketable skills in a technology-driven economy become prey to for-profit colleges?

Major Chris Davis with the United States Marine Corps observes that these valued educational benefits are making targets out of vets.

"The GI Bill is a promise between Americans and the service members who protect our freedom from all threats," wrote Major Davis in a recent blog. "My friends and fellow veterans did not spill their blood on foreign lands to return home and be taken advantage of by collegiate con artists."

Many of the "con artists" Major Davis refers to are for-profit colleges that typically charge higher

tuition and fees for enrollment than do public or nonprofit institutions. Many of these schools have low graduation rates and/or lower earnings than those promised — even after 10 years in their respective fields. Beyond these significant concerns, since 2012, for-profit college closures have left many veteran students with few, if any, of their GI educational benefits left. College credits earned at these closed schools frequently are not accepted at other institutions.

"That VA has not invoked their authority to ban schools that engage in deceptive marketing for almost 50 years is a missed opportunity to do what is right for military-connected students in higher education," said Tanya Ang, Vice President at Veterans Education Success, a veteran advocacy organization dedicated to advancing higher education success for veterans.

"We urge VA and their Office of General Counsel to review the relevant statute and act now to protect veterans from predatory schools," added Ang.

Ang's concerns are bolstered by a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that found more than 7,000 veterans

receiving Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits were attending schools operated by Corinthian Colleges and ITT Educational Services when the institutions respectively closed with little to no notice in 2015 and 2016.

At the time of Corinthian Colleges' closure, over 72,000 students were enrolled. The next year, ITT's closure of 136 campuses affected 35,000 students. Other for-profit closures by Education Corporation of America in 2018 and The Art Institutes and Argosy University — both owned by Dream Center Education Holdings — literally added thousands more exploited veteran students.

According to the GAO report, "[V]eterans can face challenges transferring credits and continuing their education at a new school. This may make it more difficult for veterans to complete their degrees before exhausting their eligibility for Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits."

For-profit schools had lower 4-year program graduation and retention rates, according to the GAO report, compared to public and nonprofit colleges.

Under the Post 9/11 GI Bill, since 2009, the VA has paid \$94 billion in two ways. College tuition and fees are paid directly

to schools, while an additional monthly housing benefit and stipend for books is paid to vets. Those who served on active duty for 36 months can access this benefit that amounts to \$24,477 for the 2019-2020 academic year. Depending upon other circumstances, veterans could also be eligible for Pell Grants and/or Direct Federal Student Loans available through the Department of Education.

For-profit institutions that enroll veterans accessing both federal loans through the Department of Education and Post 9/11 benefits can derive nearly all of their revenues and subsequent profits from federal taxpayer dollars. Such scenarios exploit the original intent of the 90/10 rule which requires that no more than 90% of all funds received by for-profit colleges from federal sources. Post 9/11 benefits are not counted in the 90%, hence the term, "the 90/10 loophole" and the practice of targeting veterans by for-profit colleges.

It's enough to make a sensible taxpayer question whether for-profit colleges are in the business of educating veterans and other consumers or simply gouging the goodwill of taxpayers.

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## 80% of Detroit's Black entrepreneurs feel left out of city's resurgence

Philadelphiaobserver.com

**D**etroit is in the midst of an economic resurgence, yet many of the city's Black business leaders say they feel stuck on the outside looking in.

A recent survey by the National Business League shows that while the Motor City is experiencing a much-needed comeback, 80 percent of its most prominent Black entrepreneurs feel they're being left out and overlooked in the city's revitalization.

In years past, Detroit's leading Black business owners have complained about being excluded from plans and discussions about the city's resurgence.

Per the report, several of the city's Black-owned businesses "felt left out of the current economic boom and opportunities

for inclusion in the private sector development opportunities, particularly for major projects like the new hockey arena and old Hudson's site."

Another 62 percent of Detroit's Black entrepreneurs are frustrated with the city and state's leadership, particularly Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who they said has done a shoddy job of ensuring they "get a fair shot" at snagging state government contracts and other development opportunities.

Similar frustrations arose in 2014 after The New York Times published an article highlighting small business success in the Corktown neighborhood one year after Detroit filed for the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history. Missing from those success stories, however,

was the role of Black businesses in helping the city get back on its feet.

U.S. Census Bureau figures from 2007 showed the city was teeming with Black entrepreneurs — over 32,000 to be exact. Much like today, however, Black business owners said they felt largely excluded from conversations around Detroit's revitalization and struggled for access to funds and other resources.

"I think, for the most part, Black-owned businesses aren't getting a piece of the pie," local bookstore owner Janet Jones told HuffPost at the time. "What about the people who have been doing the hard work of living and working and having business in Detroit for the last 20 years?"

(Photo by Uli Deck/picture alliance via Getty Images)

## Antigua demands Harvard pay reparations for school's past ties to slavery

Philadelphiaobserver.com

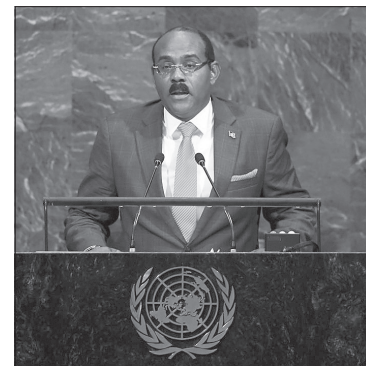
**T**he government of Antigua and Barbuda is calling on Harvard to make amends for its historical ties to slavery — the labor and profit from which led to the establishment of its elite law school.

Gaston Browne, prime minister of the twin-island Caribbean nation, sent a letter to Harvard President Lawrence S. Bacow last month demanding the Ivy League institution pay reparations as acknowledgement of the Antiguan slave labor contribution, according to The Harvard Crimson.

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Gaston Browne says Harvard University has failed to acknowledge its ties to slavery. (Photo: JEWEL SAMAD/AFP via Getty Images)

"Reparations from Harvard would compensate for its development on the backs of our people," Browne wrote in the Oct. 30 letter. "Reparation is not aid; it's not a gift; it is compensation to correct the injustices of the past and restore equity. Harvard should be in the forefront of this effort."

This isn't the first time the Antiguan government has pressed the university to atone for past



with slavery. The Caribbean nation previously reached out to Harvard, once in 2016 and again in 2018, calling for restitution. The latest push comes after what Browne called Harvard's refusal to acknowledge its ties to Antigua, especially at a time when other institutions have taken steps to atone for their slave past.

In his letter, the prime minister highlighted that several institutions of higher learning, including Princeton Theological Seminary and the University of Glasgow in the U.K. have already committed payment to Antigua and Barbuda for their ties to slavery in the Caribbean.

"We consider Harvard's failure to acknowledge its obligations to Antigua and the stain it bears from benefiting from the blood of our people as shocking, if not immoral," Browne opined.

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# On the scene

## Sterling K. Brown stars in 'Frozen 2' which will melt your heart

By Audrey J. Bernard

**H**OLLYWOOD, CA — Award winning actor Sterling K. Brown brought along his adorable family to the world premiere of Disney's "Frozen 2" at Hollywood's Dolby Theatre on Thursday, November 7, 2019 in Hollywood, California. Brown was also joined by his co-stars, VIPs and top brass from the Walt Disney Animation Studios. "Frozen 2" opens nationwide on Friday, November 22, 2019. (Photos by Alberto E. Rodriguez/Getty Images North America for Disney)



Actors Sterling K. Brown, Alfred Molina



The cast and crew of "Frozen 2" (L-R) Songwriter Robert Lopez, Kristen Anderson-Lopez, Composer Christophe Beck, actors Jason Ritter, Alfred Molina, Sterling K. Brown, Jonathan Groff, Idina Menzel, Kristen Bell, Josh Gad, Evan Rachel Wood, Martha Plimpton, Rachel Matthews, Hadley Gannaway, Mattea Conforti, Jeremy Sisto, Producer Peter Del Vecho, Director Chris Buck and Director/writer/Walt Disney Animation Studios CCO Jennifer Lee



(L-R) Actress Idina Menzel, Actor Josh Gad, Co-Chairman and Chief Creative Officer of The Walt Disney Studios Alan Horn, Actress Kristen Bell



(L-R) Producer Peter Del Vecho, Director Chris Buck, Director/writer/Walt Disney Animation Studios CCO Jennifer Lee, The Walt Disney Company Chairman and CEO Bob Iger, and Co-Chairman and Chief Creative Officer of The Walt Disney Studios Alan Horn



Sterling K. Brown and his family attended the "Frozen 2" premiere at Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California, on Thursday, November 7, 2019 in Hollywood, California. The actor, who serves as the voice of Lieutenant Mattias, had his wife, Ryan Michelle Bathe, and sons, Andrew and Amaré, with him at the screening.



Actress Faithe C. Herman attends the premiere and is pictured with Anna, Olaf and Elsa



Co-Chairman, The Walt Disney Studios Alan Bergman, Actors Sterling K. Brown and Josh Gad



The Browns on the red carpet



# On the scene

## Grammy-nominated recording artist Deborah Cox does it the 'Easy Way'

Posted by Audrey J. Bernard

**D**EBORAH COX possesses one of the most powerful and versatile contemporary voices of our time. The Grammy Award nominated, multi-platinum R & B/Pop recording artist and actress hits an emotional core and the charts with the new R&B single, "Easy Way." The triple-threat artist returns with an impressive debut at No. 2 on TIDAL's streaming chart, and the single is catching fire among fans, digital and streaming sites including Apple, Spotify, and Pandora, among others. "Easy Way" is written by hit-maker Rico Love, and produced by Rico and DTown. Rico production credits include Usher, Beyoncé, Diddy, Chris Brown, Keri Hilson, Fergie, and Fantasia.

While working on her seventh album recording, scheduled for release in 2020, Cox is overwhelmed with the response she has received on the new single. "My purpose has always been to speak about

commitment and unconditional love," she explains. "My mission is not to define it but rather to help one understand that self-love is where the journey begins. I don't think people consider that. I find that people fantasize about love but don't understand that if you want something to work, you have to fight for it, and you have to fight for it daily. I believe that's why 'Easy Way' resonates with so many people."

Rico Love draws inspiration about working with Cox on his new single from a quote he references by prolific writer E.M. Forster, "To make us feel small in the right way is a function of art, people can only make us feel small in the wrong way," which succinctly sums up his collaboration with Cox. "I experience feeling small in the most amazing way while working with my dear friend, Deborah Cox," says Rico. "I am fortunate that another one of my dreams came true. To have her trust me to be the practitioner of this art has blessed me to my core."



Deborah Cox

From R&B to Pop to Jazz, the "Nobody's Supposed To Be Here" songstress has released six career albums, including her debut album, *Deborah Cox*, followed by *One Wish*, *The Morning After*,

*Remixed*, *Destination Moon*, and *The Promise*. With an impressive career in entertainment, Deborah not only scaled the music charts with six top 20 Billboard magazine R&B singles and an impressive 13

No. 1 hits on Billboard's Hot Dance Club Play chart, but she has also carved out her place within the worlds of Broadway, television, film, and fashion.

Last seen as Rachel Marron in the national sold-out tour, *The Bodyguard: The Musical*, Cox has continued her work on screen and stage in a number of key roles including the voice of Whitney Houston in Lifetime's biopic *Whitney*, directed by Angela Bassett; and her starring role in the Asolo Repertory Theatre musical production *Josephine*, among others.

The Canadian-born star continues her longstanding commitment to various social issues in the LGBTQ community and has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the Out Music Pillar Award and the Harvey Milk Foundation recognized her at the Diversity Honors ceremony for her efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the LGBTQ community. For more information on Deborah Cox, please visit [www.DeborahCox.com](http://www.DeborahCox.com).



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# Health

## Racism, stress and your health

By Glenn Ellis(TriceEdneyWire.com) –

It's amazing how many people become uncomfortable as soon as the word racism comes up.

As writer, Nadra Kareem Nittle, concisely sums it up, "Say the word "racism" and many people might imagine someone in a white hood. However, discrimination is much more complex and comes in different types. In reality, ordinary people perpetuate racism daily."

When thinking about racism, remember it includes:

**Individual or internalized racism** - It is when one holds negative ideas about his/her own culture, even if unknowingly.

**Interpersonal racism** - It is the holding of negative attitudes towards a different race or culture.

**Institutional racism** - Benefits are structured to the advantage of powerful groups at the expense of other groups. Jim Crow laws and redlining practices are two examples of institutional racism.

**Structural racism** - Examples of structural racism include power inequalities, unequal access to opportunities, and differing policy outcomes by race. Because these effects are reinforced across multiple institutions, the root causes of structural racism are difficult to isolate. Structural racism is cumulative, pervasive, and durable.

Some racism is so subtle that neither victim nor perpetrator may entirely understand what is going on. There is a term which describes this particular form of racism: racial microaggression.

What does this have to do with health? It all begins with an understanding of the link between stress and inflammation.

The immune system is an intricate

network consisting of processes, systems, cells, tissues, and organs that work together to defend the body against attacks by "foreign" invaders.

When stress becomes ongoing and uncontrollable it then becomes dangerous to our health and well-being.

Our ongoing survival depends on our ability to respond to any kind of infection, stress, and/or injury. Any of these threats triggers an immune system response to fight off these "invaders" and repair damaged tissues. A "deployment" of specific group of genes in the immune system are key to this defense process. Inflammation is a sign that those genes are working to counter the threat or repair the damage.

Inflammation serves to protect an organism from a health threat. First, let me say that stress has both its benefits and its downsides. The physical stress on our muscles or the cardiovascular system from exercise to maintain fitness, or the level of mental needed to take an exam in school, or the stress of paying attention while driving during bad weather. But if someone feels under threat for long periods of time, their health may suffer significantly with chronic inflammation.

A team of USC and UCLA scientists has found that racist experiences increase inflammation in African American individuals, raising their risk of chronic illness, according to the study published in the Psychoneuroendocrinology Journal. The study confirms what many of us had pretty much concluded that was a connection between discrimination and health outcomes, we just never knew how it affected health.

Turns out that racial discrimination appears to trigger an inflammatory response among African Americans at the cellular level. The basis for this concept was already



established in earlier research that found this process took place in the inflammatory responses for people in socially-marginalized those experiencing chronic loneliness, poverty, PTSD, and other types of adverse life situations.

All of this leads us back to the concept of racial microaggression. It is the culminate, institutionalized, ever-present, everyday insults, indignities, and demeaning messages sent to black people by well-intentioned white people who are unaware (maybe) of the hidden messages being sent by them.

The crazy thing is that a black person is in somewhat of a Catch-22 when it comes to racial microaggression.

If you confront the perpetrator, they will outright deny any racist meaning behind their words or actions. After all, they are (presumably) not even aware of what they did! So, the black person is forced to either create a confrontation, or just move on.

Either way, the damage is done.

Once the full-blown stress response is activated, there is little you can do to override it because the hormones being secreted, such as cortisol and adrenalin, trigger a chain of unstoppable events inside of cells. The effect of the inflammatory response by the immune system to the stressor is underway: heart disease; high blood pressure; diabetes; depression; cancer; and so on, and so on. Ironically, all things that impact the health of black disproportionately; or is it irony?

Of course, any, or all, of these conditions are absolutely possible without being a victim of racial microaggression. You can be sure that, racism or not, inflammation is in play with any of these diseases. The research from the USC and UCLA scientists shows that racism may account for as much as 50 percent of the heightened inflammation among African Americans.

It's kinda like the old adage, "when white folks get a cold, black folks get pneumonia"!

With all the talk about addressing disparities, health inequities, and social determinants of health, it's time to acknowledge the science and the research that makes it clear that it racial microaggression is real, and it is deadly, particularly to blacks.

It's important to keep shining a light on the harm these behaviors inflict, no matter how black people decide to handle a given encounter.

Remember, I'm not a doctor. I just sound like one. Take good care of yourself and live the best life possible!

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Rohingya refugees

## Smallest nation in Africa extends hand to fellow Muslims in Myanmar

(GIN)

Few countries are standing up to Myanmar, formerly Burma, for its mistreatment of the Muslim community known as Rohingya. This week, the smallest nation in Africa came to the defense of the persecuted minority, filing a lawsuit that charges Myanmar with genocide.

Cast out of Myanmar, where they claim citizenship, the Rohingya Muslims found temporary shelter in Bangladesh but that country is now unwilling to support the more than 671,000 refugees.

The Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar face atrocities committed by security forces, include mass killings, sexual violence, and widespread arson. Military and civilian officials have repeatedly denied the charges.

Effectively denied citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship

Law, Rohingyas are one of the largest stateless populations in the world.

"The aim is to get Myanmar to account for its action against its own people—the Rohingya", Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou told a news conference in The Hague, where the U.N. court is based.

"It is a shame for our generation that we do nothing while genocide is unfolding right under our own eyes."

Both Gambia and Myanmar are signatories to the 1948 Genocide Convention, which not only prohibits states from committing genocide but also compels all signatory states to prevent and punish the crime of genocide.

"Gambia has found a way to turn the international community's handwringing over the Rohingya into action," said Param-Preet Singh, associate director of

the international justice program of Human Rights Watch.

Tambadou, explaining why Gambia had taken the initiative, said that visiting Rohingya in Bangladesh had reminded him of his work as a prosecutor for the tribunal set up to try those responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

"I thought this was not right and the world cannot just stand by and watch this happen again," he said, adding the Organization of Islamic Cooperation had asked Gambia to look into how to bring Myanmar to justice over the matter.

In its 46-page filing to the International Court of Justice, The Gambia says Myanmar's actions were "genocidal in character" and included killing, causing serious bodily and mental harm and imposing measures to prevent births.

## Kenyan prisoners study law, receive degrees, have hope for early release

(GIN)

Often, the only images of prisons in Africa that we know are the miserable places where faces press against barred windows, with inmates huddled together looking out desperately for someone to help.

The African Prisons Project, started in Uganda 10 years ago and now offered in Kenya, would like to change that. They offer a program to equip prisoners with legal skills and ensure that they get timely justice.

John Karanja, condemned to die many years ago for robbery with violence before his sentence was commuted to life behind bars, is one beneficiary of the Project. He expressed optimism that he will be leaving prison soon, thanks to his law degree.

"I had lost hope that I would ever leave prison until I started studying law. I had exhausted all my pleas and was resigned to my fate behind bars for life. But I have gained legal knowledge that made me look at my charges afresh. I have already launched a petition in court for my case and I have prepared enough to ensure my acquittal," he said.

Legal Aid manager John Muthuri said Kenyan prisons are filled with inmates who do not deserve to be there.

"In Kenya, there are only

about 8,000 lawyers who are supposed to serve more than 54,000 prisoners. This translates to about 80 per cent of inmates who suffer behind bars for lack of legal representation," said Muthuri.

Currently 10 convicts in Kenya have graduated with law degrees after four years of study behind bars.

After scoring well on a test, one must complete a three-week training as a paralegal officer to offer legal advice to fellow inmates. The degree is issued by the University of London.

Peter Ouko, a law student in a maximum security prison, explained the purpose of his studies was "to get justice" but also to help his fellow colleagues "who are going through worse times than me." Already they have achieved 400 releases, he said in an interview with CitizenNews.co.ke. "They having better self-representation in court, we type up their appeals. Of course their convictions may still be upheld,

Ouko is free to talk through the "campus" which has plantings and some trees. His room is a large dormitory which he shares with several other confined people.

"The programme equips one with top legal skills. It has been highly gratifying to help inmates who can't afford



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# Culture

## 'Jesus is King' is Kanye West's ninth consecutive No. 1 album debut: Billboard



Philadelphiaobserver.com

Rapper and producer Kanye West's ninth studio album, "Jesus Is King," has debuted on Billboard's Top 200 albums chart at No. 1, the magazine reported Sunday.

The popularity of West's new gospel album, released Oct. 25, places him in a tie with the rapper Eminem for the most consecutive No. 1 debuts in the history of the chart.

Help us tell more of the stories that matter from voices that too often remain unheard.

The Billboard Top 200 ranks the most popular albums of the week, based on data collected by Nielsen Music. The rapper Jay-Z still holds the record for the most No. 1 debuts on the Billboard Top 200, with a total of 14, although

they were not consecutive.

West also made his first ever appearance on Billboard's religious charts, opening at No. 1 on both the Top Christian albums and Top Gospel albums tallies, the magazine said.

Reflections on Christianity have been part of West's music since his 2004 debut album "The College Dropout." His 2013 album "Yeezus" featured a single titled "I Am a God" that identified God as a featured performer.

Still, "Jesus is King" is West's first album that focuses solely on Christian themes. During a surprise appearance on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" last month, the musician declared, "I now have given my life to Jesus Christ, and I work for God."

The 11-track album is free of curse words and full of religious references. The rapper reportedly asked everyone working on the project to fast and abstain from premarital sex.

The album also hints at criticism that's been levied against West, who supports President Donald Trump and has made controversial political statements, like suggesting that slavery was a choice. In "Closed On Sunday," he refers repeatedly to the Christian-owned fast food chain Chick-fil-A, which is popular among conservative Christians because it doesn't open on Sundays and its charitable arm donates to anti-LGBTQ causes.

## Academy criticized for disqualifying Nigerian film entry for its English dialogue

Philadelphiaobserver.com

People on social media have expressed disappointment that Nigeria's Oscar entry, the film "Lionheart," has been disqualified to compete in the International Feature Film category.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced earlier this week that it disqualified "Lionheart" in that category since most of the dialogue in the film is in English, The Wrap reported.

The rules for the International Feature category state that a submission must be a "feature-length motion picture produced outside the United States of America with a predominantly non-English dialogue track."

As The New York Times noted, the Academy had disqualified the 2015 entry from Afghanistan, "Utopia," citing the same rule.



But the decision to disqualify "Lionheart" is now facing criticism, with commentators pointing out that English is the official language in Nigeria as a result of colonization.



## Meet the first Black Miss Mississippi pageant winner in 67 years

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Asya Branch (@AsyaDanielle), the winner of Miss Mississippi 2018, has most recently won the Miss Mississippi USA pageant to become the first Black woman to ever win the crown in the organization's 67-year history. She is set to represent Mississippi in the Miss USA 2020 pageant.

Aside from the beauty, Asya, a native of Booneville, MS, has got the brains too. She graduated from the University of Mississippi and also began taking courses at Harvard University when she was just 17 years old.

Asya hopes that with her new platform as the Miss Mississippi USA, she could inspire children of incarcerated parents. She had a firsthand experience of how challenging it was as she shared her father has been incarcerated for almost half of her life.

"I am a daughter, a sister, a scholar, a community and campus leader, a nanny for a special needs child and my dad is in jail. Talk about getting the attention of a classroom full of rowdy children," Asya said, according to her biography on the Miss America website.

"The Miss America organi-

zation has empowered me to embrace my past while helping others achieve their brightest futures. I am grateful to have the opportunity to help others realize they are not defined or doomed by the actions of others but instead can achieve successes beyond their wildest imaginations," she stated. "Our country cannot afford to ignore the aftermath of a family's shared sentence."

Asya will represent Mississippi in the Miss USA pageant. The winner of Miss USA will then represent the United States in the Miss Universe pageant.

## Trevor Noah to white people: 'Rap music does not give you a pass to use N-word'

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Trevor Noah hit up "The Breakfast Club" Wednesday and spoke candidly about who can use the N-word as it relates to rap music.

"In America, there's a fundamental confusion that happens in and around hip-hop," Noah said. "Some people don't understand the sensitivities that they need to have in and around words that they use. ... As Black people, it's like the one perk to the oppression is getting the N-word in a weird way."

"Everyone knows how to censor themselves, especially when it comes to hip-hop," he concluded. "I know that it's Black people who should be deciding the thing [about who can or cannot say the N-word]. ... But if you are not Black, I can save you a lot of stress in your life by just saying don't do it."

Noah's comments come one week after actress Gina Rodriguez faced backlash over her use of the N-word.

Rodriguez, who is of Puerto Rican heritage, posted a video on Instagram last week of herself singing the N-word. In the clip, the "Jane the Virgin" actress sings along to the Fugees hit "Ready or Not" while getting her makeup



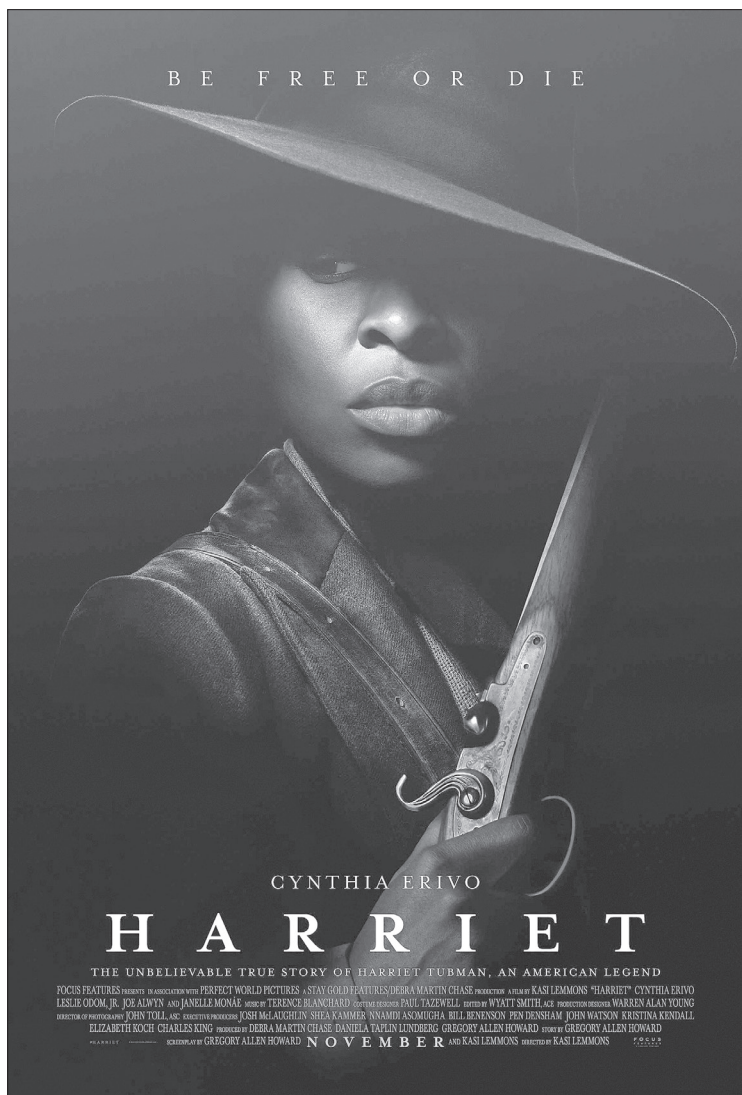
done — but folks quickly slammed Gina for dropping the N-bomb during Lauryn Hill's verse.

She later deleted the video and apologized on Instagram.

"Hey, what's up everybody. I just wanted to reach out and apologize," she said in her apology video. "I am sorry. I am sorry if I offended anyone by singing along to the Fugees, to a song that I love, that I grew up on. I love Lauryn Hill. And I really am sorry if I offended you."



## Harriet movie features a model of courage for today



By Dr. Barbara Reynolds (TriceEdneyWire.com) –

For a nation built on truth, abolitionist, freedom fighter, ex-slave Harriet Tubman should have the acclaim of a Paul Revere, or Patrick Henry whose courageous lines “Give me Liberty or Give me Death” guided the American Revolution.

Tubman, whose battle cry was to “live free or die” and revolt, guided another revolution. It was to end slavery which changed the color, content and character of America today.

Finally, through the newly released epic movie Harriet, this revolutionary warrior, born into slavery in 1822 in Dorchester County, Md., has emerged from the back alley of history to take her rightful place as a larger than life action figure, a true American hero. Unlike the heroes spun from Marvel comic strips or the Terminator franchise, Harriet Tubman is not, fake, fantasy or make believe although her expansive accomplishments are more real than can be imagined.

Don't think you are going to see the serene, sedate elderly Harriet of our textbooks. This is the Harriet of her youth, jaunting up rocky cliffs, jumping off bridges and even shooting a White slave owner with her pistol.

Through the skillful talent of British-born actress, Cynthia Erivo, the film—to be released Nov. 1—features Tubman not only as yesterday's heroine, but as a mod-

el of courage for today. Risking certain death if captured, often with a pistol in her waistband, she escaped from bondage on Maryland's Eastern shore and returned often in disguise to rescue more than 70 family and fellow slaves. She became a leader in the anti-slavery Underground Railroad, the women's suffrage movement in her long-standing struggle against systemic gender and racial inequality.

During the Civil War, she served as a nurse, scout and spy for the Union army and became the first woman to lead an armed expedition in the war guiding the raid at Combahee Ferry, which liberated more than 700 slaves. Unfortunately, her heroism did not guard her from racism as she was originally denied the pension benefits granted to White soldiers.

In heart-aching detail the movie does not sanitize the horror of slavery; nor does it gloss over the power of God in her life. Scenes of blood-soaked whips, scarred backs of enslaved men and women, screaming children torn from their families to be sold by Whites trading them as if they were dispensing sows from a pig pen—it's all there. But there is another story that shines through, one of Black love, Black loyalty and a determination of the enslaved to live free or die and the eventual embrace of the long-awaited freedom. It's all there.

In the movie, we see Harriet after learning she is to be sold South, which rumors say is more brutal than the plantations on

Maryland's Eastern shore, leave her family and the love of her life, her husband John Tubman, traveling 100 miles alone to freedom in Philadelphia through the aid of the Underground Railroad.

Though the term railroad might prompt visions of nice cushy seats, this railroad Harriet traveled was a harsh pathway through snake-filled marshes, woods, and deep rivers. Often, the flight of this woman known to some as the SHEMOSES was made even more treacherous as armed posses with baying hounds chased her to collect the rewards for her capture. But they never caught her. She once boasted that her railroad never ran off track and she never lost a passenger.

In the movie she declared she had only the North Star and we see her on her knees looking up to the heavens in deep communication with the God she depended upon to shield her from her enemies.

My favorite scene is when the only choice for a band of freeing slaves was to either turn back or cross a treacherous river. While her family cowered, frozen on the riverbank for fear of following her

and drowning, she lifted her pistol above her head wading in the deep water as she prayed aloud. Slowly the waters receded; as her feet touched dry land her family members jumped in and crossed over as well.

The two-hour epic directed by filmmaker Kasi Lemmons who also wrote and directed Eve's Bayou, sends the audience away with an inspirational song, entitled, “Stand up”, co-written by Joshua Campbell and the film's leading lady Erivo.

The song sets just the right tone for Harriet enthusiasts to continue celebrating Harriet. President Obama had selected her to become the first person of color to be represented on any of the nation's currency, replacing Andrew Jackson on the new \$20 bill. Not surprisingly in June 2019 the Trump administration has delayed the launch.

Nevertheless, in Maryland Harriet enthusiasts have other ways to celebrate her. Painted on the side wall of the Harriet Tubman Museum & Education Center in downtown Cambridge, Maryland—just a few miles from

where Tubman grew up, is a 14' X 28' mural featuring Tubman offering an outstretched hand.

Not long ago, I placed my hand in her outstretched hand, thanking her for giving me the inspiration some 20 years ago to start a ministry at Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, under the leadership of Bishop Alfred Owens. Its purpose was to inspire people to have the courage and faith to break the chains of any addiction keeping them from living their best lives. In the ensuing years, scores have broken free following in her footsteps of ending their personal bondage.

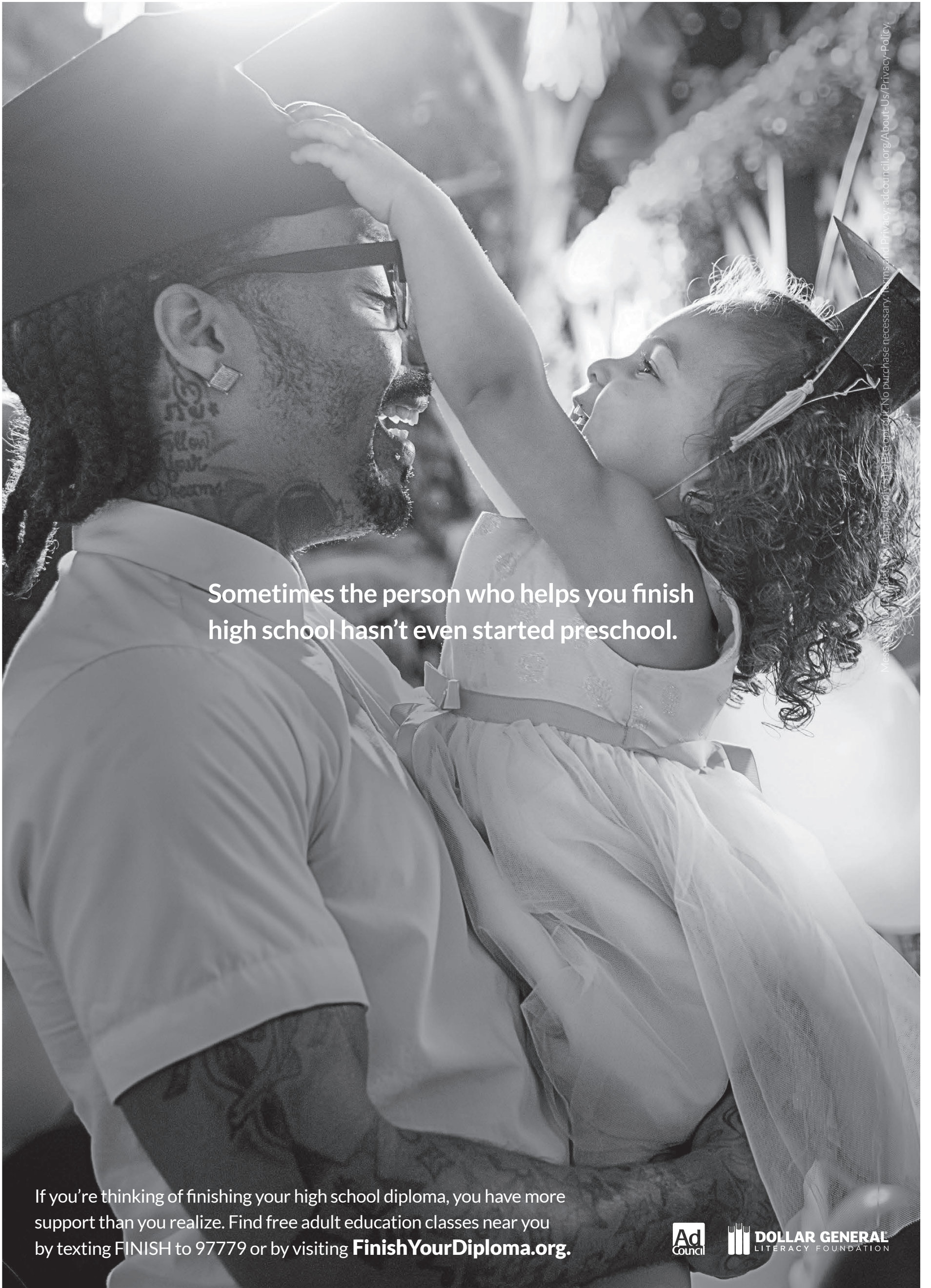
In March 2017, the Maryland Park Service and Maryland government opened the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park & Visitor Center in the heart of the Choptank River Region where Harriet grew up. It's a 17-acre facility that has already been visited by nearly 200,000 guests from all 50 states and over 60 countries. In her honor the Service has also established the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn, NY.

Tubman is the only U.S. woman to be honored by the Service with two parks.



Dr. Barbara Reynolds at the mural painted by artist Michael Rosato in Cambridge, Md. where Tubman grew up.





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