

Austin mayors – Lee Leffingwell, Lee Cooke and Ron Mullen – endorsed Prop A. continued from page 1



Standing center, from left to right: former Austin mayors – Ron Mullen, Lee Cooke and Lee Leffingwell.

In July, Save Austin Now submitted more than 25,600 “self-validated signatures” in its so-called #MakeAustinSafe initiative. A few days later, the PAC threatened legal action if their petition wasn’t certified or if their measure wasn’t placed on the November ballot.

In early August, the City of Austin certified the PAC’s petition, officially placing its initiative on the ballot.

Save Austin Now Co-founder Cleo Petricek has said that APD’s officer shortage is putting the community in harm’s way, including a rise in homicides and delayed response times. Ken Casaday, president of the Austin Police Association and a supporter of Prop A, has also stated on numerous occasions that the staffing shortage is affecting response times.

Related Articles

On Oct. 5, Save Austin Now announced Councilmember Mackenzie Kelly and three former Austin mayors – Lee Leffingwell, Lee Cooke and Ron Mullen – endorsed Prop A.

However, the initiative has faced opposition from local leaders, including Austin Mayor Steve Adler. During an interview with KVUE Daybreak on Aug. 9, Adler said:

“[The initiative is] really out of date, if it was ever appropriate. It would require a budget increase of \$150 to \$300 million over a five-year period of time. And with a 3.5% cap on our budgets now, this part of our budget would grow faster than the overall budget. There’s no way to accomplish it without either raising taxes or cutting programs like fire, EMS, or libraries or parks. It’s just a standard that I’m not sure there’s anybody that supports it other than the police union and the folks that tried to gather the signatures for the petition.”

The City’s Financial Services Department estimated in August that the #MakeAustinSafe initiative could potentially take nearly \$120 million per year out of the City’s budget.

In early September, an opposition campaign called “No Way on Prop A” gathered to protest the proposition. Local leaders in support of the campaign include Austin City Council members Vanessa Fuentes (District 2) and Alison Alter (District 10).

On Oct. 1, the Austin Firefighters Association announced that it has voted to oppose Prop A and to dedicate funds to fight the measure. Opponents of the proposition say it would force cuts to the Austin Fire Department, Austin-Travis County EMS,

911 call takers and more in order to increase police staffing.

Austin Proposition A ballot language

According to the Travis County Clerk, the ballot language for Prop A will be:

“Shall a petitioned ordinance be approved to enhance public safety and police oversight, transparency and accountability by adding new chapter 2-16 to establish minimum standards for the police department to ensure effective public safety and protect residents and visitors to Austin, and prescribing minimal requirements for achieving the same, at an estimated cost of \$271.5 million - \$598.8 million over five years?”

When can you vote on Prop A?

In-person early voting for the Nov. 2 election will run from Monday, Oct. 18, to Friday, Oct. 29. The last day to apply for a mail-in ballot is Friday, Oct. 22. Mail-in ballots must be received by 7 p.m. on Nov. 2 or 5 p.m. on Nov. 3 if the envelope was postmarked by 7 p.m. on Election Day.

On Election Day, polling locations will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. For early voters, polls are open at the same time Monday through Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp Suffer Outages after Whistleblower Goes Public

Written by Stacy M. Brown | NNPA NEWSWIRE



Mark Zuckerberg, President and CEO of Facebook

(NNPA) - Just one day after a whistleblower claimed that Facebook is aware of how its used to spread hate, violence and misinformation, Facebook suffered major outages on Monday, October 4.

Instagram and WhatsApp – both owned by Facebook – also were shuttered.

“We’re aware that some people are having trouble accessing our apps and products,” Facebook officials wrote on Twitter.

“We’re working to get things back to normal as quickly as possible, and we apologize for any inconvenience.”

The tracking site, Down Detector, reported “tens of thousands of reports for each of the services.”

While Facebook would load on Monday; Instagram and WhatsApp were only accessible for viewing. Users couldn’t load content or send messages.

The problems surfaced – coincidentally, or not – after Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen made her claims on “60 Minutes.”

She said Facebook worked to hide evidence that individuals and entities used the site to spread hate, push violence and misinformation.

Facebook has denied those claims.

Racist Much? Katy ISD bans another Black book

BY RESHONDA TATE BILLINGSLEY | THE DEFENDER

(KATY, TX)-The Katy Independent School District is at it again – banning a Black book because of its ‘racial’ content. Award-winning children’s author Jerry Craft was scheduled to visit students virtually on Oct. 4 to discuss his books. But 500 Katy ISD parents protested and demanded the visit be canceled, claiming the subject matter promotes critical race theory, so the district quietly canceled the visit and removed the book from all of their libraries.

Craft is the writer and illustrator of “New Kid” and its sequel “Class Act,” about a young Black boy struggling to fit in as one of the few kids of color in a prestigious private school. Both books are #1 New York Times Bestsellers. Craft is the winner of the 2020 Newberry Medal, the Coretta Scott King Author Award, and the Kirkus Prize. His books focus largely on the culture and lives of modern-day Black preteens and are based on the actual experiences of Craft’s two sons.

Universal Pictures has acquired film rights to New Kid, with LeBron James’ The Spring Hill Company on board to develop and produce.

A flyer sent out at the start of the school year touted Craft’s Oct. 4 virtual visit with 3rd through 5th graders at Roosevelt Alexander Elementary school. Last week, parents and guardians received another notice that they could opt their students out of the visit.

More than 30 parents opted out. One of them, Bonnie Anderson, started a petition calling on the district to cancel the virtual visit and ban the books.

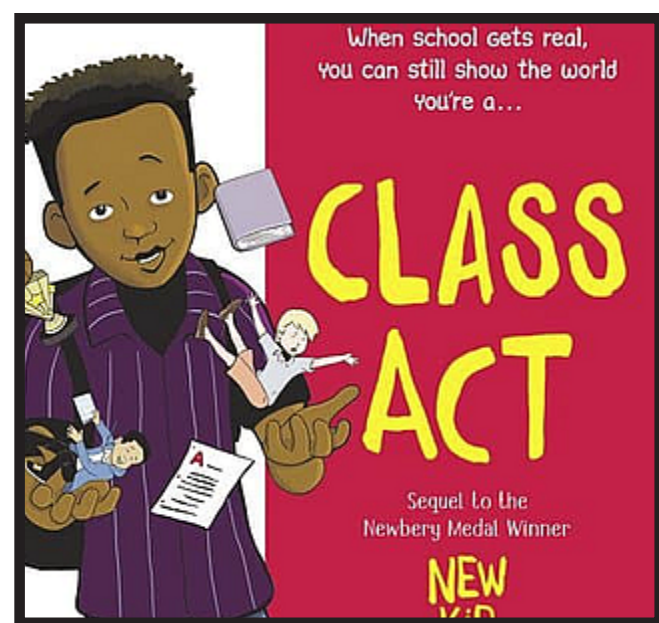
“It is inappropriate instructional material,” said Anderson, a former candidate for Katy ISD school board and a party in a lawsuit against the district’s mask mandate.

Anderson says the petition garnered 444 signatures before she says it was taken down for violating the Change.org community guidelines.

“They are pointed at white children displaying microaggressions to children of color. The books don’t come out and say, ‘we want white children to feel like oppressors’, but that is absolutely what they will do,” Anderson said.

Katy ISD says any parent who wants to challenge a library selection, is free to do so.

“Katy ISD library books are routinely reviewed through this process. Pending the outcome of a review committee, school day activities associated with the selection under review are temporarily



placed on hold. School activities pertaining to selections under review and hosted outside of the instructional day, however, may continue as a formal review process takes place,” said Laura A. Davis, Media Relations Director at Katy ISD.

Davis says students can still read the book, just not as part of the curriculum. Last year, Katy ISD banned “The Hate You Give” by popular author Angie Thomas because it dealt with racism and police brutality.

Parent Jada Massey says those protesting parents want to whitewash history.

“They want their kids to be taught this rosy picture of both the past and present. They want their kids to grow up oblivious to anything that doesn’t fit nicely into their narratives. And now, they’re using ‘critical race theory’ as a cover. It’s really sad,” Massey said.

The Defender reached out to Craft, who has written more than 10 books and is well-known for his graphic books and illustrations. He can’t comment at the time, but readers say Katy’s efforts will only lead them to further rally around the book.

“I’d never heard of Jerry Craft until a friend shared this yesterday. My kids are past this age now. But I bought the books strictly because of this. I hope lil Miss Bonnie makes him a lot of money over this stunt,” said parent Joi Bailey Green.

Added Deborah Lewis, “I’m definitely going to order books and encourage my friends to purchase too. I hope this backwards move make his sales explode.”