

## A Black Woman in Texas Begins 5 Year Prison Sentence for Voting



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With the midterm elections just weeks away, activists and others are keeping keen eyes on any semblance of voter suppression – or worse. For Crystal Mason of Rendon, Texas, “worse” took the form of the 2016 presidential election. Having previously spent time in federal prison on a tax fraud conviction, Mason was ineligible to vote in Texas. She claimed she didn’t know that.

Mason hadn’t originally planned to vote, according to supporters who have started a change.org petition that already gained more than 100,000 signatures.

After her mother reminded her of how important voting is, Mason decided to vote as a means of setting a good example for her children.

For that, she’s now serving a minimum of five years in prison.

Warren St. John, her defense attorney, said after the verdict that an appeal had already been filed and that he is hopeful his client will soon be released on bond, according to the Fort Worth Star Telegram.

During her testimony, Mason — who previously served just shy of three years in federal prison — told the court that she was assigned a provisional ballot after she arrived at her usual polling place and discovered that her name was not on the voter roll.

Mason responded that she was never told by the federal court, her supervision officer, the election workers or U.S. District Judge John McBryde, the sentencing judge in her fraud case, that she would not be

able to vote in elections until she finished serving her sentence, supervised release included.

During cross-examination by Tarrant County prosecutor Matt Smid, Mason was reminded that she had jeopardized her freedom in the past by violating federal tax laws. However, sacrificing her freedom to vote was not something she would knowingly do, Mason explained to District Judge Ruben Gonzales, who would ultimately determine sentencing. “I inflated returns. I was trying to get more money back for my clients. I admitted that. I owned up to that. I took accountability for that. I would never do that again.

Mason wrote on her Facebook page before surrendering herself, “This fight is not over, I’m glad God choose me for this journey.

## African Diaspora Host Candidate Forum



Pictured left to right are: Edward L. Hanna; Chari Kelly and Stuart Litwin. Photo by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon | Villager Columnist

Saturday, September 29, 2018, a non-profit group, "Diaspora Votes" held a Barbecue Greet and Meet event. The African Diaspora had the opportunity to engage with several candidates and was well attended.

This affair focused on candidates running for the Round Rock Independent School District and the 3rd Court of Appeals which, covers twenty-four counties, such as Williamson, Bell, Hays, Bastrop, Comal, Brazos, Burleson, Bosque, and Travis County.

Finally, Candidates Edward L. Hanna and Stuart Litwin are both competing for Round Rock ISD Place 4. Edward Hanna who was appointed to place 4 is considered the incumbent. Moreover, Mr. Hanna graduated from Praire View A & M University and serves as the vice president of Business Banking at BBVA Compass Bank. In addition, he’s been very involved in the community. Secondly, Stuart Litwin is a precinct chair in Williamson County and has been very active within the Round Rock political scene.

## Central Texas Community Welcomes Liberian Elected Official

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon | Villager Columnist

Over the years, the Liberian American community in Central Texas has seen drastic growth. According to Paul, the president of Liberian American, there are over two hundred and fifty families and the association serves as a way of "bringing the community together."

The Association has organized numerous events, like their Independence Day Celebration. Recently, the community held a Question and Answer session with Liberian House Representatives to discuss the improvement of customs and goods.

According to Paul, "since I have be-



Pictured left to right are: Paul (President of the Liberian Community) and the Honorable Vincent S.T Willie of Liberia. Photo by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon

come president of the Liberian American Association, I plan to organize more of these gatherings. It is important for our community to be in touch with issues and elected officials of our native Homeland." Finally, the Liberian American community is one of the most dynamic African communities of Central Texas.

## Growing Influence of the African Diaspora in Pflugerville

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon | Villager Columnist

Central Texas has seen a radical boom of Africans relocating to for a better way of life. From Nigerians to Togolese to Congolese, many have chosen to bypass immigrant cities like; New York City or Los Angeles. Some have come to attend college, employment opportunities. While others have come to start-up their own business due to the quality commerce climate.

For instance, Lady T who is Nigerian American has chosen to open a restaurant in Pflugerville, Texas. According to Lady T, they chose Pflugerville due to



Pictured (l-r): Lady T and Joy. Photo by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon

its diverse population and also a thriving economy. In other words, these are some of the "ingredients that would help her business to be successful."

Lady T, which, is located at 15608 Spring Hill Pflugerville, Texas, one can find both Afri-

can and Nigerian food. The restaurant serves regular African dishes and authentic Nigerian delicacies, such as; Egusi, Bitter Leaf, Afang, and Pepper soup. She plans to take over her competition through food and good customer services.



## PROPOSED JANUARY 2019 SERVICE CHANGES

### Upcoming October Community Conversations

This October, Capital Metro will come to you so that we can talk further about the proposed January 2019 service changes and hear your feedback. In addition to the opportunities listed below, Capital Metro staff members will be at bus stops in areas affected by the proposed changes to discuss them with our customers. The Capital Metro board of directors will vote on the proposals on Oct. 22. For more details, visit [CapMetro.org/January2019](http://CapMetro.org/January2019).

Capital Metro will provide opportunities for you to share input at any of the following engagement events:

**Wednesday, Oct. 10**  
**Public Hearing**  
Capital Metro Headquarters  
2910 East 5th St, Austin, TX 78702  
Served by Routes 4 & 300  
Noon

**Wednesday, Oct. 17**  
**North Lamar Transit Center**  
Served by Routes 1, 323, 350, 383 & 801  
3-5 p.m.

**Thursday, Oct. 18**  
**January 2019 Service Change Webinar**  
1 p.m.

**Thursday, Oct. 18**  
**Republic Square**  
Served by downtown routes  
3-5 p.m.

**Friday, Oct. 19**  
**Westgate**  
Served by Routes 30, 300, 311, 315, 318 & 803  
3-5 p.m.

**Online**  
Email: [Feedback@capmetro.org](mailto:Feedback@capmetro.org)  
Twitter: @CapMetroATX

The proposal will go before the Capital Metro board of directors on October 22. If approved, the changes would take effect Sunday, January 6.

Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications are provided upon request. Please provide notice at least two days in advance. Contact Martin Kareithi at 512-389-7583 or email [martin.kareithi@capmetro.org](mailto:martin.kareithi@capmetro.org) for more information or to request informational materials in another format.