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Philadelphia *Observer*

50 Cents

Speaking Truth to Justice

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Vol. 31 • No. 37

September 12 – September 18, 2024,

LEGENDARY ACTOR EGOT winner James Earl Jones Dies at 93

Emmy
Grammy
Oscar
Tony



Jones became one of a select few entertainers to achieve the prestigious EGOT award winning an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony, p 7, 8

Lawmakers face September 30 deadline to avoid government shutdown

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

After a six-week summer recess, lawmakers return to the Capitol on Monday with a looming crisis: preventing a government shutdown. They have just three weeks to act before federal funding runs out on September 30, and the stakes couldn't be higher. The twice impeached and 34 times convicted former President Donald Trump has urged Republicans to embrace a shutdown unless his demands are met, putting millions of jobs and essential services at risk just weeks ahead of the 2024 presidential election.

The prospect of a shutdown would close federal agencies and national parks and curtail essential public services while furloughing millions of federal workers. The presidential race overshadows this impending crisis, as Congress will break again at the end of the month, not returning until after the election. Before leaving in July, the political landscape shifted when President Joe Biden exited the presidential race, positioning Vice President Kamala Harris as the new Democratic standard bearer. In the campaign's final weeks, Republicans under Trump are preparing to change their strategy against Harris.

At the heart of Congress's immediate challenge is securing a funding bill to keep the government operational. With an unlikely complete funding agreement, lawmakers are looking for a stop-gap measure. But even that has become a political minefield. Under pressure from Trump and right-



wing factions, the Republican-led House proposed a stopgap bill that would extend funding through March 28, 2025. However, it comes with a controversial addition—the SAVE Act, a GOP-backed measure that would overhaul national voting laws by requiring proof of citizenship to vote. Democrats have vehemently opposed the act, arguing it would disenfranchise voters by making it harder for eligible Americans to access required documents like passports or birth certificates.

Beyond the political gamesmanship, the consequences of a shutdown would hit home in

Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, where federal workers and government operations are crucial to local economies. National landmarks like the Smithsonian Museums and the National Zoo may remain open temporarily with prior-year funding, but there is uncertainty about other attractions like the National Mall's memorials.

The economic impact could be severe in Maryland, home to over 240,000 federal worker households. State officials are preparing to use local funds to offset the disruption, but workers commuting to Washington, D.C., or Northern Virginia may be furloughed.

Virginia would bear the brunt of the shutdown, with its substantial federal civilian and military workforce. The state's economy is deeply intertwined with federal spending, particularly in regions like Hampton Roads, home to a significant number of active-duty military personnel. The shutdown could jeopardize essential programs, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and affect operations at Virginia's 22 national parks.

The ripple effects would extend to the Washington, D.C., Metro

system, which relies heavily on federal workers for ridership. With the Metro system already facing challenges in recovering from pandemic-related drops in usage, a shutdown could be another blow.

"There's no question that this is not a good thing for the country, but it's certainly not a good thing for Metro specifically," Randy Clarke, Metro's general manager, said during a recent interview. "And the timing is really challenging because ridership is really starting to grow back. So, you know, we're going to be watching this very closely, and we're hoping that if it happens, it's very short."

Trump's agenda 47 sparks alarm among federal workers, local leaders in DC area

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

As the twice-impeached former President Donald Trump pushes forward to reclaim the White House, his Agenda 47 proposal has ignited widespread anxiety and outrage across the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. The plan, which includes the forced relocation of up to 100,000 federal jobs from Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, is being met with fierce resistance from local leaders, businesses, and federal workers who see it as an existential threat to the local economy and the livelihoods of residents.

In a region where federal employment forms the backbone of the local economy, Trump's proposals have infuriated communities that depend heavily on the stability and presence of federal agencies. The anxiety is palpable in Maryland, a state that voted overwhelmingly against Trump in 2020 and where a contentious U.S. Senate race could tip the balance of power in Washington.

Angela Alsobrooks, the Democratic nominee for Maryland's open Senate seat and Prince George's County Executive, did not mince words when condemning Trump's

plans. "Former President Trump is a ruthless leader, retaliatory in all his ways, and what he talks about in terms of really harming federal workers is evil," Alsobrooks declared. "This is yet another reason we absolutely must put Donald Trump in the rearview mirror."

The discontent isn't confined to Democrats. Even Larry Hogan, the former Republican governor of Maryland and now a Senate candidate, has criticized the relocation proposals as "crazy." Hogan, a vocal critic of the 34-times criminally convicted Trump, warned that such drastic measures would not only devastate the local economy but also "undermine our entire democracy."

For federal workers, the fear is about being uprooted from their homes and the potential dismantling of the civil service as they know it. Project 2025, the Trump-backed Heritage Foundation's blueprint for a possible Trump presidency, which aims to eliminate thousands of federal jobs and strip civil service protections, also looms as a dark cloud over the workforce.

Laura Dodson, acting vice president of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 3403, spoke from personal experience about the chaos and

uncertainty of such relocations. "When my office was moved to Kansas City under Trump's administration, it was a rushed process that overlooked the basic needs of workers," Dodson recalled. "It led to retirements, forced career changes, and ultimately weakened the agency."

The stakes are equally high across the Potomac in Virginia, where the ripple effects of Trump's agenda could reverberate through the economy. Libby Garvey, chair of the Arlington County Board, painted a grim picture of what could happen if the federal workforce were to be decimated. "Our local budget would take a major hit—roads, schools, public safety—all of it would be compromised. This isn't just about jobs; it's about the survival of our communities," Garvey told reporters.

Even small businesses that have long thrived on the patronage of federal employees are bracing for impact. Tay Gibson, who manages a repair shop across from the U.S. Census Bureau in Maryland, fears the loss of customers could cripple his business. "If the federal workers leave, business leaves too, and that's a blow small businesses like mine can't afford to take," Gibson explained in a televised interview. Beyond the immediate eco-



nomie worries, many people believe that Trump's agenda is part of a more significant effort to reduce the federal government's role in an area that has historically been a Democratic stronghold. Karen Hult, a political science professor at Virginia Tech, warned that Trump's plans could alienate key voters in Northern Virginia while appealing to those in more rural parts of the state who distrust the D.C. establishment. However, she cautioned that the overall impact could be disastrous for Trump's electoral prospects in Virginia, a state he has already lost twice.

Ultimately, the implications of Trump's Agenda 47 extend far beyond the D.C. area. Filipe

Campante, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, underscored the importance of federal employees' physical presence in the nation's capital, emphasizing that face-to-face interactions are crucial for accountability and effective governance. "There's a reason why capital cities exist," Campante noted, pointing to the potential dangers of decentralizing the federal workforce.

Trump's controversial vision for reshaping the federal government has become a flashpoint, galvanizing both opposition and concern. As one local leader said, "The stakes couldn't be higher. This isn't just a battle for jobs—it's a battle for the soul of our democracy."

Republican party attempts to strike 225,000 voters from North Carolina election rolls

By Sunita Sohrabji
(EthnicMediaServices)

- A group of civil rights organizations announced Sept. 5 they are challenging a lawsuit by the Republican Party, which seeks to deem 225,000 registered voters in North Carolina ineligible to vote.

The lawsuit impacts any voter in North Carolina who does not have a Social Security number and a driver's license — or other DMV document — on file with the North Carolina State Board of Elections (NCSBE).

Election officials note that this could be a fault of human error, and that such documents were not required before 2005, when the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) took effect.

In its lawsuit filed Aug. 23, the RNC stated that the NCSBE allowed over a quarter million people to register to vote with registration forms that failed to collect required identification information. The RNC deemed it a violation of HAVA.

"Because of these errors, the North Carolina voter rolls are potentially replete with ineligible voters — including possible non-citizens — all of whom are now registered to vote," declared the RNC in its lawsuit.

RNC Chairman Michael Whatley said in a press statement: "The NCSBE has once again failed in its mandate to keep non-citizens off the voter rolls, fueling distrust and jeopardizing our elections. We are committed to the basic principle — and commonsense law — that only Americans decide American elections."

Voting by undocumented immigrants is extremely rare, reports the Brennan Center. In a survey of 23.5 million ballots, the organization found only 30 fraudulent votes, just 0.0001 percent of the votes cast. The Cato Institute, a

libertarian think tank, also reports that non-citizens do not vote in detectable numbers. Non-citizens who attempt to vote can be criminally prosecuted and deemed ineligible for citizenship.

Motion to Intervene

The North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP, along with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Southern Coalition for Social Justice filed a motion to intervene Sept. 4, on behalf of the North Carolina NAACP, and Sailor Jones, associate director of Common Cause, North Carolina, who is directly affected by the RNC lawsuit. The NAACP notes that Black voters would be disproportionately impacted, should the RNC's lawsuit prevail.

In an interview with Ethnic Media Services, Jones said he has voted in North Carolina for decades. But he re-registered to vote on July 8, 2022, after changing residences. Neither his social security number or his driver's license show up in voter files, thus he would be deemed ineligible to vote, should the RNC prevail. Jones said he provided his driver's license when voting in the 2024 primary election, and has provided his Social Security number to election officials in the past.

The RNC's 'Desperate Move'

"Now I am one of hundreds of thousands eligible North Carolina voters whom extremists want to deny their freedom to cast a ballot just days before voting begins in our state," he said, characterizing the lawsuit as a "desperate move."

The East Carolina University Center for Survey Research released a poll Sept. 3, which showed Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump in a one-point lead against Vice President Kamala



Harris, the Democratic Presidential candidate. Dr. Peter Francia, Director of the East Carolina University Center for Survey Research said in an interview with CBS17 that the razor-thin lead was well within the 3 point margin of error.

Jones said he expects more North Carolinians coming to the polls to rebuke the Republican Party's extreme policies, including restricting abortion access, new cuts to public education, and penalties for publicly protesting.

American Basketball Player Ineligible to Vote

"While these extremists may

have wanted North Carolina voters to be discouraged by this latest political ploy, they forgot we live in a state known for breaking voting records regardless of the barriers in place," he said.

Jones provided to EMS the full list of a quarter million people who would be deemed ineligible to vote. (The list can be searched by downloading the spreadsheet. While the list has over 750,000 names, only those missing both a driver's license and a Social Security number would be potentially ineligible to vote).

Jones noted that one of his favorite basketball players, University of North Carolina's Armando Bacot, is on the list. "When you

mess with college basketball in North Carolina, you mess with all of us," said Jones.

Bacot, 24, was born in Richmond, Virginia; he is Black.

The North Carolina State Board of Elections has not commented on the lawsuit. It does encourage people to check its database to see if they are still actively registered to vote. People who are listed as inactive can re-register up to 30 days prior to the election. For voters who lack a Social Security number or driver's license, North Carolinians can submit a photo ID, along with a utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows a name and address.

Jury selection begins in Federal trial of Memphis officers charged in Tyre Nichols' death

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

Jury selection began Monday, Sept. 9, in the federal trial of three former Memphis police officers charged with violating the civil rights of Tyre Nichols, the 29-year-old Black man who died following a brutal beating by police in January 2023. The incident, captured on police cameras, ignited protests and calls for police reform nationwide.

Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, and Justin Smith face charges of using excessive force, failing to intervene, and obstructing justice through witness tampering. All three have pleaded not guilty.

On January 7, 2023, the police allegedly pulled over Nichols for alleged reckless driving. After being removed from his car, Nichols attempted to flee on foot. Officers caught up with him and violently assaulted him, as shown in police body camera footage. Nichols died in the hospital three days later from his injuries. The autopsy revealed that he died from blunt

force trauma to the head, and his death was ruled a homicide.

The three officers on trial and two other officers—Emmitt Martin III and Desmond Mills Jr.—were members of the Memphis Police Department's now-disbanded SCORPION Unit, a specialized crime suppression team. All five officers were fired after the incident and were later charged with second-degree murder in state court. Mills and Martin have pleaded guilty to federal charges and may testify during the trial.

While the trial is expected to last three to four weeks, the incident has also triggered a broader civil rights investigation into the Memphis Police Department.

In September 2023, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and U.S. Attorney Kevin G. Ritz for the Western District of Tennessee announced the launch of an investigation into potential patterns of unconstitutional conduct within the Memphis Police Department. The investigation, which Nichols'

death sparked, is looking into whether the department used excessive force and racially discriminatory practices, particularly during traffic stops involving Black people.

"The tragic death of Tyre Nichols created enormous pain in the Memphis community and across the country," said U.S. Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "The Justice Department is launching this investigation to examine serious allegations that the City of Memphis and the Memphis Police Department engage in a pattern or practice of unconstitutional conduct and discriminatory policing based on race."

Clarke emphasized that while Nichols' death was a catalyst, reports of officers escalating encounters and using excessive force over an extended period prompted the investigation. "There are also indications that officers may use force punitively when faced with behavior they perceive to be insolent," Clarke stated.

The investigation will examine



whether Memphis police violated constitutional rights through unlawful stops, excessive force, or racially discriminatory policing practices.

In addition to the federal trial and civil rights probe, Nichols' family has filed a \$550 million lawsuit against the City of Memphis, Police Chief Cerelyn "C.J." Davis,

the five officers involved in Nichols' death, and other officials. The lawsuit alleges negligence in hiring practices and creating a culture of aggressive policing within the SCORPION Unit.

The trial has drawn national attention, with Nichols' family expected to attend as the officers' trial.

Biden-Harris pushes forward with unprecedented education reforms despite conservative opposition

By Stacy M. Brown(NNPA Newswire)

The Biden-Harris administration is continuing its relentless pursuit to transform America's public education system, despite repeated attempts by conservative Republicans and controversial rulings from the U.S. Supreme Court to block key initiatives like student debt cancellation. On Wednesday, Sept. 4, the White House released a comprehensive fact sheet outlining the administration's bold actions to ensure that every student in the country has access to the resources they need to succeed.

Since taking office, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have championed education as the bedrock of America's democracy and the foundation for opportunity. Their administration has delivered the largest-ever federal investment in K-12 education through the American Rescue Plan (ARP), allocating \$130 billion to schools nationwide. The White House said the funding has had a transformative effect, particularly in communities hit hardest by the pandemic.

A groundbreaking study by Harvard and Stanford revealed that schools receiving federal COVID-19 relief funds—ranging from \$4,000 to more than \$13,000 per student—are already seeing significant improvements in academic performance. Administration officials proclaimed that the long-term economic benefits are expected to be just as impressive, with the investments likely to lead to higher future earnings for students, especially those from low-income backgrounds. They said research shows that a 10% increase in per-student spending over a 12-year period boosts lifetime wages by 7%.

As students return to the classroom this fall, the administration wants to ensure the momentum continues. The White House announced a series of new initiatives to accelerate academic success, bolster student engagement, and tackle key challenges like absenteeism and literacy. Among the most impactful of these actions is the allocation of \$149 million to support evidence-based reading programs to ensure all students can read fluently by third grade. Officials said states like Ohio and Montana will use the funding to expand teacher training and strengthen literacy programs, particularly in under-



served communities that have been historically left behind.

In addition to bolstering literacy, the administration is awarding \$30 million to improve comprehensive student assessment systems. According to the White House, these tools will provide educators with critical data on student progress and help inform instruction, driving better classroom outcomes nationwide. For instance, Nebraska plans to use these funds to improve assessment data for English learners, ensuring that teachers have the insights needed to tailor instruction and close achievement gaps.

The Department of Education also issued updated school improvement guidance, providing states and school districts with evidence-based strategies to increase student achievement. The guidance offers solutions for tackling chronic absenteeism, a significant barrier to student success, through early warning systems and better family engagement. It also emphasizes the importance of small-group tutoring, after-school programs, and expanded learning opportunities to help students recover from pandemic-related disruptions.

The draft guidance is open for public comment until October 4, 2024, allowing educators and community leaders to provide input before it is finalized.

The administration also said it's taking decisive action to address chronic absenteeism, an issue that has only worsened since the pandemic. The White House called on state education leaders to create statewide data systems that provide real-time information on absenteeism rates, allowing schools to identify root causes and implement targeted interventions. States like Alabama and Rhode Island have already implemented innovative systems to monitor attendance and have seen improvements.

To support these efforts, the Biden-Harris administration said it's pressing industry vendors to improve the availability of attendance data, urging them to make this critical information accessible to schools without additional costs. Officials said the actions are part of a larger push to ensure that every district has the tools to track absenteeism and boost student engagement.

The administration has launched the Student Attendance and Engagement Solutions Network to further engage students

in partnership with AmeriCorps and Johns Hopkins University's Everyone Graduates Center. Nearly 200 school districts across 43 states have joined the network, representing over 7 million students. The initiative allows districts to share best practices for improving attendance and engagement, and the administration is encouraging more districts to join.

Recognizing that transportation challenges often prevent students from attending school regularly, the administration is also collaborating with the Department of Transportation to improve transit options for students in underserved areas. This includes expanding safe routes to school, offering free or reduced transit fares, and supporting creative solutions like walking and bike buses. Officials asserted that the efforts aim to remove transportation barriers that disproportionately affect low-income families, ensuring that students can get to school safely and on time.

In addition to addressing transportation issues, the administration is releasing joint guidance from the Departments of Education and Agriculture, focused on the role of healthy school meals in supporting regular attendance.

Schools will be encouraged to engage parents on the importance of nutritious meals for student success while providing information on how to access meal programs that support everyday attendance and academic growth.

Further, a newly launched Attendance Champions Challenge invites young people to propose creative solutions for improving attendance. Open to students aged 13-19, the challenge seeks innovative ideas for reducing absenteeism and increasing engagement, focusing on addressing the barriers that keep students out of the classroom.

Since the passage of the American Rescue Plan, the administration has allocated more than \$70 billion toward addressing students' academic, social, and emotional needs. The funding has supported a record expansion of tutoring programs, summer and afterschool learning opportunities, and improved school mental health resources. The administration's emphasis on equity has also driven \$800 million to under-resourced schools in high-poverty areas, ensuring these communities receive the support they desperately need.

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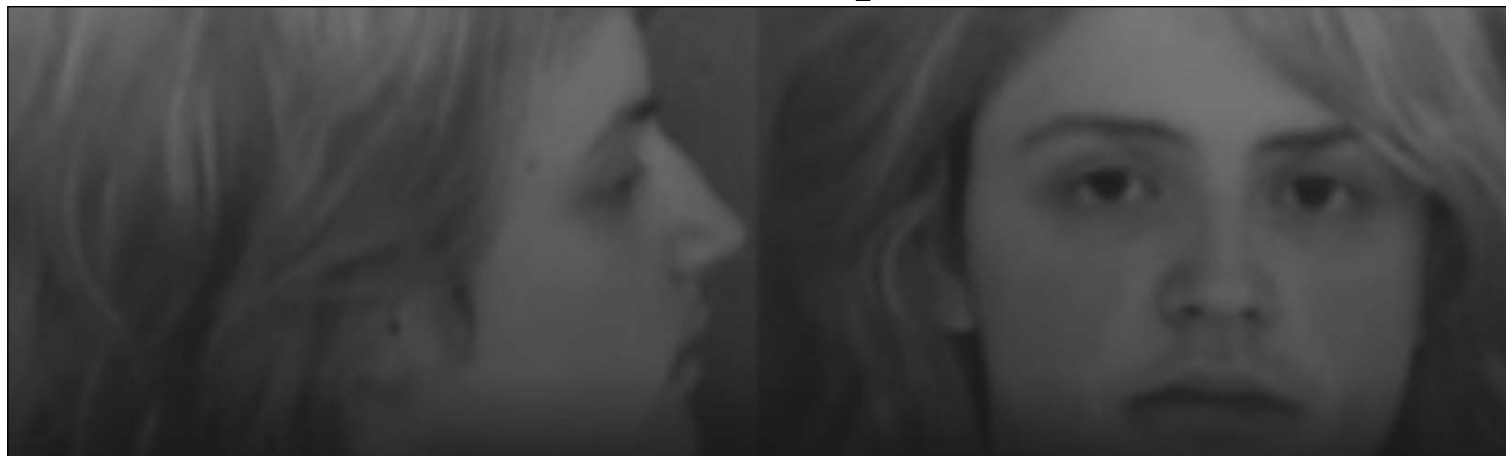
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Georgia school shooting draws outrage after media misidentifies suspect

Philadelphiaobserver.com

A tragic mass shooting at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia, has sparked outrage after two prominent news outlets misidentified the suspect. Colt Gray, 14, has been charged with killing four people and injuring nine others, yet media coverage initially focused on a Black student, Mason Schermerhorn, one of the victims. WSB-TV, based in Atlanta, posted Schermerhorn's photo under Gray's name, and the Daily Mail followed suit, posting the same erroneous image alongside a white classmate's photo. The mistakes, compounded by the outlets' lack of transparency, ignited public fury, especially over the racial undertones of the errors.

Both WSB-TV and the Daily Mail deleted the posts after they went viral, but not before they drew



accusations of implicit racial bias. Social media users were quick to point out the potential bias behind the mix-up, with some questioning whether assumptions about race played a role in the misidentification. While the outlets have since retracted the posts, there was no

formal apology or correction, leaving many calling for accountability. Critics argue that such missteps demonstrate the ongoing failure of newsrooms to ensure accurate, fair reporting, particularly when race is involved.

This incident highlights broad-

er concerns about diversity and bias in the media. Studies, like one published by the Pew Research Center in 2022, underscore the importance of newsroom diversity in shaping how stories are told. Experts have long warned that the lack of diverse perspectives

can lead to skewed coverage, as seen in this case. Implicit bias in news reporting, especially involving Black individuals, has surfaced in various high-profile incidents, exposing the persistent challenges media outlets face in representing marginalized communities fairly.

Student loan debt drops \$10b due to Biden admin forgiveness

By Charlene Crowell
(TriceEdneyWire)

As consumers struggle to cope with mounting debt, a new economic report from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York includes an unprecedented glimmer of hope. Although debt for mortgages, credit cards, auto loans and more increased by billions of dollars in the second quarter of 2024, student loan debt decreased by \$10 billion.

According to the New York Fed, borrowers ages 40-49 and ages 18-29 benefitted the most from the reduction in student loan debt.

In a separate and recent independent finding, 57 percent of Black Americans hold more than \$25,000 in student loan debt compared to 47 percent of Americans overall, according to The Motley Fool's analysis of student debt by geography, age and race. Black women have an average of \$41,466 in undergraduate student loan debt one year after graduation, more than any other group and \$10,000 more than men.

This same analysis found that Washington, DC residents carried the highest average federal student loan debt balance, with \$54,146 outstanding per borrower. Americans holding high levels of student debt lived in many of the nation's most populous states – including California, Texas, and Florida.

The Fed's recent finding may be connected to actions taken by the Biden administration to rein in unsustainable debt held by people who sought higher education as a way to secure a better quality

of life. This decline is even more noteworthy in light of a series of legal roadblocks to loan forgiveness. In response to these legal challenges, the Education Department on August 1 began emailing all borrowers of an approaching August 30 deadline to contact their loan servicer to decline future financial relief. Borrowers preferring to be considered for future relief proposed by pending departmental regulations should not respond.

If approved as drafted, the new rules would benefit over 30 million borrowers, including those who have already been approved for debt cancellation over the past three years.

"These latest steps will mark the next milestone in our efforts to help millions of borrowers who've been buried under a mountain of student loan interest, or who took on debt to pay for college programs that left them worse off financially, those who have been paying their loans for twenty or more years, and many others," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona.

The draft rules would benefit borrowers with either partial or full forgiveness in the following categories:

Borrowers who owe more now than they did at the start of repayment. This category is expected to largely benefit nearly 23 million borrowers, the majority of whom are Pell Grant recipients.

Borrowers who have been in repayment for decades. Borrowers of both undergraduate and graduate loans who began repayment on or before July 1, 2000 would

qualify for relief in this category.

Borrowers who are otherwise eligible for loan forgiveness but have not yet applied. If a borrower hasn't successfully enrolled in an income-driven repayment (IDR) plan but would be eligible for immediate forgiveness, they would be eligible for relief. Borrowers who would be eligible for closed school discharge or other types of forgiveness opportunities but haven't successfully applied would also be eligible for this relief.

Borrowers who enrolled in low-financial value programs. If a borrower attended an institution that failed to provide sufficient financial value, or that failed one of the Department's accountability standards for institutions, those borrowers would also be eligible for debt relief.

Most importantly, if the rules become approved as drafted, no related application or actions would be required from eligible borrowers — so long as they did not opt out of the relief by the August 30 deadline.

"The regulations would de-

liver on unfulfilled promises made by the federal government to student loan borrowers over decades and offer remedies for a dysfunctional system that has often created a financial burden, rather than economic mobility, for student borrowers pursuing a better future," stated the Center for American Progress in an August 7 web article. "Meanwhile, the Biden-Harris administration also introduced income limits and caps on relief to ensure the borrowers who can afford to pay the full amount of their debts do so."

"The Center for American Progress estimates the interest waiver provisions would deliver relief to roughly 6 million Black borrowers, or 23 percent of the estimated number of borrowers receiving relief, as well as 4 million Hispanic or Latino borrowers (16 percent) and 13.5 million white borrowers (53 percent)."

These pending regulations would further expand the \$168.5 billion in financial relief that the Biden Administration has already

provided to borrowers:

\$69.2 billion for 946,000 borrowers through fixes to Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF).

\$51 billion for more than 1 million borrowers through administrative adjustments to IDR payment counts. These adjustments have brought borrowers closer to forgiveness and addressed longstanding concerns with the misuse of forbearance by loan servicers.

\$28.7 billion for more than 1.6 million borrowers who were cheated by their schools, saw their institutions precipitously close, or are covered by related court settlements.

\$14.1 billion for more than 548,000 borrowers with a total and permanent disability.

\$5.5 billion for 414,000 borrowers through the SAVE Plan.

More information for borrowers about this debt relief is available at StudentAid.gov/debt-relief.

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Editorial - Opinion



By Dr. E. Faye Williams
(TriceEdneyWire)-

Do we have the courage?

Black women used to respond to that. Lord knows I wish they were here now, but we can read about the courage of Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Diane Nash, Fannie Lou Hamer, Chisholm and so many more who handled the “impossible things!” They put their own lives on the line, and as Forever First Lady Michelle Obama said “DO SOMETHING!”

Our children shouldn’t have to get ready to go to a school they dread because doing so they might get shot! That can’t continue to happen. Where is our courage? Do we care enough about our children to tell everyone who is against gun security that “You will no longer put our children through this. This must end!”

If you can do nothing more than form a Gun Security Club, do it. If you must have a gun and you don’t know how to secure a gun, ask someone who knows before

you buy it. A man by the name of William McMurray invented a system called The American Rac can help you and he’s more than willing to do it. See www.TheAmericanRac.com for what you can do.

I am a member of the Board of Directors of The World Conference of Mayors founded by the Hon. Johnny Ford who spent 32 years as Mayor of Tuskegee, Alabama and remains a member of its City Council. The current President (former police chief) is Mayor Jimmie Gardner of Pritchard, Alabama. Together they, along with thousands of others, have taken on the issue of gun security. Recently, the WCM passed the following resolution after hearing J.D. Vance sound hopeless (or just not caring) stating that “Gun violence is a fact of life.” That was like saying there’s nothing we can do about it, but he’s wrong. If he thinks such tragedies as brutally murdering students, teachers,

injuring and traumatizing many others are inevitable, we must show them it’s not! It’s absolutely disgusting!

We must find the courage to fight and end gun violence. We have a clear choice on the ballot this November: We can elect Vice-President Kamala Harris and Governor Tim Walz, proven gun safety champions, or we can allow 4 years of inaction if Trump and Vance take back the White House.

The World Conference of Mayors passed the following resolution about something we can do that reads, “Resolved that the World Conference of Mayors urge our members to work to actively promote and support gun security in their communities, states and Federal level; as well as encourage Rep. Jerrold Nadler to resubmit his bill on the subject (HR-6596) and (SB-3407) and strongly urge their representatives at all levels to support it.”

We must stand up and show our courage to end gun violence. Parents must secure their guns. They must not purchase long guns for any reason. Parents must vote against those who work against gun security.

No child must have to go to school while fearing to go. They’re our future leaders who will make decisions about our lives when we’re incapable of doing it. If Vance, Trump and those who vote and work against sensible gun laws won’t do it, let us do it! I’m making a special appeal to women who so often have been victims of gun violence from those who claim to love us. I know because I’ve been a victim while saving others. This is a personal issue. You can do something. Vote November 5th for those whose action saves children and against those whose inaction continues these tragedies.

Dr. E. Faye Williams is President of The Dick Gregory Society.

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James Earl Jones, iconic voice of Darth Vader and EGOT winner, dies at 93

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

James Earl Jones, the legendary actor whose deep, resonant voice became synonymous with some of the most iconic characters in film history, passed away today at his home in Dutchess County, New York. He was 93.

His representatives at Independent Artist Group first confirmed the actor's death to Deadline. Over a remarkable career that spanned six decades, Jones earned an indelible place in both Hollywood and Broadway. He became one of only a few entertainers to achieve the prestigious EGOT, winning an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony.

Best known to many as the commanding voice behind Darth Vader in *Star Wars*, Jones brought depth and gravitas to the villainous character, making him one of cinema's most unforgettable antagonists. He reprised the role

in *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (2005) and *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016), further cementing his legacy in the galaxy far, far away.

Born on January 17, 1931, in Arkabutla, Mississippi, Jones's contributions to the arts extended far beyond *Star Wars*. He voiced the beloved character Mufasa in Disney's animated classic *The Lion King* (1994) and again in the 2019 live-action remake. His unmistakable voice was also a signature of CNN's "This is CNN" campaign.

Jones's acting career began on the stage and in film with his breakout role in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). His powerful on-screen presence led to roles in a variety of acclaimed films including *Conan the Barbarian* (1982), *Coming to America* (1988), *The Hunt for Red October* (1990), and *The Sandlot* (1990). He earned an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Jack Jefferson in *The Great White*

Hope (1970), a role that also won him his first Tony Award.

On Broadway, Jones was a force to be reckoned with. He earned four Tony nominations and took home two wins for *The Great White Hope* in 1969 and August Wilson's *Fences* in 1987. His contribution to the stage was celebrated with a Special Tony Award in 2017.

Jones's talents were equally recognized on television, where he won two Primetime Emmys in 1991 for *Gabriel's Fire* and *Heat Wave*. His voice and presence on-screen were magnetic, a testament to his versatility as an actor who could excel in drama, comedy, and everything in between.

A recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors in 2002, Jones's lifetime of achievements earned him accolades from SAG-AFTRA and the National Board of Review and a Grammy for Best Spoken Word Recording in 1977.



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By Don Thomas

Remembering Actor James Earl Jones 93, who voiced Darth Vader in "Star Wars" and Mufasa in "Lion King"

By Daniel Kreps

James Earl Jones, the renowned actor of stage and screen who lent his booming, inimitable voice to Darth Vader and The Lion King, died Monday morning at the age of 93. He died at his home in Dutchess County, New York, with his family surrounding him, the actor's representatives at Independent Artist Group confirmed to Rolling Stone. No cause of death was given. In the decades before venturing off to "a galaxy far, far away," Jones was a Tony-winning Broadway star, first winning Best Actor in 1970 for his role of a Jack Johnson-inspired boxer in the play *The Great White Hope*; Jones was similarly nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor for the same role in the play's big-screen adaptation.

Big-screen roles in *The Comedians*, *The Man, Claudine, and The Greatest* — the latter a Muhammad Ali-starring biopic where Jones played Malcolm X — followed. However, Jones would soon make his biggest impact in cinema from a recording booth and not in front of the camera.

For 1977's *Star Wars*, British bodybuilder David Prowse provided Darth Vader's imposing onscreen presence under the sleek black suit. However, Prowse's heavy accent and verbal delivery infamously didn't mesh with the intimidating character — his *Star Wars* cast mates jokingly called him "Darth Farmer" during shooting — so director George Lucas searched elsewhere to give the villain the voice it deserved.

"I knew the voice had to be very, very special," Lucas said in 2015 at an American Theatre Wing gala honoring Jones. "It was a tough choice, but in the end, it was a really easy choice. It was really a choice between Orson Welles and James Earl Jones. James Earl Jones won hands down. He created, with very little dialogue, one of the greatest vil-

lains that ever lived."

"I understand that George did contact Orson Welles to read for the voice of Darth Vader before he contacted me," Jones said in *The Making of Star Wars*. "I was out of work, and he said, 'Do you want a day's work?'" (Jones was ultimately only paid \$7,000 for the first *Star Wars* film, and while he was uncredited during the movie's initial run, Jones was retroactively added to the credits on subsequent releases.)

"One of the world's finest actors whose contributions to *Star Wars* were immeasurable," Mark Hamill, who played Luke Skywalker in the *Star Wars* films, said in a statement. "He'll be greatly missed." He added on Twitter, "RIP Dad." Jones voiced Darth Vader in the first three *Star Wars* films — *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi* — as well as the infamous *Star Wars* Holiday Special. He'd return to the role as cameos in 2005's *Revenge of the Sith* (providing a guttural "No!"), the animated series *Star Wars Rebels*, 2016's *Rogue One*, and finally 2019's *The Rise of Skywalker*.

While Darth Vader didn't exactly represent cinema's most loving father, paternal roles would become the lynchpin of Jones' work: In 1988's *Coming to America*, he played King Jaffe Joffer, the father of Eddie Murphy's Prince Akeem, a role he would reprise 33 years later in 2021's *Coming 2 America*. In another royal role, Jones voiced Mufasa in the 1994 animated classic *The Lion King* and its live-action remake in 2019. "I'm really a dopey dad," Jones told AFI. "So they started to impose my facial expressions onto Mufasa and a different tone of voice. Yeah, he was authoritative, but he was just a gentle dad."

"I grew up in the exact generation that grew up with him as a performer, so to have James Earl Jones and his voice and the memories that his voice evokes

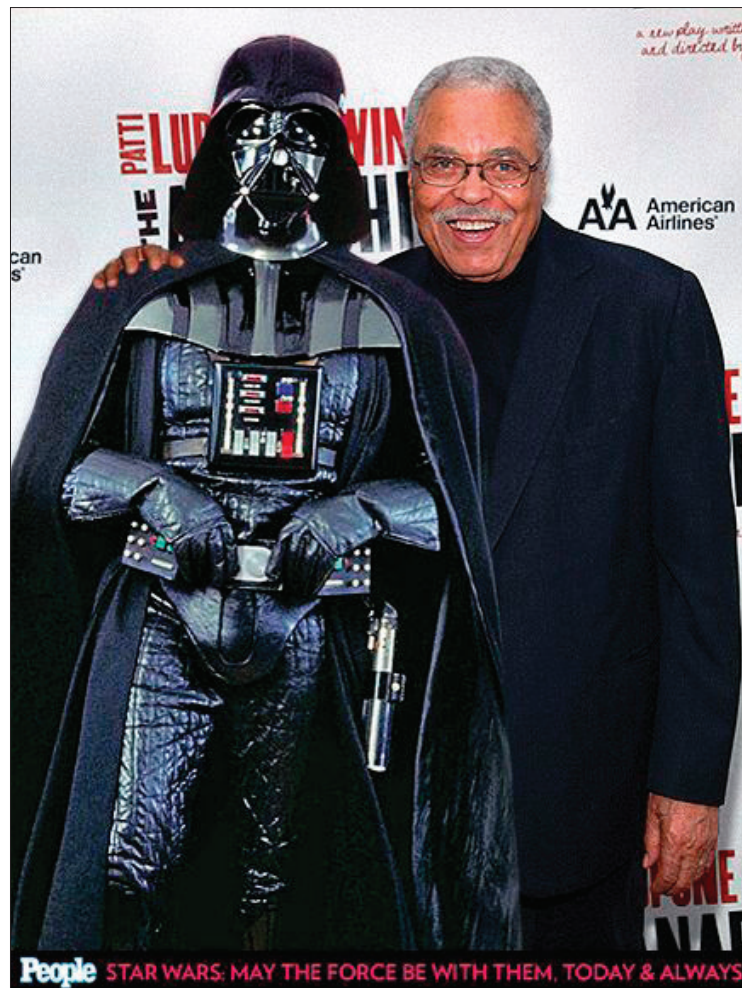
and how iconic he is, not just from this but as Darth Vader ... it felt like a very significant milestone when we recorded him," director Jon Favreau said in 2019. "He would do a take and then he would ask me for direction, and I honestly couldn't give an answer! I was like, 'You're Mufasa.' Far be it from me.... Everything he said sounded perfect because it was him saying it."

As Jones acknowledged in interviews, these paternal roles were, in a way, his means of coming to terms with his own childhood. Despite having one of Hollywood's most distinct and commanding voices, Jones spent the majority of his childhood and adolescence suffocating his gift: The Mississippi-born son of teacher Ruth and boxer Robert Earl Jones — who left the family prior to his son's birth — James was raised by his grandparents, who as part of the Great Migration, moved the young James from Mississippi to Michigan, where the trauma of his early life manifested into a stuttering problem.

"I didn't want to talk — bad enough that I just gave up. I couldn't introduce myself to people who visited the house, and it was too painful," Jones told NPR of his self-imposed silence. However, in high school, through the arts — in his case, writing and reciting poetry — Jones reclaimed his voice. Initially a pre-med student in college, Jones majored in drama at the University of Michigan, a calling that — despite not being raised by his father — was in his genes: Robert Earl Jones, or just Earl Jones as he became known, emerged as a well-known actor after leaving his family, making his debut in a Langston Hughes play before embarking on a Hollywood career that included films like *The Sting*, *Trading Places*, and *The Cotton Club*.

After spending time in the military during the tail end of the Korean War — he was never deployed into action — the actor moved to New York, where he further honed his craft at the American Theatre Wing. "They taught us not to put ethnic or gender limits on the characters that we studied," Jones said in 2015. "They taught us speech for Shakespeare, and speech for Arthur Miller, and speech for Tennessee Williams, and speech for George Lucas," alluding to his most well-known role.

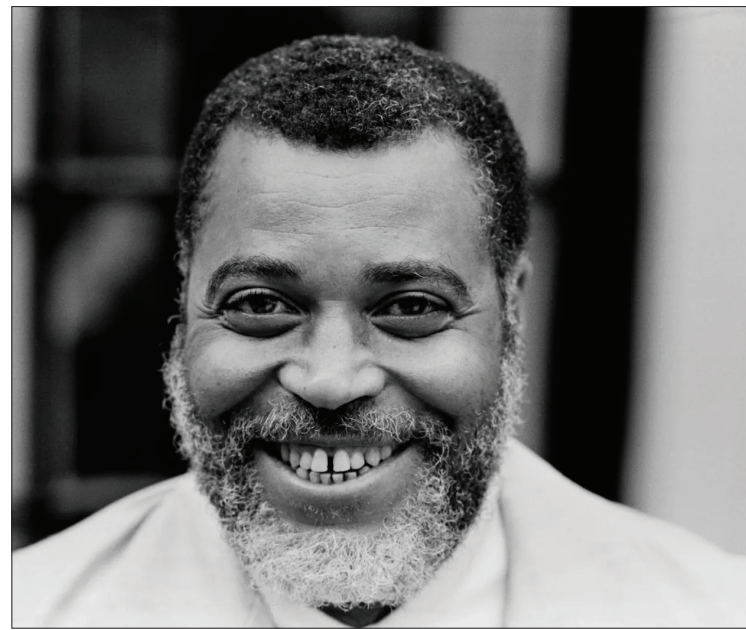
Despite retiring from the Darth Vader role — and acting in general — in 2022, Jones ensured that future generations would still hear him in the character when he made a then-cutting edge deal to re-create his trademark voice artificially through an AI program; the technology was first utilized on the Disney+ series *Obi-Wan Kenobi*. An unofficial EGOT winner — his lone Oscar was a



James Earl Jones as Darth Vader



James Earl Jones as King Jaffe Joffer



non-competitive Academy Lifetime Award — Jones twice won Best Actor in a Play at the Tony Awards, was a three-time Emmy Award winner, and earned a Best Spoken Word Grammy in 1977 for *Great American Documents*. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from both the Tonys and the Screen Actors Guild, and was a Kennedy Center honoree in 2002.

Charles S. Dutton, Jones' one-time understudy, said of the actor at the Kennedy Center Honors ceremony, "Although I was attending one of America's greatest acting schools, my real acting classes occurred when I watched you

in rehearsals. Your professionalism, your discipline, your zest and love for the craft of acting. We, the students, we spoke your name very slowly: James. Earl. Jones. And with the utmost respect, we called you then, and still call you today, 'The King of the American Theater.'"

"When I was starting out, there were only two Black actors that you saw with any regularity: Sidney Poitier in film, and James Earl Jones onstage," added Courtney B. Vance, who played Jones' son for three years in a Broadway staging of *Fences*. "He was my father on the stage. And he was my surrogate father in real life."

On the scene

John Branca's masterstroke: How Michael Jackson's estate surged passed \$2b in ticket sales

By Stacy M. Brown
(NNPA Newswire)

Michael Jackson's legacy continues to dominate the entertainment industry, with his various projects collectively surpassing \$2 billion in global ticket sales. The King of Pop's influence remains unmatched, from groundbreaking concert films to sold-out Broadway shows. However, beneath this glittering success lies a complex tale of financial recovery, legal battles, and persistent family strife.

In 2002, Michael Jackson signed a will that left nearly all his assets to his children through a trust while granting his mother, Katherine Jackson, a small interest during her lifetime. Crucially, the will endowed his executors—John Branca and John McClain—with broad powers to manage the estate, including the authority to sell its assets. This provision has proven to be pivotal, enabling Branca and McClain to rescue the estate from near financial collapse after Jackson's untimely death in 2009, turning it from a half-billion dollars in debt into a multi-billion-dollar empire.

Branca, a towering figure in the entertainment law world, has been central to this remarkable financial revival. Often described as a "rock star" among lawyers,

Branca's career is defined by his representation of some of the biggest names in music, including the Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, Dr. Dre, and the Eagles. His work has secured record earnings for these artists and set industry-changing precedents that continue to shape the music business today.

Branca's relationship with Michael Jackson began in 1980, and over the years, he became one of the most trusted figures in Jackson's professional life. Known for his ability to negotiate landmark deals, Branca was instrumental in Jackson's acquisition of the ATV Music Publishing catalog, which included the rights to many Beatles songs—a move that is still considered one of the most astute in music industry history. Michael Jackson once called Branca "the greatest lawyer of our time," and the accolades he received from industry giants only reinforced this reputation. Marty Bandier, Sony/ATV Music CEO, and Chairman, has named Branca as the number one publishing lawyer in the United States, while Carlos Santana referred to him as "the Shaman."

Under Branca's stewardship, the estate has seen a remarkable financial transformation since Jackson's passing. Over the past 12 years, Branca has orchestrated deals that have generated

a staggering \$2.5 billion for the estate. These include high-profile projects such as *Michael Jackson's THIS IS IT*, the highest-grossing concert film of all time, and *MJ The Musical*, a Broadway sensation that has won four Tony Awards and continues to draw sold-out crowds in North America, London's West End, and soon, in Hamburg and Australia.

In February 2024, Branca and McClain negotiated what The New York Times described as a 'blockbuster deal.' They sold a significant portion of Jackson's music catalog to a joint venture with Sony for a staggering \$600 million. This deal, while financially beneficial, was not without controversy. Katherine Jackson objected, arguing that Michael had expressly stated his assets should never be sold. However, a California appellate court ultimately upheld the executors' decision, citing the broad powers granted to them in Jackson's will.

With unparalleled financial success, and conflict within the Jackson family, Branca and McClain have remained undaunted, focusing on preserving and expanding Michael's legacy. Their efforts have been so effective that one observer noted, "They've taken such great care of the business of Michael Jackson that his heirs, his three children, will be able to feed a few dozen generations of Jacksons."

Additionally, a source close to the estate said Katherine Jackson has been the recipient of more than \$60 million since her megastar son's death while Tito and Jackie have been among the most supportive of their younger brother's executors, arguably the greatest and most organized estate in history.

The Jackson estate continues with its most recent project, the eagerly anticipated Antoine Fuqua biopic *MICHAEL* (2025), starring Jermaine Jackson's son, Jaafar, as Michael, casting that again showed the executor's willingness to spread the vast wealth. Still, Branca and McClain's ability to navigate familial complexities while continuing to grow the empire Michael Jackson left behind has been a testament to their expertise and commitment.

Michael Jackson's legacy, built on groundbreaking music and iconic performances, remains untouchable in the public's eyes. Yet, the story behind the scenes is one of careful legal maneuvering, enduring family discord, and the challenge of preserving a cultural icon's legacy while ensuring the financial security of his heirs for many generations to come. Branca's dedication to "fighting for artists' rights" has protected the hitmaker's legacy and set a standard for how artist



estates should be managed, securing a lasting impact on the music industry and beyond.

Branca and McClain's major accomplishments:

- Michael Jackson THIS IS IT – Highest grossing concert film of all time
- Michael Jackson THE IMMORTAL WORLD TOUR – Top 10 Touring Concert Show of All Time
- Michael Jackson ONE – Top Las Vegas Show
- MJ The Musical – 4 X Tony Award Winning Broadway Musical
- MJ the Musical – Sold-Out North American Touring Show
- MJ the Musical – Sold-Out West End London
- MJ The Musical Hamburg – Coming soon!
- MJ The Musical Australia – Coming soon!
- MICHAEL (2025) – The Most Anticipated Biopic Ever, Directed by Antoine Fuqua and Produced by Graham King, John Branca & John McClain

TRUMP'S PROJECT 2025 IS A THREAT TO BLACK AMERICANS

Project 2025 is Donald Trump and JD Vance's plan to remake the federal government if they win. It would:

Use Civil Rights-era laws created to address discrimination to instead benefit white people

– Axios, 4/1/24

Gut the Affordable Care Act, which will raise health care costs and threaten health care coverage for millions of Americans

– AP News, 11/27/23

Cut Social Security and Medicare Americans have earned

– Washington Post, 2/9/23

Ban abortion nationally

– New York Times, 2/16/24



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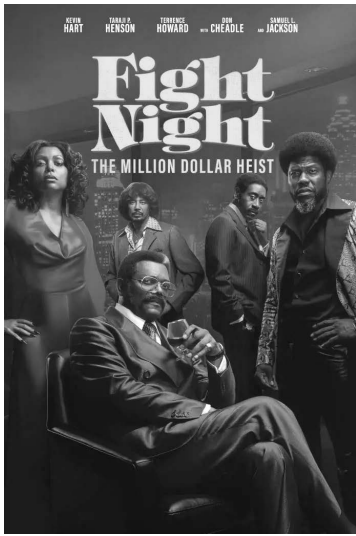
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Audrey J. Bernard



'Fight Night: The Million Dollar Heist' struts its stuff on Peacock!

There was a hot night in Metropolis Wednesday evening, September 4, 2024, where some 800 partygoers dressed in their best 70s interpretation attended the exclusive premiere of the limited series "Fight Night: The Million Dollar Heist" at the exquisite Jazz at Lincoln Rose Theater followed by a ritzy after-party in one of the City's chicest night spots, JALC's Appel Room which was transformed into a stunning 70s nightclub (reminiscence of the fabulous Studio 54) featuring pulsating beats from DJ Trauma. The evening kicked off with a surprise 70s-inspired fashion show featuring models blending the hottest looks from then and now. Additionally, guests were treated to a photo op with Roc Nation's Lenny Santiago's iconic gold couch.

Then, as they sunk in their comfortable seats in the theater they watched with excitement the special screening of the first two episodes – "Round One: The Ballad of Chicken Man" and "Round Two: Fight Night" which received raucous applause! Adding to the wild 70s ambiance was a showstopping replica of Chicken Man's (played by Kevin Hart) 1966 Cadillac Calais, custom-built by the renowned West Coast Customs, on display on the red carpet which also gave guests photo op opportunities.

"Fight Night: The Million Dollar Heist" is based on the acclaimed iHeart true-crime podcast about the infamous story of how an armed robbery on the night of Muhammad Ali's historic 1970 comeback fight changed not only one man's life but ultimately transformed Atlanta into the "Black Mecca." When a hustler named Chicken Man (Kevin Hart) hosts an afterparty to celebrate the fight with a guest list of the country's wealthiest, the night ends with the most brazen criminal underworld heist in Atlanta's history. Suspected of masterminding the crime, Chicken Man is hellbent on clearing his name but must convince his old adversary, J.D. Hudson (Don Cheadle), one of

the first Black detectives in the city's desegregated police force, who is tasked with bringing those responsible to justice.

The star-studded cast includes Kevin Hart ("Chicken Man"), Samuel L. Jackson ("Frank Moten"), Taraji P. Henson ("Vivian Thomas"), Don Cheadle ("JD Hudson"), and Terrence Howard ("Cadillac Richie"); along with special guests starring Chloe Bailey ("Lena Mosley"), Marsha Stephanie Blake ("Delores Hudson"), Dexter Darden ("Muhammad Ali"), Lori Harvey ("Lola Falana"), Sinqua Walls ("McKinley Rogers").

The A-list creative team includes creator, writer, showrunner and executive producer Shaye Ogbonna; showrunner and executive producer Jason Horwitz; executive producer Kevin Hart; executive producer Will Packer and Sabrina Wind for Will Packer Media; executive producer Bryan Smiley and Mike Stein for Heartbeat; executive producer Conal Byrne and Carrie Lieberman for iHeartPodcasts; executive producer Jeff Keating of Doghouse Pictures, LLC; executive producer Lars Jacobson; executive producer Erika L. Johnson; executive producer Mike Daniels; executive producer, director (Ep. 101, 102,



(L-R) Shaye Ogbonna, Kevin Hart, Don Cheadle, Taraji P. Henson, Terrence Howard, Samuel L. Jackson, and Will Packer

107 and 108) Craig Brewer; and co-executive producer Tiffany Brown for Heartbeat; and Kenny Burns.

At the end of the evening, no one wanted to go home! This was the party of the year! Hosts Will Packer, Shaye Ogbonna, and Kevin Hart were joined by cast members Samuel L. Jackson, Taraji P. Henson, Don Cheadle and Terrence Howard, along with Chloe Bailey, Sinqua Walls, Dexter Darden, Lori Harvey and more.

Additional celebrity guests included Amber Ruffin, Kordell Beckham, Ego Nwodim, Adam Pally, Stephen Farrelly, SAINT JHN, Lorraine Toussaint, Busta Rhymes, Kysre Gondrezick, Guerdy Abaira, Karen Huger, Sunny Hostin and many more. "Fight Night: The Million Dollar Heist" premiered Thursday, September 5, 2024, with 3 episodes at launch, and a new episode weekly on Thursdays only on Peacock. (Photos courtesy Peacock)



(L-R) Clifton Powell, Kevin Hart, Don Cheadle, Taraji P. Henson, Terrence Howard, Marsha Stephanie Blake, Samuel L. Jackson, Will Packer, Sinqua Walls and Bryan Smiley



(L-R) Shannon Willett, Lisa Katz, Kelly Campbell, Pearlana Igbokwe, Mike Cavanagh, Will Packer, Mark Lazarus, Erin Underhill and Frances Berwick



(L-R) Will Packer, Dexter Darden, Terrence Howard Sinqua Walls, Chloe Bailey and Don Cheadle



Heather Hayslett and William Packer



(L-R) Don Cheadle, Samuel L. Jackson and William Packer



Bridgid Coulter and Don Cheadle



Exclusive after party in The Appel Room overlooking Columbus Circle and Central Park



Ambiance-Kevin Hart's character, Chicken Man, had his custom-built 1966 Cadillac Calais by renowned West Coast Customs on display

Tax system's role in widening racial wealth gap, calls for urgent reforms, report exposes

By Stacy M. Brown

N NPA Newswire
Today, [Color of Change](#), the nation's largest online racial justice organization, and Americans for Tax Fairness released a damning report exposing the deep racial inequities entrenched in the U.S. tax system. The issue brief "[How Tax Fairness Can Promote Racial Equity](#)," written by Color of Change Managing Director Portia Allen-Kyle and [Americans for Tax Fairness](#) Executive Director David Kass, exposes the systemic flaws in tax policy that have widened the racial wealth gap and prevented economic mobility for Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities.

The report urgently calls for sweeping reforms to stop the flow of tax benefits to the wealthiest Americans—who are overwhelmingly white—while offering concrete solutions to make the tax code work for everyone, not just the top 1%.

"An equitable tax system does two things," Allen-Kyle asserts. "It narrows the racial wealth gap from the bottom up and spurs economic mobility for Black, Brown, and Indigenous individuals and families. Our current tax code fails on both accounts. It's a prime example of how so-called 'colorblind' systems actively prevent Black families from building generational wealth and economic security."

Tax Code Deepens Racial Disparities, Experts Say

The brief pulls no punches in describing how current tax policies disproportionately benefit wealthy white families, further deepening racial inequalities. By giving preferential treatment to wealth over work, the system locks in economic advantages for white households while leaving communities of color to bear the brunt of these inequities.

"Our tax system is not only failing to address racial wealth inequality, it's exacerbating it," Kass warns. "We privilege wealth over work, fail to adequately tax our richest households and corporations, and allow inherited fortunes to compound unchecked by taxation. This perpetuates a legacy of racial inequality."

The racial wealth gap has exploded in recent years, with the median wealth gap between Black and white households jumping from \$172,000 in 2019 to over \$214,000 in 2022. Economic crises such as the Great Recession and

the COVID-19 pandemic further entrenched these divides, benefiting the already wealthy while leaving Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities further behind.

The Racial Wealth Gap and Homeownership

Homeownership, long touted as a primary means of building wealth in America, has failed to deliver for Black families. The report points to factors such as biased home appraisals and a regressive property tax system as key reasons why Black homeowners have been unable to accumulate wealth at the same rate as their white counterparts.

As the brief notes, with critical provisions of the [Tax Cuts and Jobs Act \(TCJA\)](#) set to expire, now is a pivotal moment for tax reform. "We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform our tax system to address racial inequality," the report states, comparing recent monumental legislation like the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) and the [Inflation Reduction Act](#).

Three Key Reforms to Tackle Racial Inequity

The report lays out three central reforms aimed at curbing the wealth concentration among the ultra-rich and dismantling the racial inequities baked into the tax code:

Taxing Wealth Fairly: The report calls for equalizing the tax rates on wealth and work. Currently, capital gains—profits from investments—are taxed at a far lower rate than wages earned by working people, a disparity that overwhelmingly benefits white households. The vast majority of capital gains income flows to white families, who comprise only two-thirds of taxpayers but receive 92% of the benefits from lower tax rates on investment income.

Strengthening the Estate Tax: The estate tax, which is supposed to curb the accumulation of dynastic wealth, has been weakened over time, allowing large fortunes—primarily held by white families—to grow even larger across generations. The report calls for stronger enforcement of the estate tax to prevent the further entrenchment of wealth and power within a small, overwhelmingly white elite.

Targeting Tax Deductions to Benefit Lower-Income Households: Deductions for mortgage interest, college savings, and retirement accounts disproportionately benefit wealthier, predominantly white households. In

order to prevent lower-income and minority households from falling behind due to policies that are currently biased in favor of the wealthy, the brief advocates for restructuring these deductions.

Biden-Harris Administration and Senate Proposals for Change

Both the Biden-Harris administration and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden have proposed addressing the racial wealth gap. The [Billionaire Minimum Income Tax \(BMIT\)](#) and the [Billionaire Income Tax \(BIT\)](#) would ensure that the wealthiest Americans—who often go years without paying taxes—contribute their fair share. These proposals would raise over \$500 billion in revenue over the next decade, which could be reinvested in healthcare, education, and housing for communities of color.

As the report points out, our current tax system is skewed in favor of the ultrawealthy. It allows the rich to avoid paying taxes on the increased value of their investments unless they sell them. They often borrow against these growing fortunes, further delaying taxation, which allows white billionaires to accumulate vast wealth while paying a fraction of what working families pay in taxes.

Defending IRS Funding to Hold the Wealthy Accountable

The report also highlights the critical need to defend IRS funding, restored under the Inflation Reduction Act, which is essential for cracking down on wealthy tax cheats. Contrary to Republican claims, this funding will not increase tax enforcement on households earning less than \$400,000. Instead, it will improve customer service and expand the Direct File program, saving taxpayers significant time and money.

The Biden administration's restored IRS funding is expected to raise an additional \$100 billion over the next decade by ensuring the wealthiest Americans and corporations pay what they legally owe.

A Call for Urgent Action

The message from Color of Change and Americans for Tax Fairness is clear: America's tax system is broken, and without immediate reforms, the racial wealth gap will continue to widen. "Addressing the insidious racial preferences in our tax code is one of the most direct ways we can not only help Black communities grow here and now but for generations to come," Allen-Kyle concludes.



U.S. economy adds 142,000 jobs in August; unemployment rate falls to 4.2%, Biden hails progress

NNPA Newswire

A ccording to the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the U.S. economy added 142,000 nonfarm payroll jobs in August, less than the 165,000 economists had predicted. While the job growth missed forecasts, the unemployment rate dropped to 4.2% from July's 4.3%, suggesting continued strength in the labor market under the Biden-Harris administration.

Job growth in August came in higher than July's revised 89,000, but revisions to June and July figures showed the U.S. economy added 86,000 fewer jobs than initially reported. Despite the adjustments, wage growth continued to increase, with year-over-year wage gains rising to 3.8%, up from 3.6% in July. Monthly wages grew by 0.4%, double the prior month's 0.2%, offering signs of resilience for American workers amid ongoing inflation concerns.

Some economists, however, are cautious about how these figures will impact the Federal Reserve's upcoming decision on interest rates. "The overall solid gain in August payrolls, the retreat in the unemployment rate, and the pop in average hourly earnings are not likely enough for Fed officials to start the rate-cutting cycle with a 50 bps reduction on September 18," Nationwide's chief economist Kathy Bostjancic noted.

Bostjancic's remarks reflect the broader debate among economists. Some see the data as a reason for the Fed to pursue a

more conservative rate cut of 25 basis points to avoid overheating the economy.

In a statement following the jobs report, President Joe Biden celebrated the continued economic progress under his administration. "Thanks to our work to rescue the economy, nearly 16 million new jobs have been created, wages and incomes are rising faster than prices, businesses are investing in America, and millions of entrepreneurs are opening small businesses—acts of hope and confidence in our economy," Biden said.

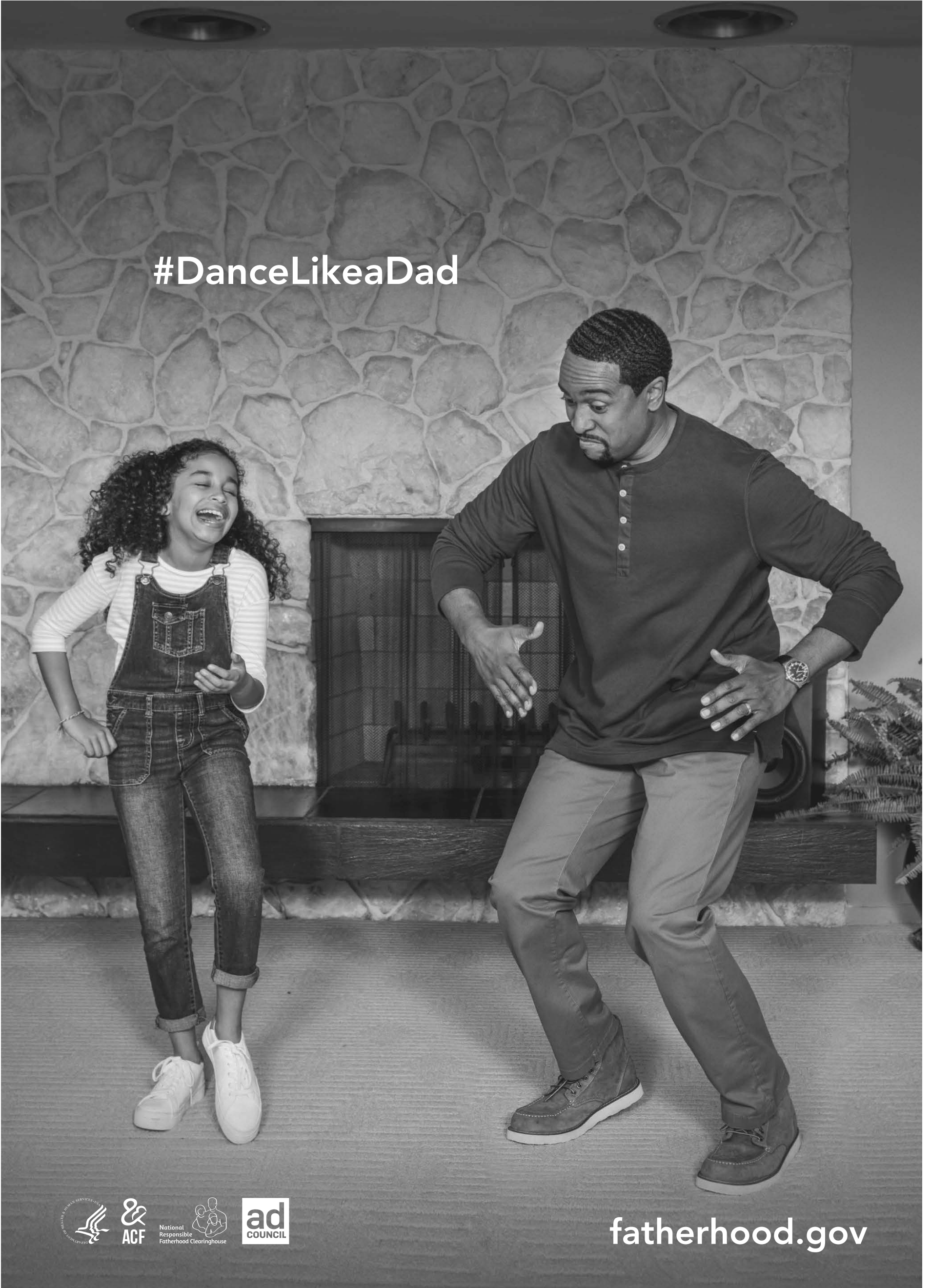
The president also stressed the importance of maintaining these gains as inflation returns to manageable levels. "With inflation back down close to normal levels, it is important to focus on sustaining the historic gains we have made for American workers," he remarked.

Biden warned against returning to what he described as failed Republican policies, including tax cuts for the wealthy and reductions to critical programs. "The last thing we should do is turn back to the failed trickle-down economics... cutting taxes for the wealthy and large corporations, raising taxes on middle-class families, or cutting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act," Biden emphasized.

"We're fighting to expand opportunity, and we'll keep pushing forward. The American people have shown their resilience, and we're committed to building an economy that works for everyone," he insisted.



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And the award for Most Treasonous Act goes to...

By Stacy M. Brown(NNPA Newswire)

The award for “Most Treasonous Act” goes to... The “Most Willing to Kill Vice President Mike Pence for President Trump” award goes to... And the moment we’ve all been waiting for—the award for “Best Insurrectionist and Most Violent Assault on a Police Officer”—goes to...

In an event that reads like a parody but was all too real, the so-called “J6 Awards Gala,” meant to honor convicted criminals from the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, has been postponed. Just days before the planned ceremony, organizers from the group Stand in the Gap announced that the event, originally scheduled for Thursday at Trump National Golf Club Bedminster in New Jersey, would not go ahead as planned.

The awards ceremony was set to pay tribute to 20 MAGA loyalists, many of whom are currently behind bars. These individuals were part of the violent mob that stormed the Capitol and later recorded a song from jail titled “Justice for All.” The evening was described by organizers as an “unforgettable night,” dedicated to honoring those whom they have labeled as heroes in the aftermath of the insurrection.

Though the event was advertised with Donald Trump listed as an “invited guest,” it was reported by The New York Times that the former president was not expected to attend. Instead, Trump’s former attorney, Rudy Giuliani, was promoted as a featured guest, along with several right-wing influencers and the families of the imprisoned insurrectionists, referred to by their supporters as “America’s Heroes.”

The gala wasn’t cheap, either. General admission tickets cost \$1,500, while VIP tickets, which offered attendees closer proximity to the controversial gathering, cost \$2,500.



The funds raised were intended to support the January 6 defendants, who continue to face significant legal and financial challenges, according to the event’s organizers.

However, the gala’s postponement came as a surprise to many. In late August, Fox Business, part of the Fox News family that had amplified the electoral disinformation that fueled the attack, reported

that the event was being delayed due to “scheduling conflicts” with invited guest speakers. Despite that report, which claimed Trump might be in attendance, the gala received little attention from major news outlets.

While the fundraiser has been postponed, Stand in the Gap expressed hope that it would occur after November 5— Election Day.

The twice impeached and 34 times convicted felon and former president, who has long expressed support for the individuals convicted in connection with the insurrection, has publicly called for their release, referring to them as “hostages.” Prominent MAGA figures such as Georgia Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene have even visited some of these

incarcerated individuals, further cementing their status as martyrs within far-right circles.

Meanwhile, Trump’s legal troubles continue to escalate. The 78-year-old faces sentencing on September 18 for 34 felony counts related to falsifying business records to conceal an alleged affair with adult film actress Stormy Daniels.

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Angry driver with gun

Philadelphiaobserver.com

A 63-year-old Florida man, Paul Slane, has been charged with multiple felonies after allegedly pointing a firearm at another vehicle during a road rage incident in Port St. Lucie. The incident, which was captured on video, occurred on August 20 around 4:30 p.m. on Southwest Heatherwood Boulevard. According to the Port St. Lucie police, Slane faces two counts each of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon without intent to kill and battery, as well as one count of robbery with a firearm.

The confrontation began when Slane, driving a black Mercedes-Benz, allegedly engaged in aggressive driving behavior, including brake-checking a white pickup truck. The victims in the pickup truck, seeking to avoid a confrontation, attempted to pass

Slane, but he followed them into a gated community. The situation escalated when Slane allegedly blocked the road, exited his vehicle, and brandished a firearm at the occupants of the truck. During the altercation, Slane is accused of striking the driver and attempting to take the passenger's cellphone, which was being used to record the incident.

Despite the tension, no shots were fired, and the situation de-escalated when Slane returned to his vehicle and drove away. Police quickly issued an alert and tracked Slane's vehicle using the license plate number. He was arrested shortly after by St. Lucie County Sheriff's deputies, who recovered the 9mm Glock pistol allegedly used in the confrontation. Slane was taken to the St. Lucie County Jail and later released on a \$105,000 bond. He declined to speak with investigators and requested legal representation.

Mississippi deputy facing 27 years for torture

Philadelphiaobserver.com

A former Mississippi sheriff's deputy, Brett McAlpin, convicted of torturing two Black men in 2023, is now seeking a reduction in his 27-year federal prison sentence, arguing that his role in the crime was minimal. McAlpin, who was one of six white law enforcement officers involved in the brutal assault, claims in a legal filing that he merely waited in his truck while the other officers carried out the violent acts against Michael Corey Jenkins and Eddie Terrell Parker. His attorney, Theodore Cooperstein, has petitioned the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, calling the sentence "unreasonable" and suggesting that McAlpin was unfairly penalized for being present at the scene.

The attack, which took place on January 24, 2023, in Jackson, Mississippi, was a horrifying ordeal that lasted several hours. The six officers, including McAlpin, broke into the victims' home without a warrant, subjected them to repeated beatings, used stun guns, and committed assaults with a sex toy. The violence culminated in a mock execution in which one of the victims was shot in the mouth. Despite McAlpin's claim of limited involvement, prosecutors and the court have emphasized his significant role in initiating the crime and overseeing the other deputies, leading to his substantial sentence. McAlpin's appeal, which does not specify the exact sentence reduction sought, argues that he did not directly partake in the physical abuse, but the prosecution has maintained that his influence

and presence were critical to the crime's execution.

McAlpin's motion to reduce his sentence comes just months after he was sentenced in March, with the other officers receiving terms ranging from 10 to 40 years. U.S. District Judge Tom Lee, who presided over the case, described the officers' actions as "egregious and despicable," imposing nearly maximum sentences under federal guidelines. The case, which has drawn significant attention, is seen as a stark reminder of Mississippi's history of racist abuses by law enforcement. McAlpin, who apologized in court without making eye contact with the victims, now argues that the cumulative impact of the other officers' actions unfairly inflated his punishment, despite his role in orchestrating the events that led to the attack.



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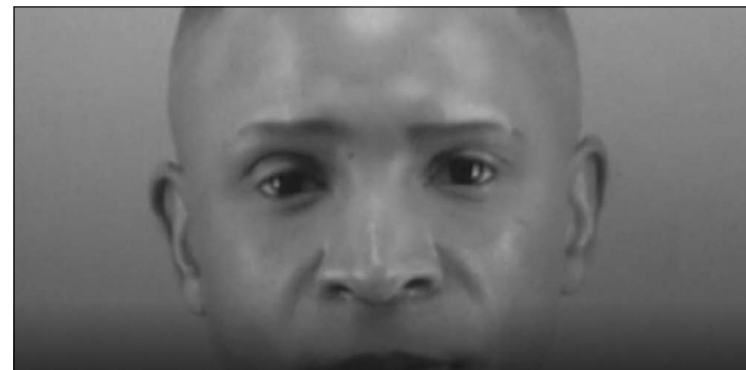
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Police warn about a 'serial foot-grabber'

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In the quiet of the Wake Forest University library, a student sat studying when a man reached beneath the table and grabbed her foot. The incident, unsettling in its strangeness, led to the arrest of Christopher Jermaine Deas on the evening of September 1. Deas, a man with no connection to the university, was taken into custody by local authorities and placed in the Forsyth County Detention Center. The university, in a brief statement, acknowledged the arrest and the odd disturbance it had caused on campus.

But this was not an isolated event. Deas's peculiar obsession



with feet has followed him through the years, spanning two decades and multiple campuses across the Carolinas. His name has surfaced in records from the University of North Carolina to Guilford Technical Community College, with charges ranging from trespassing to disorderly conduct. In one in-

cident at the University of South Carolina in 2016, he was arrested for allegedly pinching a woman's toes as she studied. Each time, the details remain the same—an invasion of personal space in the quietest of places, leaving students rattled and campus officials urging vigilance.

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