

“One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation.” ~ Arthur Ashe



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VOLUME 78 NUMBER 29

SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

April 16 - 22, 2026

Judge temporarily allows women, minority-owned businesses to qualify for Texas HUB program again

Paul Cobler and Ayden Runnels, The Texas Tribune



State Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas, left, listens as Ipsum General Contractors owner Ruben Mercado Jr. speaks at a press conference about a lawsuit against the state comptroller's office, at the Capitol in Austin on Monday, March 2, 2026. Photo Credit: **Bob Daemrich** for The Texas Tribune

An Austin district judge on Monday ordered the state's Historically Underutilized Business Program rules be temporarily reinstated, meaning women and minority-owned business owners can qualify for the state's HUB program again for now.

Four business owners and a trade association sued the state of Texas and acting Comptroller Kelly Hancock on March 2 over the agency's emergency rules that removed women and minorities from the HUB program and stripped their businesses of their HUB certifications. The judge ordered the reinstatement of six businesses that sued the

Comptroller's office over the emergency rules -- two joined after the lawsuit was first filed -- and further directs state agencies to inform HUB businesses that have been decertified since December of the court ruling.

Hancock's office imposed the changes to the program on Dec. 2. It is unclear how the Comptroller's office will go about resuming the program in its former state and if former HUB certified businesses need to reapply for their certification. The comptroller's office intends to appeal the ruling to the 15th Court of Appeals, a spokesperson said in a statement

Tuesday.

The HUB program was created through bipartisan legislation during the 1990s to give minority- and women-owned businesses a leg up when seeking state contracts. The program does not set quotas for the number of HUB-certified businesses, but sets goals that state agencies generally strive to meet.

The plaintiffs include Houston-based general contractors Ipsum General Contractors, LLC and Houston Construction Services; Sugarland-based medical technology distributor Mpulse Healthcare & Technology LLC; Burleson-based restoration firm

Williams Professional Water Restoration Service LLC; and the greater Houston chapter of the National Association of Minority Contractors, a nonprofit trade association that represents 155 minority- and women-owned contractors.

Along with Hancock, the lawsuit also names Texas Department of Transportation Executive Director Marc Williams, Texas Health and Human Services Commission Executive Commissioner Stephanie Muth and Texas Facilities Commission Executive Director Will McKerall, whose departments all

Continue **HUB** Page 4

Trump's clash with the pope reenacts a 1,000 year old question: What happens when sacred and secular power collide?

By Joëlle Rollo-Koster

Professor of Medieval History, University of Rhode Island

Alarm over the war of words between President Donald Trump and Pope Leo XIV has escalated with remarkable speed, from The New York Times to the Daily Beast and local television.

The pope has repeatedly called for peace in the Middle East since the start of the Iran war, insisting that “God does not bless any conflict” and warning against the “delusion of omnipotence.”

On April 12, in a lengthy social media post, Trump derided Leo as “WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy,” telling him to “focus on being a Great Pope, not a Politician.” His Truth Social account posted, then deleted, a Christ-like image of Trump appearing to heal a man.

At stake in this public feud is an old question: Can a religious leader challenge political power, especially a ruler of one of the most powerful countries in the world?

As a medieval historian and lead editor of “The Cambridge History of the Papacy,” I cannot help but see a familiar pattern.

For many people, Trump's rant against the

pope was shocking. But conflicts between popes and rulers are not an aberration; they're a durable feature of Western history. Whenever political leaders cloak power in sacred language, or religious leaders publicly denounce political violence, they reenact debates that stretch back more than a millennium. These struggles are not symbolic: They concern who holds ultimate authority over people, souls – and in the end, history itself.

Two powers, intertwined

From its earliest centuries, Christianity was bound up with politics. Roman Emperor Constantine legalized the religion in 313. He later presided over the Council of Nicaea, an important theological assembly, blurring the line between political rule and spiritual authority.

Conversation in the fifth century, Pope Gelasius I articulated a rival vision: that the world was governed by two powers, priestly and royal. Ultimately, he argued, spiritual authority outweighed political power, because it

Continue **Pope** Page 3

Not New To This, But True To This: OUR FAMILY FARM'S ANNUAL BLACK COWBOY TRAIL RIDE

By Don Holly

~ Article Page 6 ~



Photos Credit: Rachel Lugendo



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EDITORIAL PAGE

Coach Geno Auriemma Apologized, Coach Dawn Staley Accepted, Let's Move On!

By James B. Ewers Jr., Ed.



Dr. James Ewers

Let's say right away that Geno Auriemma is a championship basketball coach. I would opine that he is the greatest coach ever in women's college basketball. His record of winning is undeniable.

Coach Auriemma has won 12 national championships, been to 23 Final Fours, and had 6 perfect seasons. That is just a small sample of his accomplishments. He is a coach, mentor, and ardent supporter of women's college basketball. He has won and will continue to win. Now, let's get to what happened on Friday, April 3, 2026, to Geno Auriemma and the UConn women's basketball team.

They made the Final Four, and their opponent was the University of South Carolina. Their coach is Dawn Staley.

The hype and publicity surrounding the game had

everyone talking. UConn entered the game on a 54-game winning streak. The University of South was the betting underdog. The beauty of sports is contests are played on courts and fields.

When the final horn sounded, USC defeated UConn 62-48 and was going to the title game. The Huskies' winning streak was snapped.

Both coaches approached midcourt for the customary end-of-game handshake, and that is when the dustup occurred. Coach Geno didn't want to shake Coach Dawn's hand. Why?

In postgame comments, he felt slighted that she didn't come to the scorer's table to shake hands with him. There is a pre-game custom where coaches shake hands. However, Coach Staley shook hands with every UConn coach and player prior to the game being played.

It is my opinion and the opinion of many others that Geno Auriemma was simply frustrated because he lost. He was out-coached, and his players were out-played.

In an immediate post-

game interview with ESPN's Holly Rowe, Coach Staley said, "I have no idea, imma let you know this: I'm of integrity. So, if I did something wrong to Geno, I have no idea what I did. I guess he thought I didn't shake his hand at the beginning of the game. I didn't know. I went down there pre-game, shook everybody on his staff's hand. I don't know what he came with after the game. But hey, sometimes things get heated, we move on."

Dawn Staley is an ambassador for women's sports. Her vision and her opinions matter. Young women see her as the consummate role model. She understands the slippery slope between winning and losing. You can't have one without the other. That is simply the nature of sports.

If you can learn that early on as a player or coach, the losses will become a lot more bearable. You can't win them all.

Coach Auriemma released two apology statements. The first one didn't mention Coach Staley by name. The second one did. It said, "Those who know me know I have nothing but

respect and admiration for the game and the coaches who coach it. Dawn and her team deserved to win, and they deserved better from me." Further, he stated that in the loss, he lost himself. Simply put, his emotions got the best of him.

Some of us have been student-athletes and coaches at the college level. Winning is wonderful and it gives us a euphoric feeling. Smiles and pats on the back usually follow. Losing, on the other hand, is an empty and painful experience. It's draining, and you are temporarily in a losing drought. Sometimes, depending upon what is at stake, recovery time is slow to happen.

The game of women's college basketball is growing by leaps and bounds each year. Television ratings and attendance figures are at an all-time high. This has translated into more girls at the elementary, middle, and high school levels playing basketball.

Dawn Staley and Geno Auriemma have placed their imprint on this growth in basketball. Let's be happy that we have these two legends in a sport that we love.

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Political Candidates and The Black Press

By: **Dr. John E. Warren**, Publisher
San Diego Voice & Viewpoint Newspaper
Chairman of the Board of Directors, NNPA



Dr. John E. Warren

With about six weeks until the California Primary on June 2, 2026, there are a number of candidates in the Democratic Party seeking the gubernatorial nomination for the November General Elec-

tion. Most of them are so busy campaigning in their own silos that they appear to have forgotten that the Black people in California do vote and that we will be voting on June 2nd, 2026.

The real problem is how the candidates seem to determine how to reach the Black Voter. Many of the Black people who do vote are not on social media. Many of the people on social media do not vote.

Newspapers, before social media, and even now, carry the pulse of the people. The Editorials and commentaries reflect the mood and views of the

people. In the Black community, the Black Press has been the "trusted messenger" for 199 years. The Black Press, which we know as our Black newspapers, is the institution we recognize and trust. How then can a candidate say he or she respects and wants the Black vote when they refuse to advertise their candidacy with Black newspapers, i.e., the Black Press?

One candidate for Governor was recently asked whether his campaign would seek to advertise in the Black Press. His response was that he had given some money to a

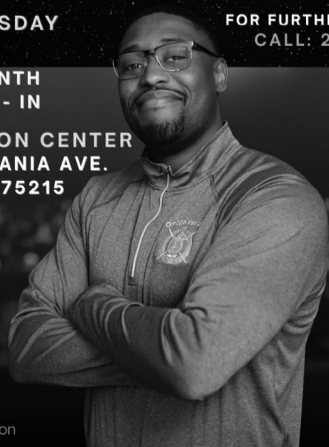
well-known Black journalist. The implication is that such a one-time, one-person advertisement should have been sufficient for all Black people. The only question for us should be, who else is running besides that individual?

How can it be alright to spend millions of dollars with White Media for the White vote, and okay not to spend any dollars to reach the Black Vote? We as Black people must return to the idea that when you disrespect our institutions, then you disrespect us. Let us not forget that people respect where they place their money.

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RELIGIOUS/NEWS

Abiding in the Love of God

I John 4:1-21



Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith

In this very informative epistle, the grand Apostle of love, John, will caution us to be aware of the prevalence of false teachers (I John 4:1-6), and the need for believers to love one another (I John 4:7-21). The Apostle John has already discussed the fact that God is light (I John 1:5), and now John declares that God is love (I John 4:7). These are two wonderful attributes that the Apostle John has declared about God.

I John 4:1-21 may be outlined as follows: I. The Declaration Involving False Teachers – I John 4:1-6; II. Demonstrating the Love of God – I John 4:7-21.

I. The Declaration Involving False Teachers – I John 4:1-6

In verse 1, the Spirit of God must be distinguished from false spirits. It is very crucial that we understand that there are many false prophets (teachers) that are in the world today! The genuine teachers of God's word will honestly confess "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (v. 2). However, failure to acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh will reveal the spirit of the antichrist that John had already spoken about (v. 3; I John 2:18-27).

Simply put, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh

is of God" (v. 2); however, false teachers are proclaiming a severe heresy when they fail to acknowledge the veracity of Christ's incarnation (v. 3). John is vehemently informing us that the spirit of the antichrist (false teachings) is prevalent! We are not to believe everything that we hear, but "try (prove) the spirits whether they are of God." Satan has many spiritual counterfeits who are advancing things that the Scriptures are not saying! We need to test everything we hear by the veracity of God's word!

As children of God (v. 4), we can resist the antichrists (false teachers) by means of the One who indwells us (the Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit is greater than the one who is in the world, namely, Satan. In verse 5, the antichrists are from the world and speak from the viewpoint of the world. However, in verse 6, people who are from God listen to the apostles. Listening to the apostolic doctrine will help one to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

II. Demonstrating the Love of God – I John 4:7-21

Beginning in verse 7, John is encouraging us to love one another. The reason we are to do so is that love is from God. Love stems from a regenerate nature and

also from fellowship with God, which issues in knowing Him (v. 7). Since God is love, this dominant attribute of our Father must be seen in believers who claim to know Him. We cannot purport (claim) to know God and persist in withholding sincere Christian love from our brothers and sisters (v. 8).

In verses 9-10, the greatest demonstration of God's love toward us was the sending of His Son. God dispatched His only begotten ("one of a kind, unique"), Son into the world so that "we might live through Him" (v. 9). God loves us unconditionally unto the end that He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (v. 10). Christ came willingly to secure our redemption as He served as the atoning sacrifice for us! Since God love us sacrificially, then this should be an incentive for us "to love one another" (v. 11).

While no one can see God, those who love one another show that God is dwelling in them and that His love is being made perfect (complete) in their lives (v. 12). In verse 13, we evidence that we know God because the presence of the Holy Spirit within us encourages behavior that reflects Christian character (Galatians 5:22-25).

As an eyewitness to Jesus' life, the Apostle John could say - "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son

to be the Saviour of the world" (v. 14). John lived among Christ, heard Him teach, and saw Him alive after His death; and "his testimony is true" (St. John 21:24; I John 1:1). Through confession that Jesus is the Son of God, the one who confesses enjoys a mutual abiding relationship with God (v. 15).

In verse 16, John stated again that "God is love" (v. 8, 16) and one who lives in love, lives in God and has God abiding with Him. Christian love is perfected or made complete in the life of a believer; and such love leads one to boldness in the Day of Judgment. As believers, being identified with Christ, our position in this world is like His exalted position in heaven. A believer who is fearful is lacking something in the development of his or her love (v. 18). A believer who considers Judgment Day with fear is the one in whom divine love has not yet reached its full maturity.

Love cannot be comprehended until we understand that "He first loved us." Long before we ever thought of loving God, He loved us (v. 19). It is incomprehensible for one to say "I love God" (v. 20) while hating his Christian brother. One who loves God will love his brother (v. 21).

May God Bless!

Continued Pope Page 1

promised eternal salvation. Gelasius' theory did not resolve the tension between the two, but it established a lasting framework for Christian political thought. The relationship between these two powers shifted decisively in the year 800, when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne, a Frankish king, emperor on Christmas

Day. This act was not merely ceremonial. It implied that imperial authority in the West came from the church and that political legitimacy required papal sanction.

The coronation followed years of political instability in Rome and the papacy's increasing reliance on the Franks for military protection. After Leo was elected pope in 795, opponents at-

tacked him, and he found shelter at the court of Charlemagne. The king returned to Rome with Leo and asserted his legitimacy. In turn, Leo crowned Charlemagne. Doing so asserted his own role as a maker of emperors, while Charlemagne gained a sacred aura.

This moment reshaped medieval political theology. It encouraged rulers to see themselves as guardians of

both political order and religious orthodoxy, while popes moved from spiritual counselors to active participants in secular governance. The result was a paradox: Kings invoked God to sanctify conquest, as Charlemagne did in his brutal wars against the Saxons. Meanwhile, churchmen claimed the authority to restrain violence, encouraged just wars and threatened violent

behaviors with spiritual sanctions.

Battle over bishops

By the 11th century, however, the papacy increasingly sought to free itself from secular dominance. In particular, popes wanted to select the church's bishops rather than allowing nobility or a king to do so.

That struggle exploded into the Investiture Contro-

versy, one of the most consequential conflicts of the Middle Ages, and lay crucial groundwork for the Magna Carta, the first document to hold royalty subject to the law. Both events addressed the same fundamental question: Who has the right to grant authority, and what limits exist on political power?

Continue Pope Page 4

~ THEME: LEGENDARY ATHLETES (Solution will appear in April 23 edition)

- ACROSS**
- Capital of Tibet
 - Templeton of "Charlotte's Web"
 - Maisie Williams on "Game of Thrones"
 - Poisonous plant
 - UN labor grp.
 - George Orwell to Eric Arthur Blair
 - Movie genre
 - Shark part
 - Ax mark
 - *First Native American to win Olympic Gold
 - *The Great One of hockey
 - Be indisposed
 - Disfigure
 - Du Bois' initials
 - Hoodwink
 - Baking soda
 - Bypass
 - "Breaking Bad" product
 - Spelunker
 - Orchestra member
 - Charles Dickens' "___ House"
 - Family room staple
 - Like United States Capitol
 - "Cogito ___ sum"
 - Tongue-___
 - Stockholm dwellers
 - *Tiger Woods has won this award the most times
 - On the wagon
 - Silage
 - Almond-induced state?
 - *Jordan or Phelps
 - *Female player with most Open Era Grand Slams
 - Infant's woe
 - Seafood selection
 - Practical
 - Stopped sleeping
 - Pigeon sound
 - *Most decorated gymnast
 - Red, or excessively bureaucratic, one
 - End of a fuse?
 - Balance sheet entry

- DOWN**
- Drug in "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas"
 - John Mellencamp's "___ So Good"
 - Nanny in East Asia
 - Polynesian island country
 - Tick or mite
 - Abundant
 - *Boxer a.k.a. The People's Champion
 - Kingdom in South Pacific
 - Loads (2 words)
 - Nabisco cracker
 - Noisy talk
 - Like Zombie's skin color
 - Low on hemoglobin
 - Perfectly vertical
 - Adam's body part
 - Measured, like electricity on utility bill
 - *Tied for most PGA Tour wins
 - Curve like a bow
 - Biotic community
 - *O Rei of soccer
 - Throw a line
 - Steer clear of
 - Send to a specialist, e.g.
 - *NFL's 7-time Super Bowl champion
 - Got ready to drive
 - Old witches, usually
 - Small steep-sided hill, in Africa
 - Vandalize
 - Johnny Nash's "I Can ___ See Clearly Now"
 - West African people
 - Choose by vote
 - Abominable snowmen
 - Med. sch. requirement
 - *Hall of Famer Bob Feller's home state
 - Hoofbeat sound
 - Nature walk
 - Narrow aperture
 - Zilches
 - Away from wind
 - Many, many moons
 - Approx.

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle Theme: LEGENDARY ATHLETES

CROSSWORD

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72						73			74				

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NEWS

Continued HUB Page 1

implemented Hancock's changes to the HUB program.

Travis County district judge Amy Meachum set a trial date for the suit for Nov. 9.

The background: HUB businesses received 3,634 contracts totaling more than \$4 billion in 2024, according to the Comptroller's Office. Republicans in the state Legislature filed several bills aimed at killing the HUB program entirely last year, but legislation failed in both chambers.

In October, Hancock announced that his office would not issue new or renewed certifications while the program was being reviewed. His decision pushed the program into the national battle over government initiatives seen as those focused on "diversity, equity and inclusion." The comptroller's office then

Continue HUB Page 5

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8	9	3	2	6	5	1	7	4
7	5	1	3	8	6	2	4	9
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Continued Pope Page 3

At stake was not merely church administration but sovereignty itself. Bishops were major landholders and political figures; controlling their selection meant controlling wealth, loyalty and governance.

In the push to appoint bishops, popes were insisting that spiritual authority came from the church alone, challenging the idea that kings ruled by unchecked power. It was a decisive attempt to separate spiritual legitimacy from royal control and to place moral constraints on rulers who claimed divine authority.

The Investiture Controversy dragged on for several decades. Finally, in 1122, Pope Calixtus II and Emperor Henry V signed the Concordat of Worms. The agreement granted the pope the right to name bishops and to install their spiritual

authority. The emperor, meanwhile, would "invest" them with their "temporalities": that is, the worldly powers attached to their office, such as land, revenue, jurisdiction and coercion.

Reining in the king

A century later, the Magna Carta pursued a parallel objective.

Its immediate background lay in the conflict over the new archbishop of Canterbury, whom Pope Innocent III had appointed in 1207. King John opposed his choice, prompting Innocent to excommunicate the king and place England under interdict, meaning the English could not participate in church sacraments.

To appease tensions, John surrendered England to the pope in 1213, turning the kingdom into a papal fief. In return, he received Innocent's approval for a war against France.

But the arrangement

deeply angered English barons, who now found themselves subject not only to their king but also to papal authority. After England's decisive defeat, John was forced to confront rebellious barons at home.

The result was the Magna Carta, the "Great Charter." Forced on the king by armed resistance, the document asserted that the king himself was subject to law. It limited royal authority over taxation, justice and punishment, and it famously declared that no free person could be imprisoned or deprived of rights without lawful judgment.

John appealed to the pope, however, who annulled the charter shortly after its issue. Despite this setback, the Magna Carta survived: John's son Henry III reissued it several times, with its definitive version implemented in 1225.

Taking the long view

Seen in this long perspective, the Trump-Leo confrontation appears less surprising. When a president invokes sacred language or imagery to justify violence, and a pope replies by denying divine sanction, they are reenacting a struggle as old as medieval Christendom: who may speak in God's name, and who may set limits on power.

The medieval world did not resolve this tension, but it learned to live with it by fracturing authority: first between church and crown, later between rulers and law. What is unsettling today is how easily modern leaders still reach for religious language to evade restraint, and how fragile the institutions meant to check them can appear.

This article was originally published on The Conversation

April is Stress Awareness Month, Autism Acceptance Month, Alcohol Awareness Month, and Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month.

Quinn Minute

Aunts, uncles, and cousins

By Rix Quinn

My friend Mel just got back from an aunt's funeral, where he met family members he did not know he had.

Personally, I've met more relatives at funerals than I have at weddings... but maybe it's because weddings require an invitation.

Last month, my uncle told me that my third cousin had died. No, two cousins didn't die before her. She was my third cousin because our great-grandmothers were sisters. Confusing, huh?

The word "removed"

just means a different generation. So, my first cousin's children would be my first cousins once removed.

I had not met the deceased, but her obituary photo looked just like my uncle...but without the beard.

I went to her memorial service so I could mingle with familiar relatives, plus meet new ones. As one of my buddies says, "You need to know cousins in several states, so you can travel cross-country for free."

The deceased cousin

was 97, and she had lived a busy life. She'd been married four times, each one an upgrade from her prior spouse.

At one time she'd also been a softball umpire. Maybe that's why she married so much. When a husband disputed her decision, she just called him "out."

Since the funeral was at the grave site, attendees then walked to a nearby large tent for a reception. I've never seen so many familiar-looking folks whose names I didn't know.

I talked to several sec-

ond cousins, third cousins, and even one old guy who looked like he'd wandered over because he smelled coffee.

After the event, I remembered what an old friend told me: "Any time an event serves food outdoors, you'll see lots of aunts."

Why have fairy tales been so popular for so many years? Why do we remember them? Order Rix's essay on this subject: FAIRY TALE WRITING SECRET

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H -84° L -70°	H 83° L -70°	H -69° L -49° 50%	H -69° L -51°	H -70° L -56*	H - 65° L - 63°	H -78° L -67° 30%

A DREAM COME TRUE:

Angel Reese is traded to the Atlanta Dream



Angel Reese was traded from the Chicago Sky to the Atlanta Dream for future first round picks. (Photo: x.com/Reese10Angel)

Atlanta's own, Taylor Rooks, took to Twitter/X to report the Chicago Sky would be trading Angel Reese, a two-time WNBA All-Star, to the Atlanta Dream. The news would later be confirmed by multiple outlets. The Dream acquired Reese in exchange for Atlanta's first-round picks in 2027 and 2028. The Dream also receives the right to swap second-round picks with the Sky in 2028.

"I'm beyond grateful for the opportunity to join the Atlanta Dream organization," Reese said in a news release from the Dream. "I'm focused on continuing

to grow my game, competing at the highest level, connecting with the fans, and giving everything I've got to the Dream."

"Angel is a dynamic talent and a perfect fit for what we are building in Atlanta," said Dream General Manager Dan Padover. "She has already proven herself as one of the most impactful players in the league, and her competitiveness, production, and drive to win align seamlessly with our vision. This is an exciting moment for our organization and our fans."

Per the Dream's press release, the team enters the

2026 season following a historic 2025 campaign, finishing with a franchise-best 30 wins and a .682 winning percentage. Smesko's system, rooted in efficiency and player development, transformed Atlanta into one of the league's most effective teams, improving from last in the league in 2024 to second in 2025 in offensive rating.

Reese will be joining Atlanta after two stellar years in Chicago. Reese averaged 13.6 points and 13.1 rebounds per game during her rookie season, earning a trip to the All-Star Game. She also finished second in the Rookie of the Year voting and earned some MVP votes. In 2025, Reese averaged 14.7 points and 12.6 rebounds per game. She also increased her shooting percentage to 47.8% in her second season.

The Culture can tap in with Women's Basketball in Atlanta

It was announced earlier this year that the Dream will play five games at State Farm Arena, the home of

the NBA's Atlanta Hawks. The five-game slate at State Farm Arena begins with the Dream's 2026 home opener on May 17th against the defending WNBA Champion Las Vegas Aces.

"There's nothing like Dream basketball in Atlanta," said Morgan Shaw Parker, president and COO of the Atlanta Dream. "Our fans bring unmatched passion and energy every night, and bringing five games to State Farm Arena allows us to share that atmosphere with even more people. It's a powerful moment for our franchise and a reflection of how much this city continues to embrace women's basketball."

Morgan is right! There's nothing like the Atlanta Dream games, and with Angel Reese coming to town, the team will need to host more games at State Farm Arena. Currently, the Dream's home arena, the Gateway Center in College Park, only holds around 3,500 fans. Conversely, the average attendance for the Dream at State Farm Arena

is over 17,000! Now, I don't want to say goodbye to Gateway Center just yet. But the Dream must negotiate with State Farm Arena about opening dates for more games.

Atlanta celebrates stars! The City of Atlanta loves big personalities! Whether it's Dominique Wilkins, Deion Sanders, Michael Vick, or currently Ronald Acuña, Jr. of the Atlanta Braves, the city will show up to watch their favorites perform. In this case, Reese brings a star power that is ready made for Atlanta. Celebrities such as Coco Gauff, Lala Anthony, Latto, Masai Russell, and Monica have welcomed Reese with open arms. The City of Atlanta also suffers from a serious case of 'the fear of missing out,' also known as FOMO. Whatever is the hottest thing or person is at the moment, citizens at large must feel like they must tap in!

Plus, Atlanta's Instagram followers on Monday to 299,000 as of Wednesday morning. Meanwhile, Chi-

cago's follower count dropped from around 584,700 to 572,000.

WNBA fans are excited about this trade, and many of Reese's fans are following her from Chicago to Atlanta. Many Atlanta Dream fans were Angel Reese supporters, and this trade will actually be great for the league. Also, the trade will draw casual WNBA fans and Reese's supporters, the "Reese's Pieces," to a city ready to embrace its newest star.

This is what I love about the current atmosphere around women's basketball: The fans, the players, and the rivalries! Angel Reese represents a segment of the new basketball culture that is highly fashionable and passionate. There are a lot of LSU and Southeastern Conference fans inside Atlanta as well! Plus, Reese will be playing in the WNBA's largest African-American market, with marketing opportunities galore, and there will be no stopping the ATL Barbie on and off the court!

Continued HUB Page 4

cited emergency powers to restructure the program in December, removing all women and minority business and limiting eligibility to only service-disabled veteran business owners.

"Businesses deserve a level playing field where government contracts are earned by performance and best value — not race or sex quotas," Hancock, who is running in a competitive GOP primary for comp-

troller, wrote on social media at the time.

That change shrank the program from more than 15,000 participants to just under 500. HUB certified business owners said at the time that the change risked undercutting their business strategy and would hurt their bottom line.

State Sen. Royce West, a Dallas Democrat who co-authored the 1999 bill that codified the program into state law, said the Legislature, not the comptroller, is

empowered to change the program.

"The Legislature voted. The answer was no," West said. "The Comptroller doesn't get to override that decision because he disagrees with it — that's not his role under the Texas Constitution, and these business owners deserve to have that principle upheld in court."

This is the first lawsuit challenging Hancock's changes to the program.

Why the businesses are

suing: During a news conference in Austin announcing the suit in March, the business owners said they are suing because they all lost out on government contracts after Hancock stripped their HUB certification in December.

"In this country, the legislature passes the laws, not the comptroller, and Texas is no different," Alphonso David, president & CEO of the Global Black Economic Forum, and lead counsel for the plaintiffs,

wrote in a statement. "The HUB case highlights a fundamental American principle — members of the executive branch cannot rewrite laws passed by the state legislature. They cannot deny citizens of their legal rights without a court order, legislative approval, or due process."

"Acting Comptroller Hancock took a program created by statute and rewrote it without any legal authority. His actions are baseless and unlawful and

must be reversed."

The businesses ultimately want the court to restore the program to its original form, arguing that Hancock overstepped his statutory authority, deprived them of state contracts without due process and violated the Texas Constitution.

Ruben Mercado Jr., founder of Ipsum General Contractors, said a contract he was drafting a \$1 million

Continue HUB Page 6

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle
Solution: April 9 - INSECTS

G	L	A	S	S		T	O	M		C	A	N	S
N	O	N	E	T		A	L	E		C	O	C	C
P	A	N	D	A		C	D	C		I	C	E	A
	M	A	G	G	O	T		C	I	C	A	D	A
		E	E	K		L	A	M	E				
F	D	A		D	A	D	A		P	R	O	T	E
R	U	D	E		P	U	N	T		O	V	O	L
U	N	I	X		I	N	G	O	T		A	D	I
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T	O	S	S	E	S		I	T	L	L		Y	E
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	P	O	L	L	E	N		B	E	E	T	L	E
A	L	G	A	E		J	A	R		W	I	E	L
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Not New To This, But True To This: OUR FAMILY FARM'S ANNUAL BLACK COWBOY TRAIL RIDE

By Don Holly

This article was originally posted in **The Foodscape Collective's**.
<https://thefoodscapescollective.com/>.

Mission Statement: "To inform, inspire, and connect the food and agriculture community by delivering engaging content, fostering professional networks, and promoting innovative ideas that drive sustainable development."

Hidden away in the ever-green East Texas pine trees of Tennessee Colony, Texas (Anderson County), the Holly Farm has been a part of my family for over 100 years, spanning 5 generations. Our family farm has long been more than just a place to raise livestock and grow crops; it's been a living testament to our heritage. Every year, when the spring rain showers roll in and the cold chill rolls out, our family hosts one of our most cherished traditions: The Holly Farm Trail Ride.

What began decades ago as a ride among friends and family has grown into a full weekend celebration of culture, community, and legacy. We've changed locations and even names since I was a kid, but at the center of it was my dad (Donald Holly) and my aunt Carol, who has kept this ship afloat. The trail ride brings together our local, mostly Black community of riders, young and old, who saddle up and ride the land in the spirit of the Black cowboys who helped shape the American West.

Our family's connection to the land runs deep. What started as a way for my great-great-grandparents to provide for their family on land they risked their lives

and limbs for has become something they couldn't have imagined generations later. As fifth-generation farmers, we've weathered the trials and tribulations of being Black farmers in America. Horses and horsemanship have always been part of our family's identity, which we've been able to hold on to in the modern era. Our annual trail ride honors that forgotten legacy and brings it vividly to life with each hoofbeat across the pasture.

The trail ride weekend is more than just a horseback journey—it's a full-on celebration. Attendees start arriving early Friday afternoon, hauling their horses and ATVs in from across Texas and neighboring states. The fields near our home transform into a vibrant, makeshift campground, with tents, trailers, barbecue pits, and pickup trucks forming a maze of people from families to the occasional riding club or posse.

Friday night kicks off with music, local blues, Zydeco, and country bands, to your favorite line dances and radio hits, as people take to the makeshift dance-floor, and the crowd dances under lights.

Saturday is typically the

heart of the event. This is when the majority of folks arrive to show off their classic cars, nice outfits, and even have mini reunions while we wait for the festivities to start. Then, with saddles cinched tight and hats tipped to the sky, the caravan (often led by my brother Jordan) sets off down a trail through our property, into the piney woods, and along old dirt roads that echo the journeys of cowboys' past.

Some ride quarter horses, others atop gaited Tennessee Walkers or, our favorite, Standardbreds. Oftentimes, you can see wagons, decorated with family banners and flags, roll in line, pulled by mules, and children riding ponies wave to folks who gather roadside to watch. There's laughter, storytelling (more like tall tales), and plenty of good-natured competition about whose horse looks the best or whose horse would win a hypothetical race. Seeing a young Black boy or girl climb into a saddle and ride proudly alongside their parents and grandparents is one of the most powerful sights of the weekend. It's proof that the legacy is alive and riding strong.

Over the years, trail riding has grown into some-

thing much larger and more mainstream, especially in urban/peri-urban spaces. It's now a regional tradition, drawing riders, musicians, vendors, and supporters from all walks of life. But we've kept the Holly Farm Trail Ride rooted in the values that started it all—respect for the land, love for our animals, honor for our ancestors, and commitment to community. As times change and rural traditions face new challenges with modern urbanism, we remain committed to keeping our trail ride alive. It's not just a yearly party; it's a cultural touchstone. It reminds us of where we come from, who we are, and the stories that deserve to be told.

When the dust settles, and the riders head home on Sunday afternoon, we always take a quiet moment to look over the land—hoofprints in the dirt, campfire ashes still smoldering, and the echoes of laughter drifting on the breeze. It's a reminder that this place, this tradition, and this legacy still matter. From our family farm to the wider world, the Holly Farm Trail Ride is our way of saying: we were here, we still ride, and we're not going anywhere.

Photos Credit: Rachel Lugendo



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April is Autism Acceptance Month

Continued HUB Page 5

bid for was withdrawn after Hancock restructured the program in December.

Wendell Stamley, president of the National Association of Minority Contractors, said its members in Texas have seen government contracts canceled and work they were expecting be unexpectedly returned to competitive bidding.

What state officials said: In a statement in March, Hancock defended the changes to HUB by pointing to the 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision that ended affirmative action in college admissions and a 2025 executive order by Gov. Greg Abbott that banned DEI policies in Texas agencies.

Every Texas business is equally eligible to compete for state contracts, regardless of race or gender," Hancock wrote. "Through the Centralized Master Bidders List, the primary system agencies use to notify vendors of bidding opportunities, any qualified business can register and compete. Texas will continue expanding opportunity for small businesses across our state the right way — rooted in fairness, equal treatment, and the Constitution."

This article first appeared on The Texas Tribune.

<link rel="canonical" href="https://www.texastribune.org/2026/03/02/texas-minority-women-business-hub-program-lawsuit-controller/" />

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