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VULGAR REMARKS

**ON A T-SHIRT
"TRUMP OR
THE TRAMP"
IGNITES OUTRAGE**

The T-Shirt worn by former Pittsburgh Steelers Le'Veon Bell targeting Vice Pres Harris, quickly ignited outrage on social media, sparking accusations of misogyny and disrespect toward Black women.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE

Biden-Harris announces more pathways to student debt forgiveness

This new initiative comes as the Biden-Harris Administration continues to press forward with efforts to alleviate student debt despite significant opposition from MAGA Republicans and setbacks imposed by the U.S. Supreme Court.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

The Biden-Harris Administration has announced new proposed regulations to expand student debt relief, potentially impacting around 8 million borrowers facing financial hardship. The proposal, introduced by the U.S. Department of Education, would allow the Secretary of Education to forgive loans in cases where borrowers are unlikely to repay due to severe hardship or where continued collection costs are deemed unjustified.

“For far too long, our broken student loan system has made it too hard for borrowers experiencing heartbreaking and financially devastating hardships to access relief, and it’s not right,” said Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. The proposed rules, developed through a negotiated rulemaking session in early 2024, outline two pathways for relief: automatic loan forgiveness based on predictive data for at-risk borrowers and an application-based process for those with persistent financial struggles. If finalized, the new rules would ensure lasting support for some of the most financially vulnerable Americans, including many Pell Grant recipients.

This new initiative comes as the Biden-Harris Administration continues to press forward with efforts to alleviate student debt despite



significant opposition from MAGA Republicans and setbacks imposed by the U.S. Supreme Court. In previous moves to support students and families, the Administration secured a \$900 increase to the maximum Pell Grant award—the largest in a decade—and established protections against career programs that leave graduates with unsustainable debt.

In addition to these efforts, nearly 5 million borrowers have already received debt relief through various targeted programs. The

measures include \$74 billion for over a million borrowers under Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), up from just 7,000 approvals at the start of the Biden Administration; \$56.5 billion for over 1.4 million borrowers under income-driven repayment plans, which addressed past administrative issues and improper forbearance practices; \$28.7 billion for more than 1.6 million borrowers who attended schools that engaged in fraudulent practices or abruptly closed; and \$16.2 billion

for close to 572,000 borrowers with permanent disabilities.

The Department of Education’s new proposal aims to provide two types of pathways to relief. The first would enable automatic forgiveness for borrowers identified through data-driven assessments as likely to default within the next two years. The second, an application-based option, would evaluate individual cases where hardship remains unaddressed by other repayment options.

The Department plans to pub-

lish these regulations in the Federal Register in the coming weeks and open a 30-day comment period on Regulations.gov. The Department aims to finalize the regulations in 2025, broadening debt relief options and providing vital support for millions of student borrowers.

“President Biden, Vice President Harris, and I will not stop fighting to deliver student debt relief and create a fairer, more just, and more affordable student loan system for all borrowers,” Cardona stated.

Stress levels soar as Americans fear election violence, threat to democracy, study

Conducted by The Harris Poll, the survey highlights the pervasive anxiety triggered by political and societal concerns.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

A new Stress in America poll by the American Psychological Association (APA) reveals that Americans are under immense stress as the 2024 U.S. presidential election approaches, with over 70% fearing that the election results could lead to violence. Conducted by The Harris Poll, the survey highlights the pervasive anxiety triggered by political and societal concerns.

The poll shows that 77% of adults cite concerns about the nation’s future as their top stressor, followed closely by economic worries (73%), and the upcoming election itself (69%). Stress related to the election had risen slightly compared to 2020, when 68% of respondents expressed concern, and significantly from 2016, when only 52% reported similar stress levels.

Worry about the potential fallout from the election is wide-



spread, with 72% of adults fearing that the results could lead to violence and 56% concerned that the 2024 election could mark the end of democracy in the U.S. “What sets the 2024 poll apart from previous APA election surveys is the collective stress about the potential fallout from the election results,” said APA CEO Arthur C. Evans.

The survey also identified additional stressors affecting Americans, with 62% citing U.S. politics as a significant source of stress, 55% pointing to healthcare, and 54% to crime. Concerns about the environment (51%) and global tensions (51%) are also significant. Issues like housing costs (65%), mass shootings (63%), and the spread of false information (62%) continue to

add to the nation’s anxiety.

Political divisions impact personal relationships, with 32% of adults reporting that the political climate has strained family ties and 30% limiting their time with family members due to differing values. Many are contemplating significant changes in response to political tensions—41% have considered moving to a different country, while

39% are considering relocating to another state.

Despite the overwhelming anxiety, some respondents feel hope. Sixty-one percent feel optimistic that the election will bring about positive change, and 59% believe it could lead to a more inclusive society. Voter turnout is expected to be strong, with 77% of respondents indicating they intend to vote in the 2024 presidential election. Additionally, 51% said they feel more compelled to support causes they care about, up from 45% before the 2020 election.

Mental health experts have offered advice on coping with election-related stress. Psychiatrist Dr. Sue Varma recommended setting boundaries around social media use to limit exposure to constant news updates. “It’s really important to carve out sacred spaces throughout your day where you don’t have constant notifications,” Varma said in a CBS News interview.

Evans added that the stress is real and palpable, “and what’s striking is that concerns about the 2024 election, potential violence, and threats to democracy are shared across the political spectrum.”

2024 Presidential Election on a knife's edge as early votes pour in

Early voting data has begun to shed light on which states might see the most significant shifts—and, in some cases, repeat the razor-thin margins of 2020.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

With the 2024 presidential election just two weeks away, early voting is surging nationwide as both parties make their final push to secure crucial ballots. Early voting data has begun to shed light on which states might see the most significant shifts—and, in some cases, repeat the razor-thin margins of 2020. While Independent and other voters are mostly excluded from the figures, pollsters warn that party affiliation doesn't necessarily determine who early voters are casting their ballots for.

National Early Voting Trends: Key Battlegrounds in Focus

Across the nation, more than 15 million mail-in and early in-person votes have already been cast. Among these early votes, 46% come from registered Democrats, 36% from Republicans, and 18% from other parties. The early voting push comes as Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign encourages Democratic voters to take advantage of mail-in and early voting to lock in ballots well before Election Day, countering the traditionally lower early voting rates among Democratic voters in past elections. Despite initially criticizing early voting, the twice-impeached former President Donald Trump's campaign has urged Republicans to vote early, apparently recognizing its critical role in battleground states.

In Georgia, where Biden narrowly defeated Trump in 2020, early voting has seen 1,691,298 ballots cast so far. The partisan split is tight, with 49% from Republicans and 46% from Democrats, reflecting how crucial the state remains in the 2024 contest.



Wisconsin, another battleground where Biden edged out Trump in 2020, has seen 326,124 early votes, with Democrats accounting for 40% and Republicans just 19%. In Michigan, where Biden won by a margin of 50.6% to 47.8% in the last election, 1,031,654 early votes have been cast, with 54% from Democrats and 36% from Republicans.

Pennsylvania, pivotal in Biden's 2020 victory, has already seen 921,720 early votes, with 64% from Democrats and 27% from Republicans. Nevada, another state that helped seal Biden's win in 2020, has logged 247,738 early votes, with a breakdown of 40% Democrats, 35% Republicans, and 25% from other voters.

The Toss-Up Nature of the 2024 Election

Polling data, including a Washington Post-Schar School survey, shows that Harris and Trump are locked in a dead heat, with each receiving 47% support from registered voters. Among likely voters, Harris holds a slight 1-point lead at 49%, compared to Trump's 48%. This trend mirrors the tight electoral battles seen in these battleground states, where margins of victory could come down to just a few thousand votes, as they did in 2020.

"I think this election will break at the end," veteran Democratic strategist James Carville stated. "Someone will carry the swing states, and that will decide it,"

Carville said, adding, "Whoever breaks those states 5-2 or 6-1 will not only take the presidency; they'll likely do well in the House and Senate too."

The Shadow of Project 2025

While much of the focus is on the election itself, the looming influence of Project 2025, a Heritage Foundation initiative to reshape the federal government, has garnered attention. The initiative, which has strong ties to Trump's first administration, is conservative in ideology. Despite Trump's claims that he has no connection to the project, analysis has revealed that well over half of the 307 authors and contributors to the "Mandate for Leadership," the document guiding Project 2025, served in

Trump's administration or during his campaign.

The policy proposals outlined in Project 2025 aim to overhaul key aspects of the federal government, including dramatically reshaping regulatory frameworks, reducing the size of government, and reversing many policies implemented by the Biden administration. Critics have pointed out that the project could significantly alter how federal agencies operate, and its influence could expand should Trump return to the White House.

"This race is a long way from decided," added Carville, who noted he has "a feeling" Harris will win. "But one thing's clear—whoever breaks those states is going to take the presidency."

Le'Veon Bell faces backlash over offensive t-shirt and Trump rally appearance

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Le'Veon Bell is under fire after attending a rally for Donald Trump in Pennsylvania, where he sported an offensive T-shirt targeting Vice President Kamala Harris. The shirt, which featured images of Trump and Harris with the caption "Trump or the Tramp," quickly ignited outrage on social media, sparking accusations of misogyny and disrespect toward Black women.

The rally, held on October 19 at Arnold Palmer Regional Airport in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, saw Bell attending alongside another former Steelers player, Antonio Brown, who delivered a speech endorsing Trump. While Bell's only verbal contribution to the event was a brief cheer for Trump, the shirt he wore—and later proudly posted on social media—became

the focal point of the controversy.

As the image of Bell wearing the shirt circulated online, many were quick to condemn his actions. Critics accused him of engaging in self-hating behavior and perpetuating harmful stereotypes. One X user blasted Bell for disrespecting Harris, writing, "You wanna support Trump. Go ahead. That's your right. But you can support him without disrespecting a Black woman and calling her out her name."

Bakari Sellers, a former South Carolina state representative and CNN political commentator, also weighed in, expressing disappointment in Bell's actions. "Support who you want," Sellers tweeted, "But a Black woman birthed you and your disrespect is crazy.... you're a whole clown." He joined a chorus of voices calling out the NFL star for what they saw as an egregious display of sexism and self-hate.



Other commenters pointed to Bell's personal life as fodder for criticism, noting the irony of him labeling Harris a "tramp" while reportedly having multiple children with different women. One user responded, "You and Donald Trump have MAKING BABIES in common because he has 5 by 3 different women, but you have 7 by 6 so who's actually the TRAMP?" The harsh words reflected a broader sense of frustration with Bell's public persona and his political choices.

In addition to the backlash over the T-shirt, Bell shared photos and videos from the event

on social media, including a post showing him posing with Trump. The responses to these posts were equally scathing, with followers calling him a "sellout" and questioning his judgment. Some even speculated that Bell's behavior could be attributed to chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a brain condition linked to head injuries in football players.

While Bell remained largely silent during the rally, Brown took center stage, leading the crowd in a Steelers chant before launching into a tirade against Harris and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz.

Brown's comments, including a bizarre claim that Walz and Harris want to "put tampons in the boys' bathroom," further fueled the rally's inflammatory rhetoric.

The appearance of Bell and Brown at the rally—and their association with Trump—has left a bitter taste for many fans, who are now questioning the athletes' political affiliations and public behavior. Despite the controversy, Bell has shown no signs of walking back his endorsement of the former president, even as criticism continues to mount across social media platforms.

Project 2025 will assault Black people first, then everybody else

By Barrington M. Salmon (TriceEdneyWire.com)
News Analysis

The Heritage Foundation in Northeast Washington, DC is the architect of Project 2025.

If Donald Trump becomes president again, African-Americans stand to lose the most. But so do women, other Black people, brown folks and immigrants – documented and undocumented.

This is not a conjecture.

The Center for American Progress says Project 2025's sweeping tentacles would touch and influence just about every facet of American life with the goal of implementing "an authoritarian playbook that would destroy the system of checks and balances our forefathers designed when they sought freedom and popular sovereignty almost 250 years ago.

Their researchers continue, "In dissolving the American idea, the plan's extremist policies would give far-right politicians, judges, and corporations more control over Americans' lives."

The LDF Thurgood Marshall Center concurs.

"Project 2025 represents a direct and deliberate threat to Black communities across seven key areas addressed in this report: civil rights, education, political participation, the criminal legal system, housing, reproductive rights, and environmental protections," Thurgood Marshall officials write. "At its core, it aims to dismantle essential agencies and regulations that protect civil rights while promoting anti-democratic and anti-justice initiatives that will weaponize civil rights enforcement by federal agencies. These proposals are designed to erode the very principles of equality, justice, and fairness that form the foundation of our democracy—and the impact would be devastating."

Trump's animosity toward Black people is palpable. He has spoken with contempt and hatred toward African Americans and immigrants and he promises to fight against and reverse civil rights and social and economic gains African Americans enjoy – if he's elected to a second term.

The former president is promising retribution for his enemies and said he will defend his fellow Republicans who feel aggrieved and resentful of Civil rights, women's equality, LGBTQ and trans rights and everything that has elevated non-white people since the 1960s.

The vehicle Trump and throngs of far-right extremist supporters plan to use to drag the United States back is Project 2025, The 922-page document describes in stark detail every element of the plan.

Project 2025 is a sweeping rightwing blueprint orchestrated by the Heritage Foundation, a right-wing conservative think tank and the Koch Brothers, which finances far-right and libertarian causes. More than 100 far-right organizations, all funded by a vast



and secretive dark money network, are the financial and ideological drivers behind this project.

"The actions of liberal politicians in Washington have created a desperate need and unique opportunity for conservatives to start undoing the damage the Left has wrought and build a better country for all Americans in 2025," the Project 2025 manifesto says. "It is not enough for conservatives to win elections. If we are going to rescue the country from the grip of the radical Left, we need both a governing agenda and the right people in place, ready to carry this agenda out on day one of the next conservative administration."

Project 2025 plans to privatize government functions, deregulate targeted industries, cut taxes for the most wealthy and American corporations and help the oligarchs churn out money at the expense of American workers, the middle class and everyone else who're lower on the food chain.

Project 2025 and Trump's Agenda 47 – another radical Republican scheme that embodies many of the Project 2025 proposals – touches everything from reproductive healthcare, access to abortions and abortion rights, general healthcare, labor, schools, labor unions, education and workers' overtime. It would redirect more unchecked power into the presidency, use every mechanism and lever available in government to dismantle democratic institutions, while jettisoning America's middle class, working class and the working poor.

USA Today explains that the plan calls for the overhaul of several federal government agencies, including the FBI. It would allow limited access to abortion pills; repeal aspects of the Affordable Care Act; push the Food and Drug Administration to reverse approval of abortion pills; and further empower Immigration and Customs Enforcement to round up, detain and deport as many as 20 million legal and undocumented immigrants.

Family Compassion, an organization committed to strength-

ening American families and the institutional and social frameworks that support them, warns of the dangers Project 2025 poses.

"Project 2025 presents a grim outlook for American families and the fundamental values and freedoms that exist today. The plan will drastically cut budgets to critical support programs, likely leading to widespread financial instability, health crises, educational setbacks, housing insecurity, and food shortages," agency officials said.

While acting as "a mandate to foster economic growth and enhance national security, Project 2025 poses a significant threat to the stability and well-being of countless families across the nation," officials warned. "If successful, the project is likely to lead to devastating consequences for existing programs and policies that provide essential support to families."

The far-right slate of proposals "will undercut the American Dream for another entire generation. And it will have our government turn its back on hundreds of thousands of innocent people in vulnerable situations, which is exactly the opposite of what our faith calls us to do."

Harold Meyerson, editor-at-large at The American Prospect, in a commentary titled, "The Far-Right has a Plan to Remake America. They Even Wrote It Down," said the far-right cabal has compiled an extensive enemies' list that includes "welfare recipients, lazy and liberal civil servants, anti-business regulators, environmentalists, and union bosses," "scientists, woke bureaucrats, woke educators, woke diplomats, woke generals and admirals, woke G-men, and anyone who doesn't indulge the next Republican president's every whim (an adaptation to the likelihood of a Trump nomination)."

Project 2025 organizers are said to have 55,000 Trump loyalists ready to step into civil service positions if Trump regains the White House. The Project 2025 document calls for "Those in charge in the incom-

ing administration are prepared to purge those deemed disloyal after identifying and interviewing "every Treasury Department official who participated in its DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) activities and programs, and make such activity "per se grounds for termination of employment."

Trump and conservative Republicans are openly hostile to education and what is taught at traditional colleges and universities, characterizing it as anti-American and politically motivated.

Of particular concern is the planned evisceration of the US Department of Education and the traditional public school system coupled with the elevation of school choice and voucher programs for private schools. Republicans would cut federal funding for public schools, including Title I and Head Start programs which would affect millions of students, particularly those in low-income communities.

According to The Washington Monthly, "Project 2025, from pages 319 to 361, envisions a transformed higher education system in which the federal government strips resources from traditional liberal arts colleges and universities, politicizes college curricula; privatizes student loan programs; and weakens protections against race discrimination, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault."

Democrats have for months publicized and put a spotlight on Project 2025. And Trump has been trying to dance away, pretending to be completing unaware of the plan and claiming in a number of social media posts that he doesn't know the people behind the plan and insists that the group doesn't speak for him.

Try as he may, the numbers don't lie. A recent CNN report shows that at least 140 people who were in the Trump administration were involved with Project 2025 to varying degrees.

Critics say this radical policy agenda would position each aspect of government to dismantle democracy and pull the rug out

from under America's middle class. Some areas that are threatened by Project 2025:

Civil rights: A new Trump administration would destroy all affirmative action policies as a way to fight the scourge of "anti-white racism." Trump's DOJ Civil Rights Division would also "prosecute all state and local governments, institutions of higher education, corporations, and any other private employers" with affirmative action or DEI policies. The DOJ would also go after "voter registration fraud and unlawful ballot correction," and any policies that discriminate against White people.

Education: Including eliminating the Department of Education, the plan would roll back the Biden administration's student debt relief efforts which have eliminated about \$138 billion worth of student loan debt so far. Black borrowers would bear the brunt of any large-scale debt reversal.

Economic Support Programs: Project 2025 would potentially significantly undermine economic support programs that families depend on. The Child Tax Credit, a program crucial to reducing child poverty, faces severe cuts or elimination through the reallocation of resources.

Higher Taxes for Middle Class Families: Project 2025's playbook includes plans to increase taxes for middle class families and allow employers to stop paying overtime.

Regulations on Contraception and Life Saving Reproductive Care: Project 2025 would remove some forms of emergency contraception from no-cost coverage. The Affordable Care Act would be rescinded, removing coverage of preventive services, including all FDA-approved birth control methods and counseling, without copayments, coinsurance, or deductible. Almost 48 million women of reproductive age would lose their guaranteed no-cost access to emergency contraception. Project 2025 would remove this much-needed option, severely undermining couples' ability to expand their families.

Health care: Project 2025 would dismantle the Affordable Care Act and allow states to impose work requirements on Medicaid, a federal program which helps those in the low-income bracket. Some states are preparing to restructure Medicaid, in anticipation of Trump winning in November.

Black Civil Rights and civil society organizations have sounded the alarm:

"Our democracy stands at a crossroads: a path of infinite promise towards a more inclusive, equitable, and durable democracy on the one hand, and one of immeasurable and, potentially, irretrievable demise on the other," said Jania Nelson, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's eighth President and Director-Counsel. "The assault on Black communities envisioned by Project 2025 will almost certainly condemn us to demise."

The radical legacy of the Black Panther Party

Philadelphiaobserver.com

On a brisk day in October 1966, a group of young revolutionaries in Oakland, California, took a stand that would reverberate through the nation. With guns slung over their shoulders and books in hand, they proclaimed their intent to defend Black communities from police violence and systemic oppression. This was the birth of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, both students at Oakland's Merritt College.



Frustrated by the relentless police brutality in their neighborhoods, Newton and Seale were driven by a sense of urgency to protect their community. They were deeply influenced by the ideas of revolutionaries like Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, and Karl Marx. Their vision extended beyond self-defense, as they sought to address the root causes of inequality through the Party's comprehensive "Ten Point Program." This manifesto demanded justice, jobs, education, and housing for Black Americans, making it clear that the Panthers were fighting

not just against the police, but against the entire system that oppressed them.

The Panthers quickly became a national symbol of militancy and defiance. Their bold approach of patrolling neighborhoods while openly carrying firearms was legally permissible at the time, and it served both as a deterrent against police violence and as a powerful statement of Black empowerment. With Oakland as their stronghold, the Panthers declared the city their territory, framing the police as an occupying force and themselves as

the defenders of Black life and dignity.

Yet, the group was more than just its militant image. The Black Panther Party was at the forefront of providing essential services to the underserved. Through their "survival programs," they offered free breakfast for children, health care, legal aid, and education to their communities, addressing the systemic neglect Black Americans faced in these areas. These programs, which became an integral part of their legacy, were designed to uplift the community in practical, everyday ways. However, their effectiveness also made them a

target of the FBI's COINTELPRO initiative, spearheaded by J. Edgar Hoover, who sought to dismantle the organization through infiltration and internal strife.

The Party's internal dynamics, like its external confrontations, were marked by tensions. Some members emphasized the socialist aspect of their platform, while others leaned into the more combative, revolutionary side. These fissures contributed to the eventual decline of the Panthers in the 1970s, along with the intense pressure from law enforcement and the FBI. By the time Elaine Brown became the Party's first

chairwoman in 1974, the organization was in sharp decline, its revolutionary fire dimmed but not extinguished.

Today, the Black Panther Party remains a controversial yet pivotal force in American history. While their armed resistance often overshadowed their community work, their radical vision for justice and equality continues to inspire movements for social change. The legacy of the Panthers is a reminder that the fight for Black liberation in America has always been multifaceted, combining both militant defiance and community care.

Trump presidency was used as a platform for personal financial gain, report

The report details how Trump's Washington, D.C., hotel regularly overcharged the Secret Service while agents protected him, his family, and foreign dignitaries—a practice that Democrats say violated the Constitution's Domestic Emoluments Clause.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

A newly released report from House Democrats reveals how Donald Trump's presidency became a platform for personal financial gain. The twice-impeached former president allegedly profited from the U.S. Secret Service and other government entities that paid inflated rates at his properties.

The report details how Trump's Washington, D.C., hotel regularly overcharged the Secret Service while agents protected him, his family, and foreign dignitaries—a practice that Democrats say violated the Constitution's Domestic Emoluments Clause.

From September 2017 to August 2018, Trump's hotel in Washington billed the Secret Service for more than 200 rooms over 50 separate nights. The rates charged were often far above the authorized government per diem, with the report highlighting multiple instances where the Secret Service paid 300% or more than standard rates. In one case, during a stay by Eric Trump and his wife, Lara Trump, in November 2017, the Secret Service was charged \$600 per room, while the per diem was \$201. On the same night, other guests paid significantly less, including a Chinese business interest.

"These payments reveal hundreds of unconstitutional and ethically suspect transactions

Trump accepted while in office from domestic sources—including a federal agency, numerous federal and state officials, and individuals who sought and frequently obtained federal offices as well as presidential pardons," the report states.

Secret Service Overcharges and Pay-to-Play Allegations

The report highlights how Trump's hotel treated the Secret Service as a "captive customer," repeatedly overcharging the agency even as Trump's children publicly claimed that government staff stayed at his properties "for free" or "at cost." The reality, according to the report, was quite different. In one February 2018 incident, the Secret Service was charged \$895 per room to protect Eric Trump during his stay, while the per diem rate was just \$201—a 450% markup.

Moreover, the report shows that Trump's hotels often charged the Secret Service more than other guests, including foreign dignitaries. On the same night that Eric Trump stayed in February 2018, the Qatari royal family was billed significantly less for their rooms, with some paying as little as \$280.

The report also emphasizes the more significant implications of these financial transactions. In addition to overcharging the Secret Service, Trump's businesses benefited from payments made by federal and state officials, individuals seeking political favors, and convicted criminals hoping for presidential pardons. Among the 30 examples of these payments highlighted in the report, more than half involved current federal or state officials using taxpayer funds to stay at Trump's hotel, potentially violating the Domestic Emoluments Clause.



One instance involves Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, whose delegation stayed at the Trump International Hotel in Washington in September 2017, racking up charges of more than \$248,000 during their visit. The Department of Justice was investigating a major corruption scandal involving Najib's government at the time. Meanwhile, the Secret Service also spent more than \$12,000 for its accommodations while protecting Trump and his family that same month.

Trump's Financial Gains During Presidency

This new report builds on a January 2024 report revealing that Trump's private businesses had received \$7.8 million from foreign entities during his office. The combined findings suggest that Trump routinely used his properties and the presidency to extract financial benefits from federal agencies, foreign governments, and individuals

seeking to curry favor.

"These transactions show that Trump used his position to line his own pockets, and at times, at the expense of American taxpayers," the report states.

The Secret Service reported spending more than \$1.4 million at Trump-owned properties during his presidency. However, Democrats on the House Oversight Committee argue that this figure likely represents just a fraction of the total amount, as many transactions remain undisclosed. The report noted that only 11 months of guest logs from Trump's D.C. hotel were reviewed and that the full scope of Trump's financial entanglements throughout his presidency has yet to be fully uncovered.

Legal Loopholes and Call for Reform

While Trump has faced multiple lawsuits over violations of the Emoluments Clauses, courts have dismissed many of these cases on

technical grounds, leaving him without direct legal consequences. The new report, however, stresses the need for stronger federal anti-corruption measures and clearer penalties for Constitutional violations.

"The findings of these Democratic staff reports reveal significant shortcomings in the current federal anti-corruption framework—shortcomings that Donald Trump exploited to the tune of millions of dollars and intends to exploit again if he is returned to the Oval Office," the report's authors write.

The report stops short of recommending penalties for Trump but instead calls on Congress to pass stricter legislation to address the loopholes that allowed Trump to profit from his presidency. It emphasized the need for more vigorous enforcement of both the Domestic Emoluments Clause and the Foreign Emoluments Clause, which bar a president from receiving payments from federal agencies and foreign governments.

Urgent Congressional Action Needed

The report warns that Trump's behavior sets a dangerous precedent for future presidents, particularly if reforms are not enacted. House Democrats argue that without swift action, future presidents could be emboldened to follow Trump's example and leverage their office for personal gain.

"These reports are urgent calls to action that Congress must heed to ensure the effective enforcement of the Constitution's Domestic Emoluments Clause—as well as the Foreign Emoluments Clause—and to ensure that our government serves exclusively the public interests of the people rather than the private interests of the president," the report concluded.

Editorial - Opinion

The clock is ticking for the government to do what is right for this flooded historic Black community



By Ben Jealous (TriceEdneyWire.com)

The state of Alabama destroyed their homes. Your federal tax dollars helped pay for it.

We are checking back in on the historic Black Shiloh community in Elba, Alabama.

Ever since 2018, when the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) expanded a highway running through the town, storm-water runoff floods the homes in this community whenever it rains. It is an ongoing crisis.

Members of this community have lost everything. Some of the families here have owned these homes for generations. Their generational wealth has been wiped

out. They deserve justice. They deserve to be made whole. Now, the federal government could be running out of time to help.

Pastor Timothy Williams is a Shiloh community member who has been a leader in the fight to get justice for his neighbors and his own family. Back in March, when I spoke with Pastor Williams, he told me, "My house has already sunk two feet into the mud. I see my inheritance and my children's American Dream being washed away and stolen."

Since then, Pastor Williams says things have only gotten worse. He now says the frustration and hopelessness taking root in the community has led to people using alcohol and drugs as an escape, whereas several years ago that would be unheard of in this community.

It speaks to the toll on this community being more than just economic. Watching your home and community be destroyed, and your generational wealth evaporate, has physical, mental, and emotional impacts just like any trauma does. People are watching their homes sink, and living with the danger all this physical upheaval of their land has caused with power lines and gas and sewage pipes. Pastor Williams himself has been warned his sinking house could eventually hit a natural gas

pipeline causing a rupture or even an explosion. Think about the impact this must have not only on the entire community's mental health, but what it must do to the kids in the community and their ability to succeed in school.

Beyond that, there is the clear racial factor here. This is Alabama after all. The reckless disregard for this rural Black community in the state's highway project was not something unfamiliar to people who have lived there for decades. Nor were years of inaction and being left behind by the state (and now the federal government) since then. And there have been acts of intimidation by outsiders aimed at community members like Pastor Williams who have spoken up – in March, Pastor Williams told me the restaurant he owns had been the target of a boycott by some local whites. And white people make up most of his clientele.

In a place where the shadow of Jim Crow still looms large, that justice for this Black community seems so elusive seems like no mere coincidence. It is understandable that some in the community believe the storm drainage pipes were aimed at their community intentionally.

In the months since I first spoke with Pastor Williams, I have visited Shiloh. And I have been working closely with Dr. Robert Bullard,

known as Father of Environmental Justice and this country's preeminent voice exposing environmental racism, to build pressure on both the state and federal governments to act. Elba, Alabama is Dr. Bullard's hometown. It is an example of the pervasiveness of environmental racism, that such injustice could continue in the hometown of a prominent expert who sits on the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

Someone else who visited Shiloh the past few months is Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. And on October 4, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced a Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA) with ALDOT to address the ongoing flooding in Shiloh every time it storms. The VRA is one product of an investigation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Title VI prohibits racial discrimination – among other kinds of discrimination – in projects that receive federal financial assistance, like the Alabama highway project that destroyed the Shiloh community.

But the VRA is not a solution for the harm that has already been done to the people of this community. It is an insult to them. The agreement requires infrastructure improvements to mitigate flooding. But these people's homes are

already ruined, their families are traumatized, and their property values are decimated.

Perhaps Army veteran Willie Horstead Jr., who has watched his home sink into the flood-soaked ground similarly to Pastor Williams, put it best when he told the visiting US Secretary of Transportation, "I'll tell you – I just want to be made whole."

In his 1963 Letter from Birmingham Jail, Dr. King wrote, "justice too long delayed is justice denied," paraphrasing an old legal maxim.

Justice has been delayed for far too long for the residents of the Shiloh community. And the clock is ticking.

We don't know what will happen with the presidential election. But it is possible it could result in some of the same people returning to the US Department of Transportation who originally approved the use of federal funds for the disastrous Alabama highway project back in 2018. Or people willing to have the federal government turn a blind eye to racial discrimination by a state with a deep history of it. Any more delay could mean justice being permanently denied to members of the Shiloh community.

Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.



By David W. Marshall (TriceEdneyWire.com)

Democracy dies in darkness

their opinions. In addition, the owner of any newspaper has the right to weigh in on decisions made by its editorial board.

But this election cycle is different. This presidential election is unlike any from previous years. The surprising non-endorsement ignores the paper's own factual reporting which, for years, outlined in specific details Donald Trump's threat to the future of American democracy.

Politically, the Washington Post is a center left newspaper which is highly respected for its accuracy and direct presentation of events in this toxic environment of "fake news". It has always fulfilled its role in sustaining democracy by being a reliable and consistent source of information.

The non-endorsement comes off as unfinished business. Similar to a court case, the newspaper endorsement would have served as the final argument presented to the jury of voters. By failing to provide a much needed summation, the silence resulting from a non-endorsement has become itself an endorsement.

The non-endorsement was a one man decision, according to a statement from the Washington Post Guild. It states, "According

to our own reporters and Guild members, an endorsement for Harris was already drafted, and the decision not to publish was made by the Post's owner, Jeff Bezos." Columnist Karen Attiah wrote that "today has been an absolute stab in the back."

Attiah is not alone in feeling betrayed. Readers of the paper also feel betrayed. The Post is already seeing subscription cancellations from loyal readers. Current and former staff members feel betrayed. Robert Kagan – a former advisor to Republican John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign, who last year warned that a "Trump dictatorship is increasingly inevitable" resigned from his position as the Post's editor at large in response to the paper's decision.

Apparently, Jeff Bezos didn't heed the warning. Michele Norris followed Kagan by also resigning as opinion columnist, a position she held since 2019.

After multi-billionaire dollar Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos bought The Washington Post in 2013, the Post's news operation used its abundant resources to thoroughly investigate the danger of a second Trump presidency. "Democracy Dies in Darkness" became the newspaper's official slogan in 2017.

It illustrates how good journalism is essential to democracy. When journalism is at its best, it helps citizens to hold those in power accountable, uncovers corruption and ensures transparency. If the press is silenced, democracy will suffer. Darkness represents ignorance, lack of knowledge and oppression. The phrase "Democracy Dies in Darkness" is a warning to us all. If people are kept in the dark, their ignorance could lead to oppression.

The press is the light that illuminates the darkness. It ensures that people are aware of what is going on around them and empowered to make necessary changes. The phrase acknowledges the fact that the free press is under threat from those in power who prefer to operate in the dark.

The Washington Post is making a powerful and defiant statement that they will not be intimidated or silenced while continuing to keep those with power accountable for their actions. Unfortunately, Jeff Bezos didn't hold up to the test when submitting to the political and economic pressures. He may have turned a defiant statement of truth into harsh reality which is about to come true.

Amazon holds contracts with the government worth billions.

Amazon and the space exploration company Blue Origin are among Bezos-owned businesses that still compete for lucrative federal government contracts. Executives from Bezos' aerospace company met with Donald Trump on the same day the newspaper prevented its editorial team from publishing an endorsement for Kamala Harris.

A retired Washington Post metro reporter, Robert McCartney, wrote on social media that there is "speculation in the newsroom that owner Jeff Bezos may want to avoid risk of endangering Amazon's government contracts if Trump wins."

Regardless, of who wins or loses the election, the Washington Post, as a strong pillar in the free press, took a major credibility hit. The Washington Post reporters and editors who remain the light that illuminates the darkness may not be able to overcome its owner who places the business interest of Amazon and Blue Origin ahead of American democracy.

David W. Marshall, a columnist for the Trice Edney News Wire, is the founder of the faith-based organization, TRB: The Reconciled Body, and author of the book God Bless Our Divided America.

Criminal justice reform poised to be decisive issue in 2024 Election, poll shows

Voters in key battleground states such as Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, and Pennsylvania overwhelmingly favor reform, positioning the issue as potentially a deciding factor in the 2024 presidential race.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

As America moves toward the most consequential presidential election in recent memory, criminal justice reform has emerged as a potential game-changer, with a new poll revealing broad bipartisan support for reducing incarceration. The survey by BSG for FWD.us reveals that 81% of likely voters support criminal justice reform, including 85% of Democrats, 82% of Independents, and 76% of Republicans. Voters in key battleground states such as Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, and Pennsylvania overwhelmingly favor reform, positioning the issue as potentially a deciding factor in the 2024 presidential race.

Zoë Towns, Executive Director of FWD.us, discussed the poll's findings during an appearance on the Black Press' Let It Be Known digital show. Towns emphasized that personal experience with mass incarceration is a significant motivator of voter support for reform. "Voters across the political spectrum have been overexposed to the harms of mass incarceration for decades now," Towns declared. "One in two Americans has experienced incarceration within their immediate families—this isn't just a policy issue, it's a lived experience. And the exposure rate is the same whether you are a Republican or a Democratic household."

Towns pointed out that this shared experience of mass incarceration is why support for reform transcends partisan divides. "The harms of mass incarceration are bipartisan," she said. "And the support for reform we're seeing is also

bipartisan. People have seen that we don't have to incarcerate our way out of all these problems—we can have safety and justice at the same time."

The poll shows that two-thirds of Black voters (67%) and a majority of Latino voters (55%) are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports criminal justice reform, further underscoring the issue's importance in shaping voter behavior in key demographics. "You've got voters who are excited about reform, you've got evidence showing it works, and you've got proof that it helps the economy and keeps families together," Towns added.

Despite the overwhelming public support, both major presidential candidates—Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump—have yet to embrace the issue in their campaigns fully. Towns view this as a missed opportunity. "In such a tight election, criminal justice reform is a massively untapped opportunity for both candidates," she said. "We've got voters across the board—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—who are asking for these reforms. So why not meet them there?"

Towns noted that some reforms, such as clemency, have proven particularly popular, especially among Black and Latino communities. "Clemency is hugely important," she said. "The Obama-era clemency initiative brought home nearly 2,000 people from federal prison, saving an average of 10 years off their sentences. Voters want to see President Biden do something similar in his final months. Clemency can bring families back together, and it's a key part of what real public safety looks like."

In fact, the poll shows that 72% of likely voters now believe it is crucial to reduce the U.S. prison population, a significant increase from 65% in February 2024. Among Black voters, that



number jumps to 80%, while 74% of Latino voters also say reducing incarceration is critical.

When asked about the persistent use of tough-on-crime rhetoric, Towns explained that while such messaging has been a political staple for years, voters are now seeing through it. "For every American election that's been studied, scaring people to the ballot box has been the cheapest way to get votes—whether it's fear of immigration, crime, or foreign influence," Towns said. "But now, voters are watching those old tough-on-crime commercials alongside an alternative lived experience. Maybe their brother or their mom has been incarcerated, and they're saying, 'Wait a second, that doesn't reflect reality.' Voters want real solutions, not fear-mongering."

The poll reveals that more voters today (65%) believe that mass incarceration causes many of the problems that lead to unsafe communities, such as homelessness, poverty, and drug or mental health challenges than did at the beginning of the campaign season. "We know what works to advance safe communities," Towns said. "There's

a ton of evidence showing what reduces violence and drug use. But for too long, politicians have been playing politics with people's safety."

Towns also touched on the legacy of the 1994 Crime Bill, a controversial piece of legislation that continues to shape public perceptions of criminal justice reform. "The 1994 Crime Bill was a punishment-focused reform package that disproportionately harmed Black and Latino communities," she said. "It built up the federal prison system and left us with laws that continue to affect people today. Many of the people sentenced under those laws are still incarcerated, and their families and loved ones are voters—they're bringing these experiences to the ballot box."

Melissa Morales, Founder & President of Somos Votantes, underscored the importance of reform for Latino voters. "We cannot continue the cycle of mass incarceration that has separated so many Latino families and overshadowed real public safety solutions," Morales said in a statement.

Similarly, Pennsylvania House Speaker Joanna McClinton pointed

to criminal justice reform as a critical issue in battleground states. "When I talk to voters in Pennsylvania, criminal justice reform comes up again and again," McClinton stated. "We know it's the right policy, and this poll shows that the politics are on our side."

The poll also indicates that candidates can gain significant political ground by supporting criminal justice reform. Nationally, voters are five times more likely to support a candidate who backs reform than one who does not. The trend is even more pronounced in key battleground states like Pennsylvania and Georgia, where the ratio is six to one.

As the election draws near, Towns said she believes criminal justice reform represents a low-risk, high-reward issue for candidates. "This is an extremely tight election, and it's going to come down to a small number of votes in a small number of states," Towns said. "Criminal justice reform is an issue that can tip the balance—and there's little downside to supporting it." Watch the full discussion here.

DLCC warns of MAGA threat in 2024, urges Democratic wins to protect elections

A memo, released less than two weeks before the 2024 presidential election, warns that the same GOP-led efforts to challenge the 2020 election results could reemerge as the twice-impeached former president Donald Trump signals to his MAGA allies to contest the outcome if he loses again.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

The Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC) has issued a memo outlining how critical it is for state legislatures to uphold democracy and protect elections. The memo, released less than two weeks before the 2024 presidential election, warns that the same GOP-led efforts to challenge the 2020 election results could reemerge as the twice-impeached former president Donald Trump signals to his MAGA allies to contest the outcome if he loses again. The DLCC is making the defense of democracy a cen-

tral focus in its campaign strategy, sounding the alarm on insurrectionist candidates who threaten fair elections.

In 2020, Republican state legislators were key players in promoting Trump's "Big Lie" and attempting to undermine the election results. DLCC officials said they conspired with insurrectionists, sponsored bills to overturn results, and even acted as fake electors. Heather Williams, president of the DLCC, emphasized that state legislatures remain "the building blocks of American democracy" and noted that these same GOP actors are still in positions of power, ready to execute similar tactics in 2024. She added, "The only way to stop them is to defeat them at the ballot box by electing Democratic defenders of democracy all the way down the ticket."

The stakes are exceptionally high in battleground states such as Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Michigan, which saw some of

the most intense insurrection activities during and after the 2020 election. Control of state legislative chambers in these key states could come down to just a few hundred votes, and those outcomes could determine whether democracy prevails or dies. The DLCC contends that electing Democrats to these chambers is the best safeguard against another potential attack on the electoral process.

The memo also highlights specific races, such as Pennsylvania Senate District 37, where MAGA extremist Devlin Robinson was involved in election conspiracies. In Arizona, the DLCC has targeted candidates who have pushed an extreme agenda to overturn elections. The DLCC argues that defeating MAGA state Republicans is essential to preventing future insurrectionist activity and ensuring a peaceful transfer of power.

Officials said Democrats' recent successes in state legislatures



exemplify what is at stake. In Minnesota, after securing control in 2022, Democrats passed a voting rights package with protections for election workers and a ban on tampering with voting equipment. In Michigan, Democrats enacted new laws aimed at streamlining elections and punishing those who attack voting access.

The outcome of state legislative races this year could be pivotal for the 2024 presidential election and

the future of American democracy, officials proclaimed. With narrow margins determining control of chambers in battleground states, the DLCC urges voters to elect Democrats to protect elections and preserve the will of voters. According to the memo, "Electing Democrats to statehouses next month will have immediate and long-term impacts on upholding our democracy and ensuring a safe and stable transfer of power."

On the scene

VP Kamala Harris, Trump crowd sizes compared

By Rachel Dobkin

Former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris' dueling Michigan rallies were packed on Saturday. There are less than 10 days until the November 5 presidential election and supporters of Trump, the GOP nominee, and Harris, the Democratic nominee, in the battleground state of Michigan came out to cheer the candidates on.

Trump's afternoon rally in Novi, about a 40-minute drive northwest of Detroit, was held at Suburban Collection Showplace. According to Getty photos and video shared on social media, there was a large crowd behind, in front of and on the sides of Trump's podium.

Steven Cheung, Trump's communications director, told Newsweek via email Saturday evening, that the Novi rally was filled to "maximum capacity with thousands outside." Meanwhile, the stands at the Wings Event Center in Kalamazoo were filled at Harris' rally with former first lady Michelle Obama Saturday evening, according to video on social media. The floor level was also packed with Harris supporters by her podium.

Rally crowd sizes have become a talking point during the election. Harris' campaign has repeatedly mocked Trump's rally crowd sizes while boasting about the high number of attendees at the vice president's events. Trump has maintained that he gets more attendees at his rallies. At one point, he said Harris used artificial intelligence (AI) in a photo to bolster her crowd size at a Detroit rally.

Referencing a photo taken at that rally, Trump wrote on social media in August, "Has anyone noticed that Kamala CHEATED at the airport? There was nobody at the plane, and she 'A.I.'d' it, and showed a massive 'crowd' of so-called followers, BUT THEY DIDN'T EXIST!"

The former president also said the large crowd at Harris' rally was "fake," adding, "She should be disqualified because the creation of a fake image is ELECTION INTERFERENCE. Anyone who does that will cheat at ANYTHING!" A Harris campaign official told Newsweek at the time, "I can confirm that the photo was taken by Harris campaign staff and not modified by AI in any way."



VP Kamala Harris (L) and former First Lady Michelle Obama (Photo: Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images)

"The Magic of Mindset," a Ross musical journey of calmness in the midst of chaos

By Raquel Aubry
Guest Scribe

I had the pleasure of attending "This Makes Me Feel Like 'BEEEP,'" an evening of music and the magic of mindset for the second time, and once again, it felt like being wrapped in the warm glow of a shared moment, where time slows down and everything else fades away. The room was filled with people who seemed, like me, fully immersed in that space—forgetting the outside world, holding onto the magic produced by Rhonda Ross. It was as if we were all in her living room, escaping the noise of life, and just being.

When Rhonda steps on stage, she immediately addresses the elephant in the room: her famous parents. It's a funny, candid moment, but as soon as the show starts, you quickly forget about her lineage and focus entirely on her—her voice, her presence, and the magic she creates. What unfolds is an evening that feels like being in the living room of a wise big sister and a curious little sister, while mixing in stories that make you laugh and reflect.

As I mentioned, this was my second time seeing the show, and yet, each time, it feels fresh. The



Rhonda Ross

song that always moves me the most is "Freedom." There's something about how she effortlessly

weaves together the past, present, and future, showing us how we're held back by chains in our minds,

preventing us from fully experiencing freedom. It's a freedom that's so close, yet just out of reach. You

could feel everyone in the room holding their breath, united in awe, as if letting it out would break the spell. Like the first time I heard it, I almost let the tears flow—but didn't.

The elegance of the venue, the soft backlighting, the rich notes of the piano, and the harmonies that filled the space—it was all mesmerizing. I will tell you that you can't explain this show; you have to experience it. That's the only way to grasp its essence, where mindfulness and music collide, creating magic and a sense of connection with the other people sharing that moment.

My full-time job is being a PhD student, and that comes with levels of anxiety I never knew I could feel. I had an early morning class that day, but having been to her show previously, I knew I needed to go again to set myself straight. And it did. Rhonda, as the director of this tour, takes you on a journey. And by the time it's over, you're changed. You came in one way and left with a profound sense of calm and connection—not just with her, but with everyone in the room. It's like therapy, but better—a prescription of joy and hope that leaves you craving more. Even after seeing it twice, I can't wait to go again.

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Photo Credit: National Archives (Top)



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Amazon to introduce price caps in new budget storefront to compete with discount giants

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Amazon is gearing up to roll out a new budget-friendly storefront aimed at capturing the market of price-conscious shoppers who currently favor discount platforms like Temu and Shein. The initiative is designed to rival these low-cost platforms by introducing strict price caps on hundreds of products, from guitars to sofas, ensuring consumers can find cheaper alternatives to everyday items.

According to reports, Amazon has set price limits on various products, with jewelry being capped at \$8, guitars at \$13, and sofas at \$20. The restrictions are part of Amazon's broader strategy to offer extremely low prices in a bid to attract customers looking for more affordable goods. Merchants selling on the platform will have to adhere to these guidelines, limiting how much they can charge for certain items.

The new storefront will source many of its products from Guangdong, China, which will allow Amazon to reduce fulfillment fees and

offer more competitive pricing to sellers. This cost-cutting measure is expected to help Amazon compete directly with rivals like Shein and Temu, which have gained popularity among consumers for their rock-bottom prices on a wide range of products.

Amazon has provided sellers with a list of over 700 items that will be subject to the price caps, further underlining the company's commitment to positioning itself as a leader in the low-cost e-commerce sector. These items will range across categories, including home goods, electronics, and apparel, offering consumers an extensive selection at reduced prices.

In a statement to Reuters, an Amazon spokesperson explained, "We are always exploring new ways to work with our selling partners to delight our customers with more selection, lower prices, and greater convenience." This move marks a significant push by Amazon to gain ground in a competitive retail environment where price is becoming an increasingly decisive factor for consumers.

Fairway Independent Mortgage Corp to pay nearly \$10M for redlining Black neighborhoods in Birmingham

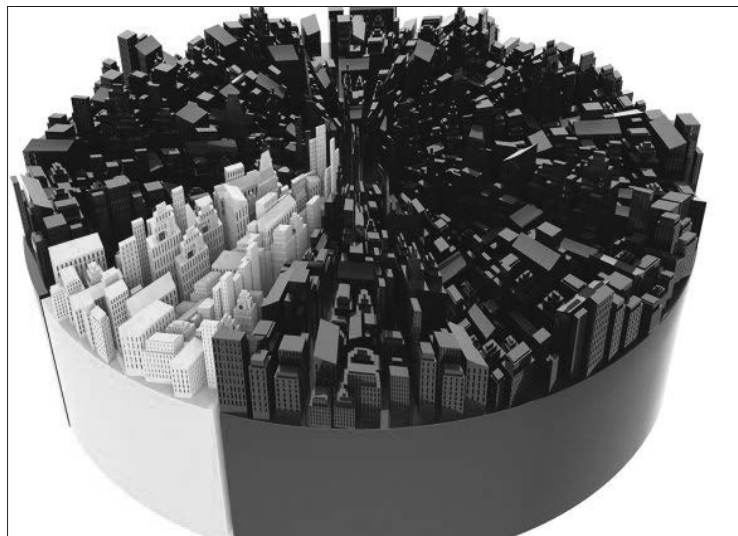
The settlement is part of the Justice Department's Combating Redlining Initiative, which has now secured over \$150 million in relief for communities of color nationwide.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation has agreed to pay \$8 million and an additional \$1.9 million civil penalty to resolve allegations of redlining predominantly Black neighborhoods in Birmingham, Alabama. This settlement is part of the Justice Department's Combating Redlining Initiative, which has now secured over \$150 million in relief for communities of color nationwide.

Redlining, an illegal practice where lenders avoid providing credit services based on race, has historically limited financial access and homeownership opportunities in Black and minority communities. "This case is a reminder that redlining is not a relic of the past, and the Justice Department will continue to work urgently to combat lending discrimination wherever it arises and to secure relief for the communities harmed by it," said Attorney General Merrick Garland.

The Justice Department, in conjunction with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), accused Fairway of focusing its marketing efforts solely on majority-white areas. At the same time, its retail loan offices were similarly located in majority-white



neighborhoods. Fairway's practices allegedly discouraged Black residents from applying for loans, with the company originating loans in Black neighborhoods at a rate far below that of its peers.

As part of the settlement, Fairway agreed to establish a \$7 million loan subsidy fund to provide affordable home purchase, refinancing, and home improvement loans for Black residents in Birmingham. Additionally, the company will invest \$1 million in programs designed to support this fund, including financial education initiatives and community partnerships to help address the longstanding impacts of discriminatory lending.

"This settlement will provide Birmingham's Black neighborhoods with the access to cred-

it they have long been denied and increase opportunities for homeownership and generational wealth," remarked Kristen Clarke, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

In addition to the financial commitments, Fairway will also open a new loan office in a majority-Black neighborhood in Birmingham and invest heavily in local advertising and outreach programs aimed at Black communities.

Fairway's \$1.9 million penalty will be paid into the CFPB's Civil Penalty Fund, which provides restitution to victims of financial misconduct. "The CFPB and Justice Department are holding Fairway accountable for redlining Black neighborhoods," offered CFPB Director Rohit Chopra.

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By David W. Marshall (TriceEdneyWire.com)

The voice of the voter

That lack of enthusiasm for Harris, he said, “seems to be more pronounced with the brothers.” The former president’s rebuke was directed toward those who were considering not voting at all. “And you are thinking about sitting out?”

He said, “Part of it makes me think—and I’m speaking to men directly—part of it makes me think that, well, you just aren’t feeling the idea of having a woman as president. And you’re coming up with other alternatives and other reasons for that.”

There are specific reasons why Black men and women are currently the two largest voting blocs supporting the Democratic Party. Historically, individuals who embraced the progressive movement and ideology were defenders of social justice, equality, and inclusion. Progressives fought for full citizenship for Blacks through the 14th Amendment. Progressives helped to overcome various forms of injustice by fighting for the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which dismantled official segregation; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, prohibiting racist voting laws; and the 1968 Civil Rights Act, ending discrimination in housing sales.

The truth lies in the fact that citizens representing Black communities as voters need the Progressive Party. In turn, the Progressive Party needs the Black voting bloc. This two-way

dependency was true during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras when the Republican Party represented the Progressives, and the Democratic Party represented the Conservatives. The Black voting bloc is like no other. It must continue to protect full citizenship for people of color. While Democrats, as the modern-day progressive party, depend on other voting blocs such as labor unions and young voters, they will never have the historical significance of the Black voter. Despite the legislative and social gains made in previous years, the efforts to diminish full citizenship have never ceased.

The Republicans have a history as well. We cannot afford to forget the Southern strategy, an electoral strategy to increase political support among White voters in the South by appealing to racism against Blacks throughout the Bible Belt. The Republicans have a critical voting bloc in the form of White evangelical Christians active in executing the Southern strategy. For centuries, we have seen countless examples of White Christians who individually choose to accept their cultural biases while turning away from their Biblical mandate to “love your brother.” This mandate serves as a social justice message of inclusion, which far too many conservatives have chosen to ignore. Some may not be racist in their hearts, but they

remain silent amid racism.

What determines a person’s voice? Everyone has a voice through their spoken and written words. Using our voices, we can express our individual opinions, points of view, and passions regarding critical issues impacting our society. Our voices can be uplifting and encouraging while corrective to those who need it. Rather than using dog-whistle tactics promoting racism and intolerance, our voices should publicly and privately denounce blatant racism and sexism, whether intended or not. It cannot be words without some degree of work behind it. There has to be action behind the right words. As citizens, our vote is also our voice. Therefore, a person’s bias and disrespect of others can come forth through the voice of their vote.

To counter and resist the potential of this election narrative, the Black voting bloc is not blind in its support for progressives. Rather, it appreciates the sacrifices of those from the past. The legacy of the voting bloc has never walked away from those in the modern-day fight for justice, inclusion, and maintaining the full citizenship rights for all people. When today’s politics is filled with anti-woke, anti-DEI, anti-CRT rhetoric, the Black voting bloc has reasons to support progressives. The Southern strategy exists under

new management but with the same goals.

The long-standing relationship between the Black voter and the Democratic Party is sometimes perceived as one-sided. Defending the party, particularly on the local level, is not always easy in specific cases. The Black vote is sometimes taken for granted. In a two-party system, too often, a vote comes down to selecting the lesser of two evils.

Former President Obama spoke out, but not everyone was happy with his words. The economic concerns of Black men are justified and have proven to be an opening for Republicans. Every person has free will as a voter, but the sense of appreciation and not being taken for granted should motivate voters of all persuasions to stay involved after the election. Stay involved by knowing the voting record of your elected officials, especially on the local level. Knowing if they support or oppose critical issues concerning your local community. Contact them on specific pieces of legislation as concerned citizens. Make them earn your vote for reelection so the next primary election is not taken for granted, even by the most entrenched lawmakers.

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*.

Former President Barack Obama gave us a lot to think about concerning the Black vote, the Democratic Party, and the issue of misogyny.

While speaking to Harris-Walz campaign volunteers and officials at a Pittsburg field office, Obama’s comments highlighted the complexities of the Black voting bloc within a male- and a White-dominated society.

“My understanding, based on reports I’m getting from campaigns and communities, is that we have not yet seen the same kinds of energy and turnout in all quarters of our neighborhoods and communities as we saw when I was running,” said Obama.



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Ahmaud Arbery murderers appeal for new trial amid claims of jury bias and ineffective counsel

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man, was fatally shot in February 2020 while out for a jog through a suburban Georgia neighborhood. Now, more than three years later, the three men convicted of his murder—Greg McMichael, his son Travis McMichael, and their neighbor William “Roddie” Bryan—have returned to court in hopes of securing a new trial. Their attorneys argue that a flawed jury process and inadequate legal defense marred the original proceedings.

The defense is seeking to overturn the convictions based on claims that one of the jurors concealed his bias in favor of the Arbery family. Travis McMichael’s attorney, Pete Donaldson, told the court that juror No. 30, the only Black member of the panel, felt pressured to represent the entire Black community during the trial. The juror allegedly confided to a private investigator in 2022 that he felt the weight of racial expectations on his shoulders, according to testimony presented in court. Judge Timothy Walmsley, who presided over the original trial, agreed to allow the juror to testify under strict conditions, though he prohibited any discussion of the jury’s private deliberations.

Defense lawyers also argued that William Bryan, who recorded the cellphone video of the killing, was misrepresented by his original attorney, who advised him to speak to investigators without legal safeguards in place. Bryan’s new attorney, Rodney Zell, contends that his client’s statements during these interviews inadvertently incriminated him and contributed to his conviction.

The February 2020 killing of Arbery went unpunished for more than two months until the video recorded by Bryan was leaked, sparking national outrage. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation took over the case, and the McMichaels and Bryan were arrested. Prosecutors charged the three men with murder, arguing that they had no grounds to pursue or detain Arbery, who was unarmed and had committed no crime. The video, which shows Travis McMichael firing a shotgun into Arbery at close range, became central to



the trial and was a key factor in the murder convictions.

The defense continues to maintain that the McMichaels and Bryan believed Arbery was responsible for a string of burglaries in the area, though no evidence of theft was ever linked to Arbery. During the trial, Travis McMichael testified that he shot Arbery in self-defense after an altercation. However, Judge Walmsley had ruled that any previous arrests or encounters Arbery had with law enforcement were irrelevant to the case, as none of the defendants knew him before the chase.

The McMichaels and Bryan were also convicted of federal hate crimes in 2022, after a separate jury concluded that they targeted Arbery because of his race. Evidence presented in that case included racist social media posts and messages from all three men. The federal hate crime convictions are currently under appeal, with a decision expected from the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Despite the legal motions being heard in Brunswick, Georgia, where the murder took place, the public response continues to focus on the broader racial issues highlighted by Arbery’s death. Alongside the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, Arbery’s death fueled national protests against systemic racism in the U.S. criminal justice system.

The legal arguments for a new trial will be heard over the course of two days, with all three defendants seeking to overturn their life sentences. While Greg McMichael and his son were sentenced to life without parole, Bryan was granted the possibility of parole after 30 years. The request for a new trial marks the beginning of what could be a lengthy legal battle for the three men convicted of killing Arbery.

From gifted performer to tragic loss: Jordan Neely’s death brings Daniel Penny to trial

The trial began this week and is expected to last six weeks, with the defense and prosecution planning to rely heavily on the four-minute video to make their case.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

Awidely shared video showing a former Marine placing a man in a chokehold aboard a New York City subway train will be at the heart of the trial of Daniel Penny, who faces charges in the death of celebrated Michael Jackson performer Jordan Neely. The video, which has sparked nationwide debates on race and public safety, shows Penny restraining Neely in a chokehold until his death.

Penny, 26, is charged with manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide and has pleaded not guilty. He faces a maximum of 15 years in prison if convicted of the top charge. The trial began this week and is expected to last six weeks, with the defense and prosecution planning to rely heavily on the four-minute video to make their case. Penny’s attorneys argue that he did not apply enough force for the chokehold to be fatal, while prosecutors contend that he used excessive and unjustified force against Neely, a 30-year-old Black man who had been struggling with homelessness and mental health issues.

According to the New York City chief medical examiner, Neely died from compression to his neck, and the death has been ruled a homicide. The incident has become another flashpoint in discussions about racial justice, the treatment of homeless individuals, and the safety of New York’s subway system. Following Neely’s death, police initially questioned Penny and then released him without filing any charges—a move that received harsh criticism from activists and elected officials.



Outside the Manhattan courthouse this week where the trial will take place, supporters of Neely continue to call for justice. In the wake of Neely’s death, those who knew him personally have shared his life story with many people. One of those voices is Moses Harper, a professional dancer who wrote a tribute to Neely for The Marshall Project titled “My Friend Jordan Neely Was Homeless and in Mental Distress. But He Was Not Expendable.”

“I first met Jordan in 2009, after Michael Jackson died,” Harper wrote. “He was in Times Square performing with a couple of his friends, and I was coming out of a dance studio where I’d been teaching the ‘Thriller’ dance moves. Jordan, who was 16 at the time, was surrounded by tourists, engaging with all different types of people. He picked me out of the crowd and said, ‘Come here, let’s do this! Don’t be scared.’”

Harper recalled how Neely was always full of life when performing but faced immense personal challenges. Neely’s mother was murdered when he was 14, a trauma that Harper said deeply affected him. “That kind of hurt is indescribable,” Harper wrote. “Performing as Michael Jackson was his escape.”

Despite his talent, Neely struggled with mental health and home-

lessness in the years leading up to his death. Harper reflected on how Neely often felt invisible and ashamed of his circumstances, even as he tried to maintain his dignity through his performances. “There is too much pressure put on Black men to hold a certain type of posture and profile,” Harper wrote. “For Jordan, I’d imagine he felt like, ‘The last time you saw me, I was dressed up like the greatest entertainer in the world. Look at me now.’”

Harper noted the broader systemic failures of individuals like Neely, who are often neglected by society. “The system failed Jordan,” he wrote. “He didn’t have a diploma, he was homeless, and he was dealing with mental health issues. On top of all of that, when he performed, he would get antagonized by people who hated Michael Jackson.”

As the trial moves forward, the video of the fatal incident will serve as a key piece of evidence in determining whether Penny’s actions were justified. But for those who knew Neely, the trial is about more than just a legal verdict—it is about the value of a life lost too soon.

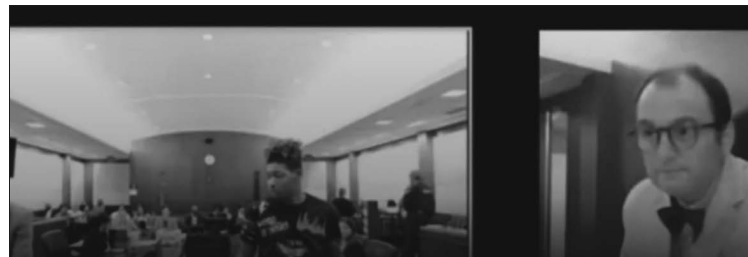
“When I think of Jordan Neely, I think of a gifted, kind, young soul who was trying to find some joy and peace in this world,” Harper wrote. “He was priceless.”

Texas judge dismisses marijuana case, citing racial profiling, lack of probable cause

Philadelphiaobserver.com

In a striking courtroom moment, a Texas judge swiftly dismissed a marijuana possession case against a Black defendant, citing the arrest as a clear instance of racial profiling. Harris County Judge David Fleischer questioned the legitimacy of the arrest, pointing out that the defendant, identified as “Mr. Blake,” had been stopped for what amounted to jaywalking, a minor offense that escalated to a drug charge. Fleischer’s decision, captured on video, quickly went viral, drawing praise for his bold stance against discriminatory policing.

The case unfolded when police detained Blake for crossing a street at an unauthorized point, which the prosecutor described as an infraction. However, Fleischer immediately expressed skepticism, referring to the situation as “walking while Black,” a pointed critique of the racial profiling Black people often face in everyday situations. The judge dismissed the case,



declaring there was no probable cause to justify the subsequent search that uncovered marijuana in Blake’s possession.

Fleischer’s sharp critique resonated deeply, underscoring the ongoing issue of systemic racism within the criminal justice system. The judge remarked that the arrest seemed to hinge on the defendant’s race rather than legitimate suspicion of criminal activity. Fleischer’s use of the phrase “walking while Black” further highlighted the racial disparities that disproportionately affect Black individuals in routine police encounters.

This was not the first time Fleischer dismissed charges under similar circumstances. In a separate case earlier this year, he

threw out charges against Zion Abiola, another Black man who was arrested after walking through a closed park. Fleischer found no probable cause in that case either, once again emphasizing that the defendant had been targeted without legitimate grounds.

As Blake left the courtroom, Fleischer offered him a stern piece of advice, encouraging him to avoid future legal troubles. “The world is against you. Don’t let them be,” Fleischer said, urging Blake to make the most of the second chance he had been given. The viral nature of the video has since ignited discussions on racial bias in policing, with many applauding Fleischer for taking a stand against the misuse of the law.

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By Audrey J. Bernard



Tom Hardy's third time around doesn't disappoint 'Venom' fans!

From Sony Pictures comes "Venom: The Last Dance," the latest horror film scaring the life out of fans who live for this type of animated exhilaration. Starring Tom Hardy as Eddie Brock and his alien symbiote alter-ego, this latest sci-fi superhero movie premiered at the Regal Times Square theater in Union Square, New York City on Monday, October 21, 2024 and won the weekend box office with \$22 million receipts making it the second biggest superhero box office opening. The third and final film in the trilogy for the horror film scared away the competition when

it was released over the weekend with an impressive \$22 million box office making it the second biggest superhero box office opening.

The film which grossed \$175 million worldwide received high praise for its action sequences, visual effects, and Hardy's phenomenal superhero performance. In particular, fans are going wild over the disco dance sequence performed by recurring fan-favorite character Mrs. Chen (played by Peggy Lu). Lu is most known as Mrs. Chen in Sony's Spider-Man Universe, and appearing in all three Venom franchise films: Ven-

om, Venom: Let There Be Carnage, and Venom: The Last Dance.

In "Venom: The Last Dance," Tom Hardy returns as Venom, one of Marvel's greatest and most complex characters, for the final film in the trilogy. Eddie and Venom are on the run. Hunted by both of their worlds and with the net closing in, the duo are forced into a devastating decision that will bring the curtains down on Venom and Eddie's last dance.

"Venom: The Last Dance" stars Tom Hardy, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Juno Temple, Rhys Ifans, Stephen Gra-

ham, Peggy Lu and Alanna Ubach. The film is directed by Kelly Marcel from a screenplay she wrote, based on a story by Hardy and Marcel based on the Marvel Comics. The film is produced by Avi Arad, Matt Tolmach, Amy Pascal, Kelly Marcel, Tom Hardy and Hutch Parker. Joe Caracciolo Jr. Tom Hardy, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Juno Temple, Rhys Ifans, Stephen Graham, Peggy Lu, and Alanna Ubach serve as executive producers. This sci-fi, superhero saga was released by Sony Pictures Releasing nationwide on Friday, October 25, 2024. (Premiere photos by Getty Images for Sony Pictures)



Image Sony Pictures



Image Sony Pictures



Famous dance sequence with character Mrs. Chen (played by Peggy Lu)



(L-R) US actress Peggy Lu, US film producer Hutch Parker, British actors Rhys Ifans, Juno Temple, US actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, British filmmaker Kelly Marcel, British actor Tom Hardy, Mexican actor Cristo Fernandez, US actress Alanna Ubach and Canadian actress Clark Backo attend the world premiere of "Venom: The Last Dance" at the Regal Times Square theater in New York on Monday, October 21, 2024. (Photo by Leonardo Munoz/AFP) (Photo by Leonardo Munoz/AFP via Getty Images for Sony Pictures)



Donny Cates (comic book writer), Sanford Panitch (president, Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group), and Ryan Stegman (comic book writer)



Busta Rhymes attends premiere



Juno Temple, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Kelly Marcel and Tom Hardy



Chiwetel Ejiofor and Rhys Ifans



SNL star Kenan Thompson attends premiere

Ponder this

There is no shame in telling your story



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

We are in the final week of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It has been good for survivors to dwell together in prayer and fellowship. It is good for our spirit and soul that we speak words of encouragement and upliftment to one another. It is good to share the good news through the word of God.

You may not be a breast cancer survivor, yet you may have a story to tell. We all have a story to tell. A testimony is a form of praise and honor to God for what He has done. It is an opportunity to tell somebody how God worked in you, through you, for you and

would not let you go.

When you needed a savior, God showed up and showed out. When you have gone through trials and sufferings in life, that is an opportunity to share a testimony of how God kept you and brought you through.

When you felt the breath of life flowing through you, that was God's loving spirit coming to you and that is a testimony to be shared. A testimony is not only the things that we say. Your testimony is insight into how you live.

Your story is the key that can unlock someone else's prison. God can turn a mess into a message, a trial into a triumph, a victim into a victor. And his only request is that you tell somebody.

As God did it for you, you must tell it to others. What you think is your misery, God can transform into a ministry. Your story can be what God uses to draw someone to faith in Jesus. Though your words are not biblically the written words of the gospels, they can be used to point people to the gospel.

We are all survivors in our own way. We will all have a cross to carry along our life journey. We do not know what it shall be, but God will watch to see how we carry it. Your prayer and your testimony are never to be taken lightly. When you check on someone or someone calls to say they are praying for you,



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

that is a profession of faith. It is a confirmation of their trust and belief in God. Testifying is a validation of your relationship with God. If you boast at all, be certain to boast in what God has done for you.

There is a blessed story of

redeeming love, how it keeps us thinking of the joys above. How it lightens sorrow, trouble, grief, and care, let us tell it, sing it, shout it everywhere. Psalm 105: verses 1 and 2. "Give thanks to the Lord, proclaim His name; tell the nations what He has

done. Sing praise to the Lord, tell all the wonderful things he has done." [Hazel Rosetta Smith is a journalist, playwright, and artistic director for Help Somebody Theatrical Ministries. Contact: misshazel@twc.com and www.hazelrosettasmith.com]

Vote! Vote! Vote!

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka ignites Black men

Posted By Don Thomas

Mayor Ras Baraka called on Black men to prove wrong the recent narrative that they are apathetic in supporting Vice President Kamala Harris for President of the United States, noting their historic role alongside Black women in the fight for social justice.

"I know Black men who boycotted in Montgomery. I know Black men who were shot for the right to vote on the steps of city hall," Mayor Baraka said in a powerful speech at St. James AME Church. "I know Black men who stand up for their families, fight for their communities, and never turn their back on their women."

Emphasizing the importance of their participation in the upcoming election, he urged today's Black men to mobilize for Harris, continuing their legacy of leadership and resilience. "In November, those same Black men are going to march themselves to the polls," he continued. "They're gonna make sure that Kamala Harris is the next president of the United States."

Recent reporting has raised an often-ill-informed narrative that Black men will not turn out to vote for a woman on the ballot. While some have pointed to low support among Black men in Stacey



Newark Mayor Ras Baraka (left) with Black men (Stock Image)

Abrams' 2018 gubernatorial race, this storyline has since been dismissed by 85% of Black men who supported her bid four years later.

Yet concerns still exist as Donald Trump has sought to court Black men, wrongly believing his nearly three-dozen felony convictions make him empathetic to them. A recent Wall Street Journal poll found about 25% of Black men in battleground states would consider voting for Trump.

Mayor Baraka has committed to transforming Newark through innovative policies and active community engagement. Under his leadership, Newark has achieved the lowest homicide rate in 63 years and reduced streethomelessness by 63%. His administration has approved over 4,000 affordable housing units, fostering economic development without gentrification. Baraka also launched a guaranteed income

pilot program providing \$6,000 yearly payments to 400 Newark residents living below the poverty line, stimulating the local economy and addressing income inequalities.

Baraka's Lead Line Replacement Program, recognized as a "model city" by Vice President Kamala Harris, focuses on job creation while ensuring safe drinking water for residents. Additionally, Baraka's commitment to educa-

tion is evident through initiatives like the Youth Literacy Action program, aimed at improving reading levels among children and their families, and the Re-engagement Center, which supports at-risk youth to help them avoid negative influences. These initiatives foster equity by addressing disparities, as Mayor Baraka is committed to uplifting the community and driving meaningful change.



Hazel Rosetta Smith VOTE! early... "Do the right thing"

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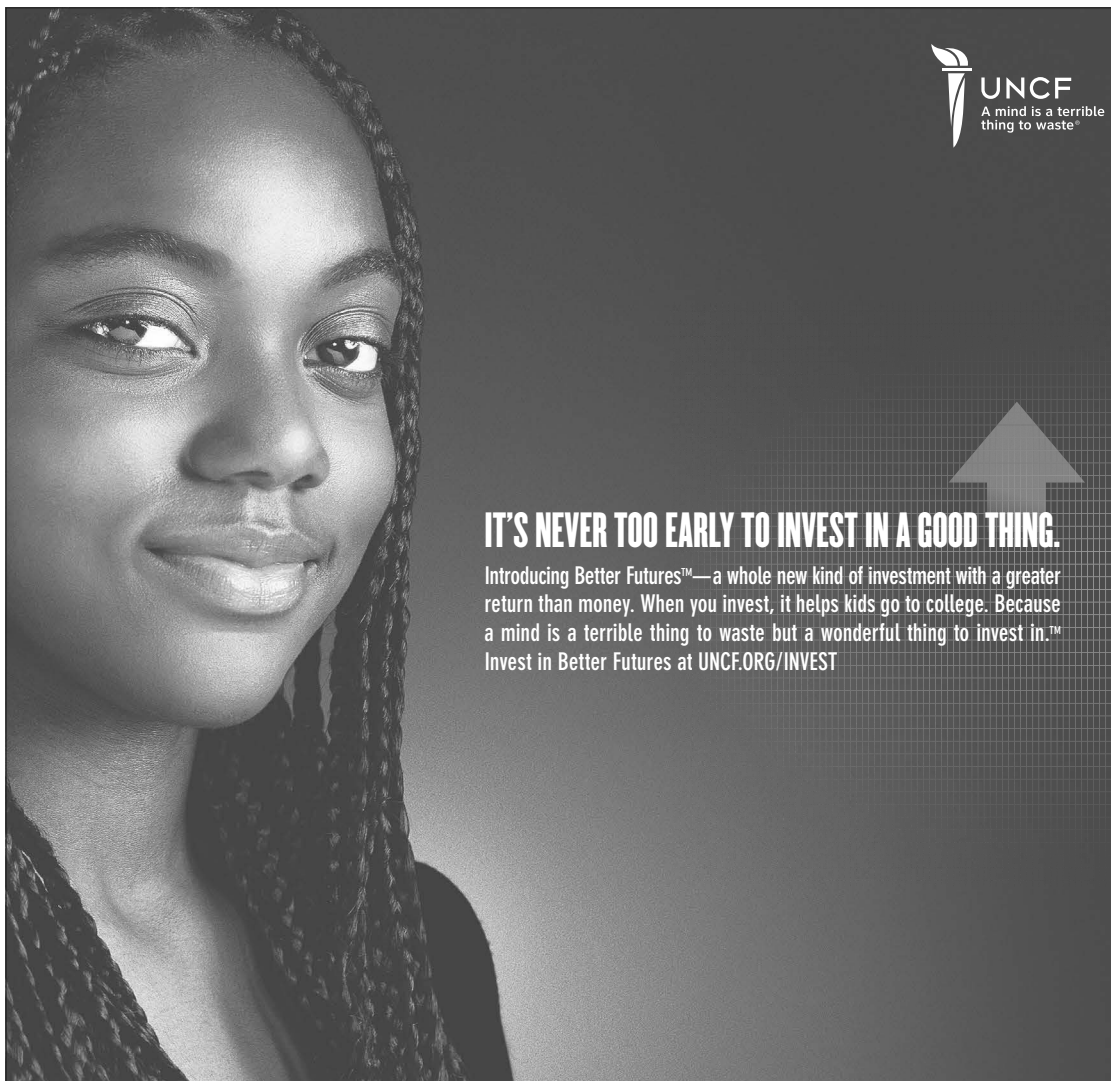
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