

"It is always safe to dream of spring. For it is sure to come; and if it be not just as we have pictured it, it will be infinitely sweeter." - Author Unknown



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SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

March 14 - 20, 2024

Study Reveals Soaring Successes and Lingering Struggles for Women, Especially Women of Color, in Music

The latest report from the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative reflected on the strides forward and the persistent obstacles women's professionals in the music industry face.

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



Photo Credit: NNPA Files

With the observance of Women's History Month in full swing, the music world has finally begun to recognize female artists' vast contributions.

The latest report from the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative reflected on the strides forward and the persistent obstacles women's professionals in the music industry face.

The USC Annenberg

Inclusion Initiative and Associate Professor of Communication Stacy L. Smith conducted the study, which included 1,200 songs from the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts and provided a detailed analysis spanning 12 years. Its scope encompasses the roles of artists, songwriters, and producers while delving into Grammy Award nominations across

six major categories.

The study's findings painted a nuanced picture of progress and disparities within the industry. Notably, there has been a marked increase in the representation of women artists, reaching a 12-year high of 35%. Researchers said this surge, particularly evident in the rise of individual female artists claiming over 40% of spots on

the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Chart in 2023, signaled a positive shift. However, despite the gains, the study authors noted that it's crucial to recognize that women still occupy less than a quarter of artist roles overall, underscoring the need for sustained efforts toward greater inclusivity.

Continue **Women** Page 2

POLITICS



Official portrait of Marcia Fudge, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (Photo Credit: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge Announces Retirement

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

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Marcia Fudge, a former Congressional Black Caucus Chair and a staunch advocate for the Black Press of America, has announced that she's stepping down from her role in the Biden-Harris administration.

The 71-year-old Fudge disclosed that her last day in office would be March 22. After decades of public service, she'll return to her home state of Ohio.

"It's time to go home," she told USA TODAY. "I believe strongly that I have done almost everything I could do at HUD for this administration as we go into this crazy, silly season of an election."

Fudge, the second Black woman to lead HUD, has been a key figure in steering the agency through housing crises triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. She has also pushed for the federal government to include the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), on behalf of the Black Press of

America, in its advertising spend.

"The NNPA salutes and forthrightly acknowledges the leadership, service, and commitment of the Honorable Marcia L. Fudge as the accomplished Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)," NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. "The Black Press of America expresses our gratitude to Secretary Fudge in particular for helping tens of thousands of underserved Americans to increase their opportunities to become homeowners."

Fudge's departure comes amid the intensifying campaign season, with President Joe Biden facing off against the twice-impeached and four-times indicted Republican former President Donald Trump.

"It is not a red or blue issue," Fudge declared. "Everybody knows that it is an issue, so it's not one-sided. It's an American

Continue **Marcia** Page 2

Experience the cosmos at the sun, moon, and our solar eclipse viewing at Cotton Bowl Stadium on April 8

Article Page 7

Neighbors launch second round of Solar Switch Dallas to offer solar panel installation guidance to Dallas residents

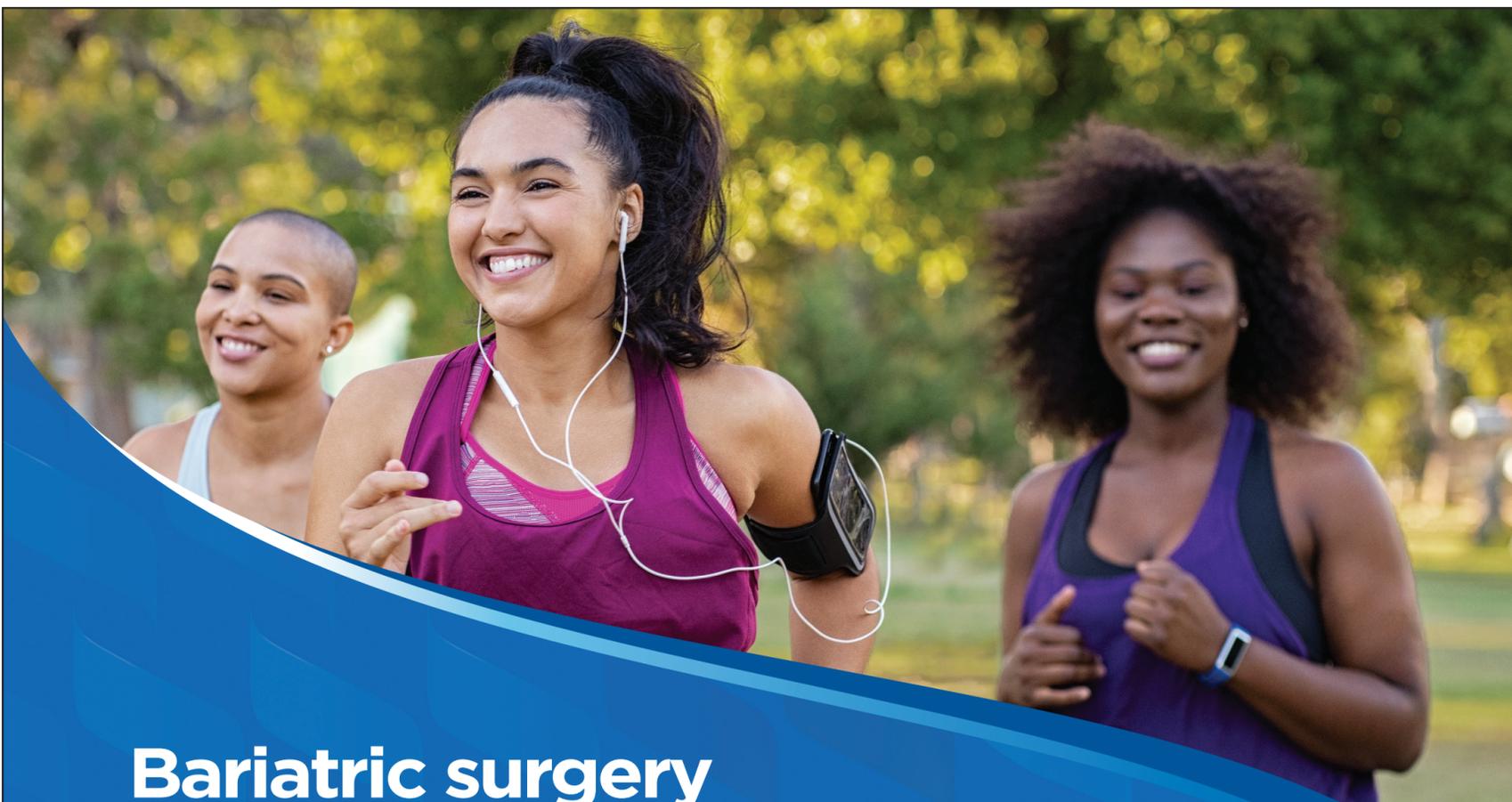
Article Page 7



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Continued **Women** Page 1

Behind the scenes, there have also been advancements. The study revealed a significant rise in the percentage of female songwriters, climbing from 14.1% to 19.5% in 2023. The increase is largely attributed to the contributions of women of color. Similarly, while the number of women producers reached a modest high, significant challenges remain in achieving equitable representation in these roles.

The study's key findings center on the crucial role that women of color have played in advancing change within the sector. Accounting for a staggering 65% of female artists on the charts in 2023 and making significant gains in songwriting roles, women of color have been instrumental in shaping the industry's trajectory. Jay-Z's Grammy speech, in which he questioned why his wife, Beyonce, hadn't won Album of the Year honors despite being arguably the most success-

ful female music star in history, underscored the lack of recognition for women, particularly in prestigious award nominations.

The study authors wrote that efforts such as "She Is The Music," "Spotify Equal," and "Girls Make Beats" have been crucial in fostering inclusivity and providing platforms for women, including women of color, to showcase their talent. However, they said there remains a need for collective action to dismantle systemic barriers and biases that hinder women's progress, particularly those from marginalized communities.

"As the industry continues to evolve, it must strive to amplify women's voices, focusing on women of color and ensuring that diversity and representation remain at the forefront of its agenda," the authors concluded. "Only then can the industry truly reflect the richness and diversity of talent within its ranks and pave the way for a more inclusive future."

Continue **Marcia** Page 1

issue."

Despite her efforts to enhance HUD's role in supporting families with housing needs, addressing homelessness, and fostering economic development, Fudge expressed concerns about inadequate funding. She highlighted the need for more than \$70 billion to address the demand for affordable housing and repair aging public housing developments.

President Biden echoed Fudge's call for bipartisan attention to affordable housing in a statement: "A fair housing market and access to quality and affordable housing are critical to the fulfillment of the American dream, and no one understands that better than Secretary Marcia L. Fudge," Biden said.

Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Chair Steven Horsford (D-Nevada) and other Caucus members praised Fudge's leadership and decades of service.

Church Mother of the Month

By **Dr. J. Ester Davis**



"Mother Sue" Lydia Sue Dan, a tireless Christian worker

I have known Lydia Sue Dan for over three(3)decades. She is indeed a tireless worker, always on God's program

in and around this state. Her influence is powerful!! We met as workers/volunteers for The National Council of Negro

Women(NCNW). Most appropriate and worthy, Dr. Dorothy Irene Height had an army of women united working on a building she bought in Washington, D.C., down the street from The White House. The building was the old home office headquarters of Sears. To this day, I love talking about the audacity of this black female leader buying this building. The cost was ten(10)million dollars, and Dr. Height wanted it paid for before she died. At the birth of this announcement, Dr. Height was in her 80s. She talked about buying the building, paying for the building, and leaving an endowment for its maintenance and upkeep.

For this important year, the Church Mother of the

Month will highlight women with the 'spirit and audacity" of Dr. Height. Number one on my list was "Mother Sue."

Mother Sue is indeed one of these women. She is rooted and grounded in the church. Mother Sue is 'unstoppable". Her daily bread inspires all people with 'gusto' to lead, work hard, and stand on the promises of God.

"Mother Sue" as she is affectionately called by her church, dresses as a Godly Woman-of-God and her example has inspired and influenced thousand of women. She is always adorned as a gracious woman on a mission.

Thank you, Mother Sue. Esterdavis2000@gmail.com

"Since her confirmation in March of 2021, Secretary Fudge has worked tirelessly to provide access to safe and affordable housing to millions of American families, with a particular focus on racial equity and addressing the gap in Black homeownership," the CBC's statement read. "Under her leadership, the agency has supported nearly a quarter of a million Black people in purchasing a home and has taken significant steps to root out racial bias in the

home appraisal process. She leaves her mark on the agency as a passionate leader, the first African American woman to lead the department in decades, and only the second in our nation's history."

Biden praised Fudge's leadership, her dedication to rebuilding HUD, and her expanding efforts to build generational wealth through homeownership. He expressed gratitude for her contributions and wished her well in her next chapter as

she transitions from public service to private life.

"Under Marcia's transformational leadership, we have worked hard to lower housing costs and increase supply," Biden asserted. "We've proposed the largest investment in affordable housing in U.S. history. We've taken steps to aggressively combat racial discrimination in housing by ensuring home appraisals are more fair and by strengthening programs to redress the negative impacts

of redlining. Thanks to Secretary Fudge, we've helped first-time homebuyers, and we are working to cut the cost of renting. And there are more housing units under construction right now than at any time in the last 50 years."

For her part, Fudge said she's simply done with politics. "Don't look for me to ever be on another ballot or another appointee or anything like that," she insisted. "I really do look forward to being a private citizen."

RELIGIOUS/NEWS

Some Instructions for the Christian Family

Colossians 3:1-25

Part I



By Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith

In this portion of Colossians (Chapter 3:1-25), Paul challenges Christians to live godly lives in conformity to who they are in Jesus Christ. The success of living Christlike lives was dependent not on their own power but on the power of Christ working in them. As Christians, our lofty Christian status embraces that we need to put off ungodly practices and put on godly practices that reflect our heavenly status.

Our text, Colossians 3:1-25, may be outlined as follows: I. Christians Focused on Our New Status – Colossians 3:1-4; II. Christians Turing from the Sins of the Past – Colossians 3:5-9; III. Christians Putting on Godly Virtues – Colossians 3:10-14; IV. Christians Living Harmoniously Among Others – Colossians 3:15-

25. I. Christians Focused on Our New Status – Colossians 3:1-4

In this epistle, the false teachers were threatening to undermine the faith, and even to dilute the devotion of the Colossian saints. Paul urged these believers to resist what was false and hold tenaciously to Christ and the word. Paul begins Colossians 3:1 with a conditional clause. By doing so, Paul drove these believers to examine their lives! If they had truly received spiritual life in Christ, they needed to live like it. Having stated the condition, Paul urged the believers who have spiritual life in Christ to seek the things that are above. To seek means to give every effort to obtain. The “things above” are those things that belong to God’s domain in heaven. Christians should devote

themselves to what God values.

In verses 2-3, Paul further admonished the saints to set their affections on things above, not things on the earth. Paul was stating that believers needed to be motivated by the things of heaven rather than the temporal concerns of earthly life. In Colossians 3:3, Paul gave a logical reason why believers should embrace a heavenly perspective rather than an earthly perspective. Theologically, believers have died with Christ. Our lives are hidden with Christ in God.

There are two perspectives in which our lives are hidden. First, we are hidden from people in the world. The people of the world do not value the things of God. Second, the full extent of our lives in Christ is hidden from view today.

According to 1 John 3:2,

believers have to wait on what our future existence will entail when we are in His presence. As we look to the future, we can only anticipate glory with Christ (v. 4). Just as Christ died, rose from the grave, and then ascended to glory in heaven, so believers have died with Him, been raised to new life in Him, and will one day share in His glory.

II. Christians Turing from the Sins of the Past – Colossians 3:5-9

In verse 5, Paul moved from describing the spiritual position of believers to detailing the specific practices they should not be engaged in. Paul admonished the saints to “Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature.” The believers are admonished not to go on living as though they are still alive to sin, when in

actuality they are not. They are to put away that old life, which springs from their earthly natures. Whatever belongs to your earthly nature is literally the members that are upon the earth.

This earthly nature is the “old self” or “old man” (Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9). As believers we are not to live as we did before we were saved because we are now new creatures in Christ (II. Cor. 5:17). The list of evil activities stemming from man’s earthly nature includes immorality (porneia, or fornication), impurity (moral corruptness), lust (uncontrollable passion), evil desires (strong desires or cravings), and greed (coveting), which is idolatry. Coveting is considered idolatry because it seeks satisfaction in things below and not above. Because of these sins

(evils), the wrath of God is coming (v. 6).

In verses 7-9, although the Colossian believers used to walk (live) in these evil ways before they came to know Christ, Paul commanded them not to do so! Paul admonished them to rid themselves of such evil acts! Like putting off a suit of clothes, they were to discard repulsive habits such as anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language. Anger is the chronic attitude of suppressed hatred; rage is an acute outburst; malice is an active ill will; slander is a railing or evil speaking. Filthy language is shameful or abrasive speech (v. 8). In verse 9, lying and all other vices are inappropriate for a Christian, for at salvation, he discarded his old self or “the old man,” the former sinful lifestyle of the believer.

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An Opportunity to Stop The Hate: Lent and Ramadan

By Dr. John E. Warren, Publisher
San Diego Voice & Viewpoint Newspaper

We, the citizens of the United States of America and our fellow citizens of the world, are living in unprecedented conflict. While the word “hatred” is rarely used or mentioned, it is the source of the worst among us toward others. In this country, founded upon the melting pot idea that there is room for everyone, we find people continuing to be attacked based on their race, color, religion, nationality, and appearance. It is timely that two of the world’s greatest religions would intersect this month with a shared idea that for ages has been the solution to hate and its destruction.

The Christian observance of Lent and the Muslim observance of Ramadan intersect with a shared religious practice known as “fasting.” The Christian observance calls for giving up certain foods or practices for a 40-day period as a symbolic way of sharing with Christ in his suffering. Lent is calculated based on the spring equinox.

Ramadan falls on the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which follows a lunar cycle. As a result, the dates for Ramadan change every year, and the period of fasting is for one month. Muslims fast from dawn until sunset for the entire month. The fast is broken each evening with a meal called “iftar.” Fasting is one of the five Pillars of Islam, which are the foundations of Muslim life. Christian fasting, in contrast, as established by the Catholic Church, leads up to Easter, which celebrates the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.

The importance of this discussion rests on the fact that fasting in both religions brings one closer to God. For Christians, prayer and self-denial during this period seek to draw them closer to God by reflecting on their lives and conduct with regard to others. Muslims believe that Ramadan is a time of heightened spirituality during which they can purify their souls and seek forgiveness for their sins.

It sounds like this is a good time for all of America to engage in some prayer and fasting for a nation at odds with itself and for a people engaged in hatred and violence against others. What greater way to stop the hate than through prayer and fasting, regardless of whether one is Christian, Muslim, or any other faith? The concept of fasting with both religions appears to be in line with this scripture from the Bible in 2 Chronicles 7:14, which says:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear From heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

We as a nation have an opportunity during this period to set in motion the healing we all so desperately need. Prayer and Fasting have changed the course of



Dr. John E. Edwards

individuals, people, and nations, and it is not too late for us. Let’s get about the business of Stopping The Hate.

This resource is supported in whole or in part by funding provided by the State of California, administered by the California State Library in partnership with the California Department of Social Services and the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs as part of the Stop the Hate program. To report a hate incident or hate crime and get support, go to <https://www.cavshate.org/>



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Stay safe this spring break

Parkland experts explain the dangers of brain injuries

DALLAS—Spring break is here, bringing sunny weather, longer days, and, unfortunately, an increase in preventable injuries. Parkland Health injury prevention experts want you to have fun and avoid the emergency room.

“Spring break is a time for relaxation and fun, but it's crucial to remember the importance of safety. Brain Injury Awareness Month serves as a timely reminder to prioritize our health by avoiding preventable accidents and injuries,” said Courtney Edwards, DNP, MPH, RN, CCRN, CEN, TCRN, NEA-BC, director of trauma community outreach at Parkland Memorial Hospital's Rees-Jones Trauma Center.

Every nine seconds someone in the United States sustains a brain injury, according to the Brain Injury Association of America. There's a wide spectrum of brain injuries, ranging from mild to severe.

“There are many miscon-

ceptions about head injuries,” Edwards said. “When people think about traumatic brain injuries, they often think of athletes or those injured in combat. However, brain injuries can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any age. The symptoms and impacts are different for everyone.”

Concussions, often referred to as a “mild” brain injury, are usually not life-threatening. Even so, the effects can be serious. Concussions can happen from whiplash in a car accident or most commonly, slips and falls.

“It is an old wives’ tale that in order to have had a concussion, you have to lose consciousness,” Edwards explains. “This is not true. Sometimes people start to feel the effects of brain injuries way after the event.” Common complaints include headache, dizziness, some forgetfulness, nausea, and sensitivity to light or sound, she said.

Parkland experts provide

the following safety tips to help protect you and your family this spring break:

- Wear helmets and protective gear when riding bicycles, scooters, or any motorized vehicle, such as an all-terrain vehicle (ATV).
- Practice safe driving always. Avoid distracted driving, driving while tired, or operating any motor vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Remind yourself and others to wear a seatbelt and ensure young children are utilizing a properly installed child's car seat.
- Stay hydrated to avoid any heat-related illness that could result in falls or accidents.
- Limit alcohol intake to avoid dehydration and loss of motor skills when engaging in outdoor activity. Absolutely avoid alcohol or any substance if you will be driving a motorized

vehicle, including boats, jet skis, and golf carts.

Anoxic brain injuries occur when a person loses consciousness and the brain is deprived of oxygenated blood flow for a certain amount of time. This can occur during a drowning incident. Parkland experts urge parents to practice water safety to prevent drowning by doing the following:

- Learn and teach children basic swimming and water safety skills. Formal swimming lessons reduce the risk of drowning.
- Set up fencing or gates around pools so that they are fully enclosed.
- Always supervise children when near any body of water.
- Wear life jackets at all times near water if you don't know how to swim and while on boats,

Continue **Spring** Page 5

Quinn Minute

Who's calling?

By Rix Quinn

The phone rings several times a day at my “office,” a place under the stairs where we used to store cleaning supplies. I equipped it with a TV tray to hold my computer and a cardboard box to house my “research materials.”

My hope was to attract customer calls for writing assignments. But each time the phone rings, the caller starts by saying, “This conversation may be recorded for training purposes.”

A couple of weeks ago, I started writing down

what each caller discussed. Here's a recent sampling:

A lady with a strong southern drawl said that her company would like to buy our house for cash. I asked her how soon she could get here and if she could pay in small bills. She hung up.

A dude with a deep baritone asked me if I felt my yard needed mood lighting. I told him I was in no mood to continue our conversation.

Another male voice asked me if our air condi-

tioners were prepared for summer. I told him they were hibernating now and that I would call him when we woke them up in May.

A lady greeted me by asking the condition of our bathroom. She said she could modernize it in one day. I said if she could do it real cheap, I would flush with excitement. She also hung up.

Finally, one day ended with a man offering ventriloquist lessons. “How do I know they work?” I asked.

“Because right now I'm drinking water,” he said, “and the dummy is talking to you.”

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SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

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80%	70%	50%				
H 77° L -65°	H - 71° L - 58°	H - 67° L - 61°	H - 68° L - 53°	H - 63° L - 46°	H - 58° L - 49°	H -62° L -53°

NAACP Urges Black Student-Athletes to Reconsider Florida Colleges Amid DEI Funding Controversy

The call comes in response to a new state policy preventing institutions from utilizing government funds for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs.

By Stacy M. Brown



NAACP president and CEO Derrick Johnson has called on Black student-athletes to reconsider their decisions to attend public colleges and universities in Florida. The call comes in response to a new state policy preventing institutions from utilizing government funds for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs.

In a letter sent to current and prospective student-athletes of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) on Monday, NBC News reported that Johnson urged them to “choose wisely” amidst the ongoing debate surrounding DEI funding in Florida. He emphasized the crucial role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in ensuring equitable and effective educational outcomes, noting that Black athletes’ value to large universities is unmatched. The controversy stems

from a bill signed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis last year, restricting public colleges and universities from using state and federal funds for DEI programs. “If these institutions are unable to completely invest in those athletes, it’s time they take their talents elsewhere,” Johnson declared, according to NBC News.

The University of Florida’s recent decision to eliminate all DEI positions, complying with the state rule, drew condemnation from NFL Hall of Famer Emmitt Smith, an alum of the school. Smith emphasized the need for minority athletes to be aware and vocal about such decisions.

The trend against DEI programs has heightened, with Republican politicians in more than 30 states introducing bills to restrict or regulate such efforts. Texas Governor Greg Abbott, for instance, signed a law last

year ordering the closure of DEI offices at state-funded colleges and universities.

The NAACP’s call comes on the heels of a similar message from Birmingham, Alabama, Mayor Randall Woodfin, who asserted that if his state passed a bill blocking funding for DEI in public colleges, he would encourage student-athletes to explore programs in other states.

Florida’s significance in Division I athletics and its central role in college sports business are one issue the NAACP zeroed in on. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the University of Florida’s sports teams generated over \$177 million in revenue from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.

“If any institution is to reap the benefits of Black talent, it is only right that they completely invest in Black futures,” Johnson argued.

House Passes Bill Banning TikTok in the United States

The move highlights lawmakers’ growing concerns over the app’s possible threats to national security.

By Stacy M. Brown

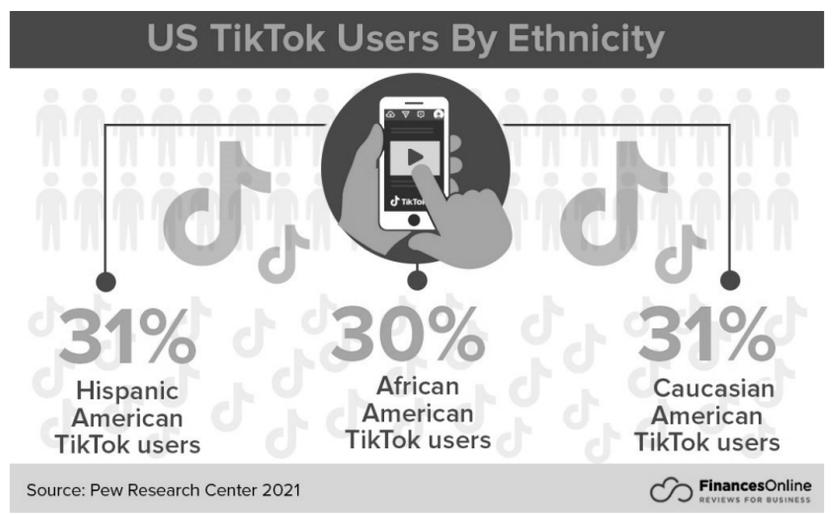


Photo Credit: NNPA Files

The United States House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation to potentially ban TikTok, the viral video-sharing platform owned by a China-based company. The move highlights lawmakers’ growing concerns over the app’s possible threats to national security.

The Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act bill sailed through the House with a decisive vote of 352-65, with one member, Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Texas, voting present. Now, all eyes turn to the Senate, where the bill’s fate remains uncertain, albeit with less immediate pressure to act.

“Communist China is America’s largest geopolitical foe and is using technology to actively undermine America’s economy and security,” said House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.), who cautioned against TikTok’s potential to access American data and spread “harmful” content.

Yet, despite the bipartisan consensus, the bill faced notable opposition from both ends of the political spectrum. Fifty Democrats and 15 Republicans voted against it, including prominent figures like Reps. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.), Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), and Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.).

Some members of

Congress expressed concerns over potential infringements on free speech, while others feared adverse impacts on small businesses.

Central to the debate is whether TikTok poses a legitimate national security threat or if the legislation risks curtailing First Amendment rights. Critics argue that the Chinese government could exploit the app to access personal data and influence user behavior, particularly among minority communities.

Recent demographic data highlighted TikTok’s broad reach, with over 834 million users globally. In the United States, TikTok boasts the largest audience, with over 135 million users, most of whom are under 20 years old.

Notably, 31% and 30% of TikTok users are Hispanic and African Americans, respectively, with whites coming in second at 18%. TikTok, however, has vehemently opposed the legislation, asserting that it would violate the First Amendment rights of its US users and detrimentally impact thousands of minority-owned small businesses that rely on the platform.

The company has launched an aggressive lobbying campaign to combat the proposed legislation. Paul Tran, co-owner of a skincare company whose success is largely attributed to TikTok, expressed

apprehension about the bill’s potential ramifications. “You will be destroying small businesses like us; this is our livelihood,” Tran cautioned lawmakers. “If you pass this bill, you will be undermining the American Dream that we cherish.”

Proponents of the legislation maintain that it aims to address genuine national security concerns. The bill would empower the president, with input from intelligence agencies, to designate specific social media applications under the control of foreign adversaries as national security threats. Once designated, these apps would face bans from online stores and hosting services unless they severed ties with foreign adversaries.

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.), the bill’s author, emphasized the need for TikTok to sever ties with its parent company, ByteDance, to mitigate security risks while allowing users to continue enjoying the platform. Gallagher stressed the importance of safeguarding American democracy and protecting users, mainly minority communities, from foreign influence. As the bill now heads to the Senate, President Joe Biden, who recently joined TikTok as part of his 2024 campaign, has pledged to sign it into law if it reaches his desk.

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Continued Spring Page 4

- kayaks, and even boogie boards.
- Swim only while a lifeguard is on duty.
- Enroll in a CPR course.

Protecting little ones from accidents is especially important as their brains are developing, Edwards emphasizes, but the same goes for young adults as well. The brain is not fully

developed until around 24-years-old.

“Our brains are like bowls of Jell-O. When you whack the bowl, you don’t necessarily damage the outside of the bowl, but you can see the Jell-O has been moved around,” Edwards says, explaining that these types of traumas can impact a developing brain’s ability to grow and make connections if not healed properly.

Parkland experts advise that you seek emergency

care if a head injury results in repeated vomiting or nausea, loss of consciousness lasting longer than 30 seconds, or a headache that gets worse over time. Discuss any injuries with your primary care provider so they can monitor you and start treatment if necessary.

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EDITORIAL PAGE

Get Ready For The Presidential Showdown Between Biden And Trump

By James B. Ewers Jr. Ed.D.



James B. Ewers Jr. Ed.D.

Some years back, there was a popular R&B group, Archie Bell and The Drells, from Houston, Texas. One of their hit songs was "Gonna Be A Showdown." The lyrics were, "Hey, hey, there's gonna be a showdown. Hey, hey, there's gonna be a showdown, showdown, oh yeah". If you are in the 4th quarter of your life, you danced to this record.

In a strange yet telling way, we may hear this tune a lot in the coming weeks and months. It won't be in a club, but it might be a part of a political commercial. Simply put, there is going to be a showdown for the presidency of the United States of America.

The primary campaigning for the Democrats and

the Republicans is over. Independents are still trying to find their way. How they influence election results is going to be a major issue in November.

We know with certainty that President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump will be the candidates for the Democratic Party and the Republican Party respectively. Super Tuesday unfortunately sealed the fate of Nikki Haley. Money and time were her enemies, so she suspended her campaign on Wednesday, March 6th.

From the onset, former South Carolina Governor Haley was running an uphill race. Her message was anti-Trump however it did not resonate with most Republican voters. The miracle win that she needed never happened. The hand-writing on the wall became clearer as she was defeated in her home state.

She did win the state of Vermont; however, it was too little, too late. As her supporters cheered for her as she made her exit speech, she did not endorse Mr. Trump.

Reports say that 79% of Haley's voters say they would be dissatisfied if Trump were the nominee. So, it begs the question, what will become of those voters who chose Nikki Haley? The Biden campaign says there is a place for them in his campaign. I think some will vote for President Biden, while others may stay and vote for Mr. Trump.

There are critics and pundits lining up to say that the former president is not as popular with independent voters. In a recent Quinnipiac University poll, it showed Biden with a small lead over Trump.

People of color and women will also play a pivotal role in who becomes the next president. A group of undecided Black voters in North Carolina said they were not happy with either candidate.

A resident of the state said, "I feel like it's a lesser of two evils. It's either a politician who is making attempts to do things for the entire country, or someone who's just about themselves or their party and their people." Still, another resident

said, "I don't want to go through another four years of his Make America Great Again and I don't want to go through another four years of Biden being indecisive as to what he's going to do."

It is safe to say that both candidates have some heavy lifting to do as they seek to secure votes to be president.

Whether you like him or not, Mr. Trump has galvanized a sizable group of voters. This momentum does not seem to be slowing down. Most are saying that the Republican Party is now his party.

However, there are some factors that may derail his bid to become president. Voters will have to decide how his legal problems will impact his bid to become president. Being in and out of court is a clear and present danger. Can he run the country and be in court at the same time?

The November election will be one for the history books. Grover Cleveland is the only US president to lose an election and then return to office four years later.

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With new state funds in hand, community colleges waive tuition for some high school students

By Sneha Dey, The Texas Tribune

"With new state funds in hand, community colleges waive tuition for some high school students" was first published by The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan media organization that informs Texans — and engages with them — about public policy, politics, government and statewide issues.

Texas community colleges know many high schoolers are skeptical of higher education because of the price tag. Some want to change that conversation by using new state dollars to waive tuition for some of their youngest students.

Austin Community College, one of the most populous junior colleges in the state, is set to waive tuition for this year's graduating high school seniors through 2027. ACC's Board of Trustees will vote on the proposal in April. If the proposal passes, the school would use the \$6.8 million it received this year through House Bill 8 — the legislation passed last year that expanded the pot of money junior colleges get funding from and tied future funds to positive student outcomes — to pay for this benefit.

"Discount" doesn't change people's perceptions that they can't afford to go to college... 'Free' means something when you're talk-

ing about college affordability in the way that a discount does not," ACC Chancellor Russell Lowery-Hart said.

Austin Community College plans to pay eligible students' tuition before federal and state aid kicks in. Known as a "first-dollar" program, this setup would allow students to use other aid toward expenses like books, child care and housing. The plan is a rare departure from "last-dollar" scholarships, in which federal and state aid goes to tuition before the institution covers for the student's remaining balance. Last-dollar scholarships don't always translate to help for the lowest-income students because the community colleges that offer them often don't end up subsidizing any tuition costs for students who qualified for the federal Pell Grant.

Other schools are also doubling down on financial support for their youngest students with dual credit. By the spring, nearly every community college in the state will have waived the cost of dual credit courses for economically disadvantaged high school students. This effort was facilitated by the state — colleges who participate qualify for extra state funding.

In Texas and across the country, young people and

their families have become increasingly skeptical of the benefits of college. Negative public perception of higher education costs has mostly centered around four-year, private institutions. Experts say community colleges often get lumped into that conversation, even though they usually have lower tuition rates.

"Families continue to still get the main message that if you mean college, you must mean a four-year college. That's what you're supposed to want. That's the thing to aspire to. And that's what you're supposed to try for your kid to go to. And if you can't, then you can't 'afford' college," said Sara Goldrick-Rab, a senior fellow at research group Education Northwest. "That's really problematic."

In Austin, about 57% of high school seniors do not enroll in any higher education institution after graduating. Higher education leaders believe many of these students skipped college and entered the workforce to keep up with the cost of living.

"We do think there's a lot of [students] that have already given up [on college] because they heard that it's \$50,000 or \$100,000 to get a degree. And they don't know that it's always been a fraction of that at Austin Community College," said

Neil Vickers, the school's chief financial officer. "But you don't know what you don't know."

Offering free tuition should convince some students to enter college right after high school, Vickers said. He also expects the very idea of free tuition will send a clear message to all students that college is attainable. He hopes more Austin students will reach out to their student financial aid offices.

Increasing access to dual credit can position students to think about college early. Earning college credit while still in high school has been linked to a higher likelihood of graduating high school, attending college and completing a degree.

And high school students enrolling in dual credit classes need the help since they are usually not eligible for financial aid, according to Mark Escamilla, the president of Del Mar College. The school used \$2 million of its HB 8 money last year to make dual credit free regardless of need.

Free-college programs at community colleges are tied to large enrollment increases of first-time, full-time students, particularly among Black, Hispanic and female students, according to a 2020 Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis report.

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Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) customers will soon use **DallasGo**, the new online payment platform for paying water bills and other City of Dallas bills.

Launching in spring 2024, **DallasGo** will replace ePay to offer customers a more convenient bill paying experience.

For more information on **DallasGo**, visit dallas.gov/DallasGo or call DWU Customer Service at 214-651-1441, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.



Neighbors launch second round of Solar Switch Dallas to offer solar panel installation guidance to Dallas residents

Nearly 600 Dallas area residents registered for the 2023 Solar Switch Dallas program and received a personal recommendation. Residents who accepted their offer saved on average \$6,030 on a rooftop solar installation.

The City of Dallas' Whole Home program has partnered with nonprofit Solar United Neighbors to offer second round of Solar Switch Dallas. The program is designed to help homeowners and small businesses install rooftop solar and battery storage at a significantly discounted price.

Solar Switch leverages the power of group buying to ensure participants get a quality system at a competitive price and vets solar installers to ensure they are qualified to bid on the group. Factors include product, quality, warranties, company financial stability, and history of customer satisfaction. Once qualified, installers compete in a reverse auction that results in a competitively priced solar package for participants.

"With growing interest in solar, we're also seeing growing confusion. Homeowners purchasing rooftop solar have likely never purchased solar panels before and are overwhelmed by the price point and the number of considerations," said Carlos Evans, Director of Office of



Photo Credit: City of Dallas

Environmental Quality and Sustainability. "That's why the Solar Switch program is so important – it helps residents through the process while also providing a group discounted price."

The Solar Switch group discount and federal clean energy incentives make solar more accessible than ever. The program helps participants learn about the federal solar investment tax credit (ITC) for residential solar, which could save homeowners 30% on their total system cost. A similar tax credit is also available for small businesses.

"Everyone deserves to benefit from generating their own solar energy. That's why we designed Solar Switch – to make installing solar affordable and straightforward for more Dallasites than ever before. I'm excited to see how much we can broaden the reach and benefits of solar group buying with the continuation of Solar Switch Dallas," said America Garcia, Texas Program Director for Solar

United Neighbors.

With rooftop solar, more Dallas homeowners and small businesses will be able to save money on their energy bills. More locally produced solar power will also make the energy grid more resilient, create new local jobs, and improve air quality.

Residents are encouraged to register by the auction on March 13. The more registrations by the auction day, the better the discount will be. Residents can still register for Solar Switch after the March 13th auction date.

Registration is free, and there is no obligation to purchase solar panels. Dallas residents can move forward with a solar installation based on program-negotiated pricing that includes the group discount. Residents who participated in the last auction saved an average of \$6,030 on a typical-sized solar installation.

Homeowners and small business owners can visit SolarSwitch.com/Dallas to register and learn more.

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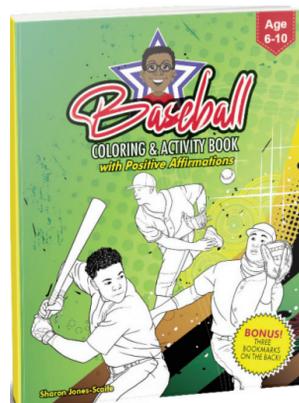
This book is about Gus, a spirited boy who learns that treating others with kindness starts with respecting oneself. When faced with the consequences of his actions, Gus turns to his classmate, Haylie, for guidance. "Respect, It's in You!" is a captivating tale filled with valuable lessons for young readers.

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RELEASING MARCH 10TH

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Experience the cosmos at the sun, moon, and our solar eclipse viewing at Cotton Bowl Stadium on April 8

THE FREE EVENT WILL FEATURE MULTIPLE SPEAKERS, INCLUDING NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON

DALLAS – March 11, 2024 – The "Sun, Moon, and You Total Solar Eclipse Viewing" is coming to Cotton Bowl® Stadium at Fair Park on Monday, April 8, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. CST. This one-of-a-kind free, public event will provide opportunities to learn about solar eclipses, the Sun, and solar-monitoring efforts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NASA, and the National Science Foundation (NSF), among others.

Join us for a day filled with learning and excitement as some of the world's leading

solar and space experts, including Neil deGrasse Tyson, share their knowledge and insights. Scientists from NOAA, NASA, NSF, and the state of Texas will also be in attendance, offering an opportunity to learn about our universe from the experts themselves.

The event will also feature live programming from the PBS kids' show Ready, Jet, Go!, amateur astronomers from Texas will host telescope viewings during the event, and there will be local STEM organizations and schools that will have tables set up in the stadium's concourse.

Free registration is open at www.fairpark-tix.com. All guests must register prior to attending the event.

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