

The Seafood Spree Wasn't Just Waste, It Was a Warning



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the answer from Washington is the same: *"There's no money."*

But there was money—**millions of dollars**—for a Pentagon seafood buffet.

There was money for luxury furniture.

There was money for electronics and catered feasts.

There was money for everything except the people who actually need it.

The numbers don't lie. The excuses do.

East Austin Is Living the Consequences of Federal Neglect

East Austin residents are facing:

- **Rent increases of hundreds of dollars a month**

- **Property taxes that outpace wages**

- **Food prices up 20–40% since 2020**

- **Medical debt rising even for insured families**

- **A shrinking supply of affordable housing**

Meanwhile, the Pentagon is burning through cash to avoid future budget cuts—cuts that never come, because Congress treats military spending as sacred and community spending as optional.

This is how inequality is engineered.

The Seafood Spree Wasn't Just Waste—It Was a Warning

Government watchdog Open the Books confirmed the spending. Snopes verified the broader pattern. The facts are not in dispute.

But the timing matters.

The seafood binge occurred **just months before U.S. attacks on Iran and Venezuela**, part of a long documented pattern where military dining budgets spike ahead of escalation.

So while East Austin families were tightening their belts, the Pentagon was loosening its own in preparation for conflict.

This Is What Structural Disrespect Looks Like

East Austin has been told for decades to "be patient," "wait for relief," "trust the process," and "understand the constraints."

But the Pentagon faces no constraints.

It faces no austerity.

It faces no scrutiny that sticks.

The message is clear:

- **Communities must sacrifice.**
- **The military must never be inconvenienced.**

This is not shared sacrifice.

It's institutional gluttony.

What East Austin Deserves to Ask—Loudly

If the Pentagon can spend **\$9 million on crab legs and lobster in one month**, then:

- Why can't Austin get federal support for affordable housing?

- Why can't East Austin families get relief from skyrocketing food costs?

- Why can't local clinics get funding to keep elders healthy?

- Why can't renters get protection from predatory increases?

The answer is not "we can't afford it."

The answer is **"we chose not to."**

The Bottom Line

The Pentagon's seafood spree is not just a scandal—it's a mirror. It reflects a government that treats luxury as a necessity for itself and necessity as a luxury for everyone else.

East Austin families are not struggling because the money doesn't exist.

They are struggling because the money is being spent somewhere else—on lobster tails, crab legs, and pianos for the powerful.

And until that changes, the affordability crisis will not be an accident.

It will be a policy.

Black Women Are Rebuilding What Corporate America Abandoned

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager

(VILLAGER) - Corporate America's retreat from its own racial justice promises has been swift, calculated, and devastatingly predictable. Four years after companies pledged to transform their cultures in the wake of George Floyd's murder, the very infrastructure built to support equity has been quietly dismantled. Diversity, equity, and inclusion roles have been slashed across industries, with some companies cutting these positions by more than half and others eliminating entire departments. The rollback has been most aggressive in tech, where DEI job postings have fallen sharply and internal programs have been stripped down to symbolic gestures. And as always, the people absorbing the impact first and most forcefully are Black women.

This is not an accident of economics. It is the result of a political climate that has made DEI a target and a corporate culture that never fully embraced equity beyond the press release. After the Supreme Court's affirmative action ruling, companies seized the moment to retreat, citing "legal uncertainty" even though the decision did not require them to dismantle internal equity programs. The ruling became a convenient shield, allowing corporations to walk back commitments they had never intended to sustain. In the process, Black women—who were already navigating workplaces shaped by both racism and sexism—lost mentorship pipelines, leadership pathways, and the few institutional protections that existed to challenge bias.

Research from Harvard and other institutions confirms what Black women have long described: their career trajectories are uniquely shaped by team dynamics, racial isolation, and the absence of structural support. When DEI programs are gutted, these conditions worsen. The disappearance of equity offices in higher education mirrors the corporate retreat, leaving Black women faculty, staff, and students without the resources that once helped them navigate hostile environments. The rollback is national, coordinated, and bipartisan in its neglect. It is a reminder that institutions will always choose comfort over accountability unless forced otherwise.

Yet the story does not end with loss. Across the country, Black women are rebuilding their careers and professional ecosystems without waiting for corporate permission. They are launching businesses at some of the fastest rates in the nation, forming peer mentorship networks, creating community based professional circles, and designing their own equity infrastructures outside the reach of corporate gatekeepers. This is not the familiar narrative of resilience that corporations love to romanticize. It is a deliberate strategy born from clarity: when institutions retreat, Black women inno-



vate; when systems fail, Black women build.

For East Austin, this national pattern feels deeply familiar. Residents here have lived through decades of institutional retreat—school closures, health care deserts, uneven city investment, and the slow erosion of public commitments to Black neighborhoods. The dismantling of DEI programs is simply another version of the same story: when the structures meant to protect marginalized communities are weakened, those communities are expected to absorb the fallout alone. But East Austin also knows how to build outside the system. Black women here have long created their own networks of support, from church based organizing to neighborhood associations to entrepreneurial circles that thrive despite the city's uneven landscape of opportunity.

For NNPA readers across the country, the rollback of DEI is not just a workplace issue; it is a political signal. It tells us whose labor is valued only when it is convenient, whose voices are welcomed only when they do not challenge power, and whose futures are considered expendable once public attention shifts. The current wave of DEI cuts is not a correction or a neutral budget decision. It is a retreat from accountability, a reversal of promises, and a reminder that progress without enforcement is always temporary.

Black women are not waiting for institutions to rediscover their conscience. They are building new pathways, new economies, and new forms of collective power. The question is not whether they will rebuild—they already are. The question is whether the country will finally recognize that the future they are constructing is the one that institutions failed to deliver.

TDLR Suspends Midwife's License Following Maternal and Infant Deaths

from the Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation



There are Midwives Associations throughout the state of Texas. /East Texas Midwives Association/Facebook

(AUSTIN, TX)—The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) has issued an emergency order suspending the midwifery license of Salli M. Gonzalez. Gonzalez is prohibited from providing midwifery services in the State of Texas unless a court orders that license restored.

The emergency action follows investigations into two cases involving Gonzalez's care of clients that resulted in serious outcomes, including an infant death in February 2023 and a maternal death in April 2023. In both cases, TDLR determined Gonzalez failed to follow the standards of care and provisions of the Texas Midwifery Law and Rules.

In addition, TDLR was made aware of a social media discussion between Gonzalez and another midwife discussing a clinical situation involving several complications that would typically require a transfer recommendation under Texas Midwifery Law and Rules. In response, Gonzalez stated, "Those things are not concerning to me."

TDLR determined that Gonzalez's response and failure to identify issues requiring escalation could place pregnant clients and unborn children at risk. Based on Gonzalez's pattern of conduct and stated disregard for midwifery standards of care as well as

the Texas Midwifery Law and Rules, TDLR concluded that emergency action was necessary to protect public health and safety of pregnant women.

"TDLR's responsibility is to protect the health and safety of Texans," said TDLR Executive Director Courtney Arbour. "When a license holder's conduct poses a risk to the public, TDLR will take action to protect Texans."

TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas, including the Texas Lottery and Charitable Bingo programs. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 41 business and occupational licensing programs with more than 1,000,000 licensees across the state.

Visit TDLR's website for more information and resources. You can search the TDLR licensee database, and also find past violations in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR's Customer Service line is available anytime between 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202.