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# VOTING AGAINST THEIR OWN SELF INTEREST

**TRUMP'S  
MESSAGE OF  
HATE  
RESONATES  
WITH  
TEAMSTERS**



**After having endorsed Joe Biden in 2020, Hillary Clinton in 2016 and Barack Obama in 2008, 2012, Teamsters chose not to make a formal endorsement this year, becoming the only one of the nation's major 10 unions not to endorse Vice President Kamala Harris**

**Did the rank-and-file forget how the Trump administration was largely anti-union and anti-worker.**

# Faith organizations declare voting as a responsibility for believers

More than 15 million Christians are not registered to vote so organizations are working to energize and register the faithful.

By Rev. Dorothy S. Boulware  
Word in Black

For many generations, Christians have been encouraged to participate in the political system in spite of the “Be in the world, but not of the world” scripture used by many to remain aloof. The Black church, especially, has been the center of prayer and protest, and of Jesus and justice.

According to Voter Registration Sunday, a campaign to foster increased voter registrations, more than 15 million Christians are not registered to vote

The upcoming general election in this country — one tasked with “saving the soul of the country,” as President Joe Biden put it — demands the attention of everyone of good faith to make the country better in whatever way they see fit.

“Don’t complain, Vote” is among the many slogans on front lawns around the nation, along with those who profess the candidate of their choice. According to Voter Registration Sunday, a campaign to foster increased voter registrations, more than 15 million Christians are not registered to vote.

So, organizations of varied faiths have aligned themselves to

encourage participation by the myriad members of their combined groups.

For some, the message will be emphasized every Sunday through the Nov. 5 presidential election.

“I’m preaching about lessons from the Daughters of Zelephedad (Numbers 27) when women’s rights and human rights were on the line,” says Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook regarding her Sept. 29 sermon at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Gastonia, North Carolina. She says democracy and women’s rights are on the line for history’s sake.

“These women woke up, spoke up, got up, and acted upon their conditions. As a result, all the laws were changed to reflect rights for everyone,” she says.

“That’s what this Sunday is about, to do our one ‘Black job’ and go out and vote, to make a difference throughout the land.”

The website Vote Your Faith, which facilitates registration, offers information and a comprehensive tool kit that outlines how to sponsor a voter registration Sunday event at one’s house of worship.

In July, the coalition Faiths United to Save Democracy began training volunteers to “provide a calming and moral presence for vulnerable voters at in-person polling sites,” according to their website. They did so



mainly because the last election, vehemently protested by the Republican candidate for president, was the scene of potential voters being denied access to the polls and of perfectly safe voting places being called unsafe, not to mention the voter identification laws enacted since that election.

“Increasingly violent rhetoric and events throughout the 2024 election has given voters credible concern about violence or intimid-

ation at the polls,” according to the FUSD site. Trained poll chaplains and peacekeepers will be deployed to the most vulnerable polling places. At this point, targeted states are Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin during early voting and on Election Day, Nov. 5.

“God intends for all creation to thrive. The current state of politics emphasizes the importance of

protecting the vote for all people, especially for people of faith. It is crucial to ensure safe access to the polls in all communities,” said Rev. Moya Harris, director of Racial Justice at Sojourners.

“The involvement of poll chaplains and peacekeepers is essential in actively safeguarding the vote in local communities. This is integral to our call as people of faith — to combat chaos with love and witness.”

# Over 130 people dead and counting, 400 miles of destruction during Hurricane Helene

Newyorkbeacon.com

Residents of Springfield, Ohio are experiencing the full and unfair effect from the politics of lies, division and hate generated from the Trump campaign and their followers.

“We did not have threats” before the claims, said Springfield Mayor Rob Rue, referring to the accusations made by Trump and J.D. Vance that Haitians are stealing and eating pets. “We need peace. We need help, not hate.”

Vance, the U.S. Senator representing the state of Ohio, has since doubled down on the false claim that Haitians are eating pets in Springfield. He also says he’ll continue to describe Haitian residents there as “illegal aliens,” although most have been granted temporary protected legal status in the U.S. because of crisis in Haiti.

Hate has become the political policy of choice for the Trump/Vance team. It is unfortunate that for many of Trump’s GOP supporters, it’s effective even when a Republican mayor is pleading for it to stop. Trump and Vance are fully aware that their strategy of lies, divisiveness and hate resonates with segments of their base, while the Haitian community in Springfield is suffering needlessly for it.

The false claims would not be used for political advantage if Trump followers were not driven by hate-filled emotions. Many who are White evangelicals claim to be drawn to him because of his policies despite Trump being



a man who stirs up racial hate and division which contradicts their Biblical teaching. Union members tend to be the opposite. Trump’s policies are anti-union, yet many union members are still drawn to the candidate of hate.

One in every five voters in swing states is a union worker, according to AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. Therefore, it is safe to say, Shuler’s statement is true in the swing state of Ohio. The Democratic Party has always been a big tent of inclusion with its members signifying a broad spectrum of beliefs and issues. Despite unions being a key demographic group within the big tent, unions are also a reflection of society’s culture wars. The Teamsters union with its 1.3 million members is one of the largest unions in the nation representing truck drivers and a wide-range of other workers, from airline pilots to zookeepers. It is considered a valuable part of the big tent.

During previous presidential election cycles, the union endorsed Joe Biden in 2020, as well as Democrats Hillary Clinton in

2016 and Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. The Teamsters said their internal polling data showed that before Biden’s withdrawal from the presidential race, members backed Biden 44.3 percent to Trump’s 36.3 percent. In a break with tradition, the Executive Board of the Teamsters chose not to make a formal endorsement for this year’s presidential election. The surprise announcement comes after the union released an internal poll showing 58 percent of members supported Trump, compared to 31 percent backing Harris.

The internal polling is an illustration that a number of White working class men from the Rust Belt who supported Biden were unwilling to support Harris. This becomes another case where White working class voters are willing to vote against their own self interest by supporting the candidate of hate. Between the first and second internal polling, the rank-and-file Teamsters must have forgotten how the first Trump administration was largely anti-union and anti-worker.

During his first term, Trump appointed a continuous flow of anti-union, pro-business right-wingers to the federal courts and to the National Labor Relations Board. They forgot how the vice president fought for multiple bills strongly backed by the Teamsters and other unions. This includes the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, which is the labor movement’s primary legislative priority making it easier for the Teamsters and other unions to organize. Trump, by the way, opposes the PRO Act. They forgot how Vice President Harris supported the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, the CHIPS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. These are pro-union legislations which will create hundreds of thousands of union jobs for Teamsters and other union members. How could they forget that Trump opposes increasing the federal minimum wage? Harris supports increasing it from \$7.25 to at least \$15. Did they know that Vice President Harris walked the picket line with UAW workers in 2019?

The vice president’s senior advisor, Brian Fallon, noted that a number of Teamsters councils and locals in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and other battleground states unveiled endorsements for the vice president. She also won the endorsement of the National Black Caucus of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters—even as the Executive Board of Teamsters withheld its formal endorsement.

If Biden remained at the top of the ticket, he should have received the Teamsters endorsement as well as Harris. The president supported the pension restoration funding under the Butch Lewis Act which was part of the American Rescue Plan. It was Vice President Harris who cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate for the American Rescue Plan. Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown named the Butch Lewis legislation in memory of the former retired head of the Teamsters Local 100 in southwest Ohio. This legislation saved the pensions for more than 100,000 Ohioans.

It is a stark reality in our nation. Many of those Ohioans will be moved more by the lies, hate and divisiveness coming from the Trump/Vance rhetoric rather than the actions displayed by the Biden/Harris administration which resulted in their pensions being saved.

David W. Marshall is the founder of the faith-based organization, TRB: The Reconciled Body, and author of the book God Bless Our Divided America.



By David W. Marshall  
NEWS ANALYSIS  
(TriceEdneyWire.com) –

# Teamsters' lack of endorsement is the White working class voting against their own self-interest



**H**urricane Helene tore through the southeastern United States this week, leaving a trail of devastation across six states and claiming at least 90 lives. The powerful storm slammed into the region, causing widespread flooding, downed power lines, and major disruptions to infrastructure. Hardest hit were North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, and Virginia, where millions remain without power and local officials expect the death toll to rise as search and recovery efforts continue. Roads have been washed out, and some towns remain submerged, complicating rescue operations.

The financial impact of the storm is also staggering. Preliminary estimates from insurers suggest that damages could range between \$15 billion and over \$100 billion. The hurricane's force crippled essential services, with cellphone towers downed and water systems disrupted, leaving communities struggling to cope. In the aftermath, transportation routes critical for emergency re-

sponse have been heavily damaged, further delaying aid efforts. The scope of the damage is still being assessed as officials work to restore basic services.

President Biden, who expressed sorrow over the devastation, is expected to visit the hardest-hit areas in the coming days. "It's tragic," he told reporters, describing

the aftermath as "stunning." Both presidential candidates, Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump, have also announced plans to tour the region, receiving briefings on the extent of the damage and the ongoing recovery efforts. Their visits highlight the storm's political and humanitarian significance as the

country confronts the aftermath of one of the deadliest hurricanes in recent years.

As of Sept. 29, the U.S. Energy Department reported that 2.7 million customers across the region were still without power, a significant drop from earlier in the week but still reflective of the widespread outages. South Carolina alone re-

ported 25 deaths, while Georgia confirmed 17, Florida 11, and North Carolina, where Buncombe County was particularly hard hit, reported 30 fatalities. Helene made landfall along Florida's Gulf Coast on Sept. 26

Coast on Sept. 26 before sweeping up the eastern seaboard, devastating entire communities in its path.

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

By Sunita Sohrabji  
(TriceEdneyWire.com) –

**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

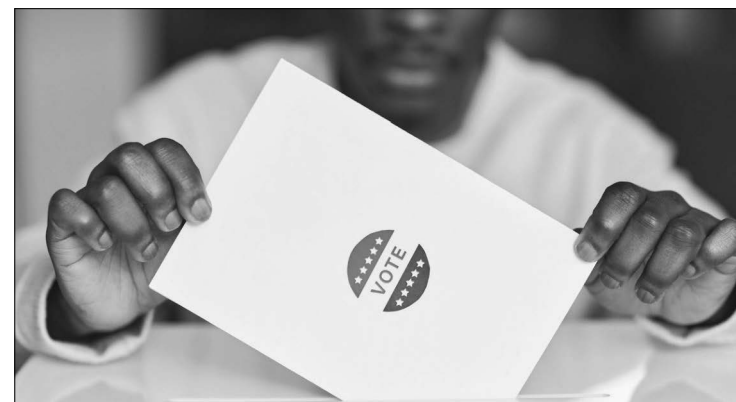
NCSBE has once again failed in its mandate to keep non-citizens off the voter rolls, fueling distrust and jeopardizing our elections. We are committed to the basic principle — and commonsense law — that only Americans decide American elections."

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 re-

leased 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.

# \$148M returned to consumers in two Consumer Protection actions

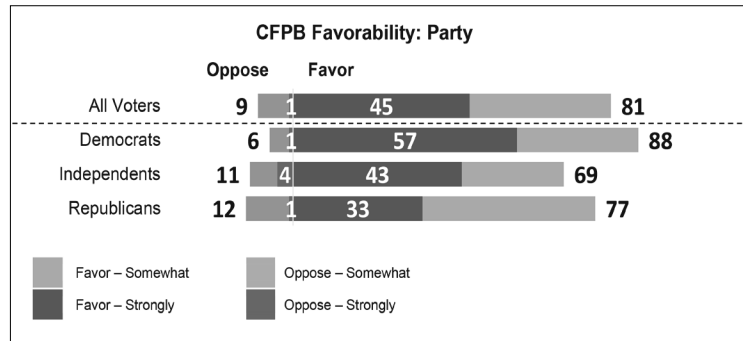
By Charlene Crowell  
(TriceEdneyWire.com)

Recent back-to-back financial enforcement actions taken by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) underscore why the nation's sole agency dedicated to consumer financial fairness retains broad and strong voter support.

On September 11, TD Bank, the nation's 10th largest commercial bank with 1,200 branches and 2,600 ATMs in 15 states and the District of Columbia was ordered for the second time by CFPB to pay restitution to thousands of consumers for illegally tarnishing credit reports of tens of thousands consumers. It repeatedly provided consumer credit bureaus with inaccurate information on its customers about personal bankruptcies and credit card delinquencies. It also failed to properly investigate and resolve customer disputes linked to the faulty information. Given the widespread use of credit reports, the bank's actions threatened customers' ability to get a loan, job, or housing.

Under the terms of the recent order, the bank will return \$7.76 million to its harmed consumers and pay a \$20 million penalty as well.

"The CFPB's investigation found that TD Bank illegally threatened the consumer reports of its customers with fraudulent information and then barely lifted a finger to fix it," said CFPB Director Rohit



Chopra. "Rather than treating its customers fairly and following the law, TD Bank's management clearly cared more about growth and expanding its empire through mergers. Regulators will need to focus major attention on TD Bank to change its course."

On the following day, September 12, CFPB ordered another repeat offender, Navient – formerly known as Sallie Mae – to pay more restitution and banned it from ever servicing student loans again. Under the terms of the order, Navient would have to pay \$100 million to harmed borrowers, and a \$20 million penalty.

The efforts to remove Navient from future student loan servicing followed several previous enforcement actions including:

A 2014 \$100 million joint order by the Department of Justice and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for illegally overcharging nearly 78,000 military servicemembers;

A 2021 order from the Department of Education to return more

than \$22 million in overcharges; and

In 2022, a \$1.85 billion settlement brought by 39 state attorneys general for originating predatory student loans in addition to its forbearance steering practices.

Consumer advocates also applauded the most recent Navient order.

"This is a step toward accountability and sends a powerful message to all student loan servicers that such behavior will not be condoned," said Jaylon Herbin, director of federal campaigns at the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL). "For decades, Navient used deceptive tactics to steer borrowers into high-cost, long-term forbearances instead of placing them in affordable income-driven repayment (IDR) plans, leaving countless borrowers – many of whom were borrowers of color and low-income students – trapped in a cycle of debt."

These and other actions that together demonstrate governmental support for financial fairness and

are underscored in findings from a recent survey. Fresh data shows that voters of all or no political affiliations support the CFPB's crack down on junk fees, discrimination, and other harmful actions from financial firms.

A bipartisan polling team from Lake Research Partners and Chesapeake Beach Consulting conducted the survey commissioned by Americans for Financial Reform (AFR) and CRL. Released on September 9, the survey showed:

Nine in ten voters (91%) believe it is important to regulate financial services to ensure they are fair for consumers; this includes 95% of Democrats, 87% of Republicans, and 88% of independents;

After reading information about overdraft fees, 84% of voters support limiting the price banks can charge to only what the overdraft costs them, with no additional profit; a majority support this policy strongly;

82% support the CFPB using all the tools available to hold financial companies accountable for discrimination in lending, with over three quarters in support across party lines;

82% of voters support government regulators capping credit card late fees at \$8 per month, down from \$32 per month; at least three quarters of voters across party lines are supportive, with at least half strongly supporting the cap; and

After hearing a short description of the CFPB and its mission, four in

five voters (81%) express support for the agency; favorability for the Consumer Bureau has been consistently very high over the past decade, ticking up slightly in 2020 and remaining at an elevated level.

"Whether the subject is credit card late fees, medical debt, or private equity's growing impact in health care, voters favor tough regulation and oversight of the financial sector," said Lisa Donner, executive director at Americans for Financial Reform.

"Voters of all political persuasions understand the need for the Consumer Bureau – a government watchdog that protects consumers from financial firms' junk fees, illegal discrimination, and other misconduct," said Mike Calhoun, president at the Center for Responsible Lending. "This poll reaffirms that politicians, regardless of their political affiliation, would best represent their constituents by supporting the Consumer Bureau and by keeping their hands off its funding structure."

The survey has a range of additional questions, including on fintech, small business lending, and bank failures. To read the complete poll, visit: <https://www.responsiblelending.org/research-publication/voters-strongly-support-consumer-bureaus-mission-across-political-spectrum>.

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## DOJ and State Attorneys General file Joint Consumer Lawsuit

By Charlene Crowell  
(TriceEdneyWire.com)

In August, the Department of Justice and eight state Attorneys General filed a lawsuit charging RealPage Inc., a commercial revenue management software firm with providing apartment managers with illegal price fixing software data that violates antitrust law and artificially increases costs for millions of renters across the nation.

After a nearly two-year investigation, the agencies found an estimated 80 percent of renters are forced to pay falsely inflated rates while also denying honest landlords an opportunity to compete for these same customers.

The lawsuit claims RealPage's practices are federal interstate commerce violations provided by the long-standing Sherman Act enacted in 1890.

"When the Sherman Act was passed, an anticompetitive scheme might have looked like robber barons shaking hands at a secret meeting," stated U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland. "Today, it looks like landlords using mathematical algorithms to align their rents. But antitrust law does not become obsolete simply because competitors find new ways to unlawfully act in concert. And Americans should not have to pay more in rent simply because a company has found a new way to scheme with landlords to break

the law."

Joining the civil lawsuit are the Attorneys General of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington.

Falsely-inflated rental costs worsen the already disproportionate financial strain felt by people of color. Tight living spaces that come at sky-high costs especially harm disproportionate numbers of Black and Latino renters. As Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies 2024 State of the Nation's Housing noted:

"More than half of Black (57 percent), Hispanic (54 percent), and multiracial (50 percent) renter households were cost burdened at last measure in 2022... While racial income inequality explains some of the difference, burden rates remain disproportionately high for lower-income renters of color, at 85 and 87 percent for Black and Hispanic renters, respectively, as compared to 80 percent of their white counterparts."

The complaint alleges that RealPage contracts with competing landlords who agree to share with the firm nonpublic, competitively sensitive information about their apartment rental rates and other lease terms. This data is then used with RealPage's algorithmic pricing software to generate recommendations, including apartment rental pricing and other terms, for participating landlords. The use of

competitively sensitive information violates interstate commerce law aimed at preventing monopolies.

The complaint further alleges that in a free market, these landlords otherwise would be competing independently to attract renters based on pricing, discounts, concessions, lease terms, and other dimensions of apartment leasing.

"Healthy competition in the rental housing market requires two key ingredients," added Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco. "The market must be dictated by open and honest competition among landlords. And, renters must be able to negotiate prices with landlords — without the specter of collusion... But RealPage has shut away those ingredients, changed the locks, and thrown away the keys. That's collusion — and that's against the law."

North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, whose office filed the joint lawsuit on August 23 in the Middle District of North Carolina, also weighed in on the lawsuit's importance.

"Few things are as important as our homes — but too many North Carolinians struggle to afford their apartment," said Attorney General Josh Stein. "Rents are already too high. I will not tolerate any company scheming to block healthy competition among landlords. It raises rent, and it's illegal."

For one North Carolina local



official, the lawsuit is an opportunity to right a grievous wrong.

"Between 2010 and 2020 the median rent in Wake County jumped up 40 percent," said Shonica Thomas, Wake County Board of Commissioners Chair. "That costs families an extra \$4,200 a year. For a household that's struggling to make ends meet, that can be the difference between stability and eviction."

A growing metro market, Wake County is home to the state's capitol, Raleigh. But according to multiple independent housing research reports, high rental rate increases have occurred throughout the nation, in communities of varying sizes and locales.

For example, monthly rents in Knoxville, TN reached \$1,818 in February 2024, a 59.1 percent increase from 2019, according to this spring, SmartAsset.com.

More recently, Apartments.com found posted national rental rate averages by state and city. Nationally, the average national

monthly cost of a one-bedroom apartment with 699 square feet is \$1,563.

On a statewide basis, average rental costs in California, the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York all surpass \$2,000 for dwellings with as low as 631 square feet to no more than 727 square feet. Conversely, Oklahoma is one of the states with the lowest average rent of \$880 for a 687 square foot unit.

Comparing costs and square footage by city, Apartments.com additionally found New York City had the highest monthly rental cost of \$3,865, and the smallest square footage at 598 square feet. The only other city, Boston (\$3,450), was the only other city with more than had over \$3,000 in average rental costs. All of the following cities average rental costs exceed ng \$2,000 for less than 700 square feet in Los Angeles, Miami, Oakland, San Diego and Seattle.

"Access to affordable housing options is becoming increasingly difficult," said Monica Burks, Policy Counsel at the Center for Responsible Lending. "Anti-competitive practices that inflate already high housing costs disadvantage individuals and families working hard to secure this basic need."

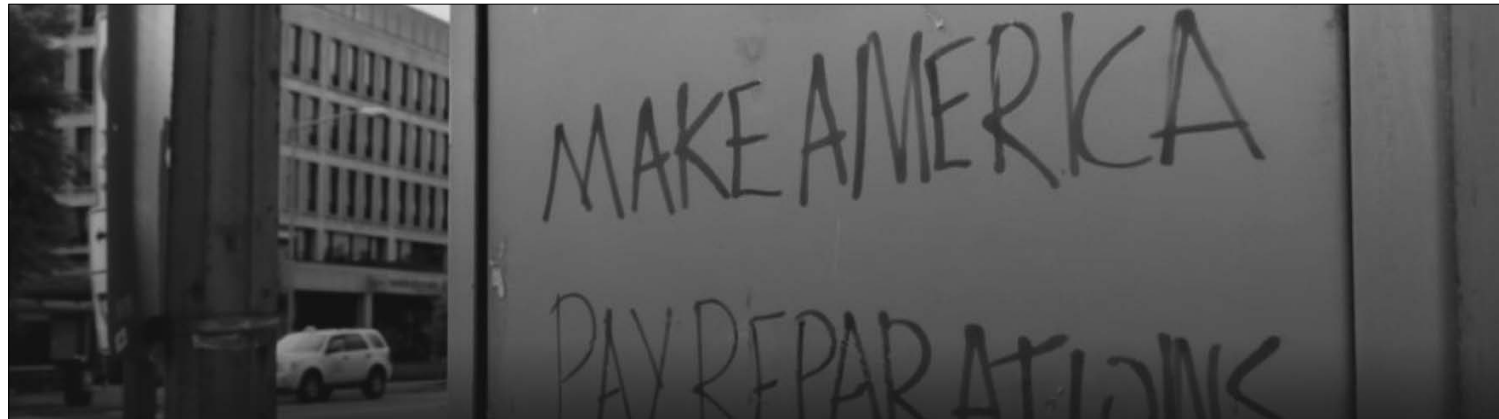
Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at [Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org](mailto:Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org).

# State issues formal apology for slavery

Newyorkbeacon.com

In a pivotal moment for California, Governor Gavin Newsom signed a series of groundbreaking bills on September 26 aimed at addressing the state's historical mistreatment of African Americans. The legislation includes a formal apology from the state for its role in perpetuating slavery and oppressing Black residents, marking a significant step in the movement toward reparations. Newsom's actions represent a symbolic acknowledgment of past injustices and a move toward accountability, following a growing national conversation about reparations and systemic racism.

Momentum for reparations in California gained considerable traction in 2023, following the release of a report by the California Reparations Task Force. The comprehensive document detailed the state's involvement in slavery, as well as the lasting harm caused by



institutional racism and implicit bias. This report, widely covered by outlets such as KQED, highlighted the state's historical and ongoing responsibility for the disenfranchisement of Black Californians. It fueled legislative efforts to introduce reparations measures, framing these bills as a step toward righting centuries of wrongs.

Assemblymember Lori Wilson, D-Suisun City, a key proponent of

the reparations bills, praised Newsom's signing of the legislation as a landmark achievement. "Together with Gov. Newsom, we are sending a powerful message that California is leading the way in repairing harm done to Black communities," she stated. Wilson emphasized that while the recent bill signings represent a victory, they are just the beginning of a larger fight for justice. Members of the California

Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), who spearheaded these efforts, focused on creating reparations measures that were both practical and meaningful, resisting calls for more controversial methods like direct cash payments.

Despite these legislative wins, challenges remain. Newsom vetoed two related bills the day before the landmark signings—one that would have required Medi-Cal

to cover food interventions and another that sought to establish a statewide process for reviewing racism claims. He cited concerns over costs as the reason for these rejections. Still, the path forward for reparations is far from over, as nine bills have successfully passed the state Assembly and Senate, and more will be decided by California voters in upcoming elections.

## I asked what kind of family

Denise, adopted 17-year-old Amina



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# Editorial - Opinion



By Dr/ E/ Faye Williams  
(TriceEdneyWire.com)

## Hate seems to have taken over!

non-white people (especially people of Hispanic, Asian and African descent, as well as a Native sister being in charge of the Department of Interior, with several other women being Secretaries of Agencies, and were we excited when Supreme Court Judge Ketanji Brown-Jackson came along!

We cheered that Barack Obama could be elected by people of all races and backgrounds to become President of the United States of America. We were proud of the fact that Hillary Clinton (but for our crazy electoral college rule) would have been our first female President!

We have wannabe President again Donald Trump and Vice-Presidential wannabe Vance to thank for the hate launched on the Haitian community of Springfield, Ohio. Without reason, that story continues in spite of being told by leaders of the city that Haitians were invited and went to Spring-

field legally and were welcomed there! Of course, Vance thought it was okay to make up a story about the situation, causing people to believe residents were eating cats and dogs!

Now, despite the unlikely chance of the story being true, Trump brought it to the big stage during the debate with Vice-President Kamala Harris. He threw in the lie on the presidential debate stage and has never stopped bringing it up with people correcting him. He not only didn't pay attention, but went on vowing to go to Springfield, knowing that story would not be welcomed!

At the debate, moderators calmly tried to correct him. His and Vance's lie about this story resulted in the unnecessary, racist lies they knew would hurt Springfield's Haitian community. Schools and businesses had to be closed. This frightened young children who wanted to be in school. That was

brought on by hate of Haitian people and for no other reason than their being Black!

Let's go to the Middle East. We've witnessed a situation where millions of innocent people, many of them babies, were killed for no reason because they were not the ones who went into Israel and caused havoc. Many are afraid to speak out because they are afraid to be called anti-Semitic but those thousands of Palestinians who've been killed by Israeli forces had nothing to do with the tragedy in Israel. Then even, as he came to the United Nations, Netanyahu had the gall to blame the whole United Nations as being anti-Semitic. It's time for Netanyahu, friends of Netanyahu, and AIPAC to stop accusing everybody whose help they are only too happy to keep getting by frightening people who care about what is right, but afraid to speak out against wrong. If you watched his speech, you saw that

only a handful applauded during his long and hate-filled speech. I know people, even many in Israel, are tired of his spewing his hate toward everybody who doesn't agree with him. I've already been hurt over this issue so I am not afraid. I applaud those who are willing to point out wrong from right no matter who is doing it.

Trump, Vance nor Netanyahu should be leading any nation. We can't do anything about Netanyahu since we don't vote in Israel, but we do have the right and obligation to vote in the United States. On November 5, 2024 we can lessen the hatred by making sure Trump is never again allowed to lead our nation. So, please listen to the candidate who is leading us in the right direction. Vote for VP Kamala Harris and return our nation to one of hope and love—not hate.

(Dr. E.Faye Williams, President of The Dick Gregory Society where peace and love reign!)

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## NBA Hall of Famer Dikembe Mutombo dies of brain cancer at 57

By Stacy M. Brown  
(NNPA Newswire)

**D**ikembe Mutombo, the towering 7-foot-2 center who starred at Georgetown University before becoming one of the NBA's greatest shot blockers, died of brain cancer, the league announced on Monday. He was 57.

Mutombo first made his mark at Georgetown, where his shot-blocking abilities and imposing presence on the court quickly earned him national recognition. Legendary coach John Thompson, who also helped the Hoyas' defense become one of the best in the game, recruited Mutombo and fellow star Alonzo Mourning. During his time with the Hoyas, he was named the Big East Defensive Player of the Year twice and famously blocked 12 shots in a single game, prompting Georgetown fans to create the "Rejection Row" cheering section.

After graduating with degrees in linguistics and diplomacy in 1991, Mutombo entered the NBA, where his defensive dominance became the hallmark of his nearly two-decade career. Over stints with six teams—including Denver, Atlanta, Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York, and Houston—Mutombo swatted 3,289 shots, the second most in NBA history. His signature finger wag warned opponents not

to challenge him at the rim after each block.

He was named NBA Defensive Player of the Year four times, cementing his reputation as one of the league's most feared defenders. Yet, for younger fans, Mutombo's legacy extended beyond his playing days through his appearance in Geico commercials, where his signature blocks and finger wags were humorously showcased.

But Mutombo's impact reached far beyond basketball. After retiring from the game, he dedicated himself to humanitarian work, particularly in his home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2007, he founded the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital in Kinshasa, providing much-needed medical care to thousands of people. The hospital, named in honor of his mother, includes an emergency room, an intensive care unit, and 150 beds.

"My thing is about fighting the mortality rate so we can allow the people to live longer," Mutombo said in a 2016 interview with NBC News. "That has been my cause, my drive."

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver described Mutombo as "simply larger than life" and "a humanitarian at his core."

"On the court, he was one of the greatest shot blockers and defensive players in the history of



the NBA. Off the floor, he poured his heart and soul into helping others," Silver said in a statement.

Mutombo's international interests were evident from his early days at Georgetown, where he initially intended to pursue a medical career. His academic achievements—earning degrees in linguistics and diplomacy—reflected his passion for global issues. He even interned with the U.S. Congress and the World Bank during his summers, showing a commitment to improving lives long before his NBA stardom.

Dikembe Mutombo leaves behind a towering legacy as a basketball icon and a champion for healthcare and humanitarian efforts in developing countries. His determination to lift others off the court rivaled his shot-blocking prowess.

Reflecting on his life's mission, Mutombo once said: "My thing is about fighting the mortality rate so we can allow the people to live longer. That has been my cause, my drive."

## Dikembe Mutombo dies of brain cancer at 58

Newyorkbeacon.com

**D**ikembe Mutombo, the towering NBA Hall of Famer known for his shot-blocking prowess and humanitarian efforts, has passed away at 58 following a battle with brain cancer. The league announced his death on Monday, September 30, mourning the loss of a beloved figure both on and off the court. Mutombo, who played for 18 seasons in the NBA, became a household name during his time with the Denver Nuggets and the Atlanta Hawks.

"Dikembe Mutombo was simply larger than life," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement. "On the court, he was one of the greatest shot-blockers and defensive players in the history of the NBA. Off the floor, he poured his heart and soul into helping others." Known for his signature finger wag after blocking shots, Mutombo's legacy transcended basketball, with deep roots in global philanthropy, particularly in his home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mutombo's journey to basketball stardom began at Georgetown University, where he played under the legendary coach John Thompson. At Georgetown, Mutombo developed into one of the best defensive players of his era, joining the ranks of fellow Hoya greats like

Patrick Ewing and Alonzo Mourning. Over his NBA career, Mutombo became one of only three players to win Defensive Player of the Year four times, a testament to his dominance in the paint. His impact extended far beyond statistics, earning him eight All-Star appearances and a place in the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 2015.

In addition to his accolades on the court, Mutombo was the NBA's first Global Ambassador, a role that highlighted his deep commitment to using basketball as a force for good. "There was nobody more qualified than Dikembe to serve as the NBA's first Global Ambassador," Silver added. "He was a humanitarian at his core. He loved what the game of basketball could do to make a positive impact on communities, especially in his native Democratic Republic of the Congo and across Africa."

Mutombo's legacy as a humanitarian is perhaps just as enduring as his basketball career. Fluent in nine languages, he founded the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation in 1997, dedicating his life to improving health and education in Africa. Even after his retirement from the NBA in 2009, Mutombo remained active in charitable work, leaving behind an indelible mark on the world, both as a legendary athlete and a global ambassador for change.

## John Amos, beloved 'Good Times' star, Emmy-nominated actor, dies at 84

NNPA Newswire

**J**ohn Amos, the Emmy-nominated actor and pioneering television star who brought to life some of the most beloved characters in entertainment history, died at 84. His son, K.C. Amos, confirmed in a statement that Amos passed away more than a month ago, on August 21, in Los Angeles of natural causes. The younger Amos didn't say why he kept his father's death under wraps for more than a month.

"It is with heartfelt sadness that I share with you that my father has transitioned," K.C. said. "He was a man with the kindest heart and a heart of gold... and he was loved the world over. Many fans consider him their TV father. He lived a good life. His legacy will live on in his outstanding works in television and film as an actor."

Amos' acting career spanned over five decades, with his most iconic role being that of James Evans Sr., the no-nonsense, hard-working father on the groundbreaking CBS sitcom *Good Times* (1974–1979). The show, which was the first sitcom to center on an African American family, became a cultural touchstone, and Amos' portrayal of James Evans Sr. made him a symbol of strength and dignity for countless viewers.

Photo of the Evans family from the television program *Good Times*. From left: Ralph Carter (Michael), BernNadette Stanis (Thelma), Jimmie Walker (J.J.),

Esther Rolle (Florida), John Amos (James)./Wikimedia Commons

However, his time on the series was cut short after three seasons due to creative differences with the show's producers. Amos famously clashed with the show's direction, objecting to what he saw as the stereotypical portrayal of his on-screen son, J.J., played by Jimmie Walker.

"We had a number of differences," Amos recalled in later interviews, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*. "I felt too much emphasis was being put on J.J. in his chicken hat, saying 'Dy-no-mite!' every third page." Amos' insistence on portraying a more balanced, positive image of the Black family on television led to his departure from the show in 1976, when his character was written out in a dramatic two-part episode.

Born John Allen Amos Jr. on December 27, 1939, in Newark, New Jersey, Amos began his professional life with dreams of playing football. He played the sport at Colorado State University and

had brief stints with teams like the Denver Broncos and Kansas City Chiefs. But after a series of injuries and cutbacks, Amos transitioned to entertainment, beginning his career as a writer and performer.

Amos got his first major acting break as Gordy Howard, the good-natured weatherman on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, appearing on the iconic series from 1970 to 1973. He would go on to write and perform sketches on *The Leslie Uggams Show* and later landed roles in various television series and films.

In 1977, Amos received an Emmy nomination for his powerful portrayal of the adult Kunta Kinte in the landmark ABC miniseries *Roots*, a role that solidified his status as one of television's most respected actors. Amos' performance in *Roots*, one of the most watched and culturally significant TV events of all time, remains one of his most enduring achievements.

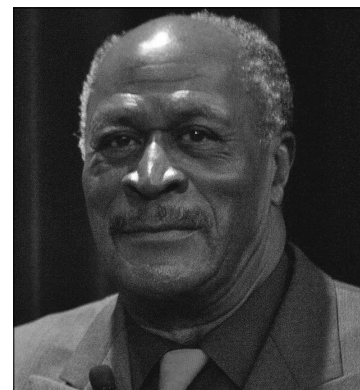
In addition to his success on

television, Amos made his mark in films. He appeared in Melvin Van Peebles' groundbreaking blaxploitation film *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971) and *The World's Greatest Athlete* (1973). He was widely recognized for his role in *Coming to America* (1988), where he played Cleo McDowell, the owner of McDowell's, a fast-food restaurant parody of McDonald's. Amos reprised the role over three decades later in *Coming to America 2* (2021).

His filmography also includes the Sidney Poitier and Bill Cosby classic *Let's Do It Again* (1975), *The Beastmaster* (1982), *Die Hard 2* (1990), *Ricochet* (1991), *Mac* (1992), *For Better or Worse* (1995), *The Players Club* (1998), *Night Trap* (1993), and *Because of Charley* (2021).

Amos was also a familiar face on television throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, with recurring roles in shows like *The West Wing* as Admiral Percy Fitzwallace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* as Will Smith's stepfather. He appeared in *The District*, *Men in Trees*, *All About the Andersons* (as Anthony Anderson's father), and the Netflix series *The Ranch*.

Beyond acting, Amos had a passion for writing and performing in theater. In the 1990s, when he found it challenging to secure roles in Hollywood, he wrote and starred in the one-person play *Halley's Comet*, about an 87-year-old man waiting in the woods for the



comet's arrival. He toured with the production for over 20 years, performing in cities across the United States and abroad.

In addition to his onscreen and stage accomplishments, Amos co-produced the documentary *America's Dad*, which explored his life and career. He was also involved in Broadway, appearing in Carl Reiner's *Tough to Get Help* production in 1972.

John Amos' life and career were not without personal challenges. In recent years, he was embroiled in a public legal battle between his children, K.C. and Shannon, over accusations of elder abuse. This unfortunate chapter cast a shadow over his later years. However, his legacy as a beloved television father and one of Hollywood's pioneering Black actors remains untarnished.

Both K.C. and Shannon, children from his first marriage to artist Noel "Noni" Mickelson and his ex-wife, actress Lillian Lehman, survive Amos.





Audrey J. Bernard

## Jussie Smollett takes you home for the 'Holliday'

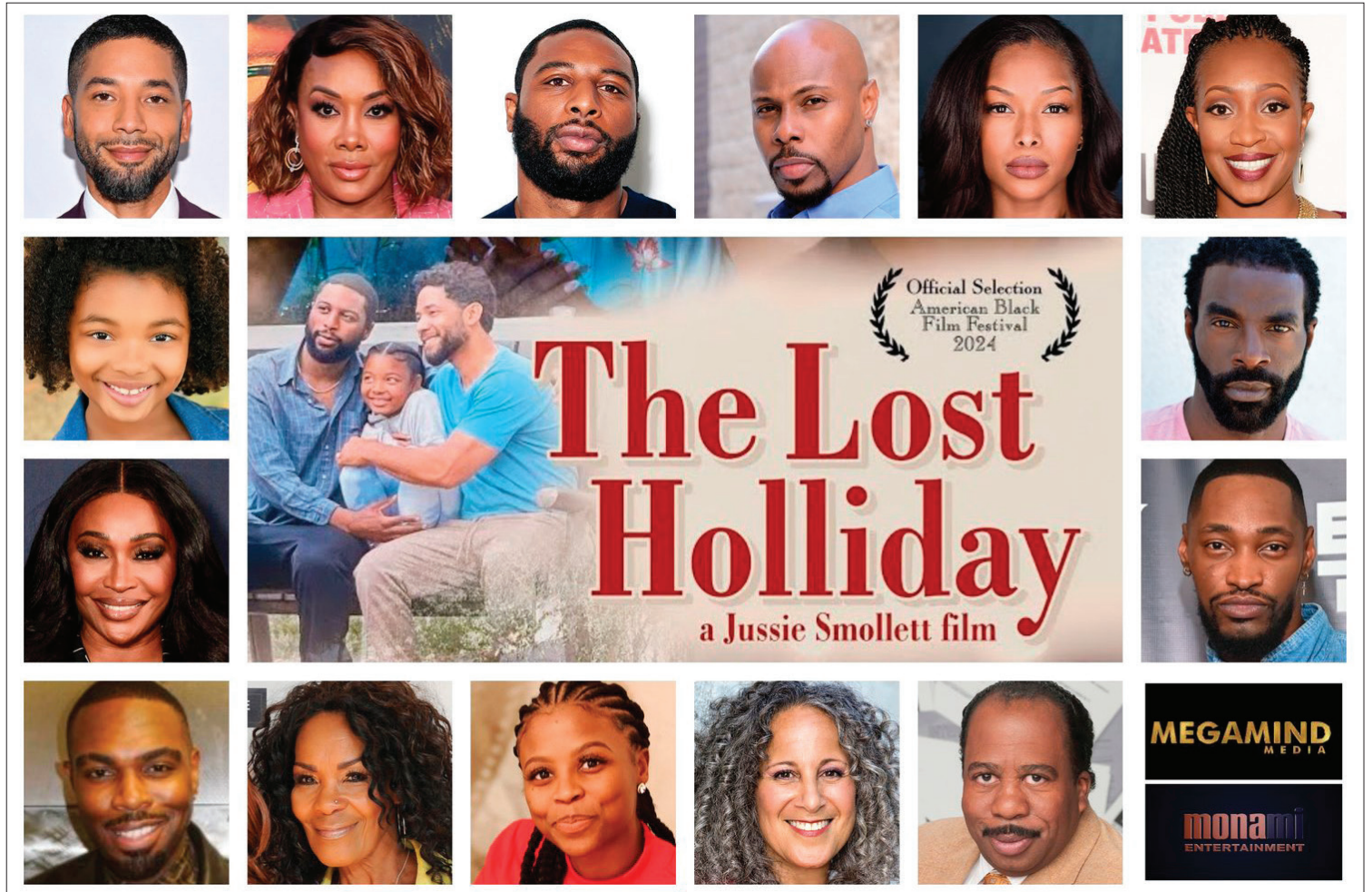


Jussie Smollett

Just in time for the holidays is the gift that keeps giving! From ground breaking and award winning musician, writer, producer, and director Jussie Smollett comes the beautifully written, heartbreakingly directed, and authentically performed "The Lost Holliday" written by Jerrell Chesney and Jussie Smollett who stars in the movie along with a phenomenally gifted cast consisting of Vivica A. Fox, Jabari Redd, Marquise Vilsón, Brittany S. Hall, Miriam A. Hyman, Londyn Carter, Memphis Cade, Cynthia Bailey, Corey Knott, Alex "ADIV" Duncan IV, Betty Coleman, Bella Bahhs, Gina Belafonte, and Leslie D. Baker.

This powerful, emotional, and heartwarming film explores themes involving family dynamics, fatherhood, adoption, mother/son & father/daughter inclinations, death/grief, and the bonds that transcend time and misunderstanding. "The Lost Holliday" follows the journey of Cassandra Marshall (Vivica A. Fox), who arrives in Los Angeles to plan the funeral of her estranged son, Damien Holliday (Jabari Redd). Upon her arrival, Cassandra discovers that the funeral arrangements are already being handled by her son's husband, Jason Holliday (Jussie Smollett)—a man and a marriage she knew nothing about. Through Jason, their adopted daughter, Arielle (Londyn Carter), Jason's sister, Cheyenne (Brittany Hall), and best friend, Duck (Marquise Vilsón), Cassandra learns more about her son in death than she ever did in his life. "The Lost Holliday" also celebrates LGBTQIA+ representation and the importance of acceptance, shining a light on the adversity and triumphs of a same gender loving couple navigating family dissension, and societal presumptions.

This new holiday movie which became an instant classic is directed by Jussie Smollett and produced by A Supermassive Movie, MegaMind Media and Monami Entertainment. Smollett shares producing credit with Mona Scott-Young, and Tressa Smallwood. Tom Wilson, Janet Smollett, Joe "Jody" Williams, Eddie Mac, Stephanie R. Gayle, James Earl Hardy, Jerrell Chesney, Michael Lang, Anthony Smallwood, Sheila Legette,



The cast of 'The Lost Holliday'



(L-R) Brittany Hall, Vivica A. Fox, London Carter, Corey Knott, and Mona Scott-Young attend 'The Lost Holliday' New York screening on September 25, 2024, at AMC Magic Johnson 9 in Harlem, New York (Getty Images)

and Vivica A. Fox serve as executive producers. The feel good holiday flick also features new music penned by Smollett. "Music has always been the driving force behind everything I do," he said in an interview. In addition to recently released single "My Mind," look for an accompanying soundtrack to follow. "The music in this film is really very special," says Smollett. "I've been so blessed and a little

lucky to be able to do certain projects that just so happen to have a musical component." The entire cast brought their swag to Harlem to attend the New York Premiere screening with Vivica A. Fox, Jussie Smollett, Mona Scott-Young, Tressa Smallwood, and cast on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at AMC Magic Johnson 9 (2309 Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Harlem, New York).

Prior to the special screening & Talk Back sponsored by Gilead and moderated by Dave Bridgeforth guests were treated to a word from Gilead. The biopharmaceutical company collaborates with communities, organizations and advocates, particularly those who work in HIV, liver disease and oncology, to affect change for individuals, for the communities they serve and for society as a whole.

During the Talk Back Mona-Scott summed up her sentiment about a movie she – along with Fox — helped bring to the screen as Smollett could not find a major film backer. "People hear us talk about how emotional, touching and heartfelt it is but it's a fun movie. The beauty is it connects with people from all different walks of life and ethnicities and sexual orientation. We see a lot of fractures in the Black family dynamic, whether it's an absent dad or whether it's estranged siblings. And that pain, that hurt, that generational trauma is unfortunately something that permeates a lot of our family dynamic. This story touches on the broader theme of family, healing and reconciliation and forgiveness."

Smollett expressed that the movie was inspired in many ways by his own family. "It was eight years in the making. I was inspired by my mother who in the mid-seventies as a Black woman married into a non-Black family. It wasn't always easy for her to navigate that. It was a much different time. And the things that she went through with my father's side of the family were difficult."

In addition to New York, the critically acclaimed motion picture premiered at ABFF and has screened in Miami, Los Angeles, Washington DC, Atlanta, Seattle, and London receiving coverage and raves in each city! Now you get to see "The Lost Holliday," at an AMC Theater in your city. Follow #TheLostHolliday #TheLostHollidayFilm #ASuperMassiveMovie #MonamiEntertainment #MegaMindMedia #FilmPremiere #VivicaAFox #JussieSmollett #JabariRedd #MarquiseVilsón



# On the scene

## Stevie Wonder announces United States tour leading up to 2024 presidential election

By Variety

**S**tevie Wonder has announced a 10-date United States tour for October in the days leading up to the presidential election titled "Sing Your Song! As We Fix Our Nation's Broken Heart," which echoes the title of his recent politically themed single.

The announcement says the tour is a call for "joy over anger, kindness over recrimination, peace over war." It also notes that "as a special thank you," the 25-time Grammy winner will be offering a designated amount of complimentary tickets "to those in our communities who are already working tirelessly to fix our nation's broken heart."

The performances are produced by Wonder Productions and promoted by AEG Presents in partnership with Free Lunch. They'll begin October 8 at PPG Paints Arena in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with stops in New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Greensboro, Atlanta, Detroit, Milwaukee and Minneapolis before concluding October 30 at the Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Last month, Wonder made a rousing appearance at the Democratic National Convention. "I know the importance of action," the 74-year-old artist said to the crowd. "Now is the moment to understand where we are and what it will take to win: win the broken hearts, win the disenchanted, win the angry spirits — now is the time. (Photo: GettyImages)



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# Our protected public lands remind us: Nature is for everyone



By Ben Jealous

"There are so many people in Detroit, there's so many people in Chicago, there's so many people in Atlanta and Washington, D.C. and Cleveland and L.A. that don't realize that whatever is ailing them potentially could be cured by a visit to a place like this."

Those are the words of Yosemite National Park Ranger Shelton Johnson. Johnson is a renowned advocate for diversity in our national parks. As a community engagement specialist for the Park,

he sees it as his duty to connect people with nature and our national parks – especially people who, in their communities, maybe do not historically feel a connection to them.

Recently, Johnson welcomed a group of high school students from his hometown of Detroit – and from the same high school he attended, Cass Tech – on their first visit to Yosemite. They were with a trip organized by Detroit Outdoors and the Sierra Club. He told them:

"You own this. This is your property. Yosemite is your property and your family's property. Yellowstone is your property and your family's property. The Grand Canyon is your property and your family's property. Any time you visit a national park, any ranger that you see, your taxes paid for that ranger. They work for you. Now, I never thought, growing up in Detroit, if I saw any guy with a badge that he worked for me."

Ranger Johnson is right. America's public lands belong to all of us. That goes for the more than 640 million acres of land that make up our more than 400 national parks, 560 national wildlife refuges, 154 national forests, more than 130 national monuments, and millions

more publicly managed acres.

Diversity in our national parks is a tradition as old as the parks themselves. Decades before the National Park Service was created, the famed African American Buffalo Soldiers served as the first rangers for the country's early national parks like Yosemite and Sequoia. (Ranger Shelton happens to be an expert on that topic.)

Making our national parks accessible to more people and communities is an act of patriotism and love. Kids like the group from Detroit and millions of others like them in cities across the country deserve the transformative experience had by those Cass Tech students in Yosemite: hiking among the majestic rock formations and expansive meadows of Yosemite Valley; finding peaceful sanctuary among the placid lakes and serene landscapes Tuolumne Meadows.

Our national parks are part of America's identity, gifts to us to enjoy and use to connect with nature in a profound way. But our parks and other public lands are more. They are a means of fighting both the extinction and climate crises. Protecting wildlife and critical ecosystems. Cleaning our air with their trees and removing carbon dioxide from our atmosphere.

The Biden-Harris administration has advanced initiatives that recognize this. A new public lands rule from April recalibrated the Bureau of Land Management's mandate from having a nearly exclusive focus on resource extraction to giving equal weight to conservation. And the U.S. Forest Service just concluded a public comment period on a proposed plan that could protect the country's remaining old growth forests. Mature and old-growth trees have a unique ability to absorb and store carbon pollution, making them one of nature's most powerful climate solutions. This is near and dear to my heart. The first protest I ever organized as a high schooler was an anti-clearcutting rally in Sacramento, California.

There are boundless examples of why protecting public lands is so important. I recently visited the Western Arctic in Alaska where an effort to add so-called Special Areas would preserve millions of acres of public lands in one of the last untouched ecosystems in the United States. It would safeguard a vital habitat for imperiled species and help protect the Arctic from the devastation of fossil fuel extraction. I am convinced that

witnessing the migratory paths of caribou and the ancient stone fences of the Inupiaq people would drive home for anyone the urgency of protecting our planet and conserving wildlife and wild places.

And our national monuments recognize sites of not only natural but historical and cultural importance. Our newest national monument – designated by President Biden in August – commemorates the 1908 Springfield Race Riot that sparked the creation of the NAACP, a national reckoning with racial violence, and birth of the modern civil rights movement.

This week we celebrated National Public Lands Day. Let us use the opportunity to break down lines of race, income, and geography when it comes to enjoying America's public lands.

As Ranger Johnson told those kids from Detroit, one of the reasons he was so excited to see them was because by simply being there, they were "changing the whole sociological dynamic right now, just being present." He told them, "That's why it's powerful that you're here. Because this is a sign of change and this is what the future looks like. You are the future."

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# Teen dies in apparent lightning strike

Newyorkbeacon.com

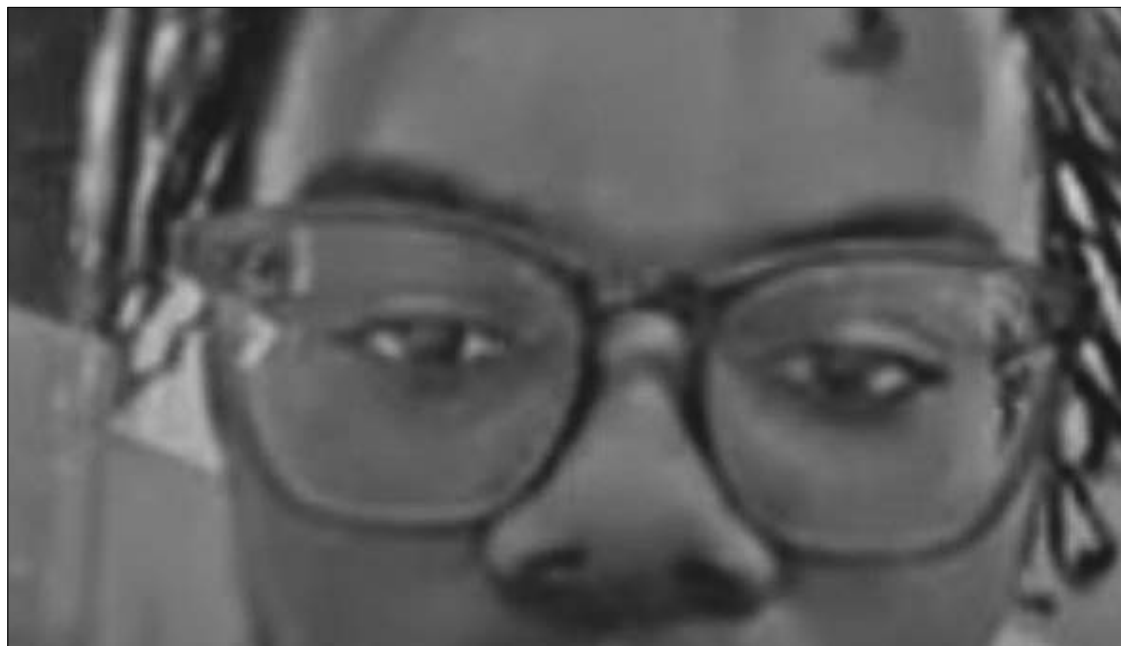
**P**embroke Pines, Fla. — Cameron Day, a 16-year-old high school junior, died on Monday after being struck by lightning while riding his bicycle during a storm in South Florida. Authorities found him unresponsive, drenched in rain, and he was rushed to Memorial Hospital Regional with severe burn injuries to his chest and thighs. Despite efforts to save him, Cameron was pronounced dead at the hospital.

Cameron, a student at McArthur High School in nearby Hollywood, was a beloved member of the school's marching band, known as the Herd of Sound. His dedication and leadership in the band, combined with his kindness and gentle demeanor, made him a cherished figure among his peers

and teachers. He was known for his deep passion for music and for being a loyal friend.

Lightning strikes, though rare, are a deadly force of nature. According to the National Weather Service, about 20 to 30 people in the U.S. die from lightning-related incidents each year. Cameron's untimely death is a reminder of the unpredictable danger posed by severe weather, especially in regions like Florida, which experiences frequent thunderstorms.

In the wake of the tragedy, Cameron's friends and family have rallied around his grieving mother, launching a GoFundMe campaign to assist with funeral costs. As they mourn the loss of a young man whose life was filled with promise, they remember his quiet strength, his love for music, and the light he brought to those who knew him.



## Wells Fargo closes CEO's bank account, freezes her assets

Newyorkbeacon.com

**W**ells Fargo has unexpectedly shut down the business accounts of Beautiful Curly Me, a Black-owned company founded by 12-year-old Zoe Oli and her mother, Evana. The business, which Zoe started at age 7, produces dolls, books, and accessories designed to inspire confidence in young Black and brown girls. Despite the brand's national recognition, with features on Good Morning America and People Magazine, the family says the bank provided no prior warning before freezing their funds.

The closure, according to Wells Fargo, stemmed from an "address discrepancy," citing the company's

Atlanta-based office as not being a legitimate physical location. Zoe and Evana, however, maintain that the address is a valid office space, and despite their efforts to resolve the issue with customer service, they were informed that their funds would remain inaccessible for up to 15 days. "As a small product-based business, we need cash to operate," Zoe said in an Instagram video, expressing frustration over the situation.

To weather the financial disruption, Zoe and Evana are encouraging supporters to shop directly from their website, offering a 20% discount with the code SUPPORT20. Beautiful Curly Me, which donates a doll for every doll sold, continues its mission of empowering young girls of color even as it navigates this challenging setback.

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# Michigan judge puts arrogant attorney in place for disrespecting courtroom

Newyorkbeacon.com

**A** Michigan defense attorney faced sharp criticism from Judge J. Cedric Simpson during a recent courtroom hearing after he violated protocol by engaging directly with the prosecutor. The incident, which unfolded in a Washtenaw County courtroom, occurred when the attorney disregarded courtroom decorum by arguing with the prosecutor instead of addressing the bench. The exchange quickly escalated, leading to a stern rebuke from Simpson, who is known for his no-nonsense demeanor and frequent viral courtroom moments.

Judge Simpson, who has gained a reputation on social media for his strict approach and memorable reprimands, did not hesitate to correct the attorney's breach of protocol. The attorney's misstep came during a case involving a domestic dispute over a family's living arrangements, which had spiraled into a criminal matter. As the defense attorney was explaining his client's actions,



the prosecutor objected, prompting an ill-advised exchange that drew Simpson's ire. The judge reminded the attorney that all objections should be addressed to the court, not directly to opposing counsel.

The courtroom atmosphere became tense as Simpson leaned forward in his chair, clearly displeased with the attorney's conduct. The defense lawyer, realizing his error, attempted to backtrack and address the judge properly, but Simpson was unforgiving, cutting him off mid-sentence.

Simpson's firm reprimand silenced the room, as the judge warned the attorney not to make the same mistake again, maintaining his high expectations for decorum in his courtroom.

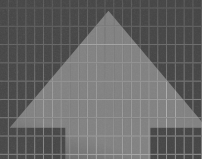
Simpson, whose fiery exchanges have become viral sensations, has a history of dealing sternly with both defendants and lawyers who fail to show proper respect in his courtroom. From sentencing a man to jail for disrespectful comments to chastising a road rage defendant for an outburst, Simpson's approach has garnered

widespread attention. Social media users frequently praise him for his handling of unruly courtroom participants, with many commenting on the attorney's poor judgment in engaging with the prosecutor.

The viral courtroom incident adds to a growing list of memorable moments from Simpson's time on the bench. Earlier this year, Simpson made headlines when he revoked a man's bond after the defendant appeared for a Zoom hearing while driving. His swift and decisive actions in court

have made him a figure of both fear and respect, with many hailing his commitment to upholding courtroom order.

Judge Simpson's courtroom continues to be a source of fascination online, where his strict adherence to legal decorum and sharp-tongued reprimands resonate with viewers. While his tough approach has made him a viral sensation, it also serves as a reminder to attorneys and defendants alike: in Judge Simpson's courtroom, there is little tolerance for disrespect or rule-breaking.



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## Lack of birth certificates puts Cameroon's Indigenous people on the brink of statelessness

**B**ilore Marie prepares a meal with porcupine meat at her house in Nazareth village in Southern Cameroon Aug. 21, 2024. Indigenous people have lived in harmony with the forests of central Africa for hundreds of years. But the government of Cameroon is trying to integrate them into mainstream society as mining and logging activities rapidly encroach.

MAYOS, Cameroon (AP) — The morning sun filtered through the forest canopy, casting dappled light on this village in Cameroon. For the Baka Indigenous community, it was a timeless image.

But a passing truck broke the silence and stirred up billows of dust, a reminder that the Baka now live an uneasy life along roadsides after being forced from their traditional homes.

The Baka and fellow Indigenous Bagyieli have lived in harmony with the forests of central Africa for generations. But mining and logging activities are encroaching, along with conservation areas, and government policy aims to integrate the ethnic groups into mainstream society.

Lives "were better when we were in the forest," said Rebecca Gwampiel, a 78-year-old Baka. She prepared yam porridge in front of a traditional hut constructed with arched saplings. In the dusty courtyard, children played football using bound banana leaves.

Among them was Francis, an 11-year-old who has quickly adapted to the new life and has aspirations. "I want to become a nurse," he declared. "I want to be able to treat my grandmother when she is sick."

But for many Baka children, such dreams go unfulfilled. Their lack of birth certificates poses a significant barrier — part of a wider global problem. They never saw the



need for birth certificates when they barely interacted with the world beyond the forest. Even now, they live far from administrative centers and can rarely afford the transport to reach them.

"Without a birth certificate, he is stuck with me here in the village," said Francis' 61-year-old father, Bertrand Akomi. He himself was denied employment by a lumber company because he didn't have a birth certificate.

The document remains elusive for the more than 120,000 members of Cameroon's Baka and Bagyieli communities. Without birth certificates, they cannot obtain national identity documents and are excluded from the full benefits of citizenship.

"When births are not registered, how can you identify yourself

as Cameroonian?" asked Banmi Emmanuel Dingha, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Cameroon's National Assembly, calling the document crucial for accessing education, health care and employment opportunities.

There is hope for change. Earlier this summer, Dingha and colleagues in the Cameroon parliament passed a bill allowing the country to accede to two United Nations conventions relating to the recognition of stateless people.

That would "help to significantly reduce discrimination against persons who often are only victims of circumstances," the government said at the time.

Cameroon's actions are part of a commitment by African nations earlier this year to address the

right to nationality and eradicate statelessness on the continent of more than 1.3 billion people.

The Indigenous people of Cameroon are mostly hunters and gatherers who are long used to easily crossing lightly guarded international borders in search of food and game.

"The Bakas are not only in Cameroon. You find them in Congo, you find them in the Central African Republic, you find them in Gabon and you find them in Equatorial Guinea. And many of them move across forests that straddle all these countries," Dingha said.

Sebastian Bissolababa, a teacher at a government school in Mayos, emphasized the urgency. Many Baka students can't move on to secondary education or beyond,

and companies often require identification papers, closing another route to integration into society.

The Indigenous Bagyieli, who live some 590 kilometers away in the southern Campo region, face similar challenges.

There, Henri Lema of Nazareth village was returning from hunting, with a porcupine dangling from his spear. He joined his wife, Bilore Marie, in preparing the evening meal.

As he sliced the porcupine, he expressed frustration with the lack of identification documents and the trouble it causes with paramilitary forces and other authorities.

headquarters), gendarmes disturb me because I don't have an ID card," he said. "I have to pay a bribe each time. And that's money I don't even have."

Simplicie Nguimbamba is a senior government official in charge of, among other things, ensuring that the Bagyieli in Campo have access to nationality documents.

"In concrete terms, our actions are based on raising awareness, doing advocacy, monitoring and support for Bagyieli," he said.

Several other groups of Cameroonians also have risked statelessness. The ongoing separatist crisis in the country's English-speaking North West and South West regions, and the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North region, have triggered internal displacement, resulting in the loss of birth certificates and national identity cards for many people.

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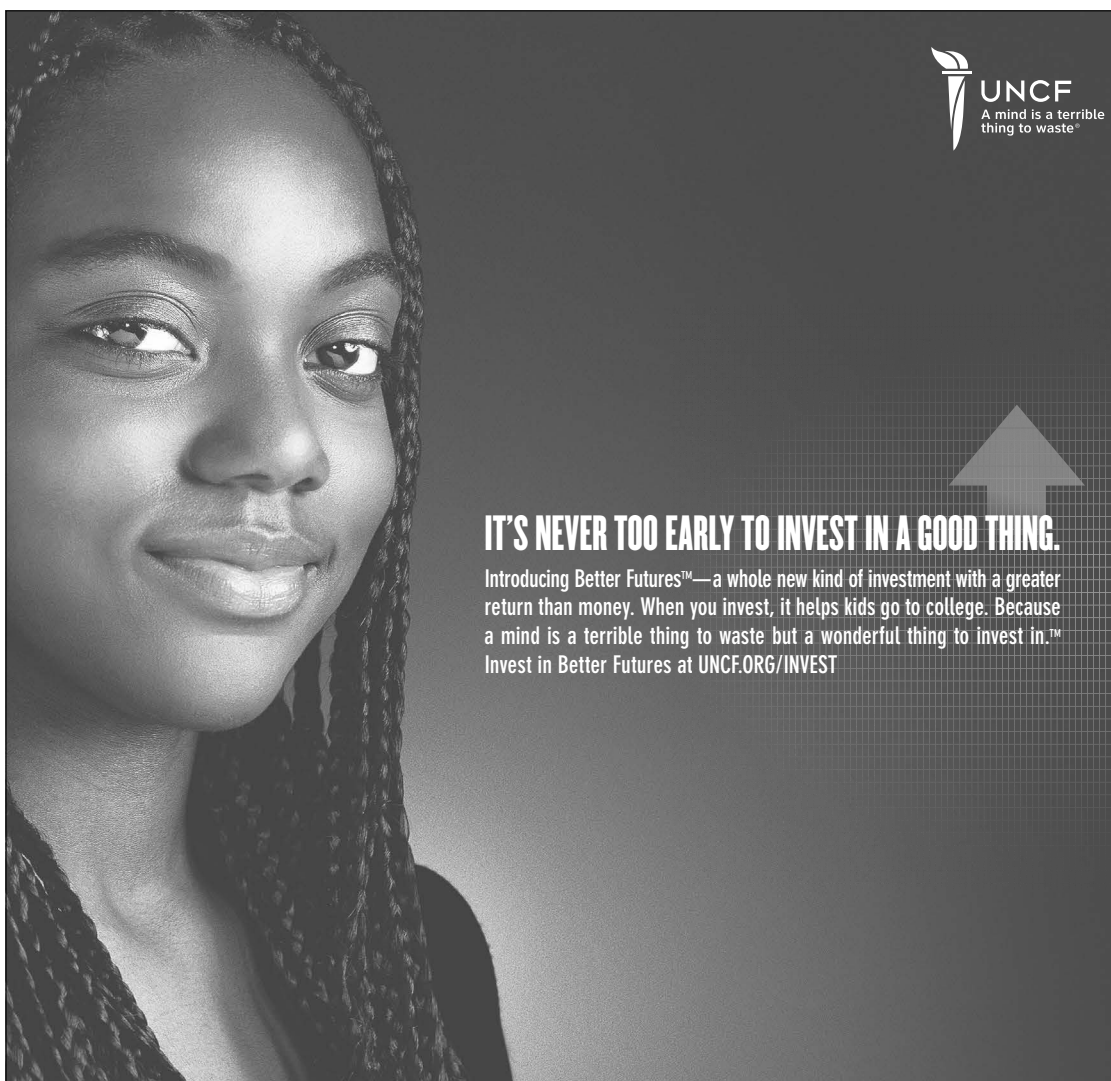
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