

MERRY CHRISTMAS

from the Staff of the Bakersfield News Observer

Bakersfield News Observer

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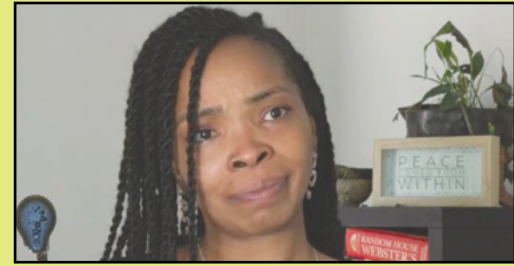
Observer Group Newspapers of Southern California

Wednesday, December 24, 2025



Organizers of the Mothers Against Gang Violence Toy Giveaway. (Photo: Cecil Egbele)

Black Mom of 4 Sues Landlord After Feces Found in Heater



Tiarra Logan

ATLANTA, GA — Tiarra Logan, an African American mother from Atlanta, Georgia, discovered her heater was blowing fecal matter into her home after a year of unresolved sewage issues. She has sued her landlord and moved her four children into a hotel to protect their health.

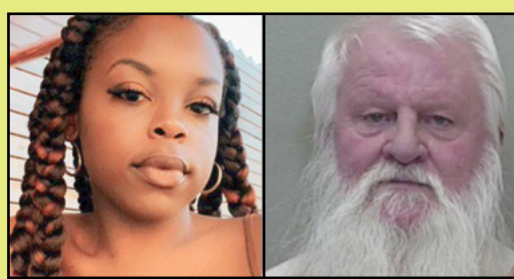
Logan moved to Snellville three years ago to escape domestic violence and start fresh for her children, according to Atlanta News First. In June 2024, she noticed a strong sewage smell coming from the drains in her rental home. Despite repeated complaints, her landlord, Invitation Homes, sent contractors who failed to identify or fix the problem.

By October, sewage had backed up into her toilet and bathtub. A contractor eventually traced the issue to a clogged septic tank outside, but the smell persisted. Dark spots appeared around pipes in the garage, and Logan said no proper cleanup was performed, leaving dried sewage in the insulation and air ducts. Her children frequently fell ill and required multiple trips to the emergency room.

In March 2025, Logan hired an attorney to demand repairs and document her children's health concerns. A court ordered Invitation Homes to pay \$6,000 and complete the necessary repairs. Instead, the landlord applied the funds to her rent, preventing her from moving. By November, a contractor confirmed that sewage had spread into the HVAC system, meaning the family had been breathing contaminated air for months.

Logan relocated her children to a hotel just before Thanksgiving. Invitation Homes said it was addressing the issues and approved partial repairs, but a full cleanup of the subfloor and HVAC unit is still needed. The case underscores challenges in Georgia, where landlords are legally required to maintain habitable homes, yet tenants often must fight to enforce this right.

Black Driver Held Against Her Will By White Man Who Claimed He Owns the Road



Jakara Wilson

Richard Fritzingler

ALTOONA, FL — Jakara Wilson, an African American woman from Florida making a grocery delivery, was held against her will after getting stuck in mud on a rural road. A 70-year-old man, Richard Fritzingler, blocked her van and claimed he owned the road. He was later sentenced to only 2 years probation.

According to Atlanta Black Star, the incident happened on January 17 in Altoona, a tiny town in Marion County. While delivering for Kroger, Wilson took a wrong turn, and her van became stuck near the Ocala National Forest. She called a tow truck, as company policy requires, and notified the customers about the delay.

While waiting, a young woman approached her window and offered her grandfather's help for \$100. Wilson refused, since the tow truck was already on its way. That's when Fritzingler stepped in, standing in front of the vehicle and claiming only he had the right to pull the van out. He refused to move, daring Wilson to run over him.

Fritzingler's adult grandson joined the confrontation, shoving the tow truck driver in a brief scuffle. He even tried to involve his dog, which walked away. The situation escalated, with Fritzingler continuing to block Wilson's van. Feeling unsafe, she called 911.

Deputy Jett Bloom arrived and reviewed video footage Wilson had recorded, which confirmed her account. Fritzingler was arrested and later convicted of felony false imprisonment in July. Wilson shared the footage on TikTok last month, highlighting the chaotic encounter and Fritzingler's surprisingly light sentence of two years' probation.

The case drew attention online, with many supporting Wilson and some suggesting the incident may have been a scheme to charge drivers trapped in the mud.

East Bakersfield Celebrates Christmas with Gifts, Hope, and Community Love

By Cecil Egbele
California Local News Fellow

Just days before Christmas, East Brundage Lane in Bakersfield was filled with laughter, music, and the unmistakable excitement of children clutching brightly colored Santa gift bags. But this time, Santa Claus came in the form of neighborhood mothers.

Mothers Against Gang Violence (MAGV) hosted its seventh annual Christmas Toy Giveaway in the neighborhood, bringing together families, volunteers, and community partners to celebrate children and remind residents that hope can take root even in places shaped by trauma.

The location was intentional. East Brundage Lane is located in an area that has historically experienced high levels of gang activity and gun violence, which disproportionately affect African American and Latino youth.

Bakersfield, once ranked among California cities with the highest homicide rates linked to gang violence, is a reality that has deeply shaped the lives of many MAGV members, including its founder.

"I was raised in this neighborhood," said Xenia King, CEO and founder of Mothers Against Gang Violence. "So I know firsthand what goes on in these households. I've seen people get murdered. I've seen families torn apart."

King's commitment to the work is deeply personal. She lost her younger brother to gun violence when he was just 16 years old.

"He wasn't a gang member," she said. "He was just in the wrong place at the wrong time."

That loss became the driving force behind MAGV, an organization made up of women who have experienced similar pain and are determined to interrupt the cycle of violence for the next generation. And to show children in at-risk communities that they are valued and loved.

"This is not only killing our young men," King said. "It's sending them to prison for life. And these young people are our future. If we don't guide them now, there won't be a future left to protect."

This year's Christmas giveaway also received support from the Nigerian community in Bakersfield, highlighting the continued role immigrant communities play in local community



An organizer with a winner of a bicycle. (Photo: Cecil Egbele)

initiatives and empowerment efforts. Michael Eghre-Bello, a community organizer and secretary of the Nigerian American Association of Bakersfield, who DJs as a hobby, volunteered his DJ services to create a festive atmosphere in the neighborhood.

"When I saw that this was about helping kids avoid gangs and look forward to a better life, I knew I wanted to support it," Eghre-Bello said. "The Nigerian community was also excited and ready to help where necessary."

In addition to music and volunteer support, Eghre-Bello offered free educational counseling opportunities for parents, focused on pathways that could help their children attend college while minimizing or avoiding students loans.

"That's a big deal to be educated," he said. "If kids are engaged, educated and supported, they're far less likely to find their way into gangs. Education

changes everything."

The collaboration reflects a broader understanding among communities of color about the importance of mutual support. While the event welcomes all community members, its focus remains on addressing the specific challenges facing Black and Brown youth in neighborhoods where opportunities have been historically limited, and gang violence has taken a devastating toll.

This year's Christmas giveaway focused on both immediate relief and long-term impact.

Every child who attended received a Christmas goodie bag filled with toys and other gift items, including blankets. Beyond the guaranteed gifts, excitement built around a raffle draw, where children won bicycles, scooters, additional toys, and cash prizes.

MAGV spokesperson Melissa Madrigal said the event is about more than gifts; it's about dignity and possibility.

"We grew up in this neighborhood. We know things can be good, and they can be really bad," Madrigal said. "But we want families to see that there's always a solution. It's about leading by example and showing that change is possible."

She said one of the most meaningful moments is watching entire families smile together.

"It's not just the children whose faces light up," she said. "We see mothers and fathers who are struggling, just trying to make their kids happy. When we see the whole family smiling, that's the fulfillment."

As Christmas music played and the noises of excited children filled the air, East Brundage Lane briefly became not a reminder of what had been lost, but a glimpse of what could still be saved.

For King, that transformation is the heart of MAGV's mission, and with hope in their eyes, their futures would be brighter.

"Always stand for our children," King said. "They are our hope. They are our future. If we put them in front of us, I promise you things will change."



A winner of a bicycle at the MAGV Christmas event. (Photo: Cecil Egbele)



A happy winner of a scooter. (Photo: Cecil Egbele)



Xenia King and a winner of a bicycle at the MAGV Christmas Toy Giveaway. (Photo: Cecil Egbele)

World & Nation

The Voting Rights Act Is Under Threat. So Are Workers' Rights.

By Fred Redmond
AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer

In our workplaces, in our communities and in our government, the right to vote is how working people make our voices heard. The late Rep. John Lewis (Georgia) proclaimed, "Your vote is precious, almost sacred." The Supreme Court's recent decision allowing Texas to use a racially discriminatory congressional map threatens that precious right once again—and with it, the foundation of worker power itself.

A challenge out of Louisiana may soon make matters worse, threatening to further limit the strength of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965—the nation's most powerful tool for correcting historical racial discrimination in voting, including the violence and suppression once used to keep Black voters from the polls.

The VRA was brought to life by courageous civil rights and labor leaders who risked everything to end racial discrimination at the ballot box. The law transformed American democracy by dramatically increasing Black political participation, expanding representation at every level of government and giving working people a real chance to shape the decisions that affect their lives.

This fight is part of the labor movement's history too. In 1963, labor leaders were key architects of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and labor unions mobilized 40,000 union members and provided resources. We offered critical lobbying support and testimony in support of the Civil Rights Act and the VRA—the passage of which in 1965 led to the filing of thousands of successful cases against workplace discrimination and eliminated many of the racist voting restrictions in the South. When Black voter turnout surged, so did worker power, especially in the South, where the VRA helped create a diverse coalition of working-class voters.

According to research from the University of California San Diego, the VRA narrowed the wage gap between Black and White workers by 5.5% between 1950 and 1980. Another study found that high-turnout communities saw more paved roads and streetlights; better access to city and county resources; and easier entry into public sector jobs such as police, firefighters and teachers.



The lesson is clear: A strong democracy gives working people space to thrive. When democracy is

weakened, workers pay the price.

In 2013, the Supreme Court issued its *Shelby County v. Holder* decision and gutted the VRA, ruling that states with histories of racial discrimination no longer needed federal approval to change voting laws. Almost immediately, a race to the bottom began. States wasted no time closing polling places, shortening early voting hours and passing restrictive ID laws. The targets were clear: young people, shift workers and communities of color—the same groups driving today's organizing momentum. In the years since *Shelby*, wages for Black teachers, city workers and health care aides have fallen, while corporate power has only grown stronger.

The Texas congressional map offers a glimpse of a future without the VRA: diluted working-class voices in a system that answers only to the wealthy few. These attempts to roll back the clock on racial progress should sound an alarm. When politicians get a green light to manipulate voting maps and take intentional steps to block representation on the basis of race, they can use that power to dismantle protections for union power, fair wages and retirement security.

Democracy depends on rules that keep it fair. Those in power understand this—and some are working overtime to erase the rules entirely. But America's unions have never accepted a world where working people are silenced. We fought for the Voting Rights Act because this movement knows our fight for fair pay, safe jobs and dignity at work is the same fight as the struggle for the ballot box.

Workers built this democracy, and we will defend it. We will continue to push Congress to do its job and pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to fully restore and permanently protect voting rights and ensure access to free and fair elections.

Voting rights are a labor issue—because when democracy breaks down, worker power breaks down with it.

Fred Redmond, the highest-ranking African American labor official in history, is the secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, the nation's largest labor federation, representing 64 unions and nearly 15 million workers.

Evan Turnage Announces Run for Congress Targeting Longtime Incumbent Bennie Thompson

By Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Senior National Correspondent

Jackson, Mississippi native Evan Turnage, a 33-year-old antitrust lawyer and former top Senate counsel, formally entered the race for Mississippi's 2nd Congressional District on December 17, setting up a Democratic primary challenge to longtime incumbent Democratic Rep. Bennie Thompson in the March 10, 2026, election.

Turnage, who grew up in Jackson after being born in Cleveland, Mississippi, launched his campaign by drawing attention to persistent economic hardship in the district, which remains one of the poorest in the nation. In announcing his candidacy, Turnage said the district was the poorest in the poorest state when he was born and remains so more than three decades later, arguing that generational economic stagnation has forced families to watch loved ones leave the state in search of opportunity.

Turnage appeared on Let It Be Known News for his first interview since entering the race, discussing his decision to run, his roots in Mississippi, and his belief that the district needs new leadership focused on economic opportunity, accountability, and helping Mississippians build stable lives at home.

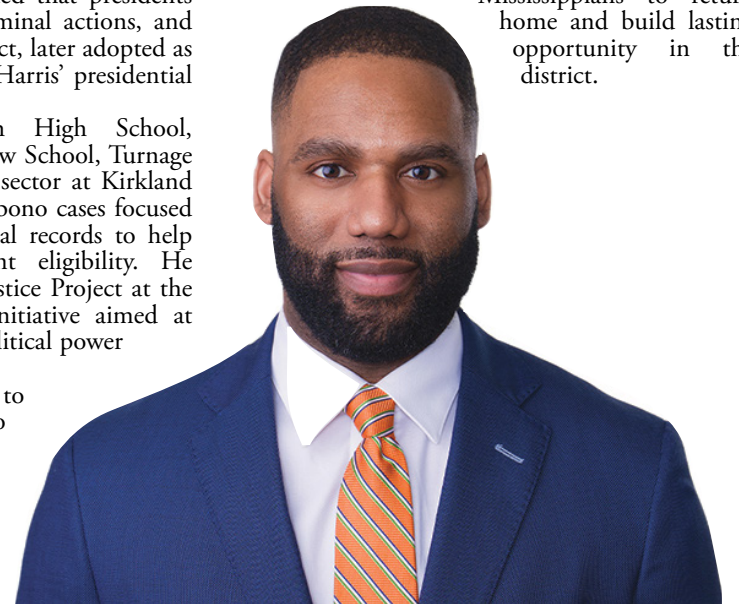
Turnage brings extensive federal policy experience to the race. He previously served as chief counsel to then Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and as senior counsel to Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, where he helped craft major legislative proposals, including

the No Kings Act, which argued that presidents do not have immunity for criminal actions, and the Price Gouging Prevention Act, later adopted as part of Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential platform.

A graduate of Murrah High School, Morehouse College and Yale Law School, Turnage has also worked in the private sector at Kirkland & Ellis, where he handled pro bono cases focused on expunging wrongful criminal records to help individuals regain employment eligibility. He currently leads the Southern Justice Project at the Open Markets Institute; an initiative aimed at strengthening economic and political power in Black Belt communities.

"I've dedicated my life to leveling the playing field so people can not only get by, but get ahead, and raise a family right here," Turnage said in announcing his campaign, adding that he is seeking to make it easier for

Mississippians to return home and build lasting opportunity in the district.



Evan Turnage. Courtesy photo.

The Truth Is Under Attack; The Black Press Needs You

By Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Senior National Correspondent

This is not a reflection. It is a demand. The Black Press of America is being deliberately starved, and unless people act now, it will collapse in full view of the nation it has served for nearly two centuries. This is not about nostalgia. It is about whether truth survives when power decides it should not.

For almost 200 years, the Black Press has told the truth when the truth was unwelcome and dangerous. It documented lynchings when they were denied, exposed segregation when it was defended, and recorded Black life when America pretended it did not exist. It did this without protection, without wealth, and without permission.

Now it is being forced to do the impossible again: survive without resources.

Under Donald Trump and his administration, policies dressed up as neutrality have functioned as weapons. Executive orders dismantling diversity, equity, and inclusion did more than reshape government offices. They sent messages across corporate America, philanthropy, higher education, and advertising. Supporting Black institutions became risky. Silence became safer.

The result has been swift and devastating. Advertising has collapsed. Corporate partnerships have evaporated. Foundations have retreated. Journalists have worked without pay. Newsrooms that serve millions are hanging on by hours and days, not months.

This did not happen because the Black Press lost relevance. It happened because truth became inconvenient.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association represents more than 235 Black-owned newspapers reaching more than 20 million readers digitally and more than 22 million in print each week. That reach has not protected it. Influence does not matter when power decides to starve the messenger.

At the same time the Black Press has been economically strangled, Black history itself has been placed under federal review. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Juneteenth were stripped from free admission days at national parks. Black historical figures were removed from government websites. The National Museum of African American History and Culture was accused of improper ideology and placed under scrutiny.

This is not coincidence. It is alignment. A government that erases history will always move next to erase those who record it.

"They have declared war on Black literature, Black history, Black media," famed civil rights attorney Ben Crump declared. "Everything Black."

Members of Congress issued the same warning. Mississippi Democratic Rep. Bennie Thompson said the administration's actions were designed to erase Black voices by attacking diversity, stripping

history from public institutions, and weakening the platforms that tell Black truth. "Black Americans have worked hard and sacrificed for generations," Thompson said. "One man can't silence our voice or erase our legacy."

But voices can be silenced if the institutions that carry them are allowed to die.

If the Black Press disappears, there will be no backup. No emergency replacement. No awakening from the mainstream media. The stories will simply stop being told.

This is the moment that demands action, not sympathy.

The Black Press of America does not need

encouragement. It needs money. Now.

If you have ever relied on the Black Press to tell the truth when others would not, you are being asked to do something specific.

Go to BlackPressUSA.com.

Find the donate button.

Click it.

Give what you can.

Give now.

Not later. Not after the next election. Not when it feels safer.

The donate button at BlackPressUSA.com is not symbolic. It is survival.

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Credo-The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from racial and national antagonisms when it accounts to every person, regardless of race, color, or creed full human and legal rights. Hating no person, fearing no person, the Black Press strives to help every person in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as any one is held back.

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Entertainment

"My Son Did Not Slap Me"

Diddy's Mom Responds to Netflix Documentary



Diddy's mother Janice Combs

Janice Combs, Diddy's mother, is speaking out against the Netflix documentary Sean Combs: The Reckoning. She says the film spreads false claims about her son and their family, and demands that the alleged inaccuracies be corrected publicly.

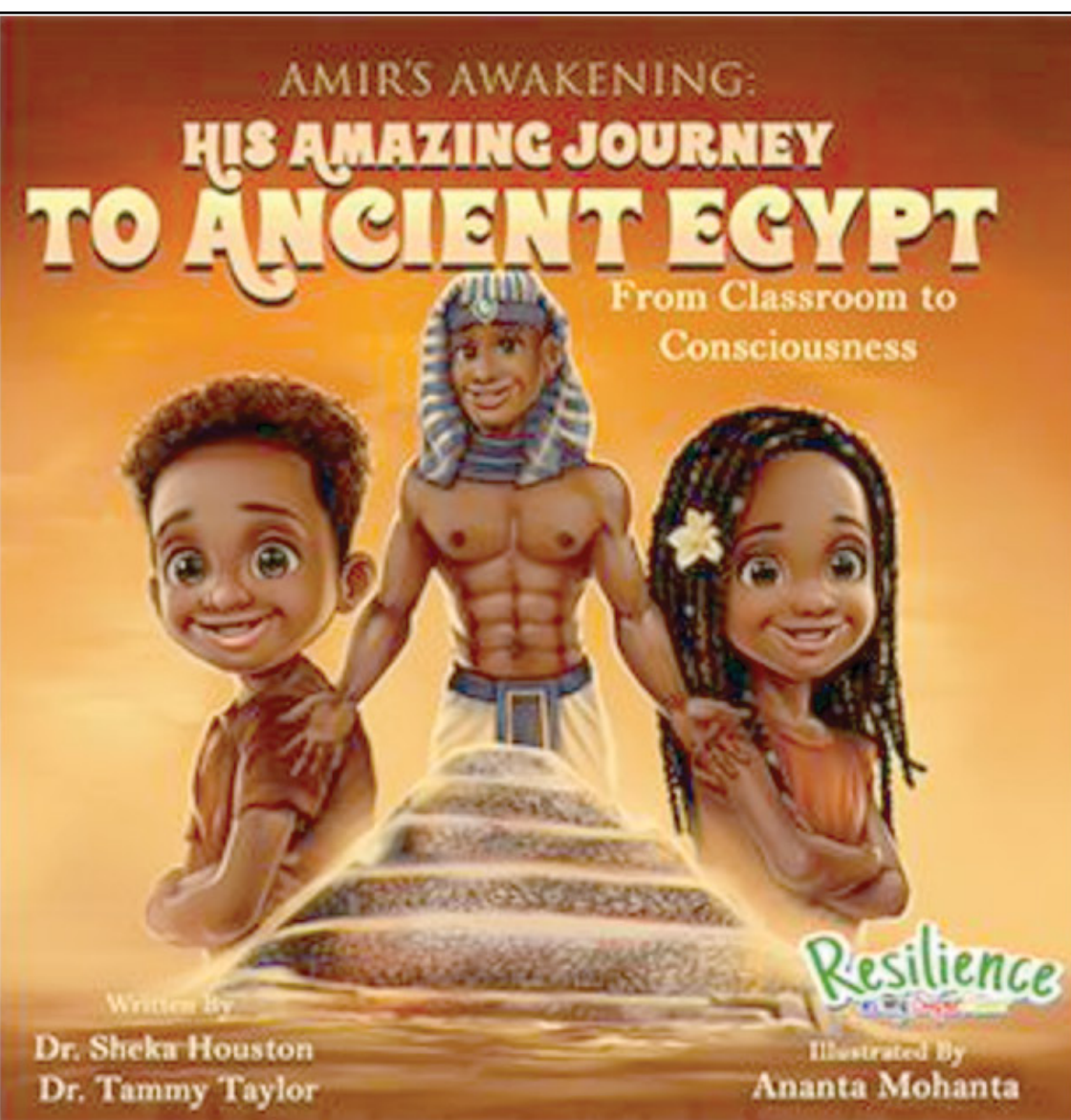
In a statement to Deadline, Combs challenged the documentary's narrative. She specifically denied claims that Diddy even slapped her after the City College tragedy on December 28, 1991. "These inaccuracies regarding my son Sean's upbringing and family life is intentionally done to mislead viewers and further harm our reputation," she said.

Combs criticized the filmmaker, Kirk Burrows, for using the tragedy to push a story she says is false. She called the portrayal of Bad Boy Records "wrong, outrageous and past offensive." She also demanded that Netflix publicly retract the alleged inaccuracies.

The documentary's executive producer, 50 Cent, defended the film. In a GQ interview, he said his goal was to shed light on hip-hop culture and not to settle any personal score. "If someone's not saying something, then you would assume that everybody in hip-hop is okay with what's going on," he explained.

50 Cent also noted that people connected to the hip-hop scene shared their experiences, which led to the stories featured in the documentary. "When you're part of the culture, things will come to you faster," he said, emphasizing that the accounts were gathered from those within the scene.

The documentary has sparked debate, with Combs firmly rejecting its claims and 50 Cent standing by the project's cultural focus. Fans and viewers continue to watch closely as the discussion unfolds.



Two Former Black School Principals Release New Book to Inspire Black Children From Classroom to Consciousness

Dr. Sheka Houston, formerly the principal of a middle school, and Dr. Tammy Taylor, formerly the principal of an elementary school, have partnered to release Amir's Awakening: His Amazing Journey to Ancient Egypt – From Classroom to Consciousness, a new book that is the first in the Resilience Series of five books that aims to inspire Black children. Based in South Carolina, both women have more than 25 years of experience in education.

At a time when African American history is being threatened, and critical books are being banned, these two trailblazing Black educators are flipping the narrative with their transformational children's book series and activity guides. The vividly illustrated story boldly empowers students by introducing – or reconnecting – them to their cultural roots and intellectual legacy, offering parents, teachers, mentors, and administrators an accessible and exciting solution for engaging Black students in school.

Research shows that African-centered

education boosts Black student achievement by an average of 45 percentile points on standardized tests. When students learn history that reflects their identity and brilliance, it activates their minds—not just for pride, but for performance.

"Amir's Awakening doesn't begin the Black story in chains. It begins in greatness—with pyramids, Pharaohs, and purpose. It's how we reignite pride and activate genius in the classroom," says the dynamic duo known as the Resilience DoctHers.

Recent studies confirm that Black students who have at least one Black teacher by third grade are 13% more likely to enroll in college. Cultural relevance in education is not a threat to other students; it lifts all learners. Culturally responsive classrooms are academically stronger, emotionally healthier, and more united.

Amir's Awakening is available for purchase at <https://create-and-educate-llc.myshopify.com> or on Amazon. Parents, schools, and organizations have ordered to empower their youth and themselves,

as Amir's Awakening has been described as a must-read for children and adults.

In addition to writing books, Dr. Houston and Dr. Taylor have also produced and hosted more than 200 episodes of their podcast called The REALL Academy, where they became the help they needed as school leaders. Their podcast has impacted nearly 200,000 educators worldwide and continues to educate and activate communities weekly with free resources.

About the Authors

Dr. Sheka Houston is COO of Create and Educate, LLC, a best-selling author, business strategist, and award-winning educator. She leads through the lens of faith and motherhood, and her leadership has helped transform underperforming schools into academic standouts. She led a Middle School to improve by two report card levels in one year, a feat that typically takes 3–5 years.

Dr. Tammy Taylor, CEO of Partnerships at Create and Educate, LLC, is a leader and Ph.D.

holder in Educational Leadership and Policy. Her doctoral work uplifts the Black woman's role in education and affirms her lifelong calling: service to humanity with humility and grace. She transformed a state-sanctioned Elementary School from CSI to success and completely out of School Improvement. The school improved three report card levels in a single year.

Together, they're awards list includes the Palmetto Silver Award for Academic Growth, the STEAM School of Excellence Award, the Local Entrepreneurs Accelerator Program Award, Semi-Finalist for the prestigious Palmetto's Finest Award, and state recognition for school turnaround. Clearly, they aren't just authors — they are nationally recognized educational leaders with a proven track record of transformation.

For press inquiries, media interviews, or partnership opportunities, contact info@createandeducate.solutions

Jay-Z Reportedly Invests \$500M in K-Pop Music, Lifestyle, and Entertainment Brands

Jay-Z is stepping into the global K-Pop market with a \$500 million investment fund. His firm, MarcyPen Capital Partners, is partnering with South Korea's Hanwha Asset Management to help lifestyle and entertainment brands expand worldwide.

The fund will target Korean businesses in music, beauty, food, and fashion, as reported by the Financial Times. MarcyPen brings expertise in lifestyle and consumer brands, while Hanwha will identify companies ready for international growth. Together, they aim to turn Korea's cultural influence into global business opportunities.

K-pop and Korean media have surged in popularity, with groups like BTS and Blackpink filling arenas around the world and shows like Squid Game and KPop Demon Hunters dominating streaming platforms. The "Korean wave," or hallyu,

has grown into a \$31 billion export industry, covering entertainment, fashion, and beauty.

South Korea has long invested in cultural exports to boost its economy and global influence. Private equity, however, has rarely backed Korean lifestyle and entertainment ventures seeking international reach. This fund represents one of the first major efforts to combine local expertise with global investment.

Founded in 2024, MarcyPen manages \$1.1 billion and has invested in brands like Merit Beauty and Rael. Robbie Robinson, MarcyPen's CEO, described South Korea as a "cultural nexus of Asia," noting its growing impact on worldwide trends. The fund plans to start raising capital next year from institutional investors and wealthy individuals.



Jay-Z invests in K-Pop

Legal Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER 25CUB00698

Superior Court of the State of California, for the county of KERN
1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Metropolitan Division - Justice Building
PETITION OF: **MARJORIE MAESTAS**
FOR CHANGE OF NAME TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **MARJORIE MAESTAS**
Filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

Present name **MARJORIE MAESTAS**
Proposed name **MARGIE ERLINDA MAESTAS**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: **January 27, 2026**
Time: **8:30 a.m.**
Dept: **L**
Room:
The address of the court is: same as noted above
A copy of this Order to Show Cause must be published at least once a week for four successive weeks before the date set for hearing on the petition in a newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
Date: **November 21, 2025**
Gina M. Cervantes
Court Commissioner
Vanessa Guerra
Deputy
Petitioner:
Marjorie Maestas
8200 Westwood Dr., Apt 401,
Bakersfield, CA 93311
Telephone: (702) 336-1189
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: **Dec 3, 10, 17, 24, 2025**

AMENDED CITATION TO PARENT
[FC §7822; Pr. Code §1516.5]
Case Number: T000249
Hearing Date: 12/26/2025
Time: 8:30 AM
Department: J1
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

COUNTY OF VENTURA

In the Matter of AMELIAH ROSALIE SLOWIK, regarding a minor female.
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, TO JESSICA ALEXANDRA MICHAEL:
You are hereby notified to appear before the judge presiding in Department J1 of this Court, located at 4353 E. Vineyard Avenue, Oxnard, California 93036, on December 26, 2025, at 8:30am, then and there to show cause, if any you have, why the minor AMELIAH ROSALIE SLOWIK, born on September 26, 2015 (herein "the minor") should not be declared free from your custody and control so that the minor may be adopted.
The following information concerns rights and procedures that relate to this proceeding for the termination of your right to custody and control of the minor, as set forth in Family Code Sections 7822 et seq, and Probate Code Sections 1516 et. seq.

1. At the beginning of the proceeding, the court will consider whether or not the interests of the minor require the appointment of counsel. If the court finds that the minor's interests do require such protection, the court will appoint counsel to represent the minor, whether or not the minor is able to afford counsel. The minor will not be present in court unless the minor so requests or the court so orders.
2. If a parent of the minor appears without counsel and is unable to afford counsel, the court must appoint counsel for the parent, unless the parent knowingly and intelligently waives the right to be represented by counsel. The court will not appoint the same counsel for the minor and the parent.
3. Pursuant to Family Code Sections 7860 and 7862, the court may appoint either the public defender or private counsel. Any private counsel appointed will receive a reasonable sum for compensation and expenses, in an amount to be determined by the court. That amount must be paid by the real parties in interests, but not by the minor, in such proportions as the court believes to be just. If, however, the court finds that any of the real parties in interests cannot afford counsel, that amount will be paid by the court.
4. The court may continue this proceeding for not more than thirty days, as necessary to appoint counsel and to enable counsel to become familiar with the case.
Dated: November 24, 2025
K. Bieker,

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER 25CUB00701
Superior Court of the State of California, for the county of KERN
1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
PETITION OF: **BRITTANY MICHELLE WADLEY**
FOR CHANGE OF NAME TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **BRITTANY MICHELLE WADLEY**
Filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present name **BRITTANY MICHELLE WADLEY**
Proposed name **IVY HAZEL GENTRY**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: **February 2, 2026**
Time: **8:30 a.m.**
Dept: **L**
Room:
The address of the court is: same as noted above
A copy of this Order to Show Cause must be published at least once a week for four successive weeks before the date set for hearing on the petition in a newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
Date: **November 26, 2025**
Gina M. Cervantes
Court Commissioner
Vanessa Guerra
Deputy

Clerk of the Superior Court
Signed: Beatriz Mendez
Amy Cannon - CSBN 304904
SEASIDE LAW, PC
1583 Spinnaker Drive, Suite 203B,
Ventura, CA 93001
Telephone: (805) 626-7343
Amy@Seaside.Law
Attorney for Petitioners,
TINA AMOKE and OMULO AMOKE
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: **Dec 3, 10, 17, 24, 2025**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER 25CUB00701

Superior Court of the State of California, for the county of KERN
1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
PETITION OF: **BRITTANY MICHELLE WADLEY**
FOR CHANGE OF NAME TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **BRITTANY MICHELLE WADLEY**
Filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present name **BRITTANY MICHELLE WADLEY**
Proposed name **IVY HAZEL GENTRY**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: **February 2, 2026**
Time: **8:30 a.m.**
Dept: **L**
Room:
The address of the court is: same as noted above
A copy of this Order to Show Cause must be published at least once a week for four successive weeks before the date set for hearing on the petition in a newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
Date: **November 26, 2025**
Gina M. Cervantes
Court Commissioner
Vanessa Guerra
Deputy

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER 25CUB00723
Superior Court of the State of California, for the county of KERN
1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Civil - Metropolitan Division Justice Building
PETITION OF: **JORGE SANDOVAL ORTEGA**
FOR CHANGE OF NAME TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **JORGE SANDOVAL ORTEGA**
Proposed name **JORGE ORTEGA**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
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Room:
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Date: **November 26, 2025**
Gina M. Cervantes
Court Commissioner
Vanessa Guerra
Deputy
Petitioner:
Jorge Sandoval Ortega
9925 Aim Ave.,
Bakersfield, CA 93307
Telephone: (661) 569-1395
BAKERSFIELD

Petitioner:
Brittany Michelle Wadley
2816 Whitley Dr.,
Bakersfield, CA 93309
Telephone: (825) 818-4152
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: **Dec 10, 17, 24, 31, 2025**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER 25CUB00723

Superior Court of the State of California, for the county of KERN
1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Civil - Metropolitan Division Justice Building
PETITION OF: **JORGE SANDOVAL ORTEGA**
FOR CHANGE OF NAME TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **JORGE SANDOVAL ORTEGA**
Proposed name **JORGE ORTEGA**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
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Date: **November 26, 2025**
Gina M. Cervantes
Court Commissioner
Vanessa Guerra
Deputy
Petitioner:
Jorge Sandoval Ortega
9925 Aim Ave.,
Bakersfield, CA 93307
Telephone: (661) 569-1395
BAKERSFIELD

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER 25CUB00723
Superior Court of the State of California, for the county of KERN
1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Civil - Metropolitan Division Justice Building
PETITION OF: **JORGE SANDOVAL ORTEGA**
FOR CHANGE OF NAME TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **JORGE SANDOVAL ORTEGA**
Proposed name **JORGE ORTEGA**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: **February 2, 2026**
Time: **8:30 a.m.**
Dept: **L**
Room:
The address of the court is: same as noted above
A copy of this Order to Show Cause must be published at least once a week for four successive weeks before the date set for hearing on the petition in a newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
Date: **November 26, 2025**
Gina M. Cervantes
Court Commissioner
Vanessa Guerra
Deputy
Petitioner:
Jorge Sandoval Ortega
9925 Aim Ave.,
Bakersfield, CA 93307
Telephone: (661) 569-1395
BAKERSFIELD

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER 25CUB00723
Superior Court of the State of California, for the county of KERN
1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Civil - Metropolitan Division Justice Building
PETITION OF: **JORGE SANDOVAL ORTEGA**
FOR CHANGE OF NAME TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **JORGE SANDOVAL ORTEGA**
Proposed name **JORGE ORTEGA**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: **February 2, 2026**
Time: **8:30 a.m.**
Dept: **L**
Room:
The address of the court is: same as noted above
A copy of this Order to Show Cause must be published at least once a week for four successive weeks before the date set for hearing on the petition in a newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
Date: **November 26, 2025**
Gina M. Cervantes
Court Commissioner
Vanessa Guerra
Deputy
Petitioner:
Jorge Sandoval Ortega
9925 Aim Ave.,
Bakersfield, CA 93307
Telephone: (661) 569-1395
BAKERSFIELD

PUBLIC NOTICE

NEWS OBSERVER

PUB: **Dec 10, 17, 24, 31, 2025**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER 25CUB00689

Superior Court of the State of California, for the county of KERN
1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Civil - Metropolitan Division Justice Building
PETITION OF: **KYLE CLIFFORD WOESSNER**
FOR CHANGE OF NAME TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **KYLE CLIFFORD WOESSNER**
Proposed name **KYLE CLIFFORD OWEN**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person

PUBLIC NOTICE

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: **KYLE CLIFFORD WOESSNER**
Filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present name **KYLE CLIFFORD WOESSNER**
Proposed name **KYLE CLIFFORD OWEN**
THE COURT ORDERS: that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person

PUBLIC NOTICE

objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: **February 2, 2026**
Time: **8:30 a.m.**
Dept: **L**
Room:
The address of the court is:

PUBLIC NOTICE

same as noted above
A copy of this Order to Show Cause must be published at least once a week for four successive weeks before the date set for hearing on the petition in a newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
Date: **November 26, 2025**
Gina M. Cervantes
Court Commissioner
Vanessa Guerra
Deputy
Petitioner:
Kyle Clifford Woessner
2725 Loma Linda Dr.,

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO PUBLIC INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

December 24, 2025
County of Kern – Planning and Natural Resources Department
2700 M Street, Suite 250,
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2372
(661) 862-5020

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or soon after January 27, 2026, the Board of Supervisors will be requested to authorize the County of Kern Planning and Natural Resources Department (PLNR) to submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Los Angeles Field Office, for the release of HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds. Under Title 2 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, to undertake the following project known as CD Activity No. 33.25.1 – HOME Rehabilitation Program related improvements. The project site is located at 5202 Greenbrier Ave Bakersfield CA 93306.

The project consists of activities that include providing modernization improvements to a private residence. Planned rehabilitation activities to the exterior include; the replacement of the existing roof, windows, screens, laundry door, and the application of stucco to the exterior walls of the residence. Planned activities to the interior include; the replacement of the kitchen cabinets, countertop, interior doors, hot water-heater, and the vanity and sink in one bathroom. Additional planned activities throughout the home include; the removal and replacement of flooring, ceiling fan installation, replacement of all space vents, the installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and both interior and exterior painting. Additionally, appropriate pest control measures, electrical work, and lead hazard control work shall be conducted. The project site is developed as a single-family residence with a General Plan classification of Low Medium Density Residential (LMR) and a zoning classification of Low Density Residential (R-1). At least \$80,000 of HOME funding is proposed for project implementation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Copies of the documents may be obtained beginning on January 5, 2026, by email or phone request as noted below. The public notice may also be found at and a copy of the scanned Environmental Assessment (EA) reviewed on the departmental website: <https://kernplanning.com/community-development-2-2/> beginning on December 23, 2025. Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the EA or the ERR to the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department by email at fergusonj@kerncounty.com; by phone at (661) 862-5046; or by mail at co: Jamal Ferguson, 2700 M Street, Suite 250, Bakersfield, CA, 93301. Comments received within the submittal period from January 5, 2026, to January 13, 2026, will be considered by the County of Kern prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Respondents should specify which part of Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The County of Kern certifies to HUD that the appointed Chairman, in capacity as Chair of the Board of Supervisors, consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the County of Kern to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

HUD will consider objections to the Responsible Entity's (RE) Request for Release of Funds and Environmental Certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date specified above or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer or other officer of the County of Kern; (b) the RE has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58 or by CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1500-1508, as applicable; (c) the RE has omitted one or more steps in the preparation, completion or publication of the Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Study per 24 CFR Subparts E, F or G of Part 58, if applicable; (d) the grant recipient or other participant in the development process has committed funds for or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before release of funds and approval of the environmental certification; or (e) another Federal, State or local agency has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58.76) and shall be addressed to HUD (Attn: Environmental Officer), Los Angeles Field Office at 300 North Los Angeles Street, Ste. 4054, Los Angeles, CA 90012 or contact by phone (213) 894-8000, fax (213) 894-8107 or via TTY Relay at (213) 894-8133. Potential objectors should contact HUD to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (Government Code Section 54953.2)
Planning and Natural Resources Department
Community Development Division
2700 "M" Street, Suite 250
Bakersfield, California 93301
Phone: (661) 862-5020
Facsimile: (661) 862-5052
TTY Relay: (800) 735-2929

The Board of Supervisors Chamber is accessible to persons with disabilities. Disabled individuals who need special assistance to attend or participate in a meeting of the Board of Supervisors may request assistance at the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, Fifth Floor, 1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, California or by calling (661) 868-3585 or via TTY Relay: (800) 735-2929. Every effort will be made to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities by making meeting material available in alternative formats. Requests for assistance should be made five (5) working days in advance of a meeting whenever possible.

Published Bakersfield News Observer December 24, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT TO THE COUNTY OF KERN ANNUAL ACTION PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

On February 10, 2026, the County of Kern Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing and consider a substantial amendment to the County of Kern Annual Action Plan for fiscal year 2024-2025 Community Development Programs to fund \$330,000 HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) funds for the following project:

6413 Lynch Canyon Drive, Lake Isabella - purchase existing duplex with two 3-bedroom, 1-bathroom units of approximate 1,300 square feet each with single-car garage and driveway. Each apartment will be rented to a low-income household and comply with HUD Rent Limits.

Immediately after the public hearing, the Board will consider the following actions:

- Approve amendment to County of Kern's Annual Action Plan for Community Development as provided herein and
- Authorize the Planning and Natural Resources Department Director approval to execute the HOME agreement, loan documents, and fund project.

The public hearing is scheduled for:

Location: Board of Supervisors Chambers
County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, First Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Date: February 10, 2026
Time: 2:00 P. M. or thereafter

Comments and/or questions prior to the public hearing concerning the proposed amendment can be directed to Catherine Vasquez, Housing Programs Manager at:

Planning and Natural Resources Department
Community Development Division
2700 M Street, Suite 250
Bakersfield, California 93301
Phone: (661) 862-5062
TTY Relay: (800) 735-2929

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Published Bakersfield News Observer December 24, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO PUBLIC INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

December 24, 2025
County of Kern – Planning and Natural Resources Department
2700 M Street, Suite 250,
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2372
(661) 862-5020

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or soon after January 27, 2026, the Board of Supervisors will be requested to authorize the County of Kern Planning and Natural Resources Department (PLNR) to submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Los Angeles Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds. Under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, to undertake the following project known as CD Activity No. 37.25.1 – CDBG Home Access Program related improvements. Under Title 2 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, to undertake the following project known as CD Activity No. 33.24.1 – HOME Rehabilitation Program related improvements. The project site is located at 119 ½ Garden Dr., Bakersfield, CA, 93307.

This project consists of activities funded by two programs, as noted above, at the same residence. The Housing Rehabilitation portion includes providing accessibility and modernization improvements to a private residence. Planned activities include; replacement of existing roof, doors, windows, and the painting of the exterior of the home. Interior renovation activities include; replacing kitchen appliances and shelving, painting kitchen walls, and the installation of vinyl tile flooring in the kitchen and bathrooms. Additional activities include; the removal and replacement of the existing plumbing throughout the home, the installation of light fixtures, and the installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in three bedrooms. Additionally, appropriate pest control measures and lead hazard control work shall be conducted.

The CDBG Home Access related activities include; the replacement of the cast iron tub in the bathroom with a low-threshold fiberglass shower pan, the installation of grab bars, and the removal and replacement of all bathroom tiles. Additionally, lead hazard control work will be necessary in accordance with 24 CFR part 35 to address lead-based paints. The project site is developed as a single-family residence with a General Plan classification of Low Medium Density Residential (LMR) and a zoning classification of Low Density Residential (R-1). At least \$90,000 of HOME funding and \$4,500 of CDBG funding is proposed for project implementation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Copies of the documents may be obtained beginning on January 5, 2026, by email or phone request as noted below. The public notice may also be found at and a copy of the scanned Environmental Assessment (EA) reviewed on the departmental website: <https://kernplanning.com/community-development-2-2/> beginning on December 23, 2025. Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the EA or the ERR to the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department by email at fergusonj@kerncounty.com; by phone at (661) 862-5046; or by mail at co: Jamal Ferguson, 2700 M Street, Suite 250, Bakersfield, CA, 93301. Comments received within the submittal period from January 5, 2026, to January 13, 2026, will be considered by the County of Kern prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Respondents should specify which part of Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The County of Kern certifies to HUD that the appointed Chairman, in capacity as Chair of the Board of Supervisors, consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the County of Kern to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

HUD will consider objections to the Responsible Entity's (RE) Request for Release of Funds and Environmental Certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date specified above or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer or other officer of the County of Kern; (b) the RE has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58 or by CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1500-1508, as applicable; (c) the RE has omitted one or more steps in the preparation, completion or publication of the Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Study per 24 CFR Subparts E, F or G of Part 58, if applicable; (d) the grant recipient or other participant in the development process has committed funds for or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before release of funds and approval of the environmental certification; or (e) another Federal, State or local agency has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58.76) and shall be addressed to HUD (Attn: Environmental Officer), Los Angeles Field Office at 300 North Los Angeles Street, Ste. 4054, Los Angeles, CA 90012 or contact by phone (213) 894-8000, fax (213) 894-8107 or via TTY Relay at (213) 894-8133. Potential objectors should contact HUD to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (Government Code Section 54953.2)
Planning and Natural Resources Department
Community Development Division
2700 "M" Street, Suite 250
Bakersfield, California 93301
Phone: (661) 862-5020
Facsimile: (661) 862-5052
TTY Relay: (800) 735-2929

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Published Bakersfield News Observer December 24, 2025

Legal Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

VIN: W1KAF4HBXNR047366
Lien Sale will take place at 10:00 AM at AYALA'S TOWING
2831 FRUITVALE AVE
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93308
(661)401-4205
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 2025

2018 HONDA FOR SALE ON 1/7/2025
VIN: 1HGCV1F59JA231984
Lien Sale will take place at 10:00 AM at AYALA'S TOWING
2831 FRUITVALE AVE
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93308
(661)401-4205
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE OF SALE ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026, AT 8:30 AM AT THE KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT, DEPT. L, 1215 TRUXTON AVE, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301, APPROXIMATELY 975.77 GROSS ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY WITH THE FOLLOWING LEGAL DESCRIPTION:
The land situated in the City of Buttonwillow, County of Kern, State of California, with the following Assessor's Parcel Numbers:
101-044-13-00-4; 101-100-28-00-1, 103-100-30-00-6; 103-110-02-01-7; 103-110-04-00-4; 103-110-09-00-9, 103-120-14-

PUBLIC NOTICE

00-6; 103-120-15-00-9; 103-120-16-00-2; 103-120-17-00-5; 103-130-01-00-1, 103-130-03-00-7; 103-130-05-00-3; 103-130-07-01-6; 103-140-02-01-6; 103-140-05-00-8; 103-140-06-00-9; 103-140-12-00-6; 103-140-15-00-5, 103-140-16-00-8; 103-140-17-00-1; 103-140-18-00-4, 103-140-19-00-7; 103-150-07-01-4; 103-170-23-00-7; 103-170-41-00-9, 103-180-01-01-5, 103-180-05-01-7; 103-180-07-01-3, 103-190-13-00-4; 103-190-14-00-7; 103-200-21-00-9; 103-200-23-00-5; 103-200-25-00-1; 103-200-26-00-4; 103-200-27-00-7, 103-200-28-00-0; 103-200-29-00-3
A complete legal description, as well as other sale documents and the overbid rules, are available at <https://bit.ly/BlackLakeSale>.
**WILL BE SOLD BY WAY OF A COURT CONFIRMATION AND OVERBID HEARING. THE OPENING BID WILL BE \$6,770,000. BIDDERS MUST CONTACT THE COURT RECEIVER BY 5:00 P.M. THE DAY BEFORE THE HEARING TO PREQUALIFY TO BID BY: (1) SIGNING THE RULES FOR CONFIRMATION AND OVERBID HEARING; (2) PROVIDING PROOF OF FUNDS AS TO THE BIDDER'S HIGHEST BID; (3) PROVIDING A \$150,000 DEPOSIT VIA CASHIER'S CHECK OR WIRE/ACH. ALL BIDDERS THAT ARE NOT THE WINNING BIDDER WILL RECEIVE THEIR \$150,000 DEPOSIT BACK FOLLOWING THE HEARING. PREQUALIFIED BIDDERS MAY APPEAR IN PERSON OR REMOTELY. CALL MICHAEL ANCHORDOQUY AT 661-616-3577 FOR DETAILS. 12/24, 12/31/25, 1/7/26
CNS-3996491#
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026**

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF CARL LEON NORTHAM AKA CARL NORTHAM
CASE NUMBER: 25PRJ00361
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of **CARL LEON NORTHAM AKA CARL NORTHAM**
A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by **CARL NORTHAM** in the Superior Court of California, County of KERN 2100 College Ave, Bakersfield, CA 93305 Juvenile Justice Center
THE PETITION FOR PROBATE requests that **CARL NORTHAM** be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.
THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons

PUBLIC NOTICE

unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.)
The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.
A HEARING on the petition will be held in this court as follows:
Date: January 16, 2026
Time: 8:30 a.m. Dept: J1
Room:
Address of court: same as noted above
IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.
IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) **four months** from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) **60 days** from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.
Attorney for Petitioner: GERALD H. OLDFIELD, ESQ., 1810 Westwind Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93301 Telephone: (661) 324-6010
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

The business is conducted by: Individual
SIGNED: ISAAH SEBASTIAN FLORES
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Kern County on: December 5, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: M VACA RAMOS, Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on December 5, 2030
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

Delano, CA 93216
County: Kern
Full name of registrant: EDGAR JUAN GARZA at PO Box 254, Delano, CA 93216
The business is conducted by: Individual
SIGNED: EDGAR JUAN GARZA
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Kern County on: December 4, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: M CEJA, Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on December 4, 2030
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

14, 2026
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2025-B6914
Doing business as: KRANBERRY at 512 Mary Street, Arvin, CA 93203
Mailing Address: same
County: Kern
Full name of registrant: KAREN MARIA FUENTES at 512 Mary Street, Arvin, CA 93203
The business is conducted by: Individual
SIGNED: KAREN MARIA FUENTES
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Kern County on: December 18, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: S CEJA, Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on December 18, 2030
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PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

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PUBLIC NOTICE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2025-B6711
Doing business as: FLORES COINS & COLLECTIBLES at 5816 Walton Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93304
Mailing Address: same
County: Kern
Full name of registrant: ISAAH SEBASTIAN FLORES at 5816 Walton Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93304

PUBLIC NOTICE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2025-B6845
Doing business as: SUPPLY at 1201 Weedpatch Hwy, Bakersfield, CA 93307
Mailing Address: PO Box 227, Edison, CA 93220
County: Kern
Full name of registrant: BAKERSFIELD IRRIGATION COMPANY, INC. at PO Box 227, Edison, CA 93220
State of incorp. or org.: CA
The business is conducted by: Corporation
SIGNED: GEOFFREY GRAY, President
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Kern County on: December 15, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: M HERNANDEZ, Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on December 15, 2030
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2025-B6897
Doing business as: MT PREMIUM SERVICES at 11017 San Diego St, Lamont, CA 93241
Mailing Address: same
County: Kern
Full name of registrant: MARCO ANTONIO TORRES-MORENO at 11017 San Diego St, Lamont, CA 93241
Full name of registrant: CLAUDIA JANET TORRES MORENO at 11017 San Diego St, Lamont, CA 93241
The business is conducted by: Married Couple
SIGNED: MARCO TORRES
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Kern County on: December 17, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: M VACA RAMOS, Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on December 17, 2030
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2025-B6464
Doing business as: QUE ROLLO PLEBES LLC at 816 Marguerita Way, Bakersfield, CA 93306
Mailing Address: same
County: Kern
Full name of registrant: QUE ROLLO PLEBES LLC at 816 Marguerita Way, Bakersfield, CA 93306
State of incorp. or org.: CA
The business is conducted by: Limited Liability Company
SIGNED: YAMAIRA ZEBADA, Manager
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Kern County on: November 17, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: S CEJA, Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on November 17, 2030
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2025-B6941
Doing business as: VECTOR & VESSEL at 10215 Bay Colony Dr, Bakersfield, CA 93312
Mailing Address: same
County: Kern
Full name of registrant: MICHAEL CHARLES GENOVA II at 10215 Bay Colony Dr, Bakersfield, CA 93312
The business is conducted by: Individual
SIGNED: MICHAEL CHARLES GENOVA II
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Kern County on: December 19, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: S CEJA, Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on December 19, 2030
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2025-B6519
Doing business as: PRO TAX & BUSINESS SERVICES at 110 N Mahan St, Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Mailing Address: same
County: Kern
Full name of registrant: PRO TAX INC. at 110 N Mahan St, Ridgecrest, CA 93555
State of incorp. or org.: CA
The business is conducted by: Corporation
SIGNED: AMANDA BARTEL, Chief Executive Officer
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: November 1, 2025
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Kern County on: November 20, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: M VACA RAMOS, Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on November 20, 2030
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME
FILE NO: 2025-B5070
Business Name you wish to abandon: THE SUNROOM FINE ART
Street address of business: 6008 Banchoy Ct., Bakersfield, CA 93314
County: Kern
Mailing address of business: same
Registrant(s) whose wish to abandon the business name: KRISTEN BAILEY MONTVOYA at 6008 Banchoy Ct., Bakersfield, CA 93314
I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information, which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime.)
Business was conducted by: Individual
SIGNED: KRISTEN BAILEY MONTVOYA, Owner
This statement of abandonment filed on: December 16, 2025
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA
County Clerk
By: M VACA RAMOS
Deputy
BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Dec 24, 31, 2025, Jan 7, 2026

Features

Worried About Health Insurance Costs? There May Be Cheaper Options — But With Trade-Offs

By Julie Appleby

For the millions of Americans who buy Affordable Care Act insurance, there's still time left to enroll for 2026. But premium increases and the expiration of enhanced tax subsidies have led to larger-than-expected costs.

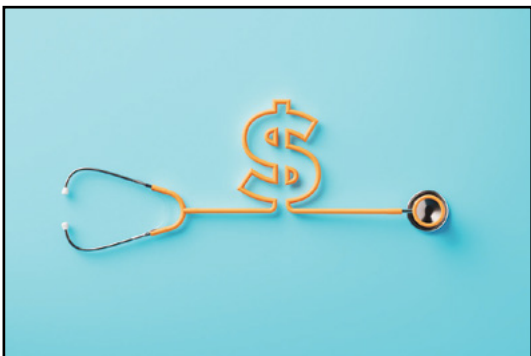
Concerned shoppers, wondering if there's anything they can do, are consulting insurance brokers or talking to representatives at ACA marketplace call centers.

"We're hearing from people with complex medical conditions who don't think they can survive if they don't have access to medical care," said Audrey Morse Gasteier, executive director of the Massachusetts Health Connector, that state's insurance marketplace.

And some are considering going outside the ACA to find more affordable options. But that requires caution.

Congress looks increasingly unlikely to extend the enhanced subsidies before the year's end. Late Wednesday, the House passed a package of measures favored by conservatives that does not address the subsidies and is largely viewed as dead on arrival in the Senate. Earlier Wednesday, however, four GOP moderates joined with Democrats to sign a discharge petition to force a vote — likely in January — on a three-year extension. The Senate and President Donald Trump would also have to approve the measure, but if extended the subsidies could be applied retroactively. Meanwhile, the deadline for choosing a health plan is quickly approaching. The official end of open enrollment is set for Jan. 15 for coverage starting Feb. 1. In most states, it's already too late to enroll for coverage starting Jan. 1. Here are five considerations in the decision-making process:

1. Short-Term Plans: 'You Have To Be Healthy' Some ACA shoppers might find themselves considering short-term insurance plans sold outside the government-run marketplaces — or steered toward the plans by insurance brokers. Be wary. Short-term plans are just that: insurance originally designed as temporary coverage for situations like changing jobs or attending school. They can look a lot like traditional coverage, with deductibles, copayments, and participating networks of hospitals and doctors. Still, they are not ACA-compliant plans and are often less expensive than ACA plans. But they cover less. For example, unlike ACA plans, they can impose annual and lifetime caps on benefits. The vast majority do not cover maternity care. Some might not cover prescription



(MICROSTOCKHUB/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS)

drugs. Short-term plans require applicants to complete a medical questionnaire, and insurers can exclude coverage or cancel a policy retroactively for those with preexisting medical conditions. Also, depending on the terms of the particular plan, a person who develops a medical condition during the coverage period might not be accepted for renewal. In addition, short-term plans are not required to cover care on the ACA's checklist of essential benefits, such as preventive care, hospitalization, or emergency services. The shortcomings of the plans, which critics say are sometimes marketed in misleading ways, have led Democrats to label them "junk insurance." The Trump administration argues they're suitable for some people and has sought to make them more widely available. "We recommend it when it makes sense," said Joshua Brooker, a Pennsylvania insurance broker. "But if you're going to enroll in short-term coverage, you need to know which boxes are unchecked." "They're not for everyone. You have to be healthy," said Ronnell Nolan, the president and CEO of Health Agents of America, a trade group. And they're available in only 36 states, according to KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News. Some states, such as California, prohibit them. Others set tight restrictions.

2. Beware of Coverage That's Not Comprehensive There are other types of health coverage offered by sales brokers or other organizations. One kind, called an indemnity plan, is meant to supplement a traditional health insurance plan by paying toward deductibles or copayments. Those plans do not have to follow ACA coverage rules, either. Generally, they pay a fixed

dollar amount — say a few hundred dollars a day — toward a hospital stay or a smaller amount for a doctor's office visit. Typically those payments fall short of the full costs and the policyholder pays the rest. They generally also require consumers to fill out medical forms stating any preexisting conditions. Another type, a faith-based sharing plan, pools money from members to cover their medical bills. The plans are not required to keep any specific amount of financial reserves and members are not guaranteed that the plans will pay their health expenses, according to the Commonwealth Fund, a foundation that supports health care research and improvements to the health system. Sharing plans expanded beyond faith communities after the ACA was adopted. Like short-term plans, they cost less than ACA plans but also don't have to follow ACA rules. They are not considered insurance, and some have been accused of fraud by state regulators. "Yes, it is cheaper, and yes, it does work for some people," Nolan said. "But you need to understand what that plan does. It would be my last resort." 3. Consider a 'Bronze' or 'Catastrophic' Plan, But Be Aware of Deductibles For those wanting to stay with ACA plans, the lowest premiums are generally in the categories labeled "catastrophic" or "bronze," Jessica Altman, executive director of California's ACA exchange, said her state has noticed an uptick in enrollments in bronze-level plans. They have lower premiums but high annual deductibles — the amount a customer must spend before most coverage kicks in. Deductibles for bronze plans average nearly \$7,500 nationally, according to KFF. Another option, new for 2026, is expanded eligibility for catastrophic plans, which used to be limited to people younger than age 30. As the name suggests, they're intended for people who want health insurance just in case they suffer a catastrophic health condition, such as cancer or injuries from a car accident, and the plans can have deductibles as high as the ACA's annual limit on out-of-pocket spending — \$10,600 for an individual or \$21,200 for a family. But now people losing subsidies because of the expiration of the enhanced tax credits can also qualify for the plans. However, they may not be available in every region. Lauren Jenkins, a broker in Oklahoma, said some of her clients earning less than \$25,000 this year had qualified for very low-cost or free plans with the enhanced subsidies. Next year, though, their costs may rise to \$100 or more per month for a "silver"-level plan, a step up from bronze. So she is showing them bronze plans to bring down the monthly cost. "But they might have

a \$6,000, \$7,000, or \$10,000 deductible they now have to pay," Jenkins said. "For people only making \$25,000 a year, that would be detrimental." Both bronze and catastrophic plans are eligible to be linked with health savings accounts, which can be used to save money tax-free for medical expenses. They are more popular with higher-income households. 4. Another Plan May Have Lower Premiums It can pay to shop around. Some people may be able to find a lower premium by shifting to a different plan, even one offered by the same insurer. There are also different levels of coverage, from bronze to "platinum," where premiums also vary. Brooker said that in some locations "gold"-level plans are less expensive than silver, even though that seems counterintuitive. Also, some people who run their own businesses but have only one employee might qualify for a group plan rather than an individual policy. Sometimes those can be less expensive. Not every state allows this, Nolan said. But, for example, Nolan said, she has a client whose only employee is his wife, so she's going to see whether they can get a group plan at lower rates. "That might work out for them," she said. ACA rates for small group plans (fewer than 50 employees) vary regionally and are not always less expensive than individual coverage, Brooker said. "It's pretty all over the board as to where the rates are better," he said. 5. Other Rules of the Road Insurance experts encourage people not to wait until the last minute to at least take preliminary steps. Shoppers can go onto the official federal or state marketplace website and fill out or update an application with required income and other information necessary to determine what the 2026 plan year holds for them. For instance, even without congressional intervention, subsidies will not go away entirely. They will be smaller, though, and there is an upper income limit — a cutoff for households earning more than four times the poverty level, which comes to \$62,600 for an individual and \$84,600 for a couple for 2026. When shopping, consumers should make sure they land on an official ACA website, because there are look-alikes that may not offer ACA-compliant plans. Healthcare.gov is the official federal site. From there, people can find websites serving the 20 states, along with the District of Columbia, that run their own ACA exchanges. The government sites can also direct consumers to licensed brokers and other counselors who can help with an application. And a reminder: Consumers also need to pay their first month's premium for coverage to take effect.

2025 in Review:

Seven Questions for Assemblymember Corey Jackson

Corey Jackson

a Strong Equity-Focused Voice in the Legislature

Edward Henderson | California Black Media Assemblymember Corey A. Jackson (D-Moreno Valley) represents the 60th Assembly District. He was first elected in November 2022.

In the Legislature, Jackson has emerged as a key voice on issues related to equity, social services, and community well-being — first as chair of the Human Services Committee in 2023 and now as chair of Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Human Services. His leadership has placed him at the center of some of the state's most urgent conversations, from protecting essential safety-net programs to shaping long-term strategies for children, families, and vulnerable Californians.

A graduate of CSU San Bernardino and California Baptist University, Jackson brings a blend of academic expertise and lived experience to the Capitol.

California Black Media (CBM) spoke with Dr. Jackson about his successes and disappointments this year as well as his goals for 2026.

What stands out to you as your most important achievement this year?

My most important achievement this year was my work as the budget subcommittee chair for human services. We've been able to preserve a lot of the housing programs within our social safety net to prevent our seniors and low-income people from falling into homelessness.

How did your leadership contribute to improving the lives of Black Californians this year?

The work that I do in terms of supporting our most vulnerable African Americans who are receiving assistance, making sure that as we strengthen our social safety net, our brothers and sisters throughout the state will have a better foundation to work from.

I think that our reparations achievements as a Black Caucus have also been significant. My job in the Black Caucus is to steer all of our bills to the governor's desk. I'm the coordinator, or the conductor, of our reparations bills. We're building an infrastructure for people that's embedded in the state, and that's never been done anywhere in the nation before.

What frustrated you the most this year?

The constant crises — whether they're natural disasters, the state budget, the economy, or Donald Trump. It's been quite some time — probably since maybe Reagan — that we've had such an anti-Black president. Someone who is literally trying to weaken our political power, weaken our voice, weaken our culture, weaken our history. That's probably the most frustrating part.

What has inspired you most this year?

The story of our people. When the going gets tough, it makes us stronger as a community. It speaks to our resilience; it speaks to us being the conscience of this state and this nation. During the worst of times is when we shine the brightest as a

community.

What is one lesson you've learned this year that will inform your decision-making next year?

Trust your gut. And hold the line.

In one word, what is the biggest challenge Black Californians are facing currently?

Collective action

When we act together, when we speak and act with one voice and one action, the whole world listens. Target is finding that out, right? So, the idea is: we must do it more. We only lose when we are not working together.

What is the goal you want to achieve the most in 2026?

I want to end seniors falling into homelessness next year. You've just got to fight for the money and the budget to do it. You can't allow the crises to stop you from making progress. It's about being laser-focused.

And, obviously, many seniors, families, and people experiencing homelessness are African American. So, I think it's time to do right by our ancestors and by the people whose shoulders we stand on.



Corey Jackson

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Features

Washington's Homeless Hide in Plain Sight, Growing Sicker and Costing Taxpayers More

By Angela Hart

WASHINGTON — Every night, Abdullah Ibrahim retreats from the streets into a wooded stretch along the Potomac River.

As night falls and temperatures drop, he erects a tent and builds a fire beneath a canopy of pine, hemlock, and cedar trees.

He evades authorities by rotating use of three tents of different colors at three campsites. As day breaks, he dismantles his shelter, rolls up his belongings, and hides them for the next night. "They don't see you if you're in the woods," the 32-year-old said. "But make sure it's broken down by morning or they'll find you."

During the day, he wanders, stopping at a public library to warm up or a soup kitchen to eat. What's important is to not draw attention to himself for being homeless.

"Police want us out of the way," he said, dressed in a gray jacket and carrying none of his possessions. "Out of sight, out of mind."

Ibrahim has been deliberate about blending in since August, when President Donald Trump placed the district's police under federal control and ordered National Guard soldiers to patrol its streets. The president also ordered homeless people to leave immediately. "There will be no 'MR. NICE GUY,'" he posted.

The Trump administration says encampment sweeps have reduced the visibility of homelessness, thereby enhancing the city. "There is no disputing that Washington, DC is a safer, cleaner, and more beautiful city thanks to President Trump's historic actions to restore the nation's capital," White House spokesperson Taylor Rogers said.

While there may appear to be fewer homeless people in the nation's capital now, they have not disappeared.

In interviews, homeless people said they are in a constant shuffle, hiding in plain sight. During the day, they stay on the move, grabbing meals at soup kitchens and resting on occasion in public libraries, on park benches, or at bus stops. At night, many unsheltered people bed down in business doorways, on park sidewalks, and on church stoops. Some ride the bus all night, while a few shelter in emergency

rooms. Others find respite in the woods or flee to suburbs in Virginia or Maryland.

There are about 5,100 homeless people in Washington, D.C., including in temporary shelters, according to an early-2025 homelessness tally. After Trump ordered the crackdown on public homelessness, people living in makeshift communities scattered and are now living in the shadows. City officials estimated in August that nearly 700 homeless people were living outdoors without tents or other shelter.

As winter draws near, they are exposed to the elements and grow sicker as chronic ailments such as diabetes and heart disease go untreated. Street medicine providers say that, since the National Guard was deployed, they have faced enormous difficulty finding patients. Many caught up in sweeps have had their lifesaving medications thrown away, and they are more likely to miss medical appointments because they are constantly on the move. Street medicine providers say they can't find their patients to deliver medication or transport them to medical appointments. The constant chaos can suck patients with mental illness and substance use deeper into drug and alcohol addiction, raising the risk of overdose.

Caseworkers report similar disruptions, saying as clients get lost, they break connections essential for obtaining housing documents, particularly IDs and Social Security cards.

District officials and health providers say this cascade will make homelessness worse, threatening public health and public safety and racking up enormous costs for the health care system.

"It was already hard locating people, but the federal presence just made it worse," said Tobie Smith, a street medicine doctor and the executive director of Street Health D.C.

The Homeless Shuffle
Chris Jones was born and raised in Washington, D.C., but now is homeless, having been pushed out of his tent near the White House in the initial days of the federal homelessness crackdown. He said two of his tents were taken during sweeps. Now, sleeping on a sidewalk outside a church, he doesn't bother trying to get another one. "Why? What's the point? It'll just get thrown away again."

Jones, 57, has a severe knee injury that prevents him from walking some days and said he was scheduled for a knee replacement in December. He said it's important to stay where he is — he relies on a nearby drugstore to refill his medications for bipolar disorder, diabetes, and high blood pressure. When he's hungry, he goes to a soup kitchen for a meal or tries to get a cheeseburger and a soda from a fast-food joint across the street.

It's important for him to stay outside the church, he said, so his case manager can find him when a permanent housing slot opens up. If it gets too cold, he said, he will cross the street and sleep in the doorway of a business, which can provide a bit more shelter. He wants to get indoors, but for now, he waits.

Since taking control of Washington's police force, the Trump administration has ratcheted up pressure on cities and counties across the nation to clear homeless encampments under threat of arrest, citation, or detention. It has ordered or threatened similar National Guard deployments in Los Angeles; Portland, Oregon; and other cities with large homeless populations.

Rogers, the White House spokesperson, said the president is maintaining National Guard and federal law enforcement presence in the nation's capital "to ensure the long-term success of the federal operation." Since March, city and federal officials have removed more than 130 homeless encampments, she said, though some local homelessness experts say that number could be inflated.

The Supreme Court last year made it easier for elected officials and law enforcement to fine or



The district is complying with the Trump administration's push to aggressively remove homeless people and their tents from public spaces in the nation's capital. This plot of land once housed a large encampment. (ANGELA HART/KFF HEALTH NEWS)

arrest homeless people for living outside. Then, in July of this year, the president issued an executive order calling for a nationwide crackdown on urban camping, including a massive removal of people living outdoors and forced mental health or substance use treatment.

Trump is also spearheading an overhaul of homelessness policy, moving to slash funding for permanent housing and services for homeless people. The move would limit the use of a long-standing federal policy known as "Housing First" that offers housing without mandating mental health or addiction treatment. The National Alliance to End Homelessness warns the move risks displacing at least 170,000 people in permanent supportive housing. The Department of Housing and Urban Development paused the plan on Dec. 8 to make revisions, which it "intends" to do, federal housing officials said.

City officials say they are complying with the Trump administration's forceful campaign against homeless people sheltering outside. Pressured by the White House, local officials said they've gotten more aggressive in breaking up camps. Advocates for homeless people say some of the sweeps have been conducted at night and others with little or no notice to move. City leaders believe they could be done more compassionately by offering services and shelter.

"We've pivoted from the notion of allowing encampments if they didn't violate public health or safety to a position of, 'We don't want you in the streets,'" said Wayne Turnage, deputy mayor for District of Columbia Health and Human Services, who oversees encampment cleanups. "It's unsafe, it's unhealthy, and it's dangerous." Yet he acknowledges the encampment sweeps can waste city resources as caseworkers and street medicine providers scramble to find their clients and patients.

Advocates say the Trump administration is inciting fear and mistrust between homeless people and those working to help them while wasting taxpayer dollars used to provide care and place people into housing. There are, however, far fewer tents and large-scale encampments visible to tourists and residents.

"People found safety in those communities and service providers could find them. Now there are people with guns and flashing lights dislocating folks experiencing homelessness without notice and just throwing stuff away," said Jesse Rabinowitz, campaign and communications director for the National Homelessness Law Center.

District officials say some people have accepted emergency shelter. But even as the city works to connect people with services and expand shelter capacity, officials acknowledge there isn't enough permanent housing or temporary beds for everyone. And there will be fewer places for people living outside to go.

The city, in its fiscal year 2026 budget, concentrated its homelessness funding on families, funding 336 new permanent supportive housing vouchers. Yet it cut funding for temporary housing for both families and individuals and provided no new permanent supportive housing vouchers for individuals. That means fewer housing slots for single adults, who make up most of those wandering the streets. City officials said, however, that they have slotted 260 more permanent housing units for homeless individuals or families into their construction pipeline.

Worsening Health Care
The fallout is inundating local soup kitchens with demand, including Miriam's Kitchen in Foggy Bottom. The local institution provides hot meals, housing assistance, and warm blankets to people in need.

Caseworkers say it's becoming increasingly difficult to help clients secure IDs and other documents needed for housing and other social services.

"I'm looking everywhere, but I can't find people," said Cyria Knight, a caseworker at Miriam's Kitchen. "Most of my clients went to Virginia."

It's unclear how much of the district's homeless population has fanned out to neighboring Virginia

and Maryland communities. There were an estimated 9,700 homeless people in the region in January, months before Trump's crackdown. Four of six counties around Washington saw homelessness rise from 2024, while it fell 9% in the district.

"I'm not seeing my patients for a month or more, and then when I do, their chronic conditions are uncontrolled. They've been in and out of the ER, and they're more likely to be hospitalized," said Anna Graham, a street medicine nurse practitioner for Unity Health Care, a network of clinics in Washington. "It's just setting us back."

Graham's team stations its mobile medical van outside Miriam's Kitchen at dinnertime to better find patients.

Willie Taylor, 63, was figuring out where to sleep for the night after grabbing dinner from Miriam's. He saw Graham to receive his medications for advanced lung disease, seizures, chronic pain, and other health disorders.

He has difficulty walking and needs a wheelchair, which is complicated because he doesn't have a permanent address. Taylor and his medical providers say his previous wheelchairs have been stolen while he slept outdoors at night. He uses a shopping cart to keep him steady, walking around all day, until nighttime.

On a cold November night, Graham helped Taylor figure out his daily medications and checked his vitals. The team handed him a warm coat and hand warmers before sending him back outside.

After walking for about 45 minutes, he found a piece of park pavement where he could build a bed out of tarps and sleeping bags.

"My body can't take this," Taylor said, preparing to sleep. "There's ice on the concrete. I'm in so much pain; it hurts so much worse when it's cold."

Homeless people die younger and cost the health care system more than housed people, largely because conditions go untreated on the streets, and when they do seek care, many go to the ER. Among Medicaid enrollees, homeless people have been estimated to incur \$18,764 a year in spending, compared with \$7,561 for other enrollees.

Over at the So Others Might Eat soup kitchen earlier that day, Tyree Kelley was finishing his breakfast of a sausage sandwich and hard-boiled eggs. He was considering going into a shelter. The streets were becoming too dangerous for someone like him, he said, referring to the police and National Guard presence. He was feeling the loss of an encampment community that would watch his back.

He's been to the ER at least seven times this year to get care for a broken ankle he sustained falling off an electric scooter. The accident caused him to lose his job and health insurance as a garbage man, he said. His situation has caused him to sink deeper into a depression that began three years ago after his mother died, he said.

Then his father and sister died this year. He began to numb his pain with beer.

"You get so depressed, being out here," said Kelley, 42. "It gets addictive. You start to not care about even changing your clothes."

His depression also led him to seek out marijuana. Then he smoked a joint laced with fentanyl. The overdose sent him to the hospital for days.

"I actually died and came back," he said, crediting other homeless people with administering naloxone and saving his life. "I need to get out of this, but I feel so stuck."

A few blocks west of the White House sits a vacant plot of land that earlier this year held more than a dozen tents. Workers in the area sense what they don't always see.

"I was here when this was all cleared. A bulldozer came in, and all their stuff was thrown in a garbage truck," said Ray Szemborski, who works across the street from the now-empty lot. "People are still homeless. I still see them around underneath the bridge. Sometimes they're at bus stops, sometimes just walking around. Their tents are gone but they're still here."



Churches are safe ground for sheltering amid a widespread crackdown on street homelessness in Washington, D.C., homeless people say. As long as they stay off federal land, people are allowed to sleep and congregate at some churches during the day and at night. (ANGELA HART/KFF HEALTH NEWS)

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Abdullah Ibrahim is homeless on the streets of Washington, D.C. He hides his tent nightly to avoid authorities conducting encampment sweeps. (ANGELA HART/KFF HEALTH NEWS)



Tobie Smith, a street medicine doctor with Street Health D.C., checks a homeless person with a stethoscope in November. (ANGELA HART/KFF HEALTH NEWS)

Features

Guns Marketed for Personal Safety Fuel Public Health Crisis in Black Communities

By Fred Clasen-Kelly and Daniel Chang

PHILADELPHIA — Leon Harris, 35, is intimately familiar with the devastation guns can inflict. Robbers shot him in the back nearly two decades ago, leaving him paralyzed from the chest down. The bullet remains lodged in his spine.

"When you get shot," he said, "you stop thinking about the future."

He is anchored by his wife and child and faith. He once wanted to work as a forklift driver but has built a stable career in information technology. He finds camaraderie with other gunshot survivors and in advocacy.

Still, trauma remains lodged in his daily life. As gun violence surged in the shadows of the covid pandemic, it shook Harris' fragile sense of security. He moved his family out of Philadelphia to a leafy suburb in Delaware. But a nagging fear of crime persists.

Now he is thinking about buying a gun.

Harris is one of tens of thousands of Americans killed or injured each year by gun violence, a public health crisis that escalated in the pandemic and churns a new victim into a hospital emergency room every half hour.

Over the past two decades, the firearm industry has ramped up production and stepped up sales campaigns through social media influencers, conference presentations, and promotions. An industry trade group acknowledged that its traditional customer was "pale, male and stale" and in recent years began targeting Black people and other communities of color who are disproportionately victimized by gun violence.

The Trump administration has moved to reduce federal oversight of gun businesses, heralding a new era announced by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives as "marked by transparency, accountability, and partnership with the firearms industry."

The pain of gun violence crosses political, cultural, and geographic divides — but no group has suffered as much as Black people, such as Harris. They were nearly 14 times as likely to die by gun homicide than white people in 2021, researchers said, citing federal data. Black men and boys are 6% of the population but more than half of homicide victims.

Washington has offered little relief: Guns remain one of few consumer products the federal government does not regulate for health and safety.

"The politics of guns in the U.S. are so out of whack with proper priorities that should focus on health and safety and most fundamental rights to live," said attorney Jon Lowy, founder of Global Action on Gun Violence, who helped represent

Supreme Court. "The U.S. allows and enables gun industry practices that would be totally unacceptable anywhere else in the world."

KFF Health News undertook an examination of gun violence during the pandemic, a period when firearm deaths reached an all-time high. Reporters reviewed academic research, congressional reports, and hospital data and interviewed dozens of gun violence and public health experts, gun owners, and victims or their relatives.

The examination found that while public officials imposed restrictions intended to prevent covid's spread, politicians and regulators helped fuel gun sales — and another public health crisis.

As state and local governments shut down schools, advised residents to stay home, and closed gyms, theaters, malls, and other businesses to stop covid's spread, President Donald Trump kept gun stores open, deeming them essential businesses critical to the functioning of society.

White House spokesperson Kush Desai did not respond to interview requests or answer questions about the Trump administration's efforts to reduce regulation of the firearm industry.

During the pandemic, the federal government gave firearm businesses and groups more than \$150 million in financial assistance through the Paycheck Protection Program, even as some businesses reported brisk sales, according to an analysis from Everytown for Gun Safety, an advocacy group.

Federal officials said the program would keep people employed, but millions of dollars went to firearm companies that did not say whether it would save any jobs, the report said.

About 1 in 5 American households bought a gun during the first two years of the pandemic, including millions of first-time buyers, according to survey data from NORC at the University of Chicago.

Harris is keenly aware of what drives the demand.

"Guns aren't going away unless we get to the root of people's fears," he said.

Surveys show most Americans who own a gun feel it makes them safer. But public health data suggests that owning a gun doubles the risk of homicide and triples chances of suicide in a home.

"There's no evidence that guns provide an increase in protection," said Kelly Drane, research director for the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. "We have been told a fundamental lie."

Record Deaths

Less than a year into the pandemic, 20-year-old Jacquez Anlage was shot dead in a Jacksonville, Florida, apartment. Five years later, the killing remains unsolved.

His mother, Crystal Anlage, said she fell to her knees and wept in grief on her lawn when police delivered the news.

She said Jacquez overcame years in the foster care system — living in 36 homes — before she and her husband, Matt, adopted him at age 16.

Jacquez Anlage had just moved into his own apartment when he was shot. He loved animals and wanted to become a veterinary technician. He was kind and loving, Crystal Anlage said, with the 6-foot-4, 215-pound physique of the football and basketball player he'd been.

"He was just getting to a point in life where he felt safe," Crystal Anlage said.

Gun violence researchers say parents like Crystal Anlage carry trauma that destroys their sense of security.

Anlage said she endures post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. She is terrified of guns and fireworks.

But she has made something meaningful of her son's killing: She co-founded the Jacksonville

Survivors Foundation, which works to raise awareness about the impact of homicide and to support grieving parents.

"Jacquez's death can't be in vain," she said. "I want his legacy to be love."

His legacy and that of other young men killed by guns is muted by firearm manufacturers' powerful message of fear.

During the pandemic, gun marketers told Americans they needed firearms to defend themselves against criminals, protesters, unreliable cops, and racial and political unrest, according to a petition filed by gun control advocacy groups with the Federal Trade Commission.

In a since-deleted June 18, 2020, Instagram post from Lone Wolf Arms, an Idaho-based manufacturer, a protester is depicted being confronted by police officers in riot gear between the words "Defund Police? Defend Yourself," the petition shows. The caption says, "10% to 25% off demo guns and complete pistols."

Impact Arms, an online gun seller, posted a picture on Instagram on Aug. 3, 2020, showing a person putting a rifle in a backpack, the document says. "The world is pretty crazy right now," the caption reads. "Not a bad idea to pack something more efficient than a handgun."

The National Rifle Association in 2020 posted on YouTube a four-minute video of a Black woman holding a rifle and telling viewers they need a gun in the pandemic. "You might be stockpiling on food right now to get through this current crisis," she said, "but if you aren't preparing to defend your property when everything goes wrong, you're really just stockpiling for somebody else."

The messaging worked. Background checks for firearm sales soared 60% from 2019 to 2020, the year the federal government declared a public health emergency.

The same year, more than 45,000 Americans died from firearm violence, the highest number up till then. In 2021, the record was broken again.

Weapons sold at the beginning of the pandemic were more likely to wind up at crime scenes within a year than in any previous period, according to a report by Democrats on Congress' Joint Economic Committee, citing ATF data.

Gun manufacturers "used disturbing sales tactics" following mass shootings in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas, "while failing to take even basic steps to monitor the violence and destruction their products have unleashed," according to a separate memo released by congressional Democrats in July 2022 following a House Oversight and Reform Committee investigation of industry practices and profits.

The firearm industry has marketed "to white supremacist and extremist organizations for years, playing on fears of government repression against gun owners and fomenting racial tensions," the House investigation said. "The increase in racially motivated violence has also led to rising rates of gun ownership among Black Americans, allowing the industry to profit from both white supremacists and their targets."

In 2024, then-President Joe Biden's Department of the Interior provided a \$215,000 grant to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, a leading firearm industry trade group, to help companies market guns to Black Americans.

The Federal Trade Commission is responsible for protecting consumers from deceptive and unfair business practices and has the power to take enforcement action. It issued warnings to companies that made unsubstantiated claims their products could prevent or treat covid, for instance. But when families of gun violence victims, lawmakers, and advocacy groups asked the FTC in 2022, during Biden's term, to investigate how firearms were marketed to children, people of color, and groups that espouse white supremacy, officials did not announce any public action.

This summer, the National Shooting Sports Foundation pressed its case to the FTC and derided "a coordinated 'lawfare' campaign" that it said gun control groups have waged against "constitutionally-protected firearm advertising."

FTC spokesperson Mitchell Katz declined to comment, saying in an email that the agency does not acknowledge or deny the existence of investigations.

Serena Viswanathan, who retired as an FTC associate director in June, told KFF Health News that the agency lost at least a quarter of the staff in its advertising practices division after Trump came into office in January.

Gun companies Smith & Wesson, Lone Wolf Arms, and Impact Arms did not respond to requests for comment. Neither did the National Shooting Sports Foundation or the NRA.

In an August 2022 social media post, Smith & Wesson President and CEO Mark Smith said gun manufacturers were being wrongly blamed by some politicians for the pandemic surge in violence, saying cities experiencing violent crime had "promoted irresponsible, soft-on-crime policies that often treat criminals as victims and victims as criminals."

He added, "Some now seek to prohibit firearm manufacturers and supporters of the 2nd Amendment from advertising products in a manner designed to remind law-abiding citizens that they have a Constitutional right to bear arms in defense of themselves and their families."

Guns and Race

In 2015, the National Shooting Sports Foundation gathered supporters at a conference in Savannah, Georgia, and urged the firearm industry to diversify its customer base, according to a YouTube video and reports from Everytown for Gun Safety and the Violence Policy Center.

Competitive shooter Chris Cheng gave a presentation called "Diversity: The Next Big Opportunity." Screenshots from the conference include slides purporting to show "demographics," "psychographics," and "technographics" of Black and Hispanic shooters.

The slides described Black shooters as "expressive and confident socially, in a crowd" and "less likely to be married and to be a college grad." They said Hispanic shooters were "much more trusting of advertising and celebrities."

Nick Suplina, senior vice president for law and policy at Everytown for Gun Safety, said industry marketing shifted in the latter half of the 20th century as the popularity of hunting declined. The new sales pitch: guns for personal safety.

"They said, 'We need to break into new markets,'" Suplina said. "They identified women and people of color. They didn't have a lot of success until the pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the death of George Floyd. The marketing says, 'You deserve the Second Amendment too.' They are selling the product as an antidote to fear and anxiety."

Gun manufacturers were harshly criticized in the Oversight Committee's 2022 investigation for marketing products to people of color, as gun violence remains a leading cause of death for young



Harris credits his wife, Tierra, with helping him find happiness and build a life after injuries from a shooting took away his ability to walk. (MEREDITH RIZZO FOR KFF HEALTH NEWS)

Black and Latino men.

At the same time, some companies also promoted assault rifles to white supremacist groups who believe a race war is imminent, the investigation found. One company sold an AK-47-style rifle called the "Big Igloo Aloha," a reference to an anti-government movement, it said.

Still, Philip Smith wants more Black people to get guns for protection.

Smith said he was working as a human resources consultant a decade ago when he got the idea to form the National African American Gun Association, which helped the National Shooting Sports Foundation compile its report on communicating with Black consumers.

Smith encourages Black people to buy firearms for self-defense and get proper training on how to use them.

After 10 years, Smith said, his group has about 45,000 members nationwide. Single members pay \$39 a year and couples \$59, which gives them access to discounts from the organization's corporate partners, including gunmakers, and raffles for gun giveaways, according to its website.

The police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the shooting death of Florida teenager Trayvon Martin helped spark early interest from doctors, lawyers, and others in joining the group, he said. But interest took off during the pandemic, he said, even among Democrats who had resisted the idea of owning a gun.

"Hundreds of people called me and said, 'I don't agree with anything you're saying, but what kind of gun should I buy,'" Smith recalled.

Smith, describing himself as "quiet, nerdy, and Afrocentric," said criticism of guns misses the point. "My ancestors bled for us to have this right," he said. "Are there some racist white people? Yes. But we should buy guns because there is a need. No one is forcing us to buy guns."

'American Amnesia'

During the pandemic, gun violence took its greatest toll on racially segregated neighborhoods in places such as Philadelphia, where roughly 1 in 4 residents live in poverty.

A city report says a one-year period in the pandemic saw more than 2,300 shootings, or about six a day. Many of the cases haven't been solved by police.

City officials cited the boom in gun sales in the report: Fewer than 400,000 sales took place in Pennsylvania in 2000, but in 2020 it was more than 1 million.

Gun sales have dropped since the pandemic ended, but the harm they've caused persists.

At a conference last year inside the Eagles' football stadium, victims of firearm violence or their relatives joined activists to share accounts of near-death experiences and the grief of losing loved ones.

Paintings flanked the stage and the meeting space to commemorate people who had been fatally shot, nearly all young people of color, under messages such as "You are loved and missed forever" and "Those we love never leave."

Marion Wilson, a community activist, said he believes the nation has forgotten the suffering Philadelphia and other cities endured during the pandemic.

"We suffer from the disease of American amnesia," he said.

Harris was on his way home from a job at Burlington Coat Factory nearly two decades ago when robbers followed him from a bus stop and demanded money. He said he had none and was shot.

Harris had spent his early life fixing cars with his grandfather, when he wasn't at school or attending church. He remembers lying in a hospital bed, overcome with a sense of helplessness.

"I had to learn to feed myself again," he said. "I was like a baby. I had to learn to sit up so I could use a wheelchair. The only way I got through it was my faith in God."

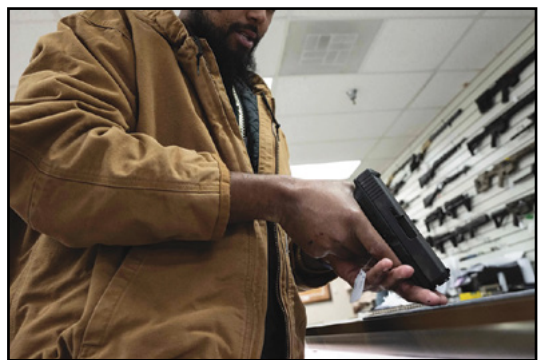
Harris endured years of rehabilitation and counseling for PTSD. As someone in a wheelchair, he said, he sometimes fears for his safety — and a gun may be one of the few ways to protect himself and his family.

"I'm mulling it over," Harris said. "I'm afraid of my trauma hurting someone else. That's the only reason I haven't gotten one yet."

If you or someone you know has experienced the pain of a gunshot wound, and are willing to talk about the medical experience, please fill out our form here.



Fearing being shot again, Harris moved out of Philadelphia, where in a one-year period during the covid pandemic there were more than 2,300 shootings, or about six a day. (MEREDITH RIZZO FOR KFF HEALTH NEWS)



A man looks at a pistol at a gun shop in Capitol Heights, Maryland, on March 14, 2023. (ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Mexico in an unsuccessful lawsuit against Smith & Wesson and other gunmakers that reached the

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Leon Harris is one of tens of thousands of Americans injured each year by gun violence. Now he is considering buying a gun to protect his daughter and their home outside Philadelphia. (MEREDITH RIZZO FOR KFF HEALTH NEWS)



Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA.

November Jobs Report Shows Rising Unemployment and Worsening Outlook for Black Workers

By Stacy M. Brown

Black Press USA Senior National Correspondent

The U.S. labor market showed further signs of strain in November, with new federal data revealing rising unemployment, steep losses in government jobs, and worsening conditions for Black workers, particularly Black men, according to an analysis of the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics report and a review by the National Women's Law Center.

Employers added 64,000 jobs nationwide in November, a modest gain following months of data disruptions caused by the federal government shutdown. The unemployment rate rose to 4.6 percent, up from 4.4 percent in September, the last month for which a full labor force survey was completed. The increase places unemployment at its highest level in four years.

Behind the headline figures, federal

employment continued to fall sharply. Since January, when Donald Trump returned to office, federal payrolls have declined by 271,000 positions. The November report reveals continued reductions tied to deferred resignation programs and layoffs that accelerated earlier in the fall, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The rise in unemployment has been uneven, with Black workers experiencing some of the most severe impacts. Black men ages 20 and older saw their unemployment rate jump from 6.6 percent in September to 7.5 percent in November. Black women ages 20 and older recorded an unemployment rate of 7.1 percent in November, slightly lower than September's 7.5 percent but still higher than any other racial or ethnic group.

Long-term unemployment has also become more pronounced for Black workers. Black women who are unemployed are typically out of work

for 14.5 weeks, while Black men face average unemployment spells of 12.1 weeks. By comparison, white women experience unemployment lasting about 8.6 weeks, and white men about 9.6 weeks, according to the National Women's Law Center's review of federal labor data.

The November report shows that overall job growth remains concentrated in a narrow set of sectors. Healthcare added more than 46,000 jobs, while construction employment rose by 28,000. Manufacturing lost 5,000 jobs, and transportation and warehousing shed nearly 18,000 positions. Leisure and hospitality also declined, reflecting broader weakness outside a handful of growth industries.

Federal officials cautioned that November's data carries higher-than-usual margins of error due to the shutdown-related survey delays. Even so, economists reviewing the report noted that revisions

to late summer and early fall payrolls showed fewer jobs than initially reported, reinforcing signs of a cooling labor market.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the number of people unemployed for more than six months rose to 1.9 million in November, up from 1.7 million a year earlier. Wage growth slowed to 3.5 percent over the past year, the weakest pace since before the pandemic, adding pressure on households facing elevated prices and limited job mobility.

The National Women's Law Center said it will continue monitoring labor market data by race, gender, and industry to assess how job losses and prolonged unemployment affect women and families as federal employment contracts and hiring remain subdued.



CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY SHEET



Hi Everyone!

I love this time of year! It's Christmas time! I know children have a hard time waiting for December 25th! There are so many great things happening at Christmas time, especially in the Black community. Let's see if there is anything you can learn about how Black families celebrate the holiday.

WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?

Christmas is a Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Christ, who, according to the Christian faith, is the Son of God. Jesus Christ is the soul "Reason For The Season". Around the world, it is always celebrated on December 25. The word "Christmas" means "mass on Christ's day". It is a time of God reminding us of His great love for us through His son, Jesus. That's why so many families and friends come together and give gifts to one another to celebrate their love for each other. Christmas for the Black American family is a time of celebration. In the Black American community, homes are decorated and a special sumptuous meal is prepared for that day.



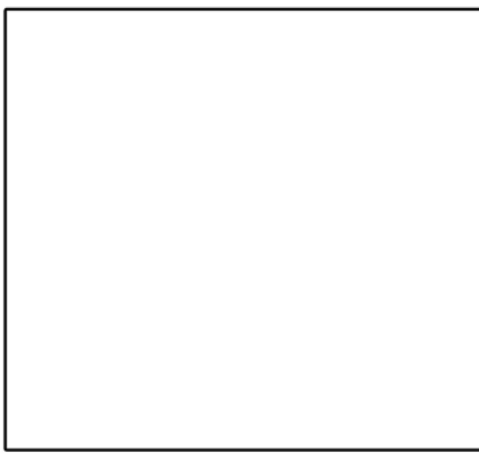
AFRICAN CHRISTMAS CONNECTION

On the lines provided, put T for true if African Americans and the people of Africa share similar traditions during Christmas.

- We attend school on that day. _____
- We attend church services and go Christmas caroling. _____
- We usually go to work on that day. _____
- We prepare a special feast on Christmas. _____
- We give gifts to one another and decorate our homes. _____
- Everyone believes in Santa Claus. _____

HOW I SEE SANTA CLAUS

Draw a picture of what Santa Claus looks like to you.



ONE MINUTE MADNESS

Unscramble all the items below that children of all ages usually ask for at Christmas time.

- sTyO _____
- eoYmN _____
- apId _____
- skoOB _____
- lICe hnoPe _____



CHRISTMAS DAY FOODS

Celebrating Christmas in the Black home is an all day eating feast, starting with breakfast. Circle below all the food items you are likely to eat on Christmas day.

- Grits Greens Spaghetti Cornbread Stuffing Eggs Oatmeal
- Rice Sausage Biscuits Baked Ham Pumpkin Pie Baked
- Chicken Sweet Potato Pie Macaroni and Cheese Eggnog
- Beets Banana Pudding Asparagus

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT!

I would like for you to meet one of our loyal 'Activity Sheet' readers, Chaarvi!

Chaarvi is from Hartford, CT and sent in this amazing drawing of me. Thank you Chaarvi! This is amazing!

Draw your own version of KEMET and send it in to: WWW.KEMETCOMIC.COM/GALLERY

YOU might be in our next artist spotlight!



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AFRICAN CHRISTMAS CONNECTION ANSWER KEY
T T T T T T

ONE MINUTE MADNESS ANSWER KEY
TyrO
mNy
IdaP
Boos
CallPoo

CHRISTMAS DAY FOODS ANSWER KEY
Grits Greens Cornbread Stuffing Eggs Sausage
Biscuits Baked Ham Baked Chicken Sweet Potato Pie
Macaroni and Cheese Eggnog Banana Pudding