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Biden must look to executive action to fulfill vow to Black Americans

BY MARTY JOHNSON | THE HILL

(THE HILL) - President-elect Joe Biden vowed in a public address the night he was projected as the nation's next president to have Black Americans' backs, thanking them for overwhelmingly voting for him instead of President Trump.

While exit polls show Trump won a higher percentage of the Black vote in 2020 than in 2016, by sheer numbers no racial voting bloc supported the former vice president more staunchly.

As such, it makes sense that Biden will attempt to make good on his Nov. 7 promise during his first 100 days in office. But to do so, Biden may be forced to rely on executive orders given the legislative hurdles he's likely to face.

At best, Democrats will win a Senate majority in a 50-50 split, allowing Vice President-elect Kamala Harris to be the tie-breaking vote. But that's only if the party is able to unseat Georgia's two Republican senators in runoff elections on

Jan. 5. Executive orders are effectively unilateral policy decisions, but they do have limits, with the general rule being that they can only build on or further enforce legislation that Congress has passed while falling within the scope of the presidential powers outlined in the Constitution.

"A president is bound by existing statute ... generally a president is not allowed to exceed what Congress has set down," Robert Tsai, law professor at American University, told The Hill.

However, simply reversing orders that a former president introduced is straightforward and something that Biden could do his first day in office.

"Anything that the previous president did purely through executive order, the incoming administration [is] going to have [its] lawyers go through everything," Tsai said. "[Biden will] reverse any of those he can."

"I think that there's a lot that can be done by executive order, a lot of this is just undoing the mean spirited, and often racist policy decisions that Trump has executed with the stroke of a pen," Andre Banks, who's involved with the activist group Color of Change, said. "I think rolling back four years of racially motivated executive orders is a really good start."

Trump has penned 194 executive orders while in office, including several that have been highly controversial such as his ban on immigration from a handful of predominantly-Muslim countries.

In the same vein, during the homestretch of the election cycle, Trump signed a pair of executive orders that banned federal agencies and contractors from conducting diversity training and rolled back fair housing guidance laid down by the Obama administration.

The orders were heavily criticized, and re-



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sulted in the Trump administration being sued by civil rights groups over both. They also are directly at odds with initial proposals Biden and Harris have released.

Biden's presidential transition website says "Biden-Harris administration will: ... [make] bold investments in homeownership and access to affordable housing for Black, Brown and Native Families," and "[p]romote diversity and accountability in leadership across key positions in all federal agencies."

That said, two of the other policy areas that are important to Black Americans — voting rights and police reform — will be harder for Biden to change through executive order.

Democratic House leadership has already signaled that it plans on shipping to the Senate two bills stymied by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) in the current Congress.

The first, HR1, known as the For The People Act, is a wide-ranging bill that is chock-full of Democratic wishes, including support for D.C. statehood and automatic voter registration.

A second bill, HR4, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, would restore part of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA). Specifically, the bill modernizes the part of the VRA that was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2013, creating more federal oversight to how states with known histories of racial discrimination and voter suppression change their voting laws.

Because of the court's decision seven years ago, states were able to tighten their voting laws, often disproportionately affecting and disenfranchising Black Americans.

"We do need a new voting rights act, we do need protection for voting rights and streamlining some of the procedures that people go through, but ... that's gonna that's going to take legislation," Tsai said.

He added: "The most important thing that [President-elect] Biden can do in the voting rights area is to pick

a very good attorney general, because the attorney general is going to be able to set the priorities [for the Department of Justice] and to make sure that the people in charge of the Civil Rights Division, in charge of the voting rights section are pursuing the kinds of priorities that he wants."

The same deal goes for Biden's police reform proposal, which features the banning of chokeholds, the creation of a national police oversight commission and more ways to hold police officers accountable.

Activists have long

advocated for reform of law enforcement and the justice system, though the movement became nationwide this summer following the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.



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NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION TO SELECT A FIRM TO PROVIDE DESIGN BUILD SERVICES FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

Pflugerville ISD will accept qualifications until 2:00 p.m., December 01, 2020, in the lobby of the PISD Administration Building. Address all submittals to:

Craig Pruett, Executive Director of Purchasing & Distribution Services
Pflugerville Independent School District
1401 West Pecan
Pflugerville, Texas 78660

The anticipated budget for this project is estimated at \$30,000,000. The scope and schedule for this project as currently defined is described in the Request for Qualifications Document.

Qualifications documents may be obtained by contacting the Pflugerville ISD Purchasing Department by email at craig.pruett@pfsd.net.

Documents can also be downloaded from the district website at: <http://www.pfsd.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=259>

Pflugerville I.S.D. reserves the right to waive any formalities and to reject any or all submittals.

Project Schedule of Events

- Request for Qualifications Released: November 14, 2020
- Due Date for Qualifications: December 01, 2020, 2:00 p.m.
- Board Approval Expected: December 17, 2020
- Notice to Proceed: December 18, 2020
- Contract Start Date: January 01, 2021
- Substantial Completion: December 31, 2021

Citation by Publication

The State of Texas
To unknown heirs of JAMES RICKEY DEARY, Deceased
Cause No. C-1-PB-20-002262,
in Probate Court Number 1, Travis County, Texas.

BARBARA MILLIGAN filed an Application for Administration and to Determine Heirship and for Letters of Independent, or in the Alternative, Dependent Administration in the above-numbered and -entitled estate on November 12, 2020, requesting that the Court determine who are the heirs and only heirs of JAMES RICKEY DEARY, Deceased, and their respective shares and interests in such estate.

All unknown heirs and any other persons interested in this estate are cited to appear before this Court by filing a written contest or answer to this application if they want to do so. The Court may act on this application at any time at the Travis County Probate Courthouse, 200 West 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, on or after 10:00 a.m. on the first Monday after the expiration of ten days from the publication date of this citation. Therefore, to ensure consideration, any contest, answer, or other response must be filed with the Travis County Clerk in cause number C-1-PB-20-002262, styled IN THE ESTATE OF JAMES RICKEY DEARY, DECEASED, on or before the above-noted date and time.

If this citation is not served within 90 days after it is issued, it must be returned unserved.

Given under my hand and seal on November 12, 2020,

Dana DeBeauvoir

County Clerk, Travis County, Texas
P.O. Box 149325, Austin, Texas 78714-9325
By Deputy:



28P - 000004093
C-1-PB-20-002262

"The Pflugerville Independent School District will open Proposals for: District Cabling and Video Security Support on Friday, December 4, 2020 @ 2:00 p.m.

All proposals may be submitted (by mail or hand carry) to: Pflugerville ISD
1401 West Pecan
Pflugerville, TX 78660
Attn: Janie Ornelas

Proposals may be picked up in person or downloaded from the PISD website at: www.pfsd.net.

Travis County Healthcare District d/b/a Central Health
1111 E. Cesar Chavez Street
Austin, TX 78702

Request for Proposal (RFP) 2010-003 Web Services, Support and Hosting
Due Date: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 by 2:00 PM

Scope of Work: Central Health is seeking an agency to provide website service/support and development services for ongoing expansion, refinement, or modification for all existing web properties, and hosting service and support for the same.

Ordering Instructions: All Solicitation Packages can be downloaded from: <https://prod.bidsync.com/central-health>, OR <http://www.txsmartbuy.comsp>



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