

# Nancy Leftenant-Colon, Trailblazing Army Nurse and Air Force Veteran, Dies at 104

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

**(NNPA)** - Nancy Leftenant-Colon, the first Black woman to join the U.S. Army Nurse Corps after the military was desegregated in the 1940s, has died at the age of 104. She passed away earlier this month at a nursing home in New York. Known for quietly breaking barriers during her remarkable military career, Leftenant-Colon enjoyed a legacy of resilience, excellence, and service.

Born on September 29, 1920, in Goose Creek, South Carolina, to James and Eunice Leftenant, she graduated from Amityville High School in New York in 1939. Despite facing racial discrimination, Leftenant-Colon pursued her passion for nursing, graduating from Lincoln School of Nursing in 1941. According to her biography posted on Tuskegeearmen.org, when she initially sought to join the Armed Forces, she was denied due to her race. Undeterred, she persisted and was accepted as a reservist into the Army Nurse Corps in January 1945, becoming a Second Lieutenant and serving at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, treating wounded soldiers from World War II.

In 1948, after President Harry Truman issued



(Leftenant-Colon family photo via AP)



**Nancy Leftenant-Colon**

Known for quietly breaking barriers during her remarkable military career, Leftenant-Colon enjoyed a legacy of resilience, excellence, and service.

Executive Order 9981 abolishing segregation in the military, Leftenant-Colon became the first Black woman integrated into the Regular Army Nurse Corps. Her career continued to flourish as she transitioned to the newly established U.S. Air Force, where she supported missions during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, serving in various locations, including Germany, Japan, Alaska, and Vietnam. As a Flight Nurse with the 6481st Medical Air Evacuation Group, she evacuated wounded soldiers from active war zones and was credited with saving countless lives.

Her groundbreaking service extended beyond the battlefield. In 1989, she became the first woman elected as National President of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., where she held multiple leadership roles. Honored with numerous accolades, Leftenant-Colon received honorary doctorates from Tuskegee University and Mount Saint Vincent College and was inducted into the Long Island Air and Space Hall of Fame.

After retiring as Chief Nurse at McGuire Air Force Base in 1965, Leftenant-Colon continued to serve her community as a school nurse at her alma mater, Amityville High School, until 1984. In 2018, the school honored her with a new media center named in her memory.

"She was just an awesome person," her nephew Chris Leftenant told The Associated Press. "She never created waves when she was doing all this first this, first that. She never made a big thing of it. It was just happening."

## “The Threat That Unregulated AI Poses to Civil Rights and National Security”

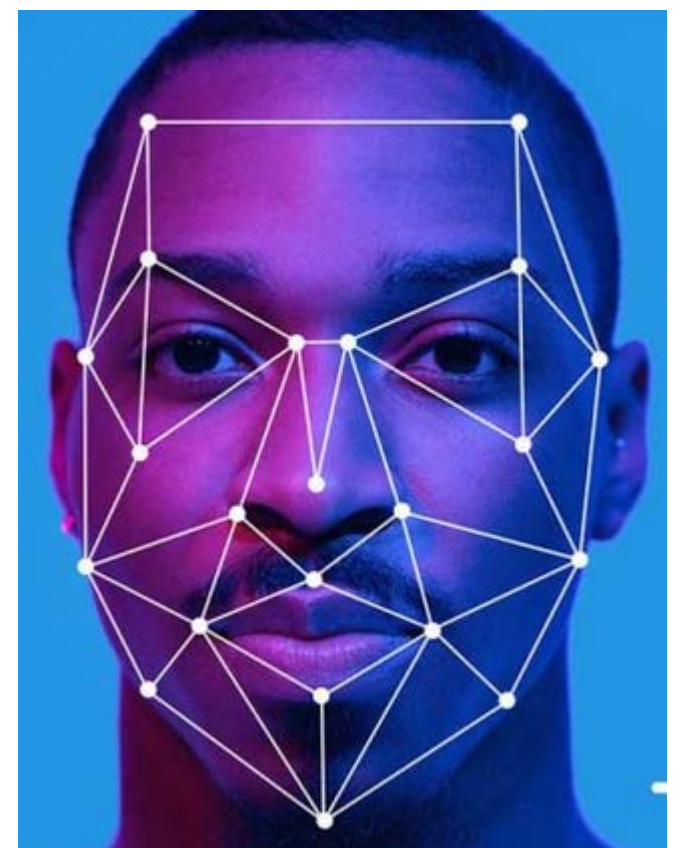
By April Ryan | NNPA NEWSWIRE

**(NNPA)** - “The threat that unregulated AI poses to Civil rights and National Security” is a top priority of the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights according to its President and Executive Director, Damon Hewitt. The rights organization has been working to reach Trump officials on AI bias data they presented to the major 2024 presidential campaigns during the race for the White House. Just days into the second Trump term, Damon Hewitt says the priority hasn’t changed but the “strategy” will.

The push by the rights group comes on the heels of this week’s White House announced partnership between OpenAI, Oracle, and SoftBank, initially formed in 2024. Stargate is funded by the private sector and will build data centers along with electricity generation. Days before the Trump Stargate announcement Hewitt expressed a concern about how the administration “by invitation”, will allow “companies to run a muck” when it comes to unregulated AI.

Just last week, Jake Sullivan, the outgoing Biden administration National Security advisor told this reporter, “There have been a lot of studies to show that [AI] bias is a genuine challenge.” He continued by saying AI bias can “undermine social cohesion in the United States and globally.” The former national security advisor also implicated problems in the fight against “terrorism” with biased AI intelligence. When Hewitt learned of Sullivan’s statement, he said, “The acknowledgment is important!”

During the Biden administration, the focus on AI bias was addressed through the administration’s AI Bill of Rights and an AI Executive Order. Hewitt believed the Biden administration understood the pervasiveness of the problem. Now Hewitt is working to make Trump officials more aware. A Trump administration staffer emphasized when asked about this AI bias concern that “this is early in the administration and there is more to come.” However, it is uncertain if more to come will include addressing the issue of AI bias.



## Texans fight back against Trump executive order rampages

by Gregory Stevenson | DEFENDER

**(LOCAL & STATE)** - Several Texas elected officials are fighting back, legally and otherwise, against what they are describing as an onslaught against the overall well-being of U.S. citizens.

According to these officials, these attacks come from President Donald Trump’s barrage of recent executive orders.

### Funding halt worries

The White House Office of Management and Budget, led by Project 2025 architect Russel Vought, issued a memo halting federal assistance programs that the current administration views as potentially not aligning with Trump’s ideological policies.

That funding halt, which could affect trillions of dollars, went into effect Tuesday at 5 p.m., leaving hundreds, if not thousands, of Texans and Americans nationally scrambling to figure out the next steps.

“This reckless freeze directly targets programs critical to millions of Texans, including Head Start, WIC, school lunches, Section 8 housing, child care grants, and funding for countless nonprofits that provide essential services to our communities,” read a Jan. 28 email sent out by the Texas Democrats.

The funding freeze could cause widespread disruption in healthcare research, education programs, and other initiatives. The Trump administration’s freeze even includes grants that have been awarded but not yet spent.

Multiple states have already reported that their

agencies and early education centers are unable to access money from Medicaid and Head Start.

### Texans respond

“This is what happens when we have a president who has no idea what life is like for everyday Americans—or simply doesn’t care,” said Texas Democratic Party Chair Gilberto Hinojosa in a statement. “Texas Democrats are sounding the alarm: this is not governance—it’s a calculated effort to destabilize our government, disenfranchise the public, and shock the resistance out of us.”

“At a time when Texans are already struggling with rising costs, stagnant wages, and negligent state leadership, the last thing we need is an administration playing politics with our livelihoods. This isn’t just a policy decision—it’s a betrayal of the working class and an undeniable sign that Trump’s America caters only to the wealthiest few,” added Hinojosa.

Hinojosa is not alone in condemning the recent move from the White House. U.S. Congressman Al Green, in fact, lumped an entire series of Trump’s executive orders together as a cause for serious concern on Jan. 24, days before Trump’s most recent funding freeze order.

“In less than a week, President Trump has, among many other things, per CNN: put a freeze on civil rights cases; recognized only two genders; shut down the gun violence prevention office; put DEI federal employees on paid leave; halted police reform agreements; begun mass deportations; and challenged birthright citizenship,” Green said in a statement.

“If the above doesn’t get your attention, maybe this will: A United States congressman has introduced H.J.Res.29, a joint resolution to allow President Trump to serve three terms. Friends, we cannot defeat the ‘Make America Hate Agenda’ by expecting others to help us when we won’t help others,” added Green, who issued a call for a coalition of resistance.

“While our issues appear to be different, the root cause of our conditions is the same for all. That root

cause for all emanates from policies promulgated by a would-be autocrat,” stated Green, as he painted a picture of what such a unified approach could produce.

Meanwhile, Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee issued a strong rebuke of the Trump administration’s freeze on federal financial assistance programs, a decision that threatens to jeopardize hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for critical programs in Harris County.

The Harris County Attorney—alongside attorneys general in states such as New York and Illinois—is considering legal action in response.

“President Trump does not have the power to withhold funds that Congress has already approved. Both the U.S. Constitution and federal law are clear on that,” said Menefee. “This reckless action puts Harris County at risk of losing hundreds of millions of dollars for essential programs—public safety, infrastructure, healthcare, and transportation. These programs aren’t political—they’re vital services that our residents rely on every day. Harris County families should not be victims of the Trump administration’s extremism. We are exploring legal options to ensure that this unlawful overreach doesn’t harm the people of Harris County.”

### A way forward

Green contends united, those most negatively impacted by Trump’s recent executive orders can achieve comprehensive immigration reform, a respectful recognition of individuals’ sexuality, gun reform, “righteous police reform,” and a defeat of efforts to end birthright citizenship.

Regarding the Trump administration’s efforts to kill DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion programs, jobs, and funding), Green said, “We can show that diversity and equity are needed inclusivities for all to overcome centuries of exclusivity for some.”

“Our unity against the policies of rising far-right-wing autocracy is the best hope for democracy,” added Green.