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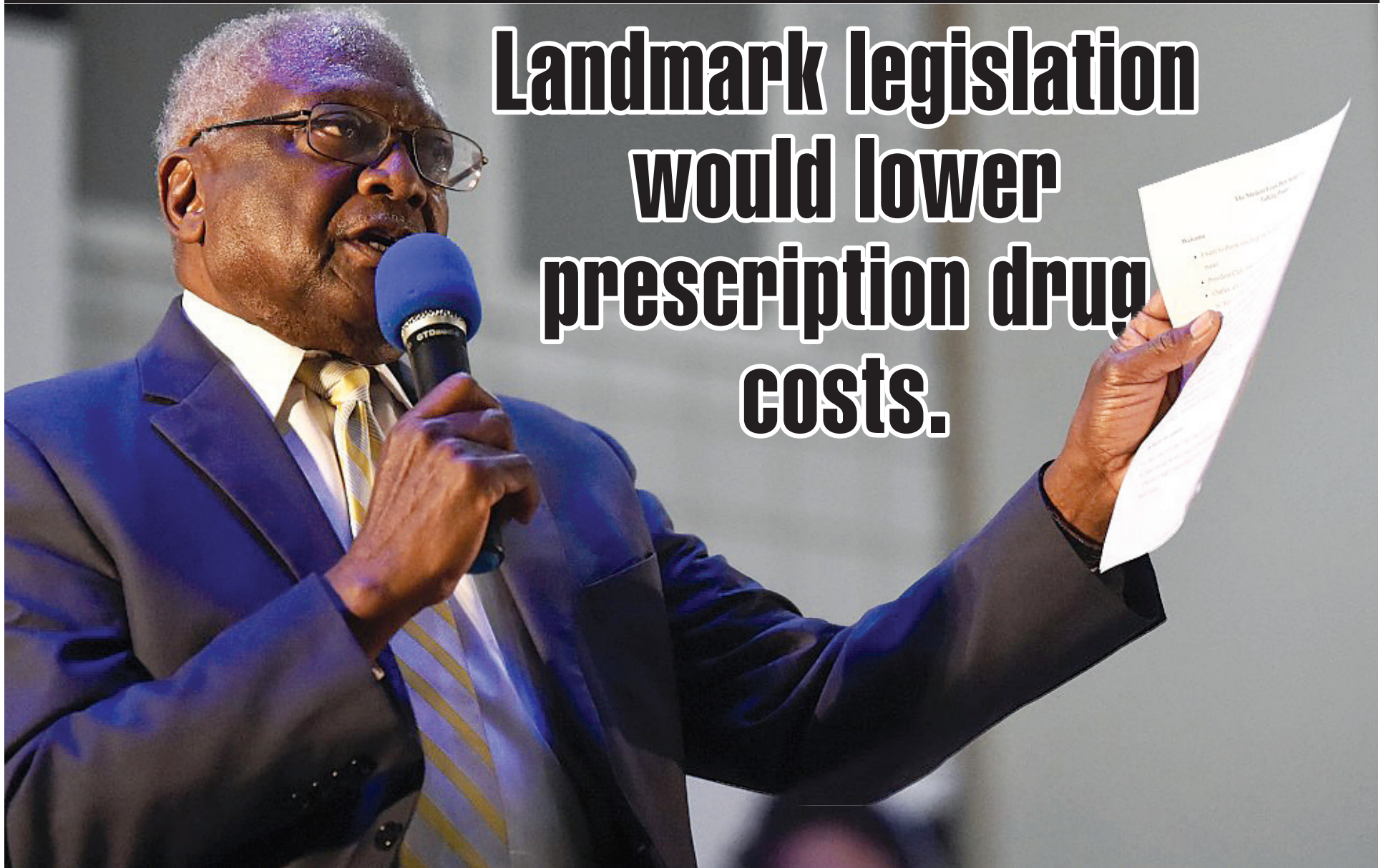
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LANDMARK LEGISLATION

**Rep. Elijah Cummings H.R.3,
Lower Drug Costs Now Act passes the House**



**Landmark legislation
would lower
prescription drug
costs.**

Rep Clyburn hails its passage. Cost savings would be used to fund Clyburn's H.R. 1943 – Community Health Center and Primary Care Workforce Expansion Act of 2019, and other benefits, page3



Black drivers in California are stopped and searched at higher rates than whites

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Black drivers in Los Angeles are disproportionately stopped and searched by police officers at nearly three times the per capita rate of white drivers, according to a new report by the state's Department of Justice.

While Blacks make up about 6% of the population, they accounted for 15% of all traffic stops across California in the second half of 2018, "while White and Latino drivers were stopped at rates proportional to their populations," cbs8.com writes.

The report was released Thursday from the California Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, an entity reportedly comprised of leaders from law enforcement, community groups and attorneys who are responsible for advising

the Attorney General's Office about racial profiling and traffic stops.

The annual report is required under the Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015, and, according to The Huffington Post, these latest findings highlight the racial statistics of about "1.8 million traffic stops from July through December 2018 from the eight largest law enforcement agencies in the state," the outlet writes — including jurisdictions in Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, and California Highway Patrol.

Officers targeted Black people the most due to "reasonable suspicion" but found contraband on white drivers at a higher rate than any other racial group. Asians as a whole were stopped the least when compared to Middle Eastern or South Asian drivers.



Queen agrees 'transition' to new role for Harry and Meghan

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Senior royals have been in talks about Prince Harry and Meghan's role after they said they wanted to "step back".

In a statement, the Queen said the talks at Sandringham,

which also involved the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, had been "very constructive".

"My family and I are entirely supportive of Harry and Meghan's desire to create a new life as a young family," she said.

Ocasio-Cortez stockpiling campaign cash after first year in congress

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez raised nearly \$2 million over the final three months of last year, according to the star House freshman's campaign.

Ocasio-Cortez's sizable cash haul — \$1.97 million in the fourth quarter of 2019 and over \$5.3 million for the entire year — is one of the largest revealed so far among members of Congress, and the size of her fundraising base will likely stoke speculation about the New Yorker's ambitions.

She is expected to report entering 2020 with \$3 million cash on hand, according to her



campaign, even though she is running for reelection in an overwhelmingly blue district. But POLITICO recently reported that whispers have already started about a presidential run for the 30-year-old, and there's also talk of a potential Senate run in 2022 or 2024.

Ocasio-Cortez's campaign said she raised an additional \$85,000 for other Democrats during the fourth quarter, including presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, whom she has endorsed, and California Reps. Mike Levin and Katie Porter. The totals are subject to slight changes by the Jan. 31 reporting deadline, her campaign said.

Sanders picks up coveted union endorsement in New Hampshire



spent months fighting for it.

The decision, as related by several people with knowledge of it, comes one month before the state's primary contest and ends a long battle — both public and behind-the-scenes — to get the state employees union on board with a campaign. SEIU Local 1984 represents more than 10,000 people and is widely regarded as having the most sophisticated political operation, routinely driving its members both to volunteer and vote for candidates it has endorsed.

"This is a really, really big deal for Bernie," said Kurt Ehrenberg, a labor leader who previously worked on the Sanders campaign, when told of the decision. "It's very meaningful because it means the support from 2016 is again solidifying around him at a crucial time. The endorsement is a huge part of painting that mosaic which brought Bernie such a huge victory last time around."

CONCORD, N.H. — Sen. Bernie Sanders has picked up the endorsement of one of New Hampshire's largest and most influential unions, POLITICO has learned, dealing a blow to other Democratic presidential campaigns that have

Rep Ilhan Omar talks about 'trauma' of war after GOP lawmaker dismissed her PTSD

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), who fled war in Somalia as a child, is speaking out about the trauma of war for civilians and challenging the notion that post-traumatic stress disorder is an issue that only soldiers face, after Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.) appeared to dismiss her mention of her own PTSD as "offensive" to military veterans.

"The trauma of war is not only felt by the soldier on the battlefield. It is felt by the child huddled under the bed as bombs go off outside her window," Omar, whose family lived in a refugee camp in Kenya before moving to the United States at age 12, tweeted Thursday. "I am that child and here in Congress I will always speak out against war."

Her tweets came as tensions have been escalating between the U.S. and Iran in recent days.



After President Donald Trump ordered the killing of Iranian military leader Qassem Soleimani last week, Iran retaliated by attacking

military bases in Iraq that house U.S. soldiers. (The House passed a largely symbolic vote Thursday to limit Trump's war powers.)



Black business owners denied business loans despite having excellent credit

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

In America, your skin color determines the privileges you get, including getting loans from banks. You may just be having a good credit score, but still, miss a loan simply because your skin is dark. That's exactly what's happening in America at the moment. Even with a credit score as high as 760, black business owners can't qualify for loans with any bank. If this isn't

pure racism in broad daylight, then what can we call it?

Many black business owners are already feeling the pinch, and they're wondering banks are denying them loans despite having good credit scores. Based on the most recent data available from the U.S. Federal Reserve, Black business owners are denied loans by banks more frequently than any other racial group, St. Louis Public Radio reported.

Among business owners

who've been denied loans is a St. Louis-based couple, Freddie Lee James Jr. and his wife Deborah. The couple says that they're receiving no loan from the bank despite bringing in an annual profit of about \$200,000.

"We have 750-760 credit score. ... We pay all our debts. We have no problems with that. But they were saying that the sauce business is not generating enough capital to their standards," said James.

Majority whip Clyburn hails passage of H.R. 3 landmark legislation to lower prescription drug costs

NPA NEWSWIRE — "This is an important step toward providing American consumers more accessible and affordable prescription drugs," Congressman Clyburn said. "In the United States, our drug prices are nearly four times higher than in similar countries, and this legislation will provide real price reductions that will put significant money back in the pocket of consumers."

Also includes Clyburn effort to expand community health centers
WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn hailed House passage of H.R. 3, the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act. This landmark legislation gives Medicare the power to negotiate directly with drug companies and extends those lower prices to Americans with private insurance too.

"This is an important step toward providing American consumers more accessible and affordable prescription drugs," Congressman Clyburn said. "In the United States, our drug prices are nearly four times higher than in similar countries, and this legislation will provide real price reductions that will put significant money back in the pocket of consumers."

Negotiating lower prescription



drug prices has the added benefit of cost savings to American taxpayers. A portion of those savings will be reinvested in the National Institutes of Health to research new cures and treatments. Cost savings will also support an expansion of Medicare benefits to cover dental, vision, and hearing needs and sets a \$2,000 out-of-pocket limit on prescription drug costs for those on Medicare.

In addition, cost savings will be used to fund provisions of Congressman Clyburn's H.R. 1943 – Community Health Center and Primary Care Workforce Expansion Act of 2019. H.R. 3 will provide a \$10 billion funding boost to community health centers, which serve 28 million Americans in communities across the United States, including over 350,000 veterans, 8 million children, and 1.4 million homeless patients.

This \$10 billion includes \$5

billion for capital improvements and construction to expand the footprint of community health centers and an additional \$5 billion in funding over the next five years for community health center grants, allowing them to serve more people, including Americans living in rural areas, where half of the Centers are located.

"Providing robust funding to build on the success of community health centers is critically important to providing quality health care in hard-to-reach communities," Congressman Clyburn continued. "In my district alone, where three rural hospitals have closed, there are eight federally-funded community health centers working to serve almost 190,000 patients."

H.R. 3 passed the House on a bipartisan vote, 230-192, and was sent to the Senate for consideration.

\$10 Billion, 10 years later: Haiti shows little progress

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Sunday marked the 10th anniversary of the Haiti Earthquake. On Tuesday, January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the country just before 5 PM. Depending upon the statistics submitted, the number of deaths ranged from 100,000 to over 300,000 lives lost as a result of the devastating earthquake. An estimated \$10 billion was donated to rebuild the country. Sadly, the current President of Haiti, Jovenel Moise, recently admitted there is little progress to report.

We can't be everywhere, nor can we do everything, but we cannot forget Haiti. Over the last week, there have been reports of



additional damage being done to Puerto Rico and other Caribbean nations and islands.

This is in the wake of awful hurricanes. The horrific effects of wildfires from California to the continent of Australia are still top of mind as well. Residents in South Texas are still affected by unbelievable flooding. But if we can help in any way, in our own ways, please remember Haiti, Puerto Rico, Australia, California, Houston, and Louisiana.



Massive protests in Iran after Tehran admits unintentionally shooting down Ukrainian plane

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

If you're just joining us, here's what you missed about the Ukraine International Airlines flight that crashed on Wednesday, killing all 176 people on board.

"This disastrous mistake": Iranian authorities said Saturday that the flight was mistakenly shot down, a conclusion Western intelligence officials had already reached. Iran's President, Hassan Rouhani, said his country "deeply regrets this disastrous mistake" and vowed to investigate.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said "human error at time of crisis caused by US adventurism led to disaster."

Iran's military also issued a statement on the crash, an unusual move for such a secretive organization. The statement said the plane was fired upon as it flew close to a sensitive military site "at an altitude and a condition of a flight that resembled (a) hostile target."

Calls for change: Those apolo-

gies and promises have not been enough to stop protests inside Iran.

Some demonstrators in Tehran called for Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's top religious and political authority, to step down and for those responsible for downing the plane to be prosecuted. Khamenei has been Supreme Leader for three decades, and there is no limit to his term.

Protests spread to other cities, including Shiraz, Esfahan, Hamedan and Orumiyyeh, Reuters reported.

Counter-demonstrations: Outside the United Kingdom's Embassy in Tehran, Iranians gathered to protest after the UK Ambassador to Iran was arrested.

Ambassador Rob Macaire was held and then released Saturday, accused of instigating and directing radical and destructive demonstrations. Macaire said on Twitter that he wasn't taking part in demonstrations, but was paying his respects to those who had been killed in the plane crash.





Oprah Winfrey backs out of Sundance doc with Russell Simmons accuser

Philaobserver.com

After signing on as a producer for a documentary about recent sexual assault allegations against Russell Simmons, Oprah Winfrey has stepped away from the project. In a recent statement, the OWN boss said she had a different vision for the doc than directors Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering did.

"I have decided that I will no longer be executive producer on 'The Untitled Kirby Dick and

Amy Ziering Documentary" and it will not air on Apple TV+," the TV mogul said in a statement to The Hollywood Reporter.

"First and foremost, I want it to be known that I unequivocally believe and support the women. Their stories deserve to be told and heard. In my opinion, there is more work to be done on the film to illuminate the full scope of what the victims endured and it has become clear that the filmmakers and I are not aligned in that creative vision."

LAPD falsely classifies innocent Blacks as gang members

Philaobserver.com

An elite unit of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is under investigation due to its alleged involvement in the mass falsification of reports, which wrongfully classified innocent people of color as gang members.

In a repeat misnomer reminiscent of the LAPD's infamous "Rampart Scandal" of the 1990s, an undisclosed amount of officers working in South LA's Metropolitan Division are suspected of falsifying documents in order to criminalize unassuming civilians.

In response to this new scandal, the LAPD said it has assigned officers as inactive and removed

others from law enforcement.

In an exclusive interview, Silva Megerditchian, CEO & President of SLM Law, told KABC-TV (a local ABC News affiliate in Los Angeles) that every report the LAPD has made should be called into question in light of this new scandal.

"It is one of the most awful designations that a defendant can have, quite honestly, because being a gang member has harsher sentencing consequences. This follows them through every arrest, through every interaction with police officers, because if they're going to lie on something like that, how can we trust them to write anything that's factual and accurate," Megerditchian told KABC.



Wrongly convicted man graduates from college after five years on death row

Philaobserver.com

Ryan Matthews from Texas was just 17-years old when he was accused of a crime he didn't commit. He later spent 5 years on death row, but was later exonerated and released. Now at 39-years old, he is celebrating being a college graduate.

Here's what happened:

In April 1997, Matthews was believed to be the culprit in fatally shooting a 43-year old businessman, who is white.

Throughout the trial, he maintained his innocence and there was really no evidence linking him to the crime. But he was still found guilty by 11 white jurors and 1



black juror. He was sentenced to death at the age of 19.

Activists and his family fought for his freedom. DNA evidence eventually proved his innocence and the real killer finally confessed. After 5 years on death row,

he was exonerated and released in 2004.

"All these years ago when I first came home, a reporter asked me what I wanted to do, and I told them I wanted to go to school," Matthews told WFAA.

Uniontown treasurer blocked from taking office sues for racial bias

Philaobserver.com

A city official in a Pittsburgh, Penn. suburb of Uniontown has filed a lawsuit against the same City Council that she is now a part of.

Treasurer-elect Antoinette Hodge was elected as the first African-American City Council treasurer in Uniontown, Penn. But this accomplishment didn't

come without a little drama first.

Hodge is alleging the Uniontown City Council denied her seat in office because she is Black. She's giving credit for her denial to the city clerk and a City Council member that she believes conspired together to withhold her from getting the required insurance bond to take office, according to Pittsburgh Action News 4.



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Editorial

Philadelphia Observer

Will the assassination of Iran's Gen. Soleimani be Trump's 1914 moment?

By Dr. Wilmer J. Leon, III (TriceEdneyWire.com) –

"Last night, at my direction, the United States military successfully executed a flawless precision strike that killed a number one terrorist anywhere in the world, Qassem Soleimani... We took action last night to stop a war... We did not take action to start a war." – President Donald Trump

On Friday, January 3, General Qassem Soleimani, Iran's most beloved military commander and leader of its elite Quds force, was assassinated in a targeted US drone air strike outside Baghdad International Airport. Soleimani had relentlessly defended Iran and its interests in the Middle East for more than two decades.

US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said that General Soleimani was killed in order to disrupt an "imminent attack" against American interests in the region. "I can't talk too much about the nature of the threats. But the American people should know that the President's decision to remove Soleimani from the battlefield saved American lives," claims Pompeo.

It is important to recognize that neither the president nor Pompeo have offered any evidence to support this irresponsible and reckless action. It was lies from the Bush 43' administration that took America into the illegal invasion of Iraq. It appears that lies and/or false narratives are being used to rationalize this latest heinous act that may also result in another senseless war.

Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it. We know that President Trump is not well read, ignorant, not learned. Will the assassination of Gen. Soleimani become Trump's 1914 moment?

Here's the background on this question: On June 28, 1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated by a Bosnian Serb nationalist during an official visit to the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo sparking a chain of events that led to the start of the World War I. As it was in 1914 it remains today. In several countries, it was a growing sense of nationalism, resistance



to colonial rule and imperialism along with the constant quest for markets, territory and resources that laid the groundwork for Ferdinand's assassination to trigger WWI. One can only wonder if Trump's latest blunder will result in a similar outcome.

More frightening than the Trump administration's blunder is the ahistorical context in which it is explained by many in US mainstream commercial media. One wonders if the media is engaging in a "wag-the-dog" scenario in order to defend failed ideas such as American exceptionalism.

Senator Warren, VP Biden and TV analysts say that General Soleimani's assassination is morally justified since he "was a murderer" and had "American blood on his hands". However, they also argue that from a tactical perspective, it was the wrong move at the wrong time. This is ahistorical, intellectually dishonest and hypocritical. There's not a general in world who has been on the battlefield that does not have the blood of his enemy on his/her hands. General's Schwarzkopf, Jr., Powell and Petraeus all have Iraqi blood on their hands. That's what generals do.

Unlike Bush 43 and members of his administration, General Soleimani was never

labeled a "war criminal" by the International Criminal Court or any other. According to Richard Clarke, former Bush 41', 43' and Clinton administration official, "...Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and their legal advisers... were tried in absentia in Malaysia... the five-panel tribunal unanimously delivered guilty verdicts against Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and their key legal advisors who were all convicted as war criminals for torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment."

General Soleimani was labeled a "terrorist". The Trump administration took the unprecedented action of labeling Iran's Revolutionary Guard of which the Quds force is a part, a "terrorist organization", thereby giving the general the designation. This was the first time the US labelled another nation's military as a terrorist organization.

Even more directly related to Iran, it was General's Schwarzkopf's father, General Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf, Sr. who along with Kermit Roosevelt implemented the 1953 coup d'état in Iran, known as Operation Ajax. This resulted in the overthrow of Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and installed the dictatorial Shah. General Schwarzkopf, Sr. also helped to train what would later become known as the SAVAK; the Shah's secret police that tortured and executed Iranian's on behalf of the Iranian government, the CIA and the Israeli Mossad.

Iran is a sovereign nation. As such it is justified in using lethal force in order to protect its clearly defined geographic territory and borders against internal and external threats. Pompeo speaks in the context of defending American "interests". "Where we see American interests at stake or fundamental norms around the world that need to be enforced, we'll use all the powers that we have..." The term American interests is a very vague and ill-defined expansion of the lexicon that in the minds of Americans gives the US carte blanche to impose its will any place it sees fit. General Soleimani was defending his country and his country's interests against the generations of threats and

aggression of western imperialists. Again, to claim otherwise is ahistorical and incredibly hypocritical. What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

Analysts and commentators often opine that America's relationship with Iran turned sour in 1979 with the taking of US hostages. They totally ignore the 1953 coup. They fail to explain that it was due to lies told to former President Carter, by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller that the Shah was dying from cancer and the only place in the world that he could receive treatment was in New York that convinced Carter to let the Shah into the country. This resulted in a decision that Bloomberg reports led to "the seizure of American hostages in Tehran from 1979 to 1981."

The irresponsible decision to assassinate General Soleimani cannot be placed solely at the feet of Trump. One must ask Speaker Pelosi and the 188 Democrats that joined the GOP about handing Trump a \$738B military budget devoid of the bipartisan amendment to stop the war in Iran. Since Soleimani's assassination is an act of war, is it a coincidence that it occurred weeks after the NDAA was passed by the House?

This decision was dangerous, reckless, foolish and irresponsible. As Minister Farrakhan said about Bush 41' in 1990, "...arrogance poisons one's ability to properly assess reality... he's your modern Pharaoh, your modern Caesar, your modern Nebuchadnezzar. He's all wrapped up in all of those ancient sick men who got sick because they thought they were a god beside God..." So it was then; so it is today.

Let us pray that the leadership in Iran does not take the bait and recklessly respond. The world can ill afford for this to become Trump's 1914 moment.

Dr. Wilmer Leon is the Producer/ Host of the nationally broadcast call-in talk radio program "Inside the Issues with Leon," on SiriusXM Satellite radio channel 126. Go to www.wilmerleon.com or email: wjl3us@yahoo.com. www.twitter.com/drwleon and Dr. Leon's Prescription at Facebook.com

War with Iran is ill-advised and thoughtless



By Marc H. Morial

- When the United States uses military force, the American people and members of the United States Armed Forces deserve a credible explanation regarding such use of military force. The War Powers Resolution requires the President to consult with Congress "in every possible instance" before introducing United States

Armed Forces into hostilities. Congress has not authorized the President to use military force against Iran. Congress hereby directs the President to terminate the use of United States Armed Forces to engage in hostilities in or against Iran or any part of its government or military, unless — (1) Congress has declared war or enacted specific statutory authorization for such use of the Armed Forces; or (2) such use of the Armed Forces is necessary and appropriate to defend against an imminent armed attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its Armed Forces, consistent with the requirements of the War Powers Resolution." – War Powers Resolution passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, January 9, 2020

The Trump Administration has said the death of Iran's top military commander, Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, was necessary to prevent American deaths the general was plotting, and the world is safer

because of his death.

I don't know a soul in America who feels safer now than we did before January 3rd. And that includes President Trump, who has spent the days since Soleimani's death issuing empty threats on Twitter, some of which are clearly war crimes.

The United States has been in conflict with Iran since 1979, when students stormed the American embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage for more than a year. In four decades since the Iranian Revolution, Iran has been the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. For 22 of those years, the last 40 years, Soleimani has led the Quds Force, a U.S. designated terrorist organization, which has armed and trained terrorist and paramilitary groups throughout the Middle East.

Yet Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama – and even Donald Trump, for the first three years of his term – all declined to kill or capture Soleimani, for a very good reason: such a move would

be tantamount to a declaration of war, not only with Iran, but with its inestimable network of proxies around the globe – what Iran expert and Carnegie Endowment senior fellow Karim Sadjadpour has called "a Shia foreign legion."

We don't want this war. We don't need this war. We cannot afford this war, neither in blood nor in treasure. Nearly half a billion lives have been lost in the conflicts in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan since 9/11, including 15,000 U.S. troops and military contractors. More than 970,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veteran disability claims have been registered with the Veterans Administration.

The United States federal government has spent or obligated \$5.9 trillion dollars on the wars in the Middle East.

As a study by the Watson Institute at Brown University noted, "This total omits many other expenses, such as the macroeconomic costs to the US economy; the opportunity costs of not investing

war dollars in alternative sectors; future interest on war borrowing; and local government and private war costs. The current wars have been paid for almost entirely by borrowing. This borrowing has raised the US budget deficit, increased the national debt, and had other macroeconomic effects, such as raising consumer interest rates. Unless the US immediately repays the money borrowed for war, there will also be future interest payments. We estimate that interest payments could total over \$8 trillion by the 2050s."

The Trump Administration has not articulated or advanced a strategy with respect to Iran. President Trump cannot keep us safe with a Tweet, as he seems to believe.

The House on Thursday passed a resolution to force President Trump to come to Congress for authorization before taking further military action against Iran, but it will take the forceful involvement of Senate leadership to keep us out of another Middle East quagmire.

Serena & Venus Williams' estranged sister lashes out at their father

Serena Williams and big sister Venus may be the most well-known Williams children, but they're certainly not the only kids their parents have. Their mother, Oracene Price, had late sister Yetunde, as well as sisters Lyndrea and Isha from a past marriage.

As for father Richard Williams, he has multiple children not with Oracene. His first marriage was to a woman named Betty Johnson and they had five children together. The couple, married in 1965, also shared a child from a previous relationship of Betty's before they split in 1973.

Price and Williams have been divorced since 2002, amid allegations he was abusive. Williams divorced a



third wife, Lakeisha Juanita Graham in 2017. The two have one son, Dylan.

Sabrina Williams, the eldest of the kids Richard and Betty had, is now speaking out her dad and about the tennis ace sisters she barely knows.

"I know there's more siblings, I was told between fif-

teen and nineteen all over the place, from LA to Louisiana," she said in an interview with the UK's Sun Online about all of her brothers and sisters. "My mom always argued with my dad about his affairs, he was a serial cheat. I remember that was always the main thing they'd talk about."

'When They See Us' wins big at Critics' Choice Awards after snubs

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Ava DuVernay's searing Netflix miniseries "When They See Us" bounced back from its Golden Globes snubs by winning big at the 2020 Critics' Choice Awards on Sunday night.

The Jharrel Jerome-fronted series that reframed the real-life stories of the "Exonerated Five" a group of five Black and Latino teenagers who were wrongfully accused of raping a woman in Central Park in 1989 picked up the award for Best Limited Series at the 25th annual ceremony.

After the star-studded crowd rose to its feet, the Oscar-nominated director seemingly addressed the lack of awards recognition at the Globes in her acceptance speech by thanking the Critics Choice Association for "finally letting us take the stage."

"We made a four-part, five-hour film that was an act of love," DuVernay said, before thanking

the cast and crew, as well as Netflix for letting a "black woman do her things."



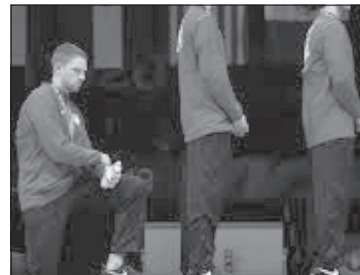
Top Olympic committee issues ban on political gestures during 2020 games

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

The International Olympic Committee said Thursday that competitors in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics will be barred from making political gestures during the Games.

"It is important, on both a personal and a global level, that we keep the venues, the Olympic Village and the podium neutral and free from any form of political, religious or ethnic demonstrations," the committee said in a statement explaining the new guidelines.

According to the committee,



athletes will be prohibited from "protesting" or "demonstrating" on the field of play; in the Olympic Village; during Olympic medal ceremonies; and during the opening, closing or other official ceremonies. They said any kind of political messaging on signs or clothing qualifies as a protest, as well as gestures and any "refusal to follow the Ceremonies protocol."

Akon finalizes deal for his own city in Senegal

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Akon has finalized an agreement for the establishment of his own city in Senegal, called Akon City.

The singer/entrepreneur shared a photo on Instagram from the deal-finalizing moment, and he captioned the image, "looking forward to hosting you there in the future" — see the pic below.

We previously reported... last June Akon announced that he was working on building a "100% crypto-based city," and construction is now officially underway. The "Locked Up" singer dished about the massive project on Nick Cannon's radio show Power 106 last month



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Audrey's society whirl

Critics' Choice Awards — Now they see us!

By Audrey J. Bernard

The star-studded 25th annual Critics' Choice Awards (CCA), recognizing achievements in film and television, were held Sunday, January 12, 2020, at Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California, and although major award nominations and/or wins eluded Black talent at previous award shows due to a lack of diversity in the selection process, they did much better at this event – and deservedly so! Hosted by acclaimed film television and stage actor **Taye Diggs**, the CCA recognized television shows and films, and people who created them.

Ava DuVernay's masterpiece *When They See Us* — the moving and powerful story of the Central Park Five, the five Black teenage boys who were wrongfully convicted of rape and assault charges of a white female jogger in the park — won two CCA for BEST LIMITED SERIES *When They See Us* and BEST ACTOR IN A MOVIE MADE FOR TELEVISION OR LIMITED SERIES **Jharrel Jerome**, *When They See Us*.

When her name was announced, DuVernay and her cast members rushed on stage with jubilation to a standing ovation. "Thank you for standing, that's very kind," she began, as the Netflix cast stood right by her side on the stage, including **Niecy Nash**, **Asante Blackk** and **Jharrel Jerome**. "Thank you to the critics for finally letting us take a stage. Yeah!"

Not one to ever shy away from an opportunity, DuVernay's acceptance speech was as eloquent as the movie. She broke it down! "We made a four-hour, five-part film that was an act of love," she



The cast and crew of *When They See Us*, which won the Critics Choice Awards for Best Limited Series and a Best Actor In A Limited Series Or Movie Made For Television for Jharrel Jerome, celebrate backstage on January 12, 2020, in Santa Monica (L-R) John Leguizamo, Asante Blackk, Marsha Stephanie Blake, Ava DuVernay, Robert De Niro, Niecy Nash, Jharrel Jerome, Berry Welsh and Jane Rosenthal. (Photo Credit: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images for Critics Choice Association)

continued. "179 actors, 117 of them having speaking parts, 312 members of the crew, my 3 co-writers, my comrades at Array, my fellow producers at participant Tribeca and Harpo and our great champions at Netflix, who let a Black woman do her thing. What can I say?"

DuVernay recalled, "The series began with a tweet from **Raymond Santana**, and now he and **Antron McCray**, **Kevin Richardson**, **Yusef Salaam** and the mighty **Korey Wise** stand for something larger than they ever imagined. They stand for justice. They shine bright like the gems that they always were, but that we never saw. If you watch their story and felt something at that moment, I invite you to consider

doing something. There's no right thing to do. Do what you feel, where you are, but don't let your anger and sadness be all."

She continued, "There's no right thing to do. Do what you feel, where you are but don't let your anger and sadness be all. Cases like this are happening all around the world, in this country, most specifically on our watch. People who are poor and innocent are behind bars, while the rich and guilty walk free and gain power." Always one to give back, she left audiences with an inspiring message by late poet, **Audre Lorde**.

Another highpoint of the CCA was the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award to **Eddie Murphy** by **Keegan-Michael Key**. Murphy was feted for his extraor-



Robert DeNiro, Ava DuVernay

dinary career. Other big winners included:

BEST COMEDY SPECIAL, *Live in Front of a Studio Audience: Norman Lear's All in the Family and The Jeffersons*. BEST LIMITED SERIES *When They See Us*. BEST ACTRESS IN A DRAMA SERIES Regina King, *Watchmen*. BEST COSTUME DESIGNER Ruth E. Carter,



Eddie Murphy



Jharrel Jerome

Dolemite Is My Name. BEST SCI-FI/HORROR MOVIE *Us*. BEST COMEDY *Dolemite Is My Name*. To see the complete list of winners, click [here](#).



Cynthia Erivo



Taye Diggs



Lupita Nyong'o



Sterling K. Brown



Zendaya



Susan Kelechi Watson



Awkwafina



Jennifer Lopez



Caleb McLaughlin



Billy Porter



MJ Rodriguez



Jharrel Jerome



Ashleigh Murray



Ava DuVernay



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Health

Racism prescribing pain medications

By Glenn Ellis(TriceEdneyWire.com) –

Pain is a very real thing; but so is medical bias.

I found out, first-hand, what I had read and heard about for a long, long time: Some doctors believe black people have an ability to be strong and tough out painful conditions, and therefore do not give them the meds they need!

Racial disparities in all health outcomes are still commonplace in the United States, and one way this is apparent is the differences in how African Americans receive medication for opioid addiction treatment. In recent years, the opioid crisis has impacted the lives of millions of Americans. Oftentimes, those impacted by opioids are portrayed as white, middle class Americans who receive treatment upon enduring non-fatal overdoses. According to PBS, “roughly 80% of American’s opioid overdose victims are white.” This means that people of color make up only 20% of opioid overdose victims. Despite this, much of the attention is on, and continues to be on, white victims of the crisis. Research has shown, conclusively, that African Americans are administered pain medications less frequently than whites.

There are those who would like to dismiss this claim and find all kinds of reasons to justify this pattern. Some attribute it to a natural tendency of African Americans to exhibit behavior that is described as “drug seekers”. These are people who misuse prescription drugs most commonly seek prescriptions for opioids and benzodiazepines; drugs that, when abused can get you “high”.

However, even though there is a growing body of evidence to silence these skeptics, the institutional bias of prescribing less pain medications for African Americans persists. Recently, I found myself personally “victimized” by this experience in a clinical encounter.

Without going into too much detail (and taking up too much space in this column), following a minor laceration on my leg that

was healing a little too slow for me, I made an appointment with a wound care doctor.

Upon being examined by the doctor, I described the history of the injury, how long ago it happened, and how painful it was; especially at night. I emphasized that it had disrupted my ability to sleep for almost two weeks. I told him that my attempts to get relief from over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil) were doing nothing. I expressed my concern about the possible kidney or liver damage that results from taking too much of either of these medications. The doctor, even though listening intently to me, looked at me with suspicion, proceeded to clean and dress the wound, gave me a follow-up appointment in two weeks, and never addressed the pain.

Now, as you can imagine, even though I’m not a doctor, I knew enough to understand that based on my description of what I was dealing with, at some point the doctor should address the management of the pain in the healing process that I was experiencing.

I guess this doctor thought that I was a patient seeking drugs for myself, or to pass on to a family member or friend with dependency issues. Or maybe he thought I was trying to get drugs to sell on the street. Drug-seeking behavior is a commonly used, although poorly defined, term that describes a range of activities directed towards attainment of sought-after drugs. It seemed to be beyond his belief that I was genuinely just trying to manage my pain.

Opioids are narcotics, there were other options the doctor could have prescribed.

There are mounds of evidence to support this attitude by the medical establishment as it relates to African Americans and pain medications:

A 2017 report released by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality stated, “Overall access to efficient health care was worse for blacks than whites.”

A 2015 study African American



children in the Emergency Room for appendicitis were less likely to receive any pain medication for moderate pain and less likely to receive opioids for severe pain.

A 2016 study found that medical students believe that African American’s nerve endings are less sensitive than white people’s nerve endings. In other words, they felt that “black people’s skin is thicker than white people’s skin”.

As most of you know, or have heard, the Opioid Epidemic that has hit this country has fueled the drug addiction rate, that has received national attention in large part due to the impact it has in white communities. As crazy as it may sound, the medical community relies on a flimsy justification for this pattern of denying appro-

appropriate pain medication to African Americans. There is a report that has determined that denying prescriptions to African Americans for pain, 14,000 lives were spared from opioid abuse (or overdose).

As reported in the New York Times, “When the opioid crisis began to escalate some 20 years ago, many African Americans had a layer of protection against it. But that protection didn’t come from the effectiveness of the American medical system. Instead, researchers believe, it came from racial stereotypes embedded within that system. As unlikely as it may seem, these negative stereotypes appear to have shielded many African Americans from fatal prescription opioid overdoses.”

The only person who can judge

the effectiveness of pain relief is the person who feels the pain, but African Americans’ pain is at the mercy of medical bias. The struggle is real, and the struggle continues...

Remember, I’m not a doctor. I just sound like one. Take good care of yourself and live the best life possible! The information included in this column is for educational purposes only. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

Glenn Ellis, is Research Bioethics Fellow at Harvard Medical School and author of *Which Doctor?, and Information is the Best Medicine*. Ellis is an active media contributor on Health Equity and Medical Ethics. For more good health information visit: www.glennellis.com

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Militant youth pin hopes on Uganda's 'new nightmare'

(GIN) –

He's elusive. He escapes, he hides. Police keep chasing him like a video game character or a superhero in a movie.

But despite their best efforts, authorities have been unable to stop Robert Kyagulanyi—a member of parliament and a popular reggae singer who records under the stage name Bobi Wine. He plans to seize the seat held by aging President Yoweri Museveni when elections are held in 2021.

Wine's been jailed dozens of times as police step up efforts to end his presidential aspirations. "It certainly cannot be safe to run against a dictator," he told a member of the press, "but it's even more dangerous to sit down and resign to fate."

Not long ago, while campaigning for another independent candidate, Wine suffered a particularly brutal beating. With international support, he was allowed to seek treatment in a hospital in the U.S.

"They beat me so hard they thought I'd died," Wine recalled. "They cursed me because I'm an ordinary ghetto youth who thought he could unseat the president."

Today, united by the slogan "People Power, Our Power," millions of young militant Ugandans dissatisfied with life under Mr. Museveni have been given a voice by the Afrobeat artist.

For the Kampala regime, however, Wine has become Uganda's "new nightmare". In a bid to halt this juggernaut, President Museveni empowered his army officers by placing them in top administration and legislative positions. He had an age-limit for presidents lifted, allowing him to rule until 2034 when he reaches 92.

"He's waging war on our prosperity," complained Museveni about Wine in a TV interview. "He's telling foreigners not to come and invest."

Having already served 33 years in office, Museveni cites "still unfinished business in Uganda as president" and would only leave if asked to do so by his National Resistance Movement party.

Meanwhile, militant youth have been gravitating towards Wine and away from long time opposition leader Kizza Besigye who, despite his long history of combat including four runs against Museveni, has been unable to make headway against the incumbent.

Uganda has the world's second-youngest population, about three-quarters of people are under the age of 30, and Museveni's government has struggled to deliver the jobs, opportunities and progress they are demanding.

"This struggle is not limited to Uganda," Wine says. "It's a struggle for all people, especially young people and particularly in Africa." w/pix of B. Wine, center

Ghana's year of return brings call to broaden scope

(GIN) –

When Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo pronounced 2019 as the Year of Return, his words resounded with warmth and joy to all people of African descent.

So began a year-long calendar of events including concerts, art shows, visits to heritage sites, fashion shows, movie premieres and creative economy and trade conferences, organized on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of African slaves in America.

Thus far, Akufo-Addo's call has been a great success, observed Ghanaian author and journalist Kwabena Agyare Yeboah in a recent online issue of African Arguments.

Americans arriving in Ghana increased by 26% to their highest ever rate between January and September 2019.

Similarly, the numbers of visitors grew from the UK (24%), Germany (22%), South Africa (10%) and Liberia (14%). All told, Ghana reportedly issued 800,000 visas this year and this week announced that all nationalities will be eligible to receive a visa on arrival for the next month or so due to the heavy demand.

It was exhaustive, writes Agyare Yeboah, but could they have done more? Was the exclusive focus on the transatlantic slave trade, with the US at the center, a pardonable weakness? Or did it erase other crucially important aspects and legacies of Ghana's history of slavery?

Missing, he maintains, is the trans-Saharan slave trade in which an estimated 6-7 million people, including from the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno, were forcibly transported to North Africa, Europe and the Middle East, a period ranging over 1,250 years," he says.

"The legacy of this trade is still palpable in Mauritania where slavery is still a present-day reality," Agyare Yeboah says. "The country only formally abolished slavery in 1981 and local activists estimate that 20% of the population—all black—are still enslaved."

"Where are the calls for these descendants to return? Where are the African descendants outside of the US, the Jamaicans, Cubans and Brazilians?" he asks rhetorically.

The failure to fully engage with the history of slavery and the focus on just a select portion of African descendants compromises its credibility, he charges.

"The Year of Return campaign had the opportunity, and a whole year, to critically engage with the history of Africans and people of African descent in its entirety. On this, it must do more."

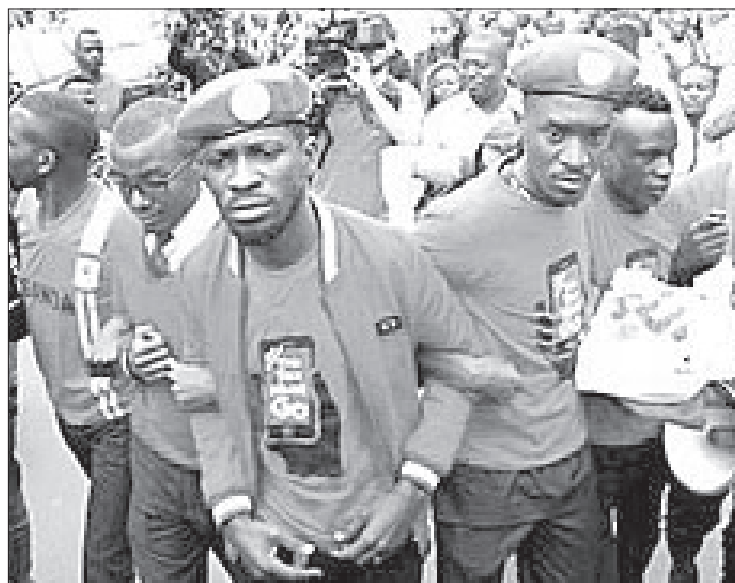





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Culture



Biggie's son CJ starts social justice-centered cannabis company

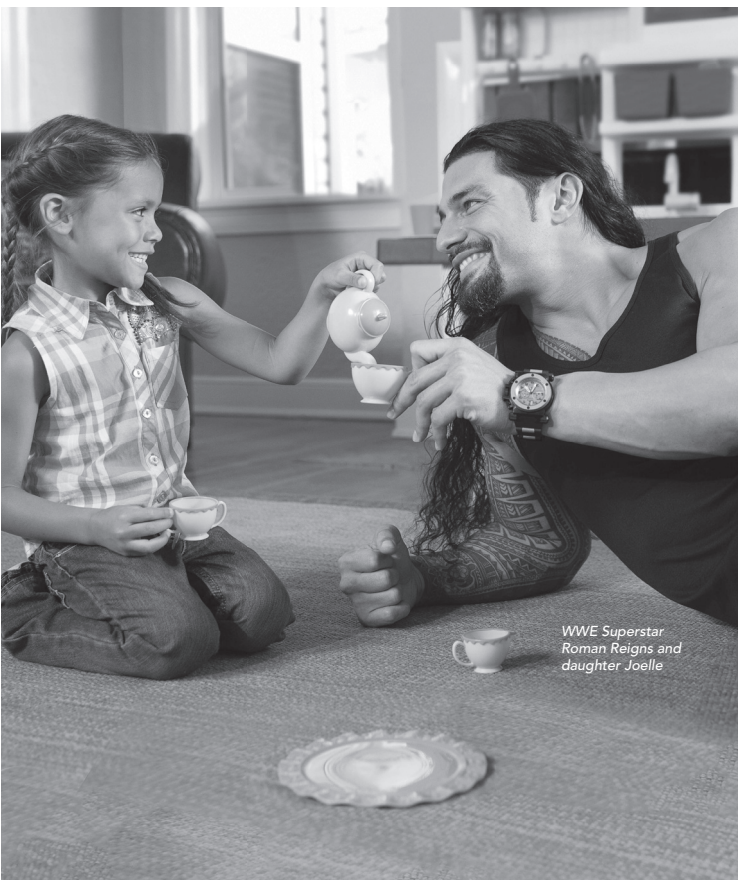
Newyorkbeacon.com

The son of deceased hip-hop legend Biggie Smalls is one of the business co-founders implementing an idea, which blends social justice with capitalizing off the recreational use of a drug that has been decriminalized in a number of U.S. states.

C.J. Wallace is the son of the late great Notorious B.I.G. and R&B songstress Faith Evans. Wallace, his stepfather Todd Russaw, and their business partner Willie Mack are the creators of an initiative called Think BIG. The plan involves

using the proceeds from legally sold cannabis products to fund social justice and judicial reform activities.

"Cannabis was important for my mom, and it was important for my father, so that was enough proof for me to know cannabis is a real tool for creative expression. This is real legacy building for me and my dads. Ultimately I feel like he'd be really proud, especially of how much positivity we are driving to normalize cannabis and finally reverse the stigma around it," Wallace told Forbes Magazine.



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John Legend, Alicia Keys to pay tribute to Prince in a concert

Newyorkbeacon.com

More than a dozen stars will take the stage to perform in honor of musical legend Prince later this month, the Recording Academy announced in a news release.

The concert, called, "Let's Go Crazy: The GRAMMY Salute to Prince," will take place on January 28 in Los Angeles and will be taped for broadcast later in the year.

Its star-studded lineup includes John Legend, Foo Fight-

ers, Alicia Keys, Juanes, Coldplay's Chris Martin, Usher, and Earth, Wind & Fire, among other artists.

The "Purple Rain" singer had won seven Grammy Awards and was nominated 38 times, the academy said.



Serena Williams wins first title in three years, donates cash prize to Australia wildfires

Newyorkbeacon.com

With her first big win in three years, Serena Williams is paying it forward in grand slam style.

The tennis icon announced she would donate her winnings from her Sunday ASB Classic match in Auckland, New Zealand to Australian wildfire relief efforts.

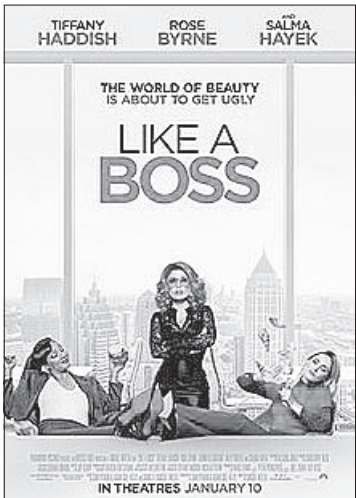
"I've been playing Australia for over 20 years and it's been really hard for me to watch all the news and everything that's been happening in Australia with all the fires and over a billion animals and people who have lost their homes," Williams said. "So I decided that I would donate all my prize money for a great cause."

The catastrophic wildfires have claimed the lives of at least 25 people and almost half a billion mammals, birds and reptiles since September.

The 38-year-old champion beat fellow American Jessica Pegula, 6-3, 6-4 to win the trophy, which came with a cash price equivalent to \$43,000 US.



Tiffany Haddish, Rose Byrne & Salma Hayek are *funtastic!*



Scene from *Like A Boss* with (L-R) Tiffany Haddish, Rose Byrne and Salma Hayek



Scene from *Like A Boss* with Billy Porter and Tiffany Haddish

Like A Boss Theatrical Poster

From Paramount Pictures comes *Like A Boss* starring Tiffany Haddish, Rose Byrne and Salma Hayek. Many of New York City's finest boss ladies showed out for the New York premiere for this hot new chick flick at SVA Theater on Tuesday, January 7, 2020, in New York City. In the movie, Haddish and Byrne have been friends since childhood and dreamed of growing up and owning a beauty business together. Along the way they encounter some very bad people and the beauty business was about to get ugly! However, nothing was going to stop these determined friends from fulfilling their dreams. *Like A Boss* brims over with love and laughter. Haddish brings the funk, Byrne brings the fun, Hayek brings the beauty and Porter delivers the flava. See it with a friend and reminisce together about your childhood memories. With all the

craziness going on today it was so nice to just sit back and enjoy a movie with no strings attached. The movie also stars Jennifer Coolidge, Natasha Rothwell and Billy Porter who is a hoot!

SYNOPSIS: Best friends Mia and Mel (Tiffany Haddish and Rose Byrne) are living their best lives running their own cosmetics company they've built from the ground up. Unfortunately, they're in over their heads financially, and the prospect of a big buyout offer from a notorious titan of the cosmetics industry Claire Luna (Salma Hayek) proves too tempting to pass up, putting Mel and Mia's lifelong friendship in jeopardy.

DEETS: Paramount Pictures Presents An Artists First Production, A Miguel Arteta Film. Miguel Arteta (director); Marc Evans, p.g.a., Peter Principato, p.g.a., Itay Reiss, Joel Zadak (producers); Tiffany Haddish,



(L-R) Billy Porter, Salma Hayek, Jacob Latimore, Caroline Arapoglou, Tiffany Haddish, Jennifer Coolidge and Rose Byrne attend the Paramount Pictures' *Like A Boss* World Premiere at the SVA Theater on January 7, 2020 in New York, New York



Salma Hayek, Rose Byrne, Tiffany Haddish

Nicolas Stern (executive producers); Sam Pitman, Adam Cole-Kelly (screenplay); Sam Pitman, Adam Cole-Kelly, Danielle Sanchez-Witzel (story); Christo-

phe Beck, Jake Monaco (music); Jas Shelton (cinematography); and Jay Deuby (editor). *Like A Boss* was distributed by Paramount Pictures on Friday, January 10, 2020.



Tiffany Haddish



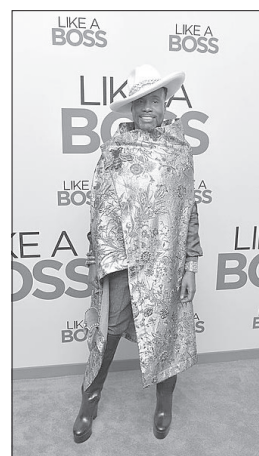
Rose Byrne



Salma Hayek



Jennifer Coolidge



Billy Porter.



Cheslie Kryst



Adam Cole-Kelly, Sam Pitman



Brandi King



Natalie Odell



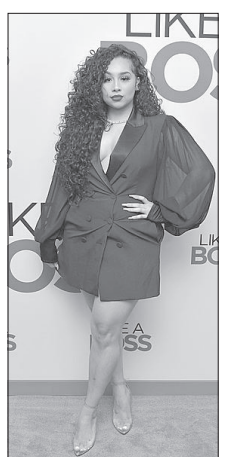
Victoria Lyn



Jackie Hernandez



Amanda Steele



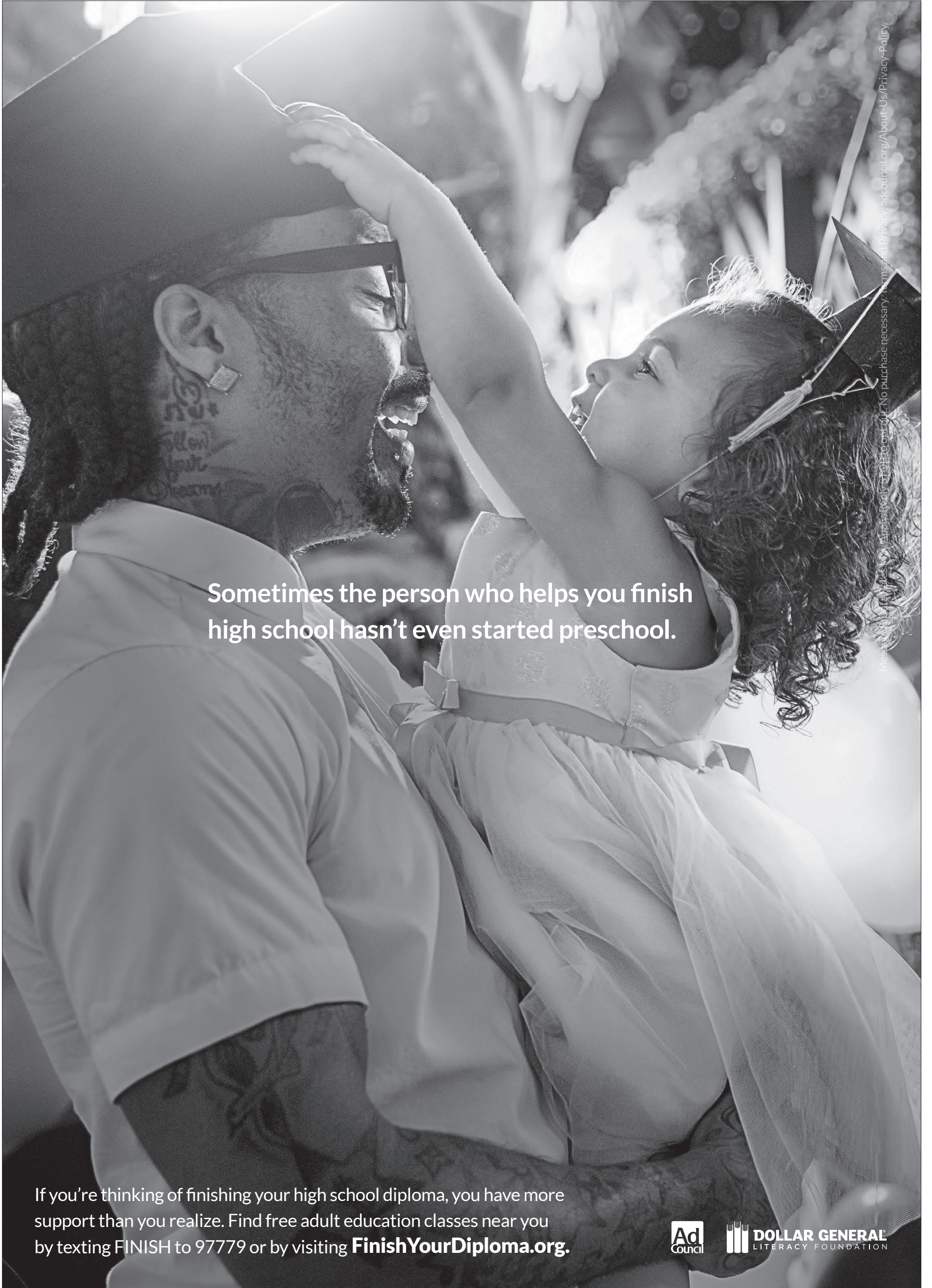
Anaya Ivy



Mischa Grimes



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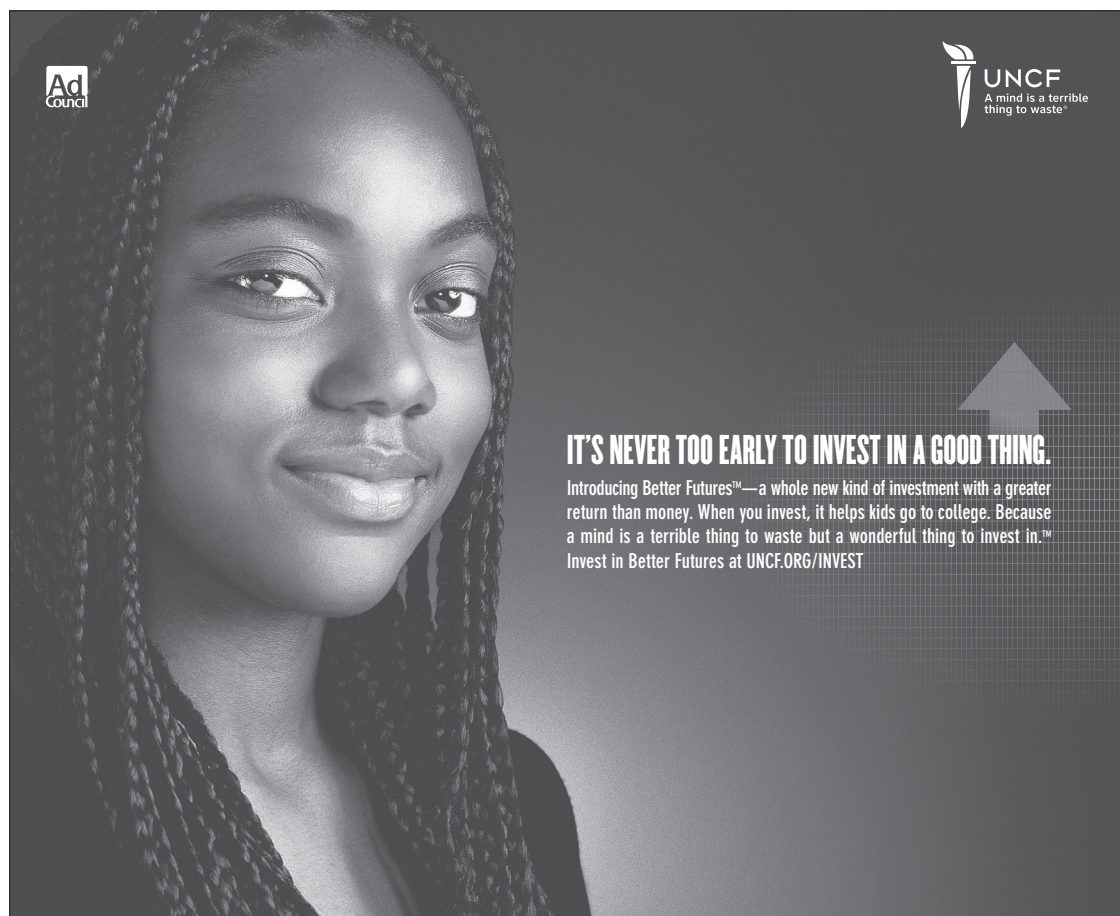
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