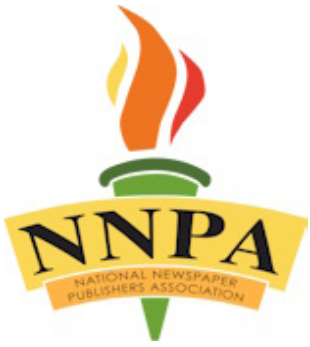




The Villager was founded by T. L. Wyatt in 1973, here, in East Austin, Texas.

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Vol. 53 No. 7

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October 2, 2026



RAPPIN'
THOMAS WYATT

CONGRESSIONAL LAUGHING STOCK

Sen. Eric Schmitt's attempt at a high-profile "gotcha" moment during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing this week instead became a national punchline, after the Missouri Republican confused the NBA's Atlanta Hawks with the University of Iowa Hawkeyes — two teams separated by 650 miles and entirely different leagues.

Schmitt pressed former special counsel Jack Smith on whether he had attended an Atlanta Hawks game on February 3, 2024, implying the trip connected Smith to Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis amid scrutiny of her relationship with a prosecutor. Smith repeatedly denied being in Atlanta or attending any Hawks game, prompting Schmitt to accuse him of perjury and call him a "total dirtbag."

The supposed evidence — a poster board of text messages held briefly behind Schmitt — did not mention Atlanta at all. When Smith finally saw the excerpt, he recognized it referenced a women's college basketball game he attended in Maryland: the Iowa Hawkeyes versus the University of Maryland, featuring star Caitlin Clark.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar stepped in to clarify the obvious mix-up. "Could it then be that the University of Iowa is the Hawkeyes?" she asked, noting that Iowa played Maryland that same day. Her correction underscored Schmitt's error and the shattered foundation of his accusation.

The blunder ricocheted across social media and political news outlets, with commentators highlighting Schmitt's confident posture moments before the mistake unraveled. What was meant to be a sharp interrogation instead became an instant viral misfire — one likely to shadow Schmitt as he seeks to elevate his national profile.

To be clear, this is why your vote matters in the upcoming November elections. The current senate, led by republicans, is a complete disaster. If they can't tell an NBA team from a collegiate one, then what the hell are they good for?

\$12M Cut from Minority Health Budget to Pay for RFK Jr. Security

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager



(VILLAGER) - The Department of Health and Human Services' decision to reduce the Office of Minority Health's budget and redirect those funds to cover security costs for independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has triggered a wave of criticism from civil rights leaders, public-health advocates, and members of Congress. The transfer, totaling roughly \$12 million, represents one of the most consequential mid-year reallocations within HHS in recent memory, both for its political implications and for its impact on longstanding efforts to reduce racial health disparities.

The Office of Minority Health, established in 1986, has historically served as the federal government's primary vehicle for addressing inequities in health outcomes among Black, Latino, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous communities. Its annual budget—approximately \$74 to \$75 million—supports community-based health initiatives, research partnerships, and grants to institutions including HBCUs and minority-serving organizations. Earlier this year, HHS notified congressional appropriators that OMH's budget would be reduced by about \$12 million. According to multiple outlets, including The Wall Street Journal, The New Republic, and Word In Black, the department acknowledged that the reallocated funds were needed to meet the sharply rising cost of Kennedy's federally mandated security detail.

Kennedy's security expenses have escalated dramatically since his entry into the 2024 presidential race. After receiving Secret Service protection—an unusual step for a non-major-party candidate—his security budget reportedly increased from roughly \$10 million in FY 2025 to an estimated \$17 million in FY 2026. HHS, which houses the Secret Service's administrative funding line for certain election-related security obligations, informed lawmakers that the agency needed to identify internal offsets to meet the new requirement. The Office of Minority Health became one of the sources for those offsets.

The consequences were immediate. Sixteen minority-health grants were canceled or suspended, affecting programs focused on maternal health, chronic-disease prevention, mental-health access, and community-based research. Several HBCUs reported

receiving notices that previously approved awards would not be funded due to "limited resources" and "programmatic reprioritization." Although HHS spokespeople insisted publicly that the cuts reflected internal assessments rather than a direct tradeoff with Kennedy's security, the department's own communications to appropriators made clear that the reallocation was tied to covering the increased protection costs.

The political reaction was swift and pointed. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Hispanic Caucus, and Asian Pacific American Caucus condemned the decision as an unacceptable diversion of funds from communities already facing disproportionate health burdens. One lawmaker described the move as "taking money from babies to beef up an entourage," a sentiment echoed across several public-health organizations that argued the cuts undermined decades of work to close racial health gaps. Advocacy groups also noted the symbolic weight of reducing minority-health funding during a period of widening disparities in maternal mortality, chronic disease, and access to preventive care.

HHS has not indicated whether the Office of Minority Health's budget will be restored in future cycles or whether additional offsets may be required as the election season continues. Congressional oversight committees have requested further documentation, and several members have signaled plans to pursue legislative protections that would prevent minority-health funds from being used for unrelated security obligations in the future.

What remains clear is that the reallocation has introduced a rare collision between public-health equity and the financial demands of federal election security. For communities served by the Office of Minority Health, the loss of \$12 million represents not only a reduction in services but a troubling precedent: that critical health-equity programs can be disrupted by political contingencies far outside their mission. As the election cycle advances, the debate over this decision is likely to intensify, raising broader questions about federal priorities, administrative discretion, and the protection of vulnerable communities in an era of heightened political volatility.

INSIDE

Historic East Austin Neighborhoods host forum for City Council, AISD candidate! See [page 2](#) for details.

Resident of Converse said to be fed up with direction of country, planned to "shoot up" the state's capitol. See [THREAT](#), page 2

Central Texas law enforcement reportedly testing AI-assisted police draft reports. What could go wrong? See [POLICE](#), page 3

Austin may soon have a major Data-Center hub in its own backyard without residents being made aware. See [COSMOS](#), page 3

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