



50th



www.TheAustinVillager.com

The Villager

6633 E HIGHWAY 290, STE. 101
AUSTIN, TX 78723



This paper can be recycled

Vol. 50 No. 24

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January 26, 2024

THE GIVING SEASON

RAPPIN'
Thomas Wyatt

Hello Villagerians! This weekend is our time to celebrate **Martin Luther King, Jr.** --- by giving.

The **Festival** will be held at **Huston-Tillotson University**, Saturday, where donations will be appreciated from all visitors to the school grounds. Please find relevant information to the right of this article.

The **Austin Area Heritage Council** is helping support the **Central Texas Food Bank** by asking those coming to the event to bring items to help stock the shelves.

Despite the most recent accolades of our rebounding economy and soaring stock market numbers, there are still many people in Austin without homes, food, clothing, and heat. And it's quite remarkable how those, who are suffering through hard times, don't even get a blip of news coverage; because all presidential candidates want to bang their chests and adorn you with how good they are/have been for **America**.

One candidate only cries about himself. No mention of restoring fair voting rights to **Texans** and **Georgians**. No mention of foreign policy. No mention of addressing domestic terrorism. No mention of gun laws and protecting our children from being massacred in their classrooms. No mention of tax cuts for the poor; or programs to help the misfortunate. No mention of education reform; or preventing the assault on **Black** culture curriculums. No mention of health care; or a real substitution for the **Affordable Care Act**. No mention of the direction of fossil fuels versus electric alternatives. No mention of federal versus state immigration policies. No mention of ending the war in the **Middle East**. No mention of housing referendums for unaffordable skyrocketing home prices. Tell me something, how does this help you?

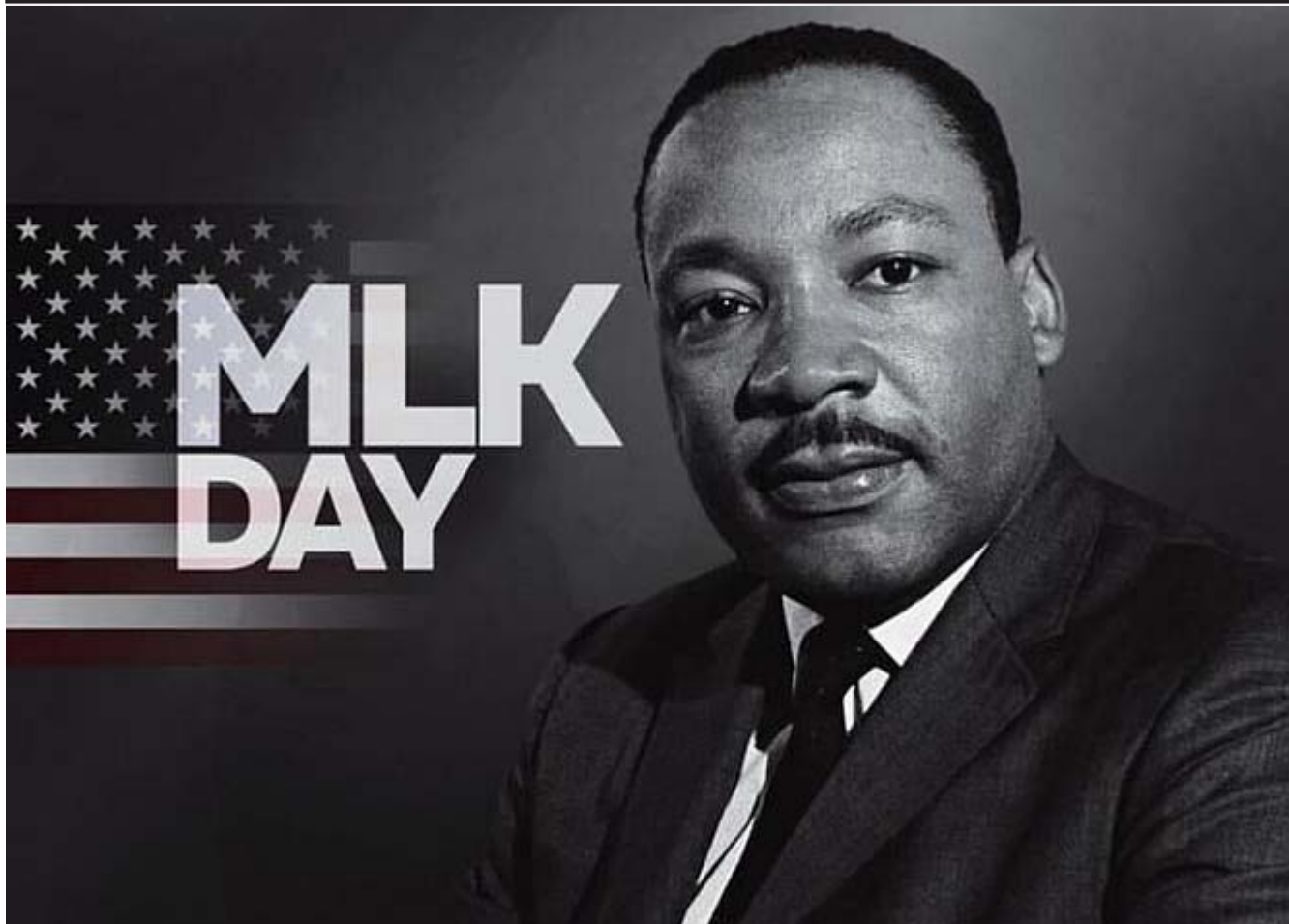
Another candidate can't even say the word **slavery** in fear of it hurting her chances to win the **GOP** nomination. And yet again, no mention of the policies in the aforementioned paragraph. Her only focus is on the whack-job mentioned in the previous block. How does this help you?

Then, there's the final candidate. This guy believes the only way to get the *slipping* Black vote is to ban **menthols**. So, just to be clear, this guy wants to ban menthols in **2024**? How long has he been **President**? How long was he **Vice President**? Hell, how long has this guy been on **Capitol Hill**? How does this help you?

I think you've seen enough. Please bring something to **The Festival**, Saturday, for our hungry citizens. And if you can't make it to that, make time to visit an **Austin Area food Bank** near you. Find information at <https://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/>.

May Elohim Bless you ALL!

The Austin Area Heritage Council MLK Festival, Saturday!



2024 Theme:

"AFFIRMING OUR RIGHT TO JUSTICE & EQUALITY."

Austin Area Heritage Council Presents Festival to Honor

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sponsored by

City of Austin, Huston-Tillotson University, The University of Texas at Austin Department of Black Studies Collective College of Liberal Arts, The University of Texas at Austin Division of Campus and Community Engagement, Wells Fargo, Applied Materials Foundation, Ascension Seton, H-E-B, Brown Distributing Company, ARCA Continental/Coco-Cola Southwest Beverages, Capital Metro/Project Connect

AUSTIN, TX – Although The Austin Area Heritage Council cancelled the MLK March due to anticipated wintry weather conditions two weeks ago, the Festival at **Huston-Tillotson University** at 8th and Chalmers will be held this Saturday, **January 27, 2024 from 11:00am – 3:00pm**.

For more information about this year's events, visit the Web site www.mlkcelebration.com.

SUPPORT THE CENTRAL TEXAS FOOD BANK (FESTIVAL ONLY)

This year, we are asking visitors to help by donating can goods or non-perishable food items, which will be donated to the **Central Texas Food Bank**. Give to those in need by helping the Central Texas Food Bank fill their shelves with non-perishable food items. "True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Receptacles will be available at the festival at **Huston-Tillotson University**.

Please follow these guidelines when considering what to donate:

- Healthy, non-perishable foods
- Items with intact, un-opened, consumer or commercial packaging
- Items with non-breakable packaging (no glass, please)
- Food within the expiration date on the packaging
- Food from your community or backyard garden
- Canned meats like tuna, stew, and chili (pop-tops preferred)
- Canned Vegetables
- Pasta and pasta sauce
- Beans
- Healthy cereals
- Peanut butter

FREE PARKING LOCATIONS

We sincerely thank the locations below for offering free parking on the morning and afternoon of the march and festival.

- State's Visitors Garage (12th & San Jacinto St.)
- Kealing Middle School (1607 Pennsylvania Ave.)
- Holy Cross Catholic Church (1610 E. 11th)
- Blackshear Elementary (1712 E. 11th)
- Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church (1206 E. 9th)
- Mt. Olive Baptist Church (1800 E. 11th)

INSIDE



Millennium to host
ReShonda Tate
for new book signing,
this Saturday.

See **HATTIE**
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SAVE THE DATE!
Leta Harrison Expo
coming Feb. 15.

See **BLACK GIRLS**
Page 3



Driving while Black?
Yeah, it's a thing.

See **TARGET**
Page 5

<http://austintexas.gov/covid19>

GET THE FACTS | FREE PUBLIC COVID-19 TESTING | TRACKING DIGITAL DASHBOARD
SELF-ASSESSMENT | STAY HOME ORDERS | HEALTH PROVIDERS | CARE

The Queen of Sugar Hill

Former Austin resident returns to highlight new book which gives insight into legendary actress, Hattie McDaniel

Courtesy Kim Wright | THE PARADIGM GROUP

(Houston, TX) - The Academy Awards nomination of **Danielle Brooks** (The Color Purple) and **Da’Vine Joy Randolph** (The Holdovers) for Best Supporting Actress is a dream fulfilled for the first Black woman ever to hold the title. When **Hattie McDaniel** won the award in 1940 for her role as the sassy “Mammy” in the controversial movie, *Gone With the Wind*, she hoped that her win would open the door for other Black actors. The road has been long, but the nomination of Brooks and Randolph is part of the fulfillment of McDaniel’s dream.

Dreams are a big part of **THE QUEEN OF SUGAR HILL, A Novel of Hattie McDaniel**, on sale January 30, 2024, from #1 nationally bestselling author (and University of Texas grad) **ReShonda Tate**. Tate brings McDaniel’s largely untold story to life and skillfully brings new dimension to the struggles of a talented actor professionally and socially hampered by her embodiment of a dehumanizing racist caricature in one of Hollywood’s most iconic films.

Months after winning the Academy Award, not only did the Oscar curse set in where Hattie couldn’t find work, but she found herself thrust in the middle of two worlds—Black and White—and not being welcomed in either. Whites only saw her as Mammy and Blacks detested the demeaning portrayal. As the NAACP waged an all-out war against Hattie and actors like her, the emotionally conflicted performer found herself struggling daily.

Through it all, Hattie continued her fight to pave a path for other Black actors, while focusing on war efforts, fighting housing discrimination, and navigating four failed marriages. Luckily, she had a core group of friends to help her out—from **Clark Gable** to **Louise Beavers** to **Bette Davis** and **Dorothy Dandridge**.

On **October 1, 2023**, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) – the organization behind the Oscars – posthumously honored Hattie McDaniel by reinstating her missing Best Supporting Actress Academy Award. This well-deserved honor serves as a perfectly timed reminder that **Hattie McDaniel**, the actor, singer, commedi-



ReShonda Tate writes both adult and teen fiction, as well as nonfiction. Her sophomore novel, *Let the Church Say Amen*, was made into a film directed by actress Regina King, and produced by TD Jakes and Queen Latifah.

Hattie McDaniel
(1895-1952)

Portrait of actress Hattie McDaniel. Autographed on front: “Best wishes from Hattie McDaniel, 1950.” Handwritten on back: “McDaniel, Hattie.”

Courtesy of the E. Azalia Hackley Collection of African Americans in the Performing Arts, Detroit Public Library

enne, and activist, was larger than a singular role. It’s time to look beyond the inherently demeaning aspects of the “Mammy” stereotype, to embrace the scope of her talents and groundbreaking role as one of the silver screen’s first Black stars.

ReShonda will be in Austin for a book signing at the **Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex**, 1156 Hargrave Street, Saturday, January 27, at 6:30pm. The free event is open to the public and ReShonda will be discussing this amazing legend.



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Austin photographer *Leta Harrison* trains her lens on Black women who use beauty as a form of activism

The solo exhibition “Black Girls Don’t Wear Red Lipstick” celebrates self-expression



“Black Girls Don’t Wear Red Lipstick”

When: February 15 through January 28, 2024
Where: The Gallery at Austin Central Library, 710 West Cesar Chavez St.
Gallery hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday-Thursday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday; 12 noon to 5 p.m. Sunday
Admission is FREE
Info: library.austintexas.gov/events/exhibit/black-girls-dont-wear-red-lipstick-7740465

(AUSTIN, TX) - Step into a world of audacious beauty and empowerment with “Black Girls Don’t Wear Red Lipstick,” an exhibition at The Gallery at Austin Central Library featuring the work of Austin photographer **Leta Harrison**. The show is curated by **Keyheira Keys** and **Whitney Hamilton** of **Of Color Atx**, an Austin arts alliance that has partnered with Austin Public Library and The Library Foundation to present the exhibition and its programs.

In Harrison’s joyous, bold photographic prints, Black women embrace vibrant colors and confidently wear shades of red lipstick. Harrison showcases women using beauty as a form of activism to reclaim their power, challenge oppressive beauty standards, and stifle stereotypes. These powerful images promote positive change, and self-love, and illustrate Black women breaking free of the shackles of conformity.

Harrison is an Austin photographer with a passion for capturing the essence of her subjects and telling their powerful stories through her lens. Harrison found inspiration in a recollection shared publicly by Texas musician and activist Kam Franklin who recalled facing pressure to be more modest. Franklin’s phrase “Black girls don’t wear red lipstick” struck a chord with Harrison, inspiring her to create this exhibition.

Thomas Gleeson Sworn in as Chairman of Public Utility Commission of Texas

Copyright © 2023 Public Utility Commission of Texas

(AUSTIN, TX) – Thomas Gleeson was sworn in today as Chairman of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT). Gleeson was appointed to the Commission by Governor Greg Abbott on Jan. 19, 2023. He has worked at the PUCT for 15 years, most recently serving as the agency’s executive director since 2020.

“It’s the highest honor of my professional life to be appointed Chairman of the Public Utility Commission of Texas by Governor Abbott. As a long-time employee of the PUCT, I’m deeply familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the agency. Even more importantly, as a husband, dad, and ratepayer, I know how the decisions we make here impact the daily lives and finances of Texas families. While issues at the PUCT are complex, our priorities are not. Keep electricity and water service reliable and affordable for all Texans.”

Gleeson has worked in a variety of roles at the PUCT, including Chief Operating Officer, director of finance and administration, and fiscal project manager. He also worked as a legislative analyst for the

EVENTS
• **Opening reception: 6 to 9 p.m. February 15. Free and open to the public.**

Co-sponsored by **Of Color Atx**. Meet the artist and curators Spoken word performance by **Christa Brown**. Music by **DJ Lauren Light**. Free and open to the public.

• **Black History Month Celebration: 1 to 3 p.m. February 24. Free and open to the public.**

Join us in the Gallery for an inspiring spoken word event, featuring **Christa Brown**. Take part in a thought-provoking writing workshop and pen your personal experiences and connect them to the exhibition’s themes of empowerment and beauty activism. Then share your stories in a supportive environment and celebrate the power of breaking stereotypes.

The Gallery at Austin Central Library features rotating art displays from local and national artists with a public call for exhibition proposals occurring every two years. **The Library Foundation** supports the Austin Public Library by increasing awareness about the library and its importance to the community, and by enhancing library collections, programs, and facilities. For more information see austinelibrary.org



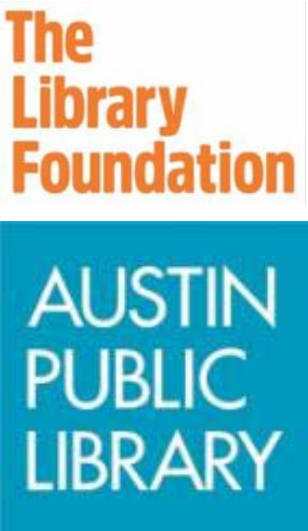
Thomas Gleeson

Texas Senate and a budget analyst for the Legislative Budget Board.

Gleeson is the former chairman of both the City of Pflugerville Finance and Budget Committee and the First United Methodist Church of Round Rock Finance Committee.

Gleeson is a graduate of the Governor’s Executive Development Program at the University of Texas at Austin. He earned his Bachelor of Business Administration from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas and a Master of Public Administration from the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University.

He and his wife, Elisa, are raising their three sons in Pflugerville, Texas.



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Holy Cross Catholic Church

1610 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78702
512-472-3741 Office
512-472-3760 Fax
Email: holycross@holycrossaustin.org
Website: holycrossaustin.org

Core Values:
Exalt
Evangelize
Edify
Equip
Encourage

Very Rev. Basil Aguzie, MSP, Pastor

Sunday Masses:
Weekdays (Tues-Fri):
First Friday Devotion:
Sacrament of Reconciliation:

8:00a.m. & 10:00a.m.
12:00 Noon
12:00 Noon & 6:30p.m.
By Appointment

“To serve as a diverse spiritual community, committed to glorifying God and Serving the needs of others as Christ did”

Reverend Dr. Ricky Freeman, Senior Pastor
1800 East Tenth Street, Austin, Texas 78702
Church Office: 512-478-1875
www.ebchurch.org

WE INVITE EVERYONE!
Sunday
10:30 a.m. Join us in-person or live on **C-LIVE**
8:45 a.m. Christian Education Ministry in person or via **zoom**

Wednesday
7:00 p.m. - Midweek Prayer Service via **zoom** *
*Contact the church office at ebenezer@ebc3austin.org for the zoom link.
Child Development Center Ages (0-5) 512-478-6705

Agape Baptist Church

In “THE CENTRE” Bldg. F-15
7801 North Lamar Blvd. (S.E. Corner of North Lamar and 183)
Austin, Texas 78752

AGAPE: A church for all people. “Where Jesus Christ is *Magnified* and the Love He exhibited is *Exemplified*.” Come, received God’s Unconditional Love for you. For there is No Greater Love!

Church Services
Sun. School – 9:30a Sun. Worship – 11:00a
Mid-Week
Thurs.: Praise, Prayer and Bible Study – 7:00PM
Call: 454-1547 for transportation
Web: www.agapebcaustintx.com

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
4805 Hefflin Lane, Austin, Texas 78721

“A Church Empowered by The Holy Spirit”

Worship Service
Brotherhood 8:00am BTU 10:00am
Sunday School 9:00 am Morning Worship 11:00am

Mid Week Services Wednesday
Prayer 6:00pm Pastor’s Desk: 512-926-6932
Bible Study 7:00pm Face Book: First Baptist Church on Hefflin Lane
Email: mbfbc2017@yahoo.com

Church: 512-926-4759

DAVID CHAPEL Missionary Baptist Church

Christian Education 9:15a.m. | Worship 10:30 a.m.
Nursery Available
WEDNESDAY |
Worship 1st Wed. monthly 7:00p.m. | Bible Study 7:30p.m.

2211 East Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd.
Austin, TX 78702
Office: 512-472-9748 Fax: 512-472-5399
Website: www.davidchapel.org
Email: info@davidchapel.org
“A Church with a Heart for The Community”

Olive Branch Fellowship of Austin / All Faith Chapel
4110 Guadalupe St. Bldg #639 Austin, TX 78751

Sunday Morning
Worship @ 11: am

Kenneth Hill,
Pastor

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

BETHEL-ST. PAUL UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH
877 W. Hempstead, Giddings, Texas 78942

Weekly Schedule
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday Night Bible Study 6:00p.m.

Pastor J. R. Roberson
& First lady
Lillian Robertson

(979) 542-2784 Church
(979) 540-6352 Home



Austin LGBT Chamber welcomes 2024 Board Members



Courtesy of Austin LGBT Chamber

(AUSTIN, TX) – The Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce, Austin’s leading resource for the LGBTQ+ and allied business community, is pleased to announce the appointment of a new boardchair, new members of the board, and extend heartfelt thanks to the outgoing board members for their dedicated service.

The Chamber is proud to welcome Emilie Kopp (Director of Strategic Partnerships at Deem, Inc), Liz Arreaga (Partner of MAKE Entertainment Group & the Arreaga Agency), Eve Molnar (Communication Designer & Strategist at Seventh Scout), and ex officio Emily Alley (Senior Vice President of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce.) With a wealth of experience in the Austin business community, they bring valuable insights and a commitment to the

Chamber. Their addition strengthens our leadership team, and we are confident that their contributions will play a pivotal role in driving the organization’s success.

Andrew Peters (Global Marketing for Silicon Labs) will serve as the 2024 Board Chair. Emilie Kopp will serve as Vice Chair and Tim Packard (Taylor Morrison) as Secretary for 2024.

“We are thrilled to welcome Emilie, Liz, Eve, and Emily to our board. Their diverse expertise and passion for the LGBTQ+ and allied business community will undoubtedly enhance our strategic vision and impact. We look forward to working together to achieve new milestones,” said Chamber President & CEO Tina Cannon.

Continuing their service on the board is Andrew Peters, Richard

W Stipe (Dell Technologies), Gary Schumann (Savrick, Schumann), Rich Segal (KXAN), Roger Trinh (Trinh Solutions), and Tim Packard.

The organization extends its sincere gratitude to outgoing board members, Deirdre Walsh (IGC Impact), Valerie Salinas-Davis (University of Texas at Austin), Lynn Yelldell (Seventh Scout), Joshua Kettler (RSM), & Becky Arreaga (MAKE Entertainment Group & the Arreaga Agency). Their unwavering dedication and contributions have been instrumental in the success of the Chamber. We thank them for their exceptional service.

As the Austin LGBT Chamber enters 2024, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advocating for, supporting, and uplifting LGBTQ+ and allied businesses in the Greater Austin area.

Former Austin and Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo will no longer take job at Austin City Hall

Story by Jonathan Limehouse | HOUSTON CHRONICLE

(AUSTIN, TX) - Former Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo announced Tuesday he will not take the interim assistant city manager position in Austin, a job the 59-year-old was offered only a week ago.

In a social media post on X, formerly known as Twitter, Acevedo said the newly created position “has become a distraction from the critical work” he and other leaders intended to do in Austin.

“Unfortunately, politics and power struggles have hindered our efforts to create real positive improvements for the people of this city,” Acevedo said in the post. “I firmly believe that if we are to build a future together, we cannot afford to blame others or point fingers.”

MORE ON ART ACEVEDO: Who is Art Acevedo? What to know about his jobs, controversies and why he’s return-



Art Acevedo

ing to Texas

Instead of accepting the position, Acevedo said he would “pursue other opportunities” and continue to voice his “support for the men and women of the Austin Police Department,” according to the post on X.

Acevedo’s announcement comes after controversies in his past, particularly during his time as Houston police chief from 2016 to 2020, became a point of contention for many Texans.

While Houston’s chief of police, Acevedo saw an increase in crime,

backlash from a botched drug bust that led to two homeowners’ deaths, turmoil between his administration and rank-and-file officers and a lack of support from police reform advocates.

A federal lawsuit was also filed against Acevedo and the city claiming that George Floyd protesters were wrongly arrested.

Before coming back to Texas in January, Acevedo served in police leadership roles in Miami and Colorado. He also led the Austin Police Department as its chief in 2007.

Pooja Sethi Breaks New Ground as First AAPI Chair of Travis County Democratic Party

Courtesy Cynthia Van Maanen | TRAVIS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

AUSTIN, TX – In a significant and unanimous decision, the Travis County Democratic Party (TCDP) is proud to announce Pooja Sethi as its new Chair, the first Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) to occupy this position. This unanimous appointment by over 100 precinct chairs highlights the Party’s unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusivity as the nation prepares for the presidential election.

Pooja Sethi, an attorney and public servant, brings her rich experience and personal passion to TCDP. “My vision is clear and urgent: we are ramping up our fundraising, building a diverse leadership bench, and intensifying our Get Out The Vote (GOTV) initiatives. In this critical election year, these goals are absolutely essential,” Pooja states.

Just a week into her term, Pooja has hit the ground running. Her efforts are focused on amplifying fundraising activities, pushing coordinated campaign efforts to ensure outreach to every Democratic voter



Pooja Sethi

in Travis County, and actively participating in community events and club meetings.

“As the first AAPI Chair of the TCDP, I am deeply honored. This role reflects our Party’s dedication to creating a political environment where every voice, especially those historically sidelined, is a driving force for change,” says Pooja.

Pooja Sethi’s unanimous election and swift actions since taking office signal a new era of proactive and inclusive leadership for the Party. The Travis County Democratic Party invites its members and the wider community to join Pooja in this transformative journey towards a more inclusive, representative, and vibrant democracy.

Austin Light Rail is Moving Forward

Austin is growing, and so is the need for more transit options. Implementation of Austin Light Rail has begun, including the effort to secure federal funds. ATP is advancing environmental studies to support the federal process. Please join us to provide input on station location and other design options.

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON FEEDBACK EVENTS

In-person: Feb. 1, 10, 12, 27 and 29
Virtual: Feb. 22

LOCATIONS AND SIGN-UP DETAILS AT: [ATPTX.ORG/EVENTS](https://atptx.org/events)

For translation in other languages, contact us by email at input@atptx.org or phone at 512-389-7590.



by Aswad Walker
DEFENDER

(DEFENDER) - What do Tyre Nichols, Patrick Lyoya, Daunte Wright, Sandra Bland, Philando Castile, Walter Scott, Samuel DuBose and countless others have in common? A police traffic stop ended in their death. Of the names listed, only Castile, a licensed gun owner, had a weapon; a fact that he informed the officer of when asked, yet less than 1.7 seconds later he was shot and killed.

Black people need not bungee jump or skydive to experience the “exhilaration” of danger. Driving While Black has become for African Americans, an extreme sport.

Texas Black Drivers Targeted

And it all stems from police targeting Black drivers, stopping them at far greater rates than any others – stops that may not end in death, but account for the over-arresting of Blacks in proportion to their numbers.

A report from the Texas Civil Rights Project analyzed 2022 traffic stop data from the Houston Police Department and found that police pulled over 81,026 people specifically for non-moving traffic violations, like driving with an expired registration sticker.

According to the report, “Houston’s Black drivers accounted for nearly 42% of these stops — despite the fact that about 23% of Houston’s population is Black, according to census data.”

For context, of HPD traffic stops, Hispanic drivers made up about 31% while white drivers accounted for about 25%.

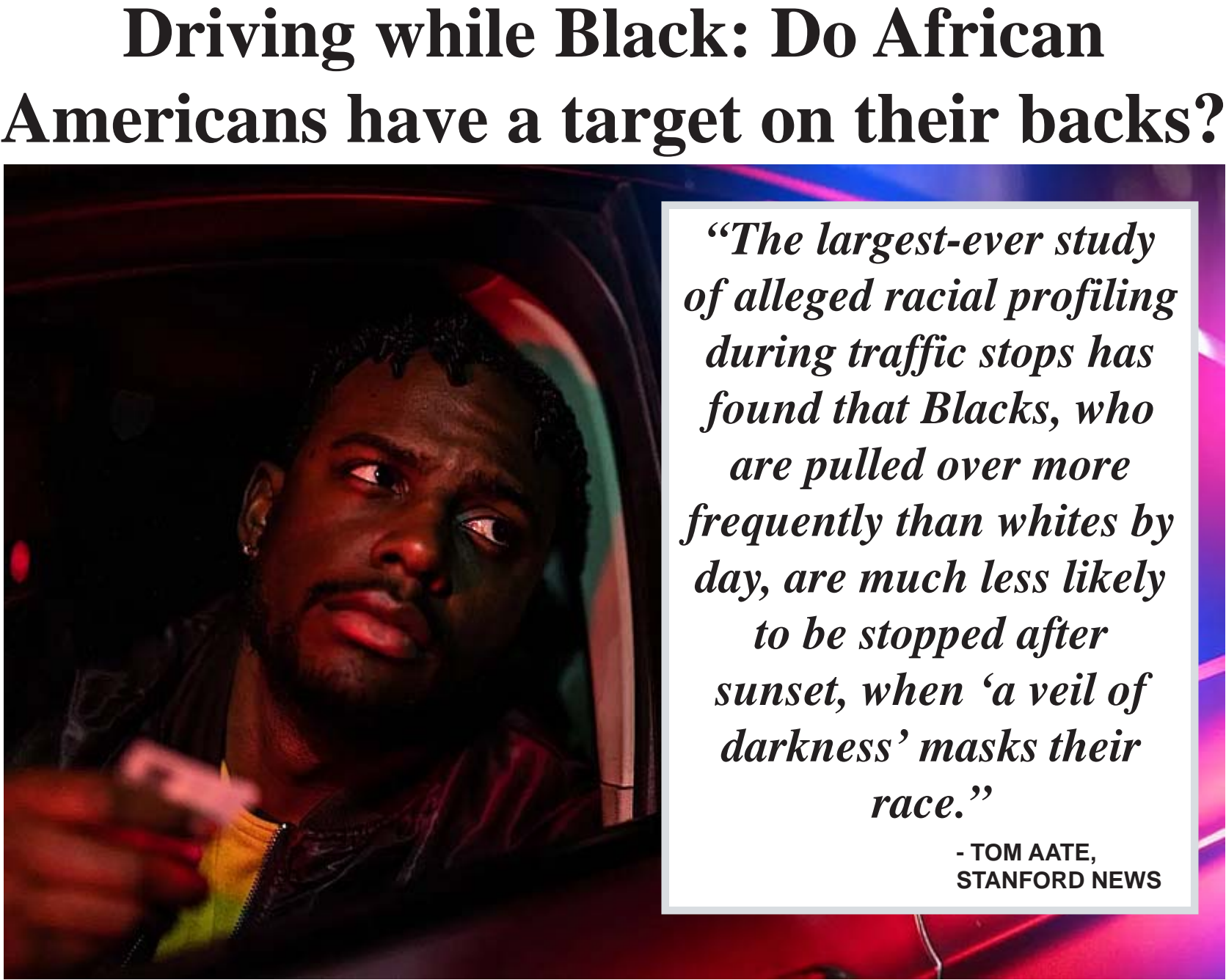
Additionally, the report found that Black drivers made up nearly 60% of the 2,733 arrests that occurred after these stops while white and Hispanic drivers accounted for roughly 19% each.

Black Drivers Targeted Nationally

And this disturbing reality is national.

Encounters with police during traffic stops, including minor infractions, disproportionately harm people of color, according to data collected by Mapping Police Violence, a non-profit research group, which argues that armed police should not be involved in many of these cases.

Per 2018 statistics, roughly 10% of the



For Tyre Nichols, Patrick Lyoya, Daunte Wright, Sandra Bland, Philando Castile, and countless others ‘Driving While Black’ has become an extreme sport. Photo/Getty.

nearly 1,100 people killed by police each year involve traffic violations, the group found.

The Investigative Project on Race and Equity and WBEZ Chicago are launching a three-part investigation of the convergence of race and traffic stops in Illinois.

In 2003, Illinois passed a measure sponsored by then-state Sen. Barack Obama to gather details of every police stop in the state, including the driver’s race or ethnicity. On the 20th anniversary of that law’s passage, the Investigative Project and WBEZ assembled and analyzed 42.5 million records of traffic stop data that were collected under the law, covering more than 1,000 jurisdictions across Illinois.

Here’s what they found:

In the last two years, stops involving Black drivers have topped 30% of all traffic stops statewide, up from 17.5% in 2004, the first year data was released;

In Chicago, where Black, white, and Latino populations* are roughly equal, traffic stops of Black drivers in 2022 were more than four times that of whites and more than twice that of Latinos;

Beyond Chicago’s city limits, traffic stops also disproportionately affect Black drivers. Last year traffic stops involving Black drivers made up 21% of all traffic stops throughout Illinois (excluding Chicago); and

The percentage of Black drivers stopped by police continues to rise, unabated. A record number of law enforcement agencies are ignoring the law. And the state seems incapable of reversing the tide.

“Our analysis and reporting demonstrates that Illinois and the Chicago area are still grappling with the consequences of systemic racism,” said Laura Washington, a founding board member of the Investigative Project.

But Illinois is far from alone. This is a national issue.

According to a report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), 6% of Black and Hispanic Americans pulled over for traffic stops were

searched or arrested, the most of any other groups. Americans in “all other” racial categories were searched or arrested 4% of the time.

Police Ticketing By the Numbers

40% Of Whites
45% Of Blacks
50% Of Hispanics

Police Warnings By the Numbers

47% Whites
36% Hispanics
34% Blacks

Threat or Use of Excessive Force by Police

63% Blacks
54% Hispanics
44% Whites (however, their definition of “excessive force often included merely being pulled over by police) (source: usafacts.org)

In Houston, there’s a movement to pass laws to confront this inequity of racially targeted traffic stops.

The Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) report recommends city officials “pass an ordinance that prohibits police from conducting non-safety traffic stops,” and therefore focus on moving traffic violations like speeding and drunk

driving.

“The ordinance would only allow police to focus on what causes road fatalities, to actually address what makes the road dangerous for all of us,” said Christopher Rivera, outreach coordinator for TCRP’s Criminal Injustice Program.

For Blacks, beyond traffic stops all too often proving to be fatal or leading to arrest rates that far surpass arrest numbers for other races, there’s the outsized economic impact of highly racialized traffic stops.

In 2022, vehicle traffic violations in Houston amounted to over \$19 million in fines and fees, according to the TCRP report. Failure to display registration tags, the most collected fine, extracted payments of over \$500,000.

“We oppose these types of fines and fees because we already know people are struggling because inflation has gone up so much. Oftentimes, they just have to pay off these fines and fees, they don’t get their car fixed, and this vicious cycle of poverty just continues,”

said Rivera.

“Police are currently going out and patrolling to siphon wealth, to injure individual drivers, and increase our incarceration,” Rivera said, whose organization is pushing for a voucher program to help low-income drivers get their vehicles up to code.

One of the most exhaustive studies on the issue, led by Stanford University, found that after analyzing 95 million traffic stop records, filed by officers with 21 state patrol agencies and 35 municipal police forces from 2011 to 2018, researchers concluded that “police stops and search decisions suffer from persistent racial bias.” Their conclusion regarding reducing or deterring racially motivated police traffic stops was less a recommendation and more of an observed reality.

“Our results indicate that police stops and search decisions suffer from persistent racial bias, and point to the value of policy interventions to mitigate these disparities,” the researchers write in the May 4th issue of “Nature Human Behaviour.” But researchers concluded that Blacks’ best defense against being racially targeted for a traffic stop was to literally hide from police the fact that they are Black motorists.

“The largest-ever study of alleged racial profiling during traffic stops has found that Blacks, who are pulled over more frequently than whites by day, are much less likely to be stopped after sunset, when ‘a veil of darkness’ masks their race,” wrote Tom Aate for the Stanford News. Source: Houston Public Media, news.stanford.edu



A still photo taken from a dashcam video shows the July 2016 police shooting of Philando Castile. (Courtesy Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension)



by Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

(NNPA) - Recent research conducted by Scientific American Online supported fears that facial recognition technology (FRT) can worsen racial inequities in policing. The research found that law enforcement agencies that use automated facial recognition disproportionately arrest Black people.

The report's authors stated that they believe these results come from factors that include the "lack of Black faces in the algorithms' training data sets, a belief that these programs are infallible, and a tendency of officers' own biases to magnify these issues."

FRT was again cast in a negative light after the arrest of a 61-year-old grandfather, who is now suing Sunglass Hut's parent company after the store's facial recognition technology mistakenly identified him as a robber. Harvey Eugene Murphy Jr. was subsequently held in jail, where he says he was sexually assaulted, according to a lawsuit.

The robbery oc-

curred at a Sunglass Hut store in Houston, Texas, when two gun-wielding bandits stole thousands of dollars in cash and merchandise. Houston police identified Murphy as a suspect, even though he lived in California. They arrested Murphy when he returned to Texas to renew his driver's license. His lawsuit claims that, while in jail, he was sexually assaulted by three men in a bathroom, causing him to suffer lifelong injuries.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office later determined Murphy was not in-

involved in the robbery, but the damage was already done while he was in jail, his lawyers said in a news release.

"This is precisely the kind of situation we've been warning about for years: that these systems, whatever their theoretical reliability, are in practice so finicky and consequential that they cannot be fixed," Os Keyes, an Ada Lovelace Fellow and PhD Candidate at the University of Washington, told Vice News.

"The only thing I'd push back on is Murphy's lawyer's claim that it could happen to

anyone; these systems are attractive precisely because they promise to automate and speed up 'business as usual,' which includes laundering existing police biases against people who are already in the system, minority groups, and anyone else who doesn't fit. This outcome is as inevitable as it is horrifying and should be taken as a sign to restrict and reconfigure policing in general as well as FRT in particular."

Scientific American researchers noted that the algorithms used by law enforcement "are typically developed by

companies like Amazon, Clearview AI and Microsoft, which build their systems for different environments." They argued that, despite massive improvements in deep-learning techniques, federal testing shows that most facial recognition algorithms perform poorly at identifying people besides white men.

In 2023, the Federal Trade Commission prohibited Rite Aid from using FRT after the company wrongly accused individuals of shoplifting. CBS News noted that, in one incident, an 11-year-old girl was stopped and

searched by a Rite Aid employee based on a false match. Also last year, the Detroit Police Department was sued by a woman whom their technology misidentified as a carjacking suspect. Eight months pregnant at the time, Porcha Woodruff was jailed after police incorrectly identified her using FRT.

The FTC acknowledged that people of color are often misidentified when using FRT. "Disproportionate representation of white males in training images produces skewed algorithms because Black people are overrepresented in mugshot databases and other image repositories commonly used by law enforcement," Scientific American researchers determined. "Consequently, AI is more likely to mark Black faces as criminal, leading to the targeting and arresting of innocent Black people."

"We believe that the companies that make these products need to take staff and image diversity into account. However, this does not remove law enforcement's responsibility. Police forces must critically examine their methods if we want to keep this technology from worsening racial disparities and leading to rights violations."



Dexter Scott King, son of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., has died of cancer at 62

By The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Dexter Scott King, the younger son of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, died Monday after battling prostate cancer.

The King Center in Atlanta, which Dexter King served as chairman, said the 62-year-old son of the civil rights icon died at his home in Malibu, California. His wife, Leah Weber King, said in a statement that he died "peacefully in his sleep."

The third of the Kings' four children, Dexter King was named for the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, where his father served as a pastor when the Montgomery bus boycott launched him to national prominence in the wake of the 1955 arrest of Rosa Parks.

Dexter King was just 7 years old when his father was assassinated in April 1968 while supporting striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee. In his 2004 memoir, "Growing Up King," Dexter King recalled his father's slaying as the end of a carefree childhood.

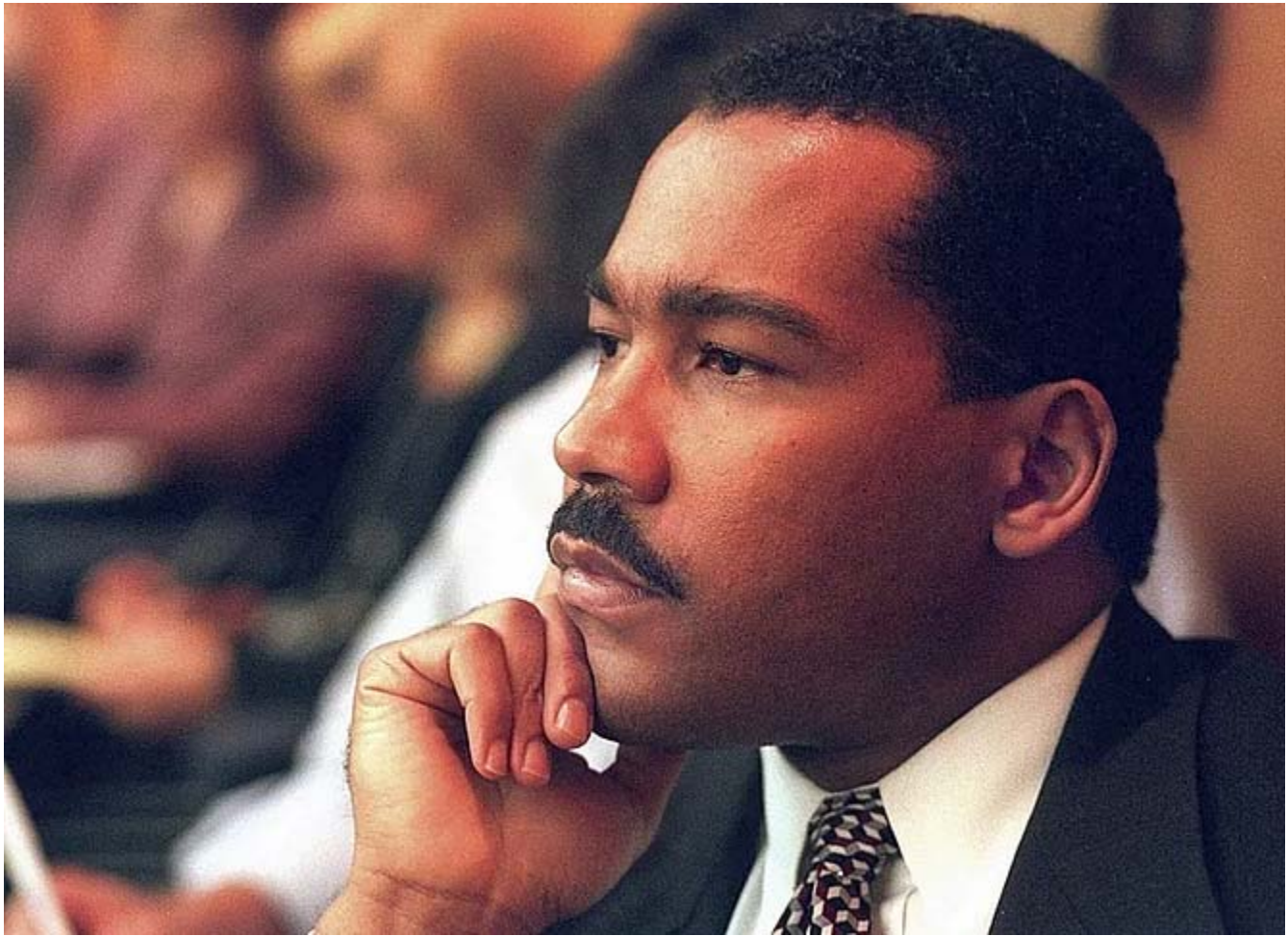
"Ever since I was seven, I've felt I must be formal," he wrote, adding: "Formality, seriousness, certitude — all these are difficult poses to maintain, even if you're a person with perfect equilibrium, with all the drama life throws at you."

As an adult, Dexter King became an attorney and focused on shepherding his father's legacy and protecting the King family's intellectual property. In addition to serving as chairman of the King Center, he was also president of the King estate.

In addition to his work with the King Center, Dexter King was known for the striking resemblance he bore to his father. They looked so much alike that the son ended up portraying his famous father in a 2002 TV movie about Parks.

Coretta Scott King died in 2006, followed by the Kings' oldest child, Yolanda King, in 2007.

"Words cannot express the heart break I feel



Dexter King, son of the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., listens to arguments in the State Court of Criminal Appeals in Jackson, Tenn., Friday, Aug. 29, 1997, to determine whether two Memphis judges overstepped their authority surrounding the investigation of the King assassination. The King Center in Atlanta said the 62-year-old died Monday at his California home. (Helen Comer/The Jackson Sun via AP)

from losing another sibling," the Rev. Bernice A. King, the youngest of the four, said in a statement.

His older brother, Martin Luther King III, said:

"The sudden shock is devastating. It is hard to have the right words at a moment like this. We ask for your prayers at this time for the entire King family."

Report Reveals Racial Wealth Gap Widens in the United States

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

(NNPA) - A new report from WalletHub, a personal finance website, has found that the racial wealth gap in the United States is alive and well. The report, titled “2024’s States with the Biggest & Smallest Wealth Gaps by Race/Ethnicity,” compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across 21 key metrics, ranging from the median household income gap to the unemployment rate gap. The report found that the median household wealth for Black Americans is just \$14,100, compared to \$187,300 for non-Hispanic white households. Hispanic households also lag behind, with a median household wealth of \$31,700. “The racial wealth gap is a persistent problem in the United States,” said Jill Gonzalez, a WalletHub analyst. “There are many factors that contribute to this gap, including unequal access to higher education and employment for minorities, as well as residential segregation.” The report also found that the racial wealth gap is more expansive in some states than others. For example, the District of Co-

lumbia has the broadest racial wealth gap, with a median household wealth of \$281,700 for non-Hispanic white households and just \$11,100 for Black households. “Even decades after the Civil Rights Movement, there is still a high degree of wealth inequality among racial groups in America,” WalletHub Analyst Cassandra Happe stated. “These gaps persist not just in held wealth but also in wages, poverty rates, homeownership rates, and unemployment rates. Part of this wealth disparity is due to unequal access to education, which can put some people on a better financial footing from the start.” Statistics show that the racial income gap grows larger and larger each year, said Irving L. Joyner, a law professor at North Carolina Central University’s School of Law. Joyner said the growth of the gap has grown because those with more wealth have benefitted more abundantly from their investments and ability to survive the economic downturns within the economy while poorly individuals, mainly racial



The report found that the median household wealth for Black Americans is just \$14,100, compared to \$187,300 for non-Hispanic white households.

minorities, were forced to consume their meager resources to survive day-to-day and did not have resources which they could invest. “For those individuals who have the financial capacity, knowledge, and needed resources to engage in entrepreneurial pursuits, those programs can and do benefit them,” Joyner remarked. “Those opportunities, however, are not readily available for the vast majority of African Americans because of the absence of the resources and business skills that are required to begin and sustain these efforts. Hawaii has the smallest racial wealth gap, with a median household wealth of \$104,300 for non-Hispanic white households and \$87,300 for Black families. “The racial wealth gap is a complex issue with no easy solutions,” said Gonzalez. “However, the findings of our report suggest that there are some states that are making progress in closing the gap. We hope that other states will learn from their example.”

Black Kids Keep Being Told Their Hair Needs to ‘Conform’

by Aziah Siid | WORD IN BLACK

(EDUCATION) - Who would have thought Darryl George’s school year would go this way? Certainly not him, or his mother Dareesha George. Since last fall, the 18-year-old and his mother have been in an ongoing battle with Barbers Hill High School in Texas, all because of his refusal to cut off his dreadlocks. The heated feud began back in September when Barbers Hill Independent School District suspended the teen for several days and threatened expulsion if he did not cut his hair. During the in-school suspension, George wasn’t given any hot lunches and sat on a stool for eight hours doing schoolwork without a teacher’s instruction, according to his family. Following the first suspension, outrage spread across social media, prompting many people to ask why a predominantly white school is policing this Black boy? Despite the Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair — or CROWN Act as most people know it — prohibiting discrimination against Black students with natural hairstyles like afros, braids, bantu knots, locs, and twists, District Superintendent Dr. Greg Poole, insists on doubling down on the ramifications the George families have endured.

Now, nearly six months later, Dareesha and Houston attorney, Allie Booker, have filed a civil rights lawsuit stating the school’s hair policy violates state law. “White boys can wear their hair over their ears and collar as long as they don’t braid it like a Negro,” Booker said in a statement to NPR. What’s Poole’s justification for infringing on the student’s rights? The Barbers Hill dress code. In addition, on Jan. 14, the superintendent released a full-page ad in the Houston Chronicle justifying his decision, saying he believes the dress code is legal, and that it teaches students to conform. “Being American requires conformity,” Poole wrote in the ad. The folks involved in the CROWN Act movement disagree. “Mr. Superintendent, if being American requires conformity, then please conform to the Texas CROWN Act which prohibits racial discrimination based on hairstyle,” they posted in response on The CROWN Act official Instagram. “Your actions not only undermine the essence of individual expression, but also the significant ef-



Darryl George (AP photo)

forts made to enact the CROWN Act in Texas. We must ask ourselves: Shouldn’t ‘conformity’ in America align with our laws and values that celebrate diversity and inclusion? Let’s continue to fight for the end of race-based hair discrimination these race-based practices.” In addition, one of the co-authors of the CROWN Act, State Rep. Ron Reynolds, told Houston Public Media News that Darryl has the “right to express himself the way he chooses to do by wearing his hair in a lock, in a dreadlock, and that is perfectly acceptable and normal and lawful in Texas for a high school student to do that.” Reynolds also pointed out that what Black students are being asked to conform to is a European standard. “The message they’re sending to these other students is, ‘You either conform to our European standards of what a student should look like and dress like and act like, or else you’re going to face the same consequences as Darryl and you won’t be allowed to attend school here,’” Reynolds said. Ibram X. Kendi, director of the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University and author of “Stamped from the Beginning” and “How to Be an Antiracist,” also explained what conformity actually means. “To be racist in a multicultural society is to mandate and defend cultural conformity,” Kendi wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. “To be antiracist in a multicultural society is to accept and respect every hairstyle, hair covering, and hair adornment. I want to live in a society where we teach young people acceptance and respect by first accepting and respecting them.” And State Rep. Reynolds said it doesn’t matter how many ads the Barbers Hill district puts out. “We are going to speak truth to power,” he said.

The Pflugerville Independent School District will open Proposals for:

Athletic Equipment & Supplies
RFP #24-023AO
on Friday, February 16, 2024
@ 2:00 p.m.

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

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

Travis County Healthcare District d/b/a Central Health
1111 E. Cesar Chavez Street
Austin, TX 78702
RFP 2401-001 Data Governance Platform
Due Date: Friday, February 9, 2024. by 2:00 PM CT
Central Health acknowledges that the enterprise requires a Data Governance Platform. The purpose of the request is to work alongside a vendor and obtain a solution that stands up a platform that works with the data warehouse to create a unified system to facilitate data governance and the documentation that accompanies it. Ordering Instructions: Package can be downloaded from: <https://prod.bidsync.com/central-health>
OR <http://www.centralhealth.net/finance/purchasing>
OR <http://www.txsmartbuy.com/sp>

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
CONSTRUCTION MANAGER-AT-RISK
AI SD 230006-Cook ES GMP-2 (Remaining Work)
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (AISD)
Cadence McShane Construction as Construction Manager-at-Risk for Austin ISD, will receive bids or proposals from all qualified subcontractors for the Cook Elementary GMP-2. The scope of work consists of **interior renovations, MEP and low voltage upgrades, along with minor exterior upgrades.**
A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held **Tuesday February 6th at 4:30pm CST at Cook Elementary School** located at **1511 Cripple Creek Dr Austin, TX 78758.**
Bids or proposals are due **Wednesday February 14th, at 2:00pm CST**, and bids or proposals should be emailed to bidsctx@cadencemcshane.com. Late bids will not be accepted.
There will be no public opening of bids or proposals. After receipt of bids or proposals, **Cadence McShane Construction** will conduct its evaluation of the subcontractor bids or proposals in relation to the project requirements and will select the bid(s) or proposal(s) that offers the best value to AISD.
AISD, the Owner, reserves the right to waive any informality and/or to reject any, or all bids, or proposals. Contact Julia Mason at JMason@cadencemcshane.com for additional information on this project.
Drawings and specifications are available on Virtual Builder’s Exchange and SmartBid, Contact Julia Mason for a SmartBid invitation.



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SUNDAY

NFL PLAYOFFS CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES



AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

KANSAS CITY
CHIEFS

AT THE
BALTIMORE
RAVENS

2:00 P.M. CST | SUNDAY, JANUARY 28 | TV: CBS

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

DETROIT
LIONS

AT THE
SAN FRANCISCO
49ERS

5:30 P.M. CST | SUNDAY, JANUARY 28 | TV: FOX



SUPERBOWL LVIII (58) AT ALLEGiant STADIUM, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 5:30 PM CST | TV: CBS