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# 'FOLLOW OUR NATION'S NORTH STAR'

Pres Biden speaking at the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference reminded attendees of the determination 13 congressmen had in 1971 to create a better future and become the conscience of congress.

Following our nation's North Star, the Caucus vowed to fight conservative attempts to turn back the clock on Black economic, political progress, p3



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# Biden-Harris Admin launches White House office of gun violence prevention to tackle epidemic

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

**G**un violence remains a pressing concern for the United States, with over 500 mass shootings and a reported estimate of 25,000 victims in 2023 alone. In response, the Biden-Harris administration has announced a significant step forward in curbing this crisis. President Biden has introduced the inaugural White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, dedicated to implementing crucial executive and legislative measures to save lives and heal communities.

The office will be under the stewardship of Vice President Kamala Harris, perhaps the administration's most vocal advocate against gun violence. Stefanie Feldman, a long-serving policy advisor on gun violence prevention, will take the reins as the Director. Joining her are gun violence prevention advocates Greg Jackson and Rob Wilcox, who assume the roles of Deputy Directors.

"Every time I've met with families impacted by gun violence as they mourn their loved ones... they all have the same message for their elected officials: 'Do something,'" Biden asserted. He highlighted the importance of recent legislative strides and executive actions but stressed that they represent the initial required phase.

The White House noted that Feldman, the new director of the inaugural office, brings a wealth of experience. Over more than a decade, Feldman has been a stalwart member of Biden's team, officials noted. Her journey includes instrumental contributions following the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012.

Further, Greg Jackson, appointed Deputy Director, brings his own profound experience as a gun violence survivor. As a Community Justice Action Fund leader, he has tirelessly advocated for gun violence prevention, shedding light on its disproportionate impact on marginalized communities.

Additionally, Rob Wilcox, also assuming the role of Deputy Director, has a distinguished background in advocating for gun safety measures. Wilcox's artwork is a tribute to his cousin Laura, a victim of gun



violence, and it draws inspiration from personal loss. The White House said the establishment of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention builds on the historic actions already taken by Biden. This includes signing the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, a landmark piece of legislation aimed at preventing gun violence.

Officials insisted that efforts to implement the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act have yielded tangible results. They pointed out that the legislation has increased the Justice Department's ability to prosecute firearms traffickers, restricted access to firearms for those under 21, and increased mental health support for victims of gun violence.

The Biden-Harris Administration also noted they've introduced many executive actions to address the root causes of gun violence, including measures to curb the proliferation of dangerous weapons, hold rogue gun dealers accountable, and provide law enforcement with essential resources.

Biden has advocated for a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, mandated safe storage of firearms, universal background checks, and an end to gun manufacturers' immunity from liability. His Safer America Plan also proposes increased investment in community policing and gun violence prevention.

"This epidemic of gun violence requires urgent leadership to end the fear and trauma that Americans experience every day," Harris affirmed. The vice president affirmed the administration's unwavering commitment to a safer nation, pledging that "no effort would be spared in achieving this goal."

# Republicans again defending extremism in defense of their views



By Rev Jesse Jackson  
News Analysis

**T**he inmates have taken over the asylum in the Republican Party. In the party that once prided itself on being pro-military, one wingnut senator is blocking the confirmation of hundreds of senior military officials, including the secretaries of the Navy, Army and Air Force. The party that preaches law and order now in Alabama openly defies a federal court order, refusing to redraw a racially discriminatory election map. In Wisconsin, Republicans seek to impeach a recently elected state Supreme Court justice

before she even takes her seat on the bench – this time to protect a gerrymandered election map that allows them to have a governing majority in the state legislature, despite representing only a minority of the votes. Donald Trump and his co-conspirators dominate the headlines, but the zaniness now pervades the party.

Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) – who never served a day in the military – has blocked the confirmation of 260 high officers of the military – a number that will rise to 650 by the end of the year if Republicans don't put an end to his nonsense. Tuberville, part of the Republican minority in the Senate, abuses his senatorial privilege by blocking all defense confirmations to extort a Senate vote on the Defense Department's abortion policy. He won't draw up legislation for that vote himself. He demands that Democrats introduce the bill and hold the vote.

The Pentagon's policy – implemented after the Supreme Court's egregious decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* – allows soldiers and their dependents to take time off and use official travel to get to states that offer reproductive care – this includes not only abortions, but in vitro fertilizations. The Pentagon policy forbids the funding of

abortions, except in the rare cases of rape and incest or if the life of the mother is at risk. The policy mirrors the opinions of the vast majority of the American people.

To take up each confirmation separately and hold the votes necessary to overcome his objections would consume virtually all of the time of the Senate. Appointees who are not confirmed can't move into their official quarters and have limited authority.

In a joint op-ed, the secretaries of the Navy, Army and Air Force warned that Tuberville was "putting national security at risk." Rep. Michael McCaul, the Republican chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, warned that Tuberville was "paralyzing the Department of Defense." The effect on recruitment and retention and on the morale of career officials will be brutal. Senior Republican leaders in the Senate have publicly called on Tuberville to stand down. Instead, he vows to persist.

In Wisconsin, Republicans display their utter contempt for voters. They gerrymandered the election districts to give them a controlling majority of the legislature with the minority of the votes. In a partisan 4-3 vote, the

# President Biden, Black lawmakers conclude CBC weekend reinvigorating fight for freedom, justice and equality

By Hamil R. Harris

**P**resident Joe Biden addressing the audience at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Phoenix Awards PHOTO: Kea Taylor/Imagine Photography)

– After years of enduring Republican lawmakers on Capitol Hill working to dismantle Civil Rights laws the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) concluded their annual conference last week, fired up and ready for a new season of political battles with a new generation of foot soldiers enlisted in the fight.

"Why are they trying to prevent economic prosperity and wealth-building in communities of color?" asked CBC Chairman Stephen Hosford (D-Nev.) during a forum. Flanked by Isabella Casillas Guzman, administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), they vowed to fight conservative attempts to turn back the clock on Black economic and political progress.

The SBA has temporarily suspended new applications to its 8(a) programs after the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee in July ruled against people using the "socially disadvantaged" category as a status to gain entry to the program.

But Hosford said "The Congressional Black Caucus will fight, defend, and (hold) the line" when it comes to these programs.

"It is very important that we create wealth and my question to these individuals who are standing in the way and filing these lawsuits is what are they afraid of? It is important for all of America to know who is bringing these lawsuits and why they are doing it. They are attempting to take us back at a time when we are making so much progress."

Whether voting right, economic or criminal justice, dozens of topics were covered during the conference mixed with parties and issues forums.

Trial lawyer Ben Crump held a forum at the convention center with the families of those killed by police brutality. "When you talk about equality, equity, and access," whether it is through housing, education, employment, or healthcare we realize the power of our dollars," he said.

The group discussed a path forward for police reform since the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act has still not been passed in Congress. Families will discuss what reforms have been successful on the local level with lawmakers.

"I gotta believe a greater good has to result from my son being killed," said Row Vaughn Wells, the mother of Tyre Nichols, who died after he was beaten by Memphis police officers Jan. 7.

Other participants included: Mona Harden, mother of Ronald Greene; Gwen Carr, mother of Eric Garner; Tiffany Crutcher, sister of Terence Crutcher; Allisa Findley, sister of Botham Jean. The lawmakers present included: Rep. Lucy McBath; Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, Rep. Steven Horsford, and Sen. Cory Booker.

On Saturday morning, Karen Clarke Sheard and Reverend Dr. Gina Stewart were the special guests at the CBC Day of Healing, formerly the CBC prayer breakfast, at the Convention Center.

The Day of Healing was a new feature of the ALC, that offered moments of reflection and rejuvenation for various communities.



Nicole Austin-Hillery, President and CEO of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, said, "In the spirit of this year's conference theme, Securing Our Democracy, Protecting Our Freedoms, Uplifting Our Culture, the Day of Healing grounds us in our purpose and fortifies our will to remain steadfast in our commitment to community empowerment."

On Saturday night Vice President Kamala Harris introduced President Biden during the CBC's annual Phoenix Awards, A Black Tie event that is the highlight of the ALC.

"The CBC has always been a conscience of our country, a truth teller. Truths about where we have been and where we must go," Harris told the audience Saturday night.

"Tonight, let us continue to speak truth. Across America there is a full-on attack on many of the hard-fought, hard-won freedoms that the CBC has achieved: the freedom to vote; to teach America's full history; to address inequity and diversity; to love who you love; to access education, healthcare, and economic opportunity; and the freedom of a woman to make decisions about her own body," she said to applause.

During his speech President Biden singled out a number of CBC members.

He described House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries "a leader with integrity and courage. Courage. Courage."

He also pointed out Justin Jones, 28, member of the Tennessee House of Representatives, calling him "a new voice who gives us hope for the future."

The audience chuckled as Biden pointed out Hip Hop artists LL Cool J and MC Lyte in the Ballroom: "LL J... Cool J...uhh... (laughter)... By the way, that boy has got, he's got, I think that man has got biceps bigger than my thighs...and MC Lyte."

But Biden concluded on a serious note by reminding those present that the CBC has come a long way after six decades.

"In February of 1971, the year before I got to the United States Senate, 200 years ago," he said to laughter. "13 Black members of Congress, determined to create a better future and leverage their collective strength, formed the Congressional Black Caucus, the conscience of Congress, calling us to follow our nation's North Star; A light for the dreams and the pains of centuries of enslaved people in America."

He said the CBC was created to fight for "The idea—once the most simple and the most powerful idea in the history of the world—that we're all created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout our entire lives. We've never lived up to that fully, but we've never walked away from it either."

Continued on page 7

# No Woke

## There has always been class warfare x

News Analysis  
By Julianne Malveaux

The United Auto Workers and the Big Three automobile manufacturers – Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis haven't been able to agree on worker compensation, and no wonder. The UAW leader, Shawn Fein, is fiercely committed that workers should be better compensated and should recoup some of the concessions they made to manufacturers when the automobile industry was in trouble in 2009. On the other side, the CEOs of the big three are touting their "generous" offer to the union, claiming they'd be bankrupt if they met union demands, and using terms like "class warfare" to describe the current stalemate.

CNBC anchor Jim Cramer was among the first to mention class warfare when the UAW offered a set of reasonable demands. He fails to understand that when CEOs make hundreds of times more than the average worker, there is some kind of warfare. Predatory capitalists extract surplus value from workers and direct it to shareholders and themselves. Thus, Ford GM Mary Barras earns more than \$30 million a year, 362 times the average worker's earnings. Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares earns more than \$24.8 million, 365 times the average worker. And Ford's James Farley earns \$21 million, 281 times as much as the average worker. Mary Barras defended her high salary by indicating that her pay is "performance-based."

She would not have performance were it not for worker productivity, but there is a gap between worker pay and productivity. Predatory capitalists are capturing the benefits of both worker productivity and worker concessions, resulting in record profits among auto manufacturers. President Joe Biden was spot on when he said that record profits should mean record contracts. In other words, pay the people whose labor contributed to the record profits.

While the Big Three CEOs saw their compensation rise by at least 40 percent in the last four years, they'd deny similar pay increases to their workers. Indeed, the average auto worker earns \$28 an hour, just a dollar, or less than four percent, more than last year. Those hired before 2007 earn \$33 an hour, but those employed after 2007 make only \$17 an hour, the two-tier compensation the UAW is fighting to eliminate. How fair is it that two workers, standing side by side, have such a pay differential, one earning about half of what the other is making? That's called worker exploitation. The UAW agreed to it under challenging circumstances, and those circumstances don't



exist anymore. By the way, the lower-paid workers also get fewer health and pension benefits, and the union proposal is partly about equalizing some of these benefits. The quest for fairness is something that CNBC's Cramer describes as "frightening."

What is frightening is the increasing poverty in our nation. It's frightening that predatory capitalists are getting away with extreme exploitation. It is frightening that CEOs make so much compared to labor and find nothing wrong with this. And it is empowering to see UAW President Shawn Fein fight fearlessly for workers in the face of CEOs who whine about a bankruptcy that won't happen unless they figure out how to cut a deal with labor.

If they disagree, the consequences can be dire. If the 150,000 workers in the UAW all strike simultaneously, the union has enough in the strike fund to keep them out for three months. Meanwhile, the auto industry may lose over \$5 billion, and a strike may push the economy toward a recession. Auto workers aren't the only ones at risk. Those who supply auto manufacturers with parts will probably have to lay workers off if auto manufacturing slows. There may be fewer automobiles available, and the fourth quarter is often a time when car sales go up. Fewer cars may also mean inflationary increases in automobile prices. If all auto workers go out at the same time, it will be catastrophic for the economy. Even if fractions go out, as 12,000 did on Friday, September 15, it will disrupt the economy.

The auto strike encourages other workers to stand up for themselves. Kaiser employees will strike by the end of this month if they can't agree with management about the terms and conditions of work. Others are considering strikes, and labor unrest is at an all-time high. Workers want to be paid fairly. That's not class warfare, that's survival. To the extent that predatory capitalists resist paying fairly, there has always been class warfare.

*Dr. Julianne Malveaux is an economist, author, and educator in Washington, DC. [JulianneMalveaux.com](http://JulianneMalveaux.com)*

## Historically Black Land-Grant Universities deprived of \$12.6b funding over three decades

*Drawing on data from the National Center for Education Statistics from 1987 to 2020, the departments calculated the amount these institutions would have received if their state funding per student equaled that of 1862 institutions. Officials said the discrepancies in appropriated funding ranged from \$172 million to \$2.1 billion, creating significant financial disparities.*

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

Historically Black land-grant universities across 16 states have been denied a staggering \$12.6 billion in funding over the past 30 years, according to the Biden administration. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack announced that they have contacted governors in each affected state, urging them to rectify the funding gap, which has had its most significant impact in Tennessee, according to a news release. Tennessee State University has suffered an underfunding deficit of \$2.1 billion.

"Unacceptable funding inequities have forced many of our nation's distinguished historically Black colleges and universities to operate with inadequate resources and delay critical investments in everything from campus infrastructure to research and development to student support services," Cardona emphasized.

Similar letters were dispatched to governors in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. The nation's land-grant universities, established in the 19th century, were designed to advance agricultural education and research. While federal law mandates equitable distribution of state funding for all land-grant universities, this has not been realized for many historically Black institutions, as revealed in a comprehensive analysis.

Utilizing data from the National Center for Education Statistics, the federal agencies uncovered funding disparities in 16 out of 18 states hosting Black land grants. Only Delaware and Ohio provided equitable funding.

Cardona spoke fervently about the accomplishments of HBCUs and their impact on various professions. "The Biden-Harris Administration is proud to have made record investments in our HBCUs, but to compete in the 21st century, we need state leaders to step up and live up to their legally required obligations to our historically Black land-grant institutions," Cardona demanded.

Vilsack echoed Cardona's sentiments, recognizing these institutions' pivotal role in agricultural advancements. He emphasized the need for governors to invest in HBCUs at levels commensurate with their contributions to society and the economy.

In a news release, administration officials noted that the Second Morrill Act of 1890 mandated that states establishing a second land-grant university for Black students ensure equitable distribution of



state funds between their 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions. The 1862 land-grant universities were established through the First Morrill Act of 1862, which provided states with federal land to support the colleges.

Drawing on data from the National Center for Education Statistics from 1987 to 2020, the departments calculated the amount these institutions would have received if their state funding per student equaled that of 1862 institutions. Officials said the discrepancies in appropriated funding ranged from \$172 million to \$2.1 billion, creating significant financial disparities. Over the past three decades, these funds could have been channeled towards crucial infrastructure and student services, enhancing the universities' capacity to pursue grants and expand educational opportunities.

The Departments of Education and Agriculture said they have extended their offer to collaborate with each state's budget office to analyze the funding data and redress the disparities in investments for 1890 HBCUs that have faced chronic underfunding.

Each letter outlined the specific underfunding per student for each state's 1890 HBCUs between 1987 and 2020 and suggested remedies for the situation. "We want to make abundantly clear that it is not necessary to reduce funding to other institutions, nor make a reduction in general fund allocations to (HBCUs) in addressing these disparities," the secretaries wrote. "We are at an inflection point that will determine our place in the world as leaders. We need to solidify our country as the top producer of talent and innovation – demonstrating to the global community that nothing can beat American ingenuity."

They continued:

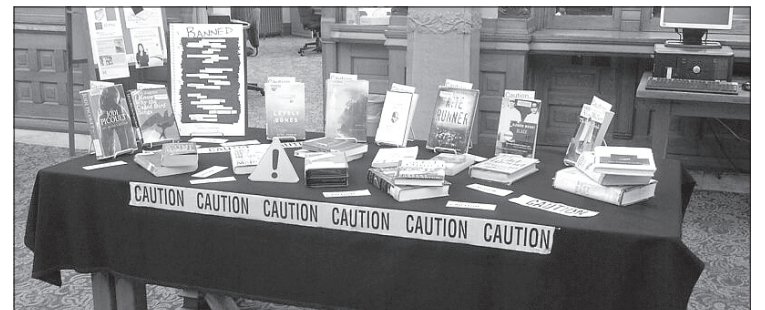
"The state that serves as our nation's economic engine for the next generation is sure to be one that fully realizes all its assets and is committed to ensuring that opportunity is equally distributed. Given the career opportunities that will be available due to recent bipartisan federal investments for key industries, strengthening these universities to provide tomorrow's workforce will enhance your state's economic viability."

## Book censorship on the rise in libraries, ALA reports 20% increase in challenges in 2023

*Books written by or about people of color or members of the LGBTQIA+ community are primary targets.*

By Stacy M. Brown  
(NNPA Newswire)

Assault on Black history and other minority groups have ramped up with the recent banning of books. The American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) has released alarming preliminary data indicating a significant surge in attempts to censor books, ma-



terials, and services across public, school, and academic libraries in the United States during the first eight months of 2023.

The American Library Association (ALA) compiled crucial data on

Continued on page 11



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# Editorial - Opinion



By David W. Marshall (TriceEdneyWire.com) -

## New generation of leaders

Michael Jordan is arguably one of the best professional basketball players in the history of the NBA. Among his many accomplishments during his illustrious career, Jordan was Rookie of the Year, five-time NBA MVP, six-time NBA champion, six-time NBA Finals MVP, and NBA Hall of Fame inductee. Jordan's final game as a player was on April 16, 2003, where he finished with 15 points in a loss to the Philadelphia 76ers. "Now I guess it hits me that I'm not going to be in a uniform anymore—and that's not a terrible

feeling," Jordan said afterward. "It's something that I've come to grips with, and it's time. This is the final retirement."

Jordan was a phenomenal athlete with a thrilling combination of grace, speed, power, artistry, and competitive desire. Yet Father Time was the only opponent the then-40-year-old Jordan could never overcome. There are current players, like Jordan, who are competitive past their basketball prime, but physical skills will eventually decline, and all players will suffer the same fate: retirement. While a 40-year-old Jordan is considered old by professional sports standards, he would be regarded as relatively young as an elected politician.

But Father Time respects no one, and he ultimately catches up with all of us. Just as Jordan concluded it was time to "hang it up," Utah Sen. Mitt Romney made the same decision as he recently announced that he will not seek a second term. Romney emphasized the need for a new generation of leadership. "At the end of another term, I'd be in my mid-80s," Romney, 76, said in an interview. "Frankly, it's time for a new generation of leaders. They're the ones that need to make the decisions

that will shape the world they will be living in."

A true leader understands they cannot be held captive by their pride, ego, fame, and thirst for power when an influential and productive career has run its natural course, and it becomes time to pass the baton to the next generation. In a rare move, former Justice Stephen Breyer retired from the Supreme Court, allowing President Biden to appoint a successor who could serve for decades.

There was not a major ideological shift when the 51-year-old Ketanji Brown Jackson replaced the 83-year-old Breyer, but rather a critical generational and cultural shift that gives a fresh voice speaking on behalf of a diverse nation. It is the generational and cultural shift that causes Republicans to feel threatened. Young people can be a formidable voting bloc in elections if they mobilize across racial and party lines. Unsurprisingly, young conservatives feel abandoned by the Republican Party when evidence shows they are targets of the same voter suppression tactics used against minority voters. In Texas, Republicans introduced a bill that would ban all college voting centers and drop boxes. In Florida, the gover-

nor approved a bill making it more difficult for third-party voter registration organizations to conduct outreach to young people. And in Idaho, Republicans passed a bill to ban student ID's from being used to register to vote.

We no longer live in times where each generation will do better than the previous one. As our nation moves from one era to the next, the idea of the infamous American dream is seen only as a pipe dream by many millennials and members of Generation Z. They have a right to feel cynical about their future with the current generational divide and the baby boomers who maintain political and economic power while holding little interest in the future quality of life for younger generations. The skyrocketing cost of college tuition and houses make future homeownership and higher education unattainable for many Gen Zers.

The future safety of our schools is no longer treated as a national tragedy and is often addressed by prescribing guns in the hands of teachers. Our communities are facing more intense flooding, extreme heat, and vanishing mountain forests and wildlife due to decades of ignoring climate

change warnings out of allegiance to the fossil fuel industry. Millennials and Gen Zers are likely stuck with climate change's effects becoming a natural way of life in the future. The fight for affordable healthcare and decent wage growth are reasons we are seeing a comeback of the labor movement, as evidenced by the United Auto Workers having gone on strike. Even with the increase in corporate profits, corporate greed will always force future generations of workers to fight for inflation-adjusted wage growth.

As baby boomer lawmakers like Mitt Romney continue to age out, will members of Gen Z commit to public service and be trusted defenders of their generation? Will they have enough political opportunities to serve effectively when older elected officials on the state and federal levels don't know when it is time to pass the baton? With the election of Rep. Maxwell Frost of Florida as the first Gen Z member of Congress, he became an example for others to follow.

David W. Marshall is founder of the faith-based organization, TRB: The Reconciled Body, and author of the book "God Bless Our Divided America". He can be reached at [www.davidmarshallauthor.com](http://www.davidmarshallauthor.com)



By Marc H. Morial

## U.S. Open champ and phenom Coco Gauff represents a new era of American tennis I

"If you can think it, you can do it. If you can dream it, you can do it. Just keep working hard. It won't come easy and it will seem impossible but if you keep working hard it will definitely happen." - Coco Gauff

Tennis is a sport that has been historically dominated by white athletes. However, the sport has since been experiencing a massive shift. Today, young Black athletes, exemplified by the prodigious

Coco Gauff, are not just participating, but also shining on the world's largest stages. Their rise not only redefines the face of American tennis but also challenges long-standing narratives around race and sports.

Remembering tennis greats like Arthur Ashe and Althea Gibson, we celebrate their unforgettable spirit and the legacy they left behind. These pioneers battled racial prejudice, both subtle and overt, to carve out their places in the archives of tennis history. Their stories are the epitome of courage, perseverance, and resilience.

Ashe and Gibson blazed new trails in sports and in social justice. Coco Gauff is who they blazed them for.

It's fitting that Gauff won the U.S. Open as the nation celebrates 50 years since it became the first

of the Grand Slam tournaments to offer equal prize money to men and women. Billy Jean King, who spearheaded the boycott that led to equal pay, said "she's the reason we fought so hard 50 years ago."

Like many among the new generation of outspoken Black athletes, Gauff has used her platform to advocate for social justice - a trail that her own grandmother, Yvonne Lee, helped to blaze when she became the first Black student to attend Delray Beach's all-white Seacrest High School in 1961.

Though she was only 16 when George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police in 2020, Gauff delivered a powerful speech at Black Lives Matter rally outside Delray Beach City Hall, speaking just after her grandmother, saying "I think it's sad that I'm here protesting the same thing that she did

50-plus years ago."

Like her grandmother, Gauff stormed onto the scene with a maturity and expertise well beyond her years. From her run at Wimbledon in 2019 defeating seven-time Grand Slam title winner Venus Williams, to her consistent performance on the global stage, Coco's story is a testament to the transformative power of dedication and grit. But Coco is more than just a talented tennis player. She embodies hope, the promise of change, and the boundless potential of the next generation. She's not alone though. Players like Frances Tiafoe, Sloane Stephens, and Taylor Townsend also play crucial roles in reshaping that narrative.

Together, they signify the increasing diversity in a sport once perceived as elitist and exclusive.

This rise of young Black ath-

letes in tennis is not just about achieving individual excellence. It's about challenging the status quo, breaking barriers, and carving out spaces where historically there were none. Their successes send a powerful message to Black children everywhere that they too can challenge the status quo, and win. It is also important for institutions and stakeholders in tennis to recognize this shift and support it. From funding grassroots programs in marginalized communities to promoting diversity at all levels, there's a lot that can and should be done.

As we celebrate Coco Gauff and other Black athletes in this sport, let's remember the significance of their journey. They are not just changing the face of tennis; they are changing the fabric of American sports.

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## Byron Allen makes a bid for ABC television

Byron Allen  
BlackManStreet.  
Today(TriceEdneyWire.com) –

**M**edia mogul Byron Allen, founder and CEO of Allen Media Group and Entertainment Studios, has bid \$10 billion to buy Walt Disney's ABC television network, a spokesperson for Allen said on Friday, according to various media reports.

A Disney spokesperson said that the company was "open to

considering strategic options for its linear business." The company has not decided yet on selling ABC or any other property.

The discussions come after Disney CEO Bob Iger said in July that the company could sell some of its traditional TV assets, which struggled for years because of the rise of streaming services.

ABC comprises a national TV network and eight regional stations. It has affiliation agreements

with about 240 local television stations reaching almost all U.S. television households.

In 1993, Allen founded the Los Angeles, California-based Entertainment Studios, a division of the Allen Media Group, a global media company. Allen's enterprise has grown over the years, expanding to encompass offices in New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and Raleigh. The company also owns the Weather Channel.

## Republicans again defending extremism in defense of their views

From page 3

state Supreme Court refused to overturn the injustice. In response, voters in Wisconsin threw out a conservative justice and elected a reformer who campaigned on upholding the rights of women and workers and ensuring that elections expressed the will of the majority. So now Republicans in the state legislature are threatening to impeach the new justice before she takes her seat on the bench. Following Donald Trump's example, they scorn the verdict of the voters.

In Alabama, Republican defiance of the order of a federal court evokes the ugly Southern history of invoking states' rights to discriminate against African Americans. In June, the Supreme Court upheld the lower court rul-

ing that Alabama's redistricting violated the Voting Rights Act and ordered the state to redraw the lines. (In a state where over one in four voters are African American, only one of seven districts was majority black.) The legislature simply ignored the court order. Now a three-judge federal court panel has appointed its own master to redraw the lines. State Republicans are counting on an appeal to the Supreme Court in the hope that its conservative majority will give them free rein.

On abortion, on racial discrimination, on redistricting, Republican views are opposed by most Americans. So, they seek various ways to enforce their views – even if that requires perversely weakening the Pentagon, or overturning the results of an

election, or ignoring the orders of a court.

In 1964, Sen. Barry Goldwater, the Republican candidate for president, proclaimed that "extremism in defense of liberty is no vice. And moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue." This echoed the rhetoric of plantation owners, arguing that their liberty included the right to enslave others. Goldwater suffered one of the worst election defeats in history. Now Republicans are once more defending extremism in defense of their views that they have the right to strip women of control of their bodies, to revoke the voting rights of African Americans, to subvert the will of a majority of the voters. Once more they will only be stopped if they are repudiated again and again by voters at the ballot box and by j

## Usher set to headline 2024 Super Bowl halftime show

*The appearance will mark Usher's second appearance at the Super Bowl, following his 2011 performance alongside the Black Eyed Peas.*

By Stacy M. Brown  
(NNPA Newswire)

**G**rammy-winning artist Usher plans to dazzle hundreds of millions of fans as he takes center stage for the highly anticipated 2024 Super Bowl halftime show. On February 11, 2024, the renowned performance will occur at the Allegiant Stadium in Paradise, Nevada, just outside the famed Las Vegas Strip.

Kim Kardashian surprised Usher with a phone call to announce that he would be headlining at X (previously known as Twitter).

The appearance will mark Usher's second appearance at the Super Bowl, following his 2011 performance alongside the Black Eyed Peas. Rihanna headlined the event last year and revealed her pregnancy to A\$AP Rocky during her unforgettable performance.

"It's an honor of a lifetime to finally check a Super Bowl performance off my bucket list. I can't

wait to bring the world a show unlike anything else they've seen from me before," Usher said in a statement.

He extended his gratitude, saying, "Thank you to the fans and everyone who made this opportunity happen. I'll see you real soon."

Jay-Z, whose Roc Nation company is returning to produce the halftime show for the fifth consecutive year, also commended Usher. "Usher is the ultimate artist and showman. Ever since his debut at 15, he's been charting his own unique course. Beyond his flawless singing and exceptional choreography, Usher bares his soul," Jay-Z stated.

He added, "His remarkable journey has propelled him to one of the grandest stages in the world. I can't wait to see the magic." The rapper, 53, and Usher, 44, have previously collaborated on tracks including "Hot Tottie," "Anything," and "Best Thing."

Super Bowl LVIII will be broadcast live on CBS on February 11, 2024. The iconic halftime show generally draws hundreds of millions of viewers, making it one of the most sought-after platforms in music.



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# Dignitaries, changemakers, lawmakers tout the Black Press at the 2023 NNPA National Leadership Awards Reception

The highly anticipated event delivered on the Black Press of America's promise of an evening of recognition and celebration in honor of exceptional leaders who have made significant contributions to America, particularly the African American community.

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire

**F**ounder and Head of Mission of the Diaspora African Forum H.E. Dr. Erieka Bennett, Baltimore Ravens QB Tyler Huntley, Activist Erica Ford, Democratic National Committee Chair Jamie Harrison, Exonerated Five Member and New York City Councilman-Elect Dr. Yusef Salaam, Eric Garner's Mother Gwen Carr, and Oscar Grant's Mother the Rev. Wanda Johnson, were among the activists, celebrities, politicians, and changemakers to cram into the main ballroom at the Marriott Marquis to celebrate the National Newspaper Publishers Association National Leadership Awards Reception.

The highly anticipated event delivered on the Black Press of America's promise of an evening of recognition and celebration in honor of exceptional leaders who have made significant contributions to America, particularly the African American community.

This year's theme, "Black Press of America Salutes Black Leadership Excellence," reflected the spirit of acknowledgment and appreciation for those who have tirelessly worked toward the betterment of society. "The Black Press is the foundation of our community it's how we hear and amplify what's going on in our community," said DNC Chair Jamie Harrison, among the many powerbrokers to grace



the NNPA's Red Carpet. "We have to support the Black Press. I'm going to make sure that we support the Black Press," Harrison insisted.

Ohio Democratic Rep. Shontell Brown, a Leadership Award Recipient, joined Harrison on the Red Carpet and pledged to continue supporting the Black Press. "My local newspaper is the Call and Post, and that newspaper is critical," Brown declared. "The Black Press is how we get and receive our news. It's essential to communicate with people who look like us. I couldn't agree more with the chair that we must support the Black Press," Brown stated.

Fellow awardee CBC Chair Steven Horsford (D-Nevada) echoed Brown and Harrison, taking it a step further by insisting that Democrats and others ensure revenue continues to flow into Black-owned newspapers and media companies. "We have to make every effort to support you, to fund you, to make sure our campaigns and organizations are placing ads and media spend with you," Horsford proclaimed, adding that after 196 years of serving African



American communities, the Black Press is as vital as ever.

Ruff Endz, the renowned R&B duo, added a musical flair to the evening with some of their chart-topping hits like "No More," and "Someone to Love You." Guy Lambert, a distinguished figure in the world of broadcasting, served as master of ceremonies, while the Rev. Mark Thompson, a longtime contributor and supporter of the NNPA, helped to introduce the awardees who also included Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.), Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Texas), Niesha Foster of Pfizer Inc., Jessie Woolley-Wilson of Dreambox Learning, and the People's Attorney Benja-



min Crump.

"It's been a very exciting event," Dr. Bennett said of her week in Washington at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Legislative Conference, and the NNPA National Leadership Awards Reception. She noted the excursions members of the CBC and the Black Press have made to Ghana and other parts of the African continent. "In the African tradition, when someone comes to your house, you go back to their house."

Ford, of Life Camp Inc., said although she arrived in Washington for a special ceremony at the White House, she's always valued the role of the Black Press. "I'm

here because our hard work paid off. It's history," Ford declared. "The White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention (announced earlier in the week) is something we worked so hard for and so long for. So, we were at the White House and decided to come here."

Standing only feet away from Ford were Carr and Grant. Both said the Black Press has helped to amplify their concerns and messages since police in New York and Oakland, respectively, killed their sons. "I can't tell you how important the Black Press has been before Eric and since," Carr said.

NNPA Chair, Westside Gazette Publisher Bobby Henry, and NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., provided over the evening, which drew thousands to the event. Chavis said the outing further symbolized the unity and strength of the NNPA in its mission to continue to serve as the unchallenged voice of Black America.

"For 196 years, the Black Press has been the trusted voice, the unwavering voice, for truth, justice, equality, and equity in America and globally," Chavis asserted. "We are at a pivotal time in history and the Black Press will continue to be the vital, trusted, and needed voice during this time as well."



## Annual Legislative Conference concludes with power remarks from Biden, Harris

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris paid tribute to the dedication of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) in their pursuit of progress and equality.

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent  
@StacyBrownMedia

**T**he Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference concluded with resounding calls to action by Black lawmakers and their unwavering commitment to uphold democratic values and advance the rights of Black Americans. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris paid tribute to the dedication of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) in their pursuit of progress and equality.

"I chose to run because silence is complicit, and I would not be silent," Biden said in an impassioned address at the Phoenix Awards, hoping to underscore the urgency of the moment.

"Democracy was at stake in 2020, and thank God, because of you, we won," Biden said.

However, the president also issued a sobering reminder that the threat to democracy persists. "I wish I can say the threat to our democracy ended with our victory in 2020, but it didn't. Our democracy is still at stake, don't kid yourself," Biden insisted.

Vice President Harris, herself a former CBC member, lauded the Caucus as the nation's moral compass, emphasizing their role as truth-tellers about the past and advocates for the future.

"Across America, there is a full-on attack on many of the hard-fought, hard-won freedoms that the CBC has achieved," Harris asserted.

The evening also celebrated leaders and trailblazers who have dedicated themselves to advancing the cause of Black communities. The 2023 Phoenix Awards recognized individuals whose work is creating opportunities for the next generation:

- White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre received the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Confer-

ence Honorary Co-Chairs' Award.

- Mayor of Los Angeles Karen Bass was honored with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Chair's Award.

- House Minority Leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY-8) received the Congressional Black Caucus's Body Award.

- Tennessee State Rep. Justin Jones (D-TN-52) was presented with the Congressional Black Caucus Chair's Award.

- MC Lyte and LL Cool J were bestowed with the 2023 Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Culture Icon Award.

The conference featured insightful panels and discussions addressing critical issues facing Black communities throughout the week. Notable sessions included a press conference hosted by the Hip Hop Caucus, calling for continued activism around issues of policing and overpolicing. Additionally, a panel led by CBC Chair Rep. Steven Horsford and Small Business Association Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman highlighted the significant increase in SBA-backed loans going to Black-owned businesses under the Biden-Harris



Administration.

Other sessions delved into critical topics such as advancing equity in infrastructure access, protecting voting rights, and celebrating arts and foreign affairs achievements. A panel discussion on the battle for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the face of growing opposition was of particular significance.

The conference also addressed critical issues such as transportation and the impact of innovations on Black communities. A panel on artificial intelligence delved into leveraging the potential of AI while mitigating risks and ensuring

that Black voices are amplified in discussions surrounding emerging technologies.

With the recent Supreme Court decision on affirmative action and challenges to DEI initiatives, this year's ALC took on added importance, said Nicole Austin-Hillery, President and CEO of CBCF.

"It is vital that we all engage... to fortify our democracy, protect fundamental freedoms, and celebrate the richness and vibrancy of our cultural heritage" as the nation looks ahead to a pivotal 2024 presidential election," Austin-Hillery asserted.



# On the scene



Vice President Kamala Harris welcomes CBC to Phoenix Awards



President Joe Biden introduces Vice President Kamala Harris at the start of the Phoenix Awards

## CBCF annual Legislative Conference is the biggest caucus to date! Phoenix Awards rock!

By Audrey J. Bernard

The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. (CBCF) wrapped the 51st Annual Legislative Conference which took place Wednesday, September 20 through Sunday, September 24, 2023, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center after five days of phenomenal programming and stellar signature events that included the Prayer Breakfast, National Town Hall, Phoenix Awards and Black Party. This year's theme was Securing Our Democracy, Protecting Our Freedoms, and Uplifting Our Culture. The five-day extravaganza concluded with the always glamorous Phoenix Awards dinner on Saturday, September 23 which recognized individuals who have impacted the Black community. The event was keynoted by President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris



House Minority Leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries



Rep. Terri Sewell presents LA Mayor Karen Bass with award



New Edition (L-R) Ronnie DeVoe, Ricky Bell, Ralph Tresvant, Michael Bivins & Johnny Gill perform



LL Cool J with his award



LA Mayor Karen Bass and Rev. Al Sharpton

fries. Bringing closure to an amazing evening was an exceptional performance from legendary group New Edition who rocked the house! This year's caucus was the biggest one to date boasting fifty-eight members, representing eighty-two million Americans, and making up close to one-quarter of the House Democratic Caucus. (Photos by Jemal Countess / Getty Images)



Stacey Plaskett and Senator Raphael Warnock present Karine Jean-Pierre with award

who both delivered resounding remarks as they bestowed honors on White House Press Secretary

Karine Jean-Pierre, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, and House Minority Leader Rep. Hakeem Jef-



Congressional Black Caucus members pose onstage at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference National Town Hall event

# City Chic



Audrey J. Bernard

## Fashionistas took the "A" Train to Harlem to attend HFR's 16th Anniversary Style and Awards Show at the legendary Apollo Theater

Harlem Fashion Row (HFR) brought HFR's 16th Annual Fashion Show & Style Awards Show to the legendary Apollo Theater during New York Fashion Week with a spectacular show that featured a Tribute to Hip-Hop's 50th Anniversary on Tuesday, September 5, 2023.

Themed The Remix, the star-studded show kicked off with celebrities joining local politicians, community leaders, business owners, entertainment and sports legends, and fashionistas on the red carpet. Once inside the storied venue, excitement filled the air. Black elegance was on display. There was a sense of pride. This was a Black CEO, honoring Black fashion influencers on the famous stage of a coveted Black culture showcase in Black Harlem! Wonders never cease the tried and true. The show commenced with a cocktail hour and a Dream in Black Rising Future Makers Showcase sponsored by AT&T. "AT&T is proud to support and celebrate Harlem's Fashion Row 16th Anniversary Style and Awards Show," said Michelle Jordan, Chief Diversity Officer, AT&T.



HFR Founder & CEO Brandice Daniel

"We value HFR's commitment to nurturing the next generation of diverse designers through our Rising Future Makers Showcase. We believe that vital platforms like this are essential to providing emerging leaders with the golden opportunity to make their dreams a reality."

Then, it was showtime at the Apollo! From the stage, HFR's Founder & CEO Brandice Daniel welcomed guests to the show. The stylish boss lady em-

boldened her guests with her powerful remarks. "This year's event was a tremendous success. We are extremely grateful to the sponsors who came on board to make this event possible. From day one, HFR's mission has been to showcase and provide opportunities for designers of color. We have come a long way since we first started, and we are fortunate to receive so much support from companies committed to improving diversity and inclusion. Many opportunities have opened up for Black designers, and the future is bright for those considering entry into the industry."

The show followed and the 2023 Style Awards recipients were buoyed by Daniel's remarks as they all shared anecdotes of empowerment during their acceptance speeches. Gorgeous Kelly Rowland received the Fashion Icon Award. Rowland was surprised by her husband who presented her with the award. ASAP Rocky received the Virgil Abloh Award presented by Anish Melwani, Chairman and CEO of LVMH and Gena Smith, Chief Human Resource Officer LVMH North



Kelly Rowland accepts the fashion icon of the year award (Arturo Holmes, Getty Images)

America. The Editor of the Year Award was presented to Vogue's Global Contributing Editor, Gabriella Karefa-Johnson. The Stylists of the Year Award was presented to Wayman and Micah. Lastly, The Designer of the Year Award was presented to Stella Jean. Ace photographer Johnny Nunez received a brand-new distinction, the Hip Hop Trailblazer Award. Award recipients received a lavish gift from Tiffany & Co.

Next up! The fashion show

which thrilled guests with each fashion as breathtaking as the next. The Illharmonic Orchestra opened the show with a sensational performance and ode to Hip-Hop, giving everyone goosebumps. Slow Fashion Brand Designer Nicole Benefield, Fashion Designer Aaron Potts, and Sustainable Women's Brand Designer Megan Renee rocked the runway with stunning designs from their latest collection. The models wore makeup provided by Dior, and EveShudawn Mitchel led the team of hairstylists from Camille Rose. The inimitable Doug E. Fresh closed the show with a memorable hip-hop style performance. Following the show guests made their way to a reception sponsored by The Walt Disney Company. The night's entertainment showcase continued with unique exhibits from Taofeek Abijako, Coline Creuzot, Clarence Ruth, Chandricka Carr, Kimminski Adams, and Daziah Green as part of Disney's Create 100 initiative, a global celebration of creativity that marks 100 years of Disney storytelling. (Photos by Shutterstock for HFR)



Stella Jean, right, accepts designer of the year from Brandice and Tamron Hall (Arturo Holmes, Getty Images)



Micah McDonald and Wayman Bannerman accept the stylists of the year (Arturo Holmes, Getty Images)



Anish Melwani, Chairman and CEO of LVMH and Gena Smith, Chief Human Resource Officer LVMH North America, and Brandice Daniel presented A\$AP Rocky with the Virgil Abloh Award



Johnny Nunez accepts hip hop trailblazer award from Brandice Daniel



Gabriella Karefa-Johnson accepts editor of the year award from Tonne Goodman, and Brandice Daniel



A. Potts



Megan Smith



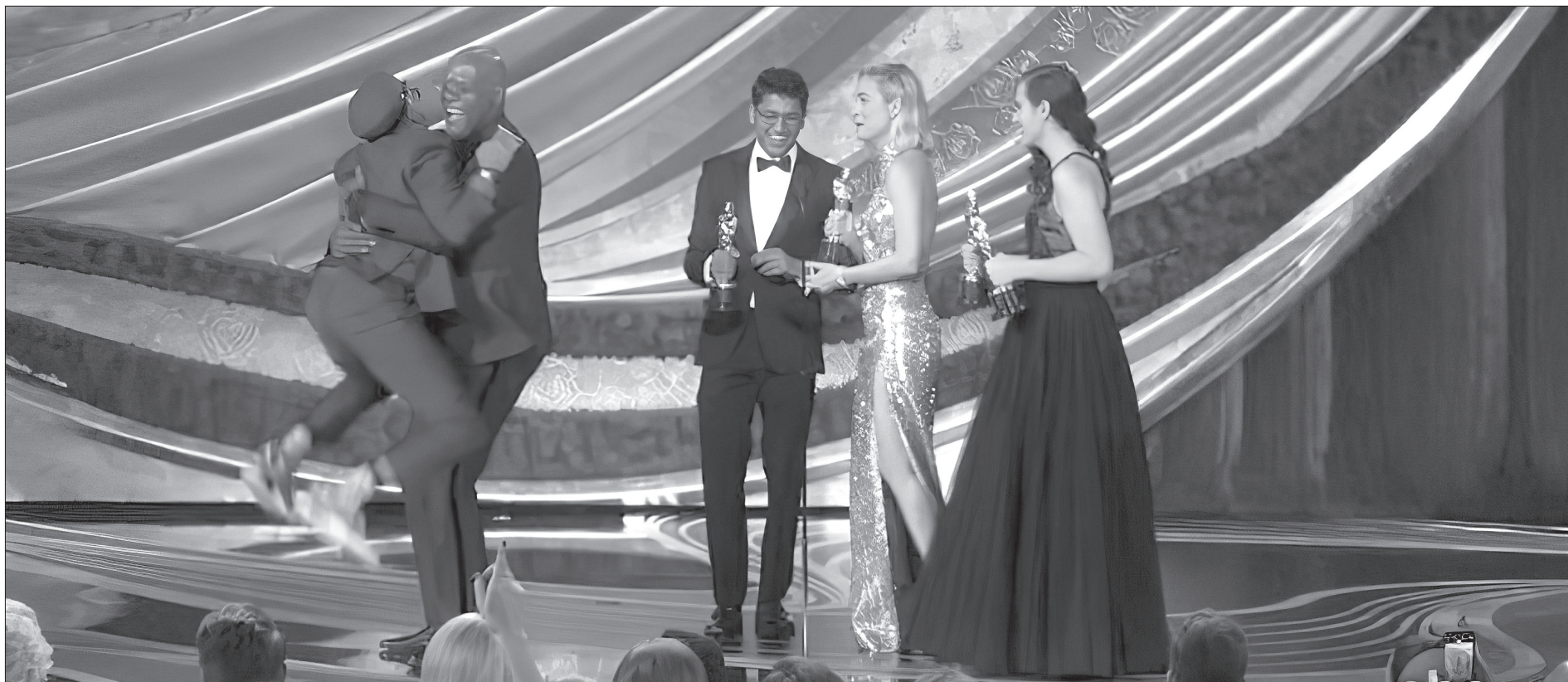
Nicole Benefield



Doug E. Fresh performed



Fashion Icon of the Year Kelly Rowland



# Hollywood Labor Dispute Nears End as Writers Guild Reaches Tentative Deal

By Stacy M. Brown  
(NNPA Newswire)

Hollywood's protracted labor conflict has taken a significant step towards resolution. The Writers Guild of America, representing over 11,000 screenwriters, said the 146-day strike might end with the announcement of a tentative agreement on Sunday, Sept. 24.

The forthcoming days will see guild members vote on whether to accept the deal, which aligns with their demands. The demands include higher pay for streaming content, agreements from studios on minimum staffing for TV shows, and protections against AI technology affecting writers' credits and pay.

According to the New York Times, the Writers Guild's negotiating committee emailed members, expressing their pride in the deal. They emphasized the meaningful gains and protections for all members.

The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, representing studios, consistently refrained from celebrating prematurely, offering a concise statement: "The W.G.A. and A.M.P.T.P. have reached a tentative agreement."

Many in the entertainment industry, profoundly impacted by the streaming revolution catalyzed by the pandemic, view this tentative accord as a crucial stride toward stabilization. However, a substantial portion of Hollywood

remains at a standstill, with tens of thousands of actors continuing their strike and no talks scheduled between the actors' union, SAG-AFTRA, and the studios.

Only productions devoid of actors, such as late-night shows hosted by Jimmy Fallon and Stephen Colbert and daytime talk shows hosted by Drew Barrymore and Jennifer Hudson, stand poised for a swift restart.

In addition to actors, over 100,000 behind-the-scenes professionals in Los Angeles and New York face continued idleness, grappling with escalating financial strain. According to Governor Gavin Newsom, the Hollywood shutdown has cost California's economy more than \$5 billion.

SAG-AFTRA has been on strike since July 14, with demands surpassing the Writers Guild's. The studio alliance prioritized talks with the Writers Guild because of SAG-AFTRA's leader, Fran Drescher, who pushed for 2% of streaming show revenue. Studios considered this point non-negotiable.

However, given shared concerns, the agreement with the Writers Guild could expedite negotiations with the actors' union. Actors, like writers, harbor apprehensions over the potential use of A.I. to create digital likenesses or alter performances without consent or compensation.

Reportedly, artificial intelligence became the crucial factor during the last stage of negoti-

ations. Entertainment company lawyers finalized language that addressed the guild's concerns about artificial intelligence and ownership of old scripts. Senior company leaders, including Robert A. Iger, Donna Langley, Ted Sarandos, and David Zaslav, directly joined the talks.

Hollywood workers have tapped into over \$45 million in hardship withdrawals from the Motion Picture Industry Pension Plan as the strike persists. Warner Bros. Discovery anticipates a \$300 million to \$500 million reduction in adjusted earnings for the year due to the dual strikes.

The agreement gives hope to Hollywood's recovery, which could prevent billions in losses and financial hardships for workers.

# Book censorship on the rise in libraries, ALA reports 20% increase in challenges in 2023

From page 4

book challenges from reports filed by library professionals and news stories published nationwide.

This year, between January 1 and August 31, 2023, OIF documented a staggering 20% increase in challenges, with 695 attempts to censor library materials and services. The challenges encompassed 1,915 unique titles, marking an escalation from the same period in 2022.

Books written by or about people of color or members of the LGBTQIA+ community are primary targets. Challenges within public libraries accounted for nearly half of documented cases, a sharp rise from 16% last year.

## Rise in Multiple Title Challenges

What sets 2023 apart from previous years is the continued surge in simultaneous challenges to multiple titles. A staggering 92% of books challenged were part of

attempts to censor multiple titles, compared to 90% in the first eight months of 2022. Cases involving challenges to 100 or more books were reported in 11 states, a significant increase from just six states during the same reporting period in 2022 and none in 2021. Previously, most challenges aimed to remove or restrict a single book. However, this year, a single challenge targeting multiple titles has become the predominant contributor to the rise in censorship attempts.

"These attacks on our freedom to read should trouble every person who values liberty and our constitutional rights," said OIF Director Deborah Caldwell-Stone. "To allow a group of people or any individual, no matter how powerful or loud, to become the decision-maker about what books we can read or whether libraries exist is to place all of our rights and liberties in jeopardy."

She further emphasized the expanding focus of groups with

political agendas. "Expanding beyond their well-organized attempts to sanitize school libraries, groups with a political agenda have turned their crusade to public libraries, the very embodiment of the First Amendment in our society," Caldwell-Stone insisted. "This places politics over the well-being and education of young people and everyone's right to access and use the public library."

## Public Cases of Censorship

To ALA documented several public cases of censorship:

- Samuels Public Library (Front Royal, Va.): A local pressure group called "Clean Up Samuels" organized book-banning BBQ events, intending to fill out Request for Reconsideration forms for library materials. Their efforts primarily targeted LGBTQIA+ materials, resulting in over 500 forms completed for nearly 150 unique titles. County board members,

influenced by the group, voted to withhold 75 percent of the library's budget until it took action to restrict access to certain books.

- Clinton (Tenn.) Public Library: In response to challenges to books related to gender identity and sexual orientation, the library board voted against creating a special section for such materials. Challenges persisted, with group members advocating for the censorship of LGBTQIA+ representation in library materials. They also called for the library director's resignation and threatened community members who defended access to resources. In August, elected officials asked the sheriff to investigate whether 17 books violated Tennessee's criminal obscenity laws.

- Urbandale (Iowa) Community School District: Officials flagged 374 books for removal from school libraries in response to a state law defining age-appropriate content. The list included titles addressing sex, sex education, sexual orien-

ation, and gender identity. The list was revised to 65 books, with titles like "The Kite Runner" and "The Handmaid's Tale" removed.

Call to Action and Banned Books Week

"The antidote to the contagion of censorship is public, vocal support for libraries," said ALA President Emily Drabinski, who encouraged public support for libraries and for individuals to attend local school or library board meetings, participate in Banned Books Week initiatives, and join the Unite Against Book Bans campaign to combat censorship.

Banned Books Week 2023, scheduled for October 1-7, draws attention to attempts to remove books and materials from libraries, schools, and bookstores. Officials said the theme, "Let Freedom Read," highlights the urgent need to defend the right to read and support the community of readers, library staff, educators, authors, publishers, and booksellers.

# Film



## John David Washington is valiant in 'The Creator' sci-fi action thriller

By Audrey J. Bernard

From 20<sup>th</sup> Century Studios comes sci-fi action thriller "The Creator" starring the unstoppable John David Washington, Gemma Chan, Ken Watanabe, Sturgill Simpson, Madeleine Yuna Voyles, and Allison Janney. This film is a fascinating reality check about the thing living rent free in most inquiring minds about artificial intelligence as it chronicles a post-apocalyptic war between humans and AI which is a belief that feels as if it's becoming more of a reality as life goes on. The gorgeous visuals and pulsating musical score add to the reality of "The Creator." Although the mysterious weapon is described as a weapon to end the war, in this movie, Washington is the force to be reckoned with! His platinum performance is out of this *whirl!*

To bring his vision to the screen, director/co-writer Gareth Edwards and producer Jim Spencer, along with producers Kiri Hart ("Soul") and Arnon Milchan ("L.A. Confidential"), assembled a diverse group of talented actors from around the world. For the pivotal role of Joshua, the filmmakers chose John David Washington, best known for his roles in Spike Lee's 2018 "Black-

klansman," for which he received both Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award nominations, and Christopher Nolan's "Tenet." Washington not only found the story intriguing but also surprisingly heartfelt.

"Gareth has this great ability to inject human behavior—warmth, compassion, human imperfection—into a genre that usually depends on spectacle and danger, and it's a happy balance," Washington says. "Joshua has this very interesting, complex relationship with his conscience and what he believes in. The film explores how love can determine what you think is right or wrong, your reasons for wanting to be alive, and whether you're serving any purpose in life." Some of the film's themes really struck a chord with the actor, such as how can you love something that's not alive, whether "choice love" is more powerful than "programmed love" or "obligated love," and the importance of empathy. "Empathy," Washington says, "could be the difference between us living and having a nuclear holocaust. I think empathy is what makes us human. Every character in this film makes a decision, whether it be driven by empathy or self-preserved on. Those consequences are fleshed out, and they affect every other thing in the story. It's so exciting to be part of it and to execute it, and as an audience member, I think this film will challenge how you empathize with someone."

In discussing Washington's approach to the role, Edwards says, "He really wanted to have kind of transformative experience like Joshua, not just as an actor, but as a person. He went through the crazy



John David Washington as Joshua in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Studios' *THE CREATOR*. Photo by Oren Soffer. © 2023 20<sup>th</sup> Century Studios. All Rights Reserved.

stuff that Joshua went through, like holding on to a boat for an hour and going to these temples and chatting with monks. He was sucking it up because it helped his character, but also as a person he wanted to have that experience. He just happened to be making a movie while doing it." Edwards continues, "The sort of journey that Joshua goes on in the film is a journey you don't want to go on. When you take a character and you chuck him into a situation he just doesn't want to be in, every bone in his body resists going on that journey, but it's the journey he needs to go on to become a better person or to fix himself. So, going into making the film, John David knew this was going to be hard, but he dove into it wholeheartedly, ready to let it hit him." Adds Spencer, "John David Washington's performance is

astonishing. From the moment his name was mentioned in casting, no one else could have played Joshua. There are only a handful of actors who have both the physicality to create stunning acts on sequences and at the same time have the ability to deliver a heart-rending performance."

"John David is one the most intelligent, generous, and hard-working actors you could ever hope to work with," continues Spencer. "It was a privilege to watch him practice his craft. His positivity on set was infectious, keeping everyone going whether shooting in 100-degree heat with 100% humidity or in a freezing cold dawn in the Himalayas! He's unstoppable."

SYNOPSIS: From director/co-writer Gareth Edwards ("Rogue One," "Godzilla") comes an epic sci-

fi action thriller set amidst a future war between the human race and the forces of artificial intelligence. Joshua (John David Washington), a hardened ex-special forces agent grieving the disappearance of his wife (Gemma Chan), is recruited to hunt down and kill the Creator, the elusive architect of advanced AI who has developed a mysterious weapon with the power to end the war...and mankind itself. Joshua and his team of elite operatives journey across enemy lines, into the dark heart of AI-occupied territory, only to discover the world-ending weapon he's been instructed to destroy is an AI in the form of a young child (Madeleine Yuna Voyles).

CREDITS: A Gareth Edwards film based on a story by Gareth Edwards who co-wrote with Chris Weitz and directs. Edwards produces along with Kiri Hart, Jim Spencer, p.g.a. and Arnon Milchan. Executive produced by Yaviv Milchan, Michael Schaffer, Natalie Lehmann, Nick Meyer, Zev Foreman. Directors of Photography Greig Fraser, ASC, ACS and Oren Soffer. James Clyne is the production designer. Editors Hank Corwin, ACE, Joe Walker, ACE and Scott Morris. Music by Hans Zimmer. Music Supervisor Gabe Hilfer. Sound Design by Erik Aadahl and Ethan Van Der Ryn. Visual Effects Producer Julian Levi, ILM Visual Effects Supervisor Jay Cooper. ILM Visual Effects Producer Katherine Farrar Bluff. Co-Producers Nicholas Simon, Greig Fraser and Courtney L. Cunniff. Costume Designer Jeremy Hanna. Casting by Jina Jay, CDG, CSA. "The Creator" opens nationwide on Thursday, September 29, 2023, in theaters and IMAX. (Photos courtesy 20<sup>th</sup> Century Studios)



John David Washington as Joshua and newcomer Madeleine Yuna Voyles as Alphi

#DanceLikeaDad



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# Classified

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By Don Thomas

## Lionel Richie wants chance to duet with Diana Ross

By Angelina Velasquez

**L**ionel Richie would like a moment of Diana Ross' time, and he wants the whole world to know about it. The Motown crooner could not help but feel slighted after seeing the iconic songstress hit the stage during the final LA show of the "Renaissance World Tour" on Sept. 4, 2023 in honor of Beyoncé's birthday.

As previously reported by REVOLT, the already jaw-dropping concert was accented by an appearance from Kendrick Lamar and Ross, who emerged onstage to perform her 1976 hit record "Love Hangover" and "Happy Birthday" to Queen Bey. The two ladies shared a special moment in front of thousands of fans as they embraced.

Richie is currently on tour with the equally iconic group Earth, Wind & Fire. The original Commodores singer was onstage when he addressed his longtime unrequited desire to share the spotlight with Ross like they once did in 1982. "There is a song I want to do, and for 37 years, I have tried my best to get Ms. Diana Ross to show up on this stage right here, tonight," he said, as seen in fan footage captured from a recent show. He and The Supremes alum performed their ballad "Endless Love" for the first and only time at the Oscars in 1982.

Despite his efforts, the singer-songwriter has apparently been unable to coax Ross to share the mic with him again. "[For] 37 years, I have tried to call Ms. Ross



Lionel Richie (left) Diva Diana Ross belts out "Happy Birthday" song to Queen Beyonce (Photos: Getty Images)

on the phone ... Full disclosure, it was clear to me when I said she has told me no for 37 years. What did you think she was gone do? Show up tonight? The woman ain't coming. She's over there singing 'Happy Birthday' to Beyoncé. Piss me off," he continued

as concertgoers could be heard laughing.

Richie appeared on an episode of "Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen," in 2021 where he stated that performing the record "is one of my bucket list things if I ever had to go back

and say, 'Could I redo something?'" At the time, he said the touring and other obligations had been the cause of their inability to recapture the magic of the only live performance together. "We just could never get our schedules together... that's one of the

things that I miss about my entire career, having us onstage together," he noted. The BeyHive hasn't swarmed the 74-year-old artist in defense of Beyoncé, but several fans have expressed doubt that his mini-rant will help to convince Ross to perform with him.

## Remembering

### Katherine "Please, Mr. Postman" Anderson-Schaffner

By Troy Smith

**K**atherine Anderson-Schaffner, a founding member of the Marvelettes, has reportedly died at the age of 79. The Marvelettes were the group behind the classic "Please, Mr. Postman" a song that stayed on the Billboard music charts for an astounding 23 weeks in 1961, eventually reaching #1 on the charts in December.

Anderson-Schaffner was a founding member of the group that created this hit. Anderson-Schaffner's sister made the following post on social media following the beloved singer's passing... Some called her Kat - some called her Sis, Gamma -

Momma K but my sister and I called her MOM," she wrote in her tribute post. "She was not just a Mom to us but to many. Many people would come and sit at her table. Now if you ever sat and said, 'Kat I need to talk.' You already knew you were going to get true, uncut, unedited council.

"She wasn't going to tell you what you wanted to hear but what you should hear. I remember friends saying 'I'm coming over and I would say, 'I'm not home;' the response would be 'I'm going to talk to your mom. My response would always be you know how that's going to go right? Two hours and a box of tissue later sitting at her kitchen table, your

counseling session was over. The funny part is you would come back for more."

Katherine Anderson-Schaffner is and will always be one of the Original Marvelettes. Her music and Legacy will live on. So the next time you hear 'Please Mr. Postman,' 'Don't Mess With Bill,' or 'The Hunter Gets Captured By The Game,' just smile and say 'I'll Keep Holding On.' Mom we love you and will miss you. And yes we know — 'It is what it is.' Katherine Anderson, co-founder of The Marvelettes will be remembered forever. She made great contributions to American music, and we pray for her family during these times. Rest in peace, legend!



The Marvelettes

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