



Cash for Moms: As Medicaid Cuts Loom, Cities Test a New Approach to Black Maternal Health

- Page A2



14 Black-Owned Media Companies That Are Taking Over Entertainment One Film (or TV Series) At a Time

- Page A3

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Becerra Discusses Diversity, Health Care, Housing and Education with California Black Leaders

By Joe W. Bowers Jr.
California Black Media

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Xavier Becerra met with Black elected officials and faith, labor, civic and community leaders in South Los Angeles on Oct. 15, outlining his priorities for working families, education, housing and health care. He also pledged to defend diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs against federal opposition and tie state homelessness funding to results.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly Mitchell introduced Becerra, citing his service in the state



California gubernatorial candidate Xavier Becerra speaks with Black media journalists during a roundtable discussion in Los Angeles on Oct. 15, 2026. CBM photo by Maxim Elramsisy.

Assembly, Congress, as California attorney general and as U.S. secretary of health and human services. She said his record of challenging the Trump administration would be important as California confronts federal policy changes.

“We need people who have walked where we have walked and understand the communities that we all live in, come from, and represent,” Mitchell said.

Becerra defended DEI programs as essential to expanding opportunity. Recalling his upbringing as the son of working-class immigrants who never

attended college, he said too many Californians work hard but remain overlooked.

“A lot of folks don’t see them because they’re working so hard; they’re keeping their heads down. But we see them, and that’s why we make this fight,” he said.

Becerra also opposed voter identification requirements, arguing that they create barriers to voting.

“If there’s a fight for that diversity, that strength, that inclusion, that equity, count me in, and let me use the governor’s office to make it clear,” he said.

Asked about his first priorities as governor, Becerra identified housing and health care.

He said more than 40,000 housing units are ready for construction but remain stalled by financing shortages.

Becerra pointed to Proposition 1, a housing bond measure on the November ballot, as a potential source of financing.

“Prop 1 would give us the money to help start



Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass greets California gubernatorial candidate and former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra during a reception with Black community leaders in Los Angeles on Oct. 15, 2026. CBM photo by Maxim Elramsisy.



Former state Sen. Steven Bradford, California gubernatorial candidate Xavier Becerra and California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond gather during a reception with African American community leaders in Los Angeles on Oct. 15, 2026. CBM photo by Maxim Elramsisy.

getting those moving,” he said. “And the more you build, the more you relieve the pressure, the demand for housing, which means you can probably see the price stabilize as well.”

On homelessness, Becerra warned that cities and counties should not expect continued state funding without measurable progress.

“We will demand accountability when it comes to homelessness,” he said. “I’m not willing to let \$1 from the state, from taxpayers, go to a city or a county unless they can show me how they’re going to use the dollar and what the results will be.”

He called for temporary shelter paired with mental health and substance use treatment, while acknowledging that local governments control decisions about encampments and public streets.

Becerra also emphasized preventing homelessness before families lose their housing because of layoffs or medical emergencies.

Continued on page A2

Sacramento:

Golden State Legislative Reunion Brings Together Lawmakers and Officials Who Served Between 1964 and 1995

By Antonio Ray Harvey
California Black Media

Decades of political history, legislative battles and bipartisan relationships came to life in Sacramento on Oct. 9 as some of California’s most influential former lawmakers gathered for the Golden State Legislative Reunion.

In addition to former and current legislators, the event, held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in the state capital, also brought together former governors, constitutional officers and other political figures.

Hosted by former Republican legislative leader Jim Brulte and former Democratic Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, the reunion honored lawmakers elected to the California Senate and Assembly between 1964 and 1995.

Brown, who served in the Assembly from 1964 to 1995 and held the speakership for nearly 15 years, described the reunion as a “unique occasion” to recognize particular contributions of lawmakers from both parties.

“We want to think seriously about the achievement of this body, members of the Assembly, some who went on to join the Senate, and some who went off to other places,” Brown said. “We do want to thank the sponsors for making it possible for all of us to enjoy and renew relationships.”

A towering figure in California politics, Brown rose to become the Democratic whip in 1969 and later chaired influential committees, including Ways and Means and Revenue and Taxation. He became the first Black American Californian to serve as Assembly speaker in December 1980 and remains the longest-serving speaker in California history.

Known for his political savvy and sharp wit, Brown drew laughter as he reflected on his record-setting tenure and the term limits that ultimately reshaped the Legislature.

“For the ones who became speaker after me, I’d still be the speaker if it wasn’t changed to term limits,” Brown said.



Former legislature members from left to right, Antonio Villaraigosa, Maxine Waters, and Willie Brown were all smiles at the Golden State Legislative Reunion at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento on Oct. 9. Villaraigosa was the Speaker of the California State Assembly from 1998 to 2000, Waters served in the California State Assembly for 14 years (from 1977 to 1991), and Brown was the Speaker of the California State Assembly from 1980 to 1995. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey



Former California Assembly Speaker Willie Brown greets Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee and other former colleagues at the Golden State Legislative Reunion at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento. The event drew more than 500 guests, including former lawmakers and officials who served in the California State Capitol. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

Among those joining Brown were former Assembly speakers Antonio Villaraigosa and Bob Hertzberg, along with former members of the Capitol press corps and lobbyists who had spent years covering, negotiating and navigating legislative business.

Brulte, who represented portions of Riverside and San Bernardino counties during his 14 years in the Legislature from 1990 to 2004, brought his own political history to the celebration. He served as a Republican leader in both the Assembly and Senate, becoming the first freshman legislator to lead a party caucus in the Assembly.

In a lighthearted nod to legislative tradition, Brulte took the podium and struck the gavel to call the dinner to order, a moment he joked had been more than three decades in the making.

“The house will be in order,” Brulte said before addressing Brown. “Willie, it only took me 31 years to do that.”

Organizers described the reunion as the largest gathering of former California lawmakers in nearly 50 years, drawing nearly 80 former legislators and approximately 500 guests. Beyond the nostalgia, the event celebrated a period when political adversaries often maintained personal relationships despite sharp disagreements over legislation and public policy.

Among the prominent attendees was U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-CA-43, who represented California’s 48th Assembly District from 1977 to 1991 before beginning her congressional career.

Waters said the opportunity to reconnect with former colleagues was particularly meaningful, but her longstanding friendship with Brown made attending the reunion an easy decision.

“All you have to say is ‘Willie Brown,’ and I’m here. He’s like my brother,” Waters told California Black Media (CBM). “I admire him so much. He’s so brilliant. Of course, we worked together in order to get him his first speakership.”

The reunion drew a cross-section of California’s political establishment, including former Republican Gov. Pete Wilson and former Democratic Gov. Gray Davis, whose careers spanned some of the state’s most consequential political and policy debates.

Also attending was Xavier Becerra, a former U.S. secretary of health and human services, California attorney general and congressman who began his legislative career in the Assembly in 1990. Becerra is now a candidate for California governor.

Other notable guests included former Secretary of State Bruce McPherson, who also served in both houses of the Legislature; former Republican Assemblymember Jim Cunnene; U.S. Rep. Jim Costa, a former state legislator; and former Democratic lawmakers Jackie Speier and Grace Napolitano, both of whom later served in Congress.

Former U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee, now mayor of Oakland, also attended, adding to the gathering’s roster of political figures whose careers extended from the state Capitol to local and national leadership.

Brown, Lee and Waters share another distinction: All three served as members of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), which has played a significant role in advancing legislation and public policy addressing civil rights, economic opportunity and the interests of Black Californians.

After leaving the Legislature, Brown served as San Francisco mayor from 1996 to 2004. Lee went on to represent the East Bay in Congress for more than two decades before becoming Oakland’s mayor in 2025.

For many attendees, the reunion was more than a chance to revisit political accomplishments. It was an opportunity to renew friendships, remember hard-fought legislative battles and reflect on the personal experiences that defined their years in Sacramento.

Waters said seeing former colleagues brought back memories of both the challenges and triumphs they experienced together.

“I am so excited and thrilled to see some of my old colleagues and what they are doing,” Waters said of the event. “I’m remembering the days, all of the good times, bad times, and how we survived.”



Former Republican Senator Jim Brulte and former Assembly Speaker Willie Brown co-hosted the Golden State Legislative Reunion that brought back lawmakers who served between 1964 and 1995. Shown left to right is the Brultes’ daughter, Ivy Vital Brulte, Jim Brulte, Willie Brown, and Jim’s wife, Dr. Kirsten Vital Brulte. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

Six Flags Closes Several Rides After Man Dies On Goliath Rollercoaster

The accident occurred on Monday, after a man was ejected from his seat while riding Goliath at Six Flags Over Georgia, injuring several passengers.

What was supposed to be a fun-filled day at an amusement park turned tragic after a man died while riding a roller coaster at Six Flags Over Georgia.

According to The New York Times, 42-year-old Hassan Jihad Ibn Kariem was ejected from his seat while riding the Goliath attraction. Kariem apparently hit the coaster three times as he fell, hitting other passengers, before landing on a haunted house attraction below. Kariem was on the ride with his son, with his wife and daughter watching from below.

According to the Six Flags website, the roller coaster reaches speeds of 70 miles per hour and a height of 200 feet. In addition to Kariem’s death, four other passengers were injured. The extent and severity of their injuries are still unknown.

Cobb County Police Department said that Kariem was found “unresponsive and not breathing” when they arrived at Six Flags just after 4 p.m. on Monday. The accident caused the ride to stop on an incline, and rescue crews were brought in to evacuate passengers who were stuck on the ride.

Witnesses on the roller coaster described the experience to 11 Alive. “We were having a great time to just screaming ‘Oh my God, what is happening?’” a woman told the outlet.

“He was in our pictures,” another witness told 11 Alive. “He fell and hit the car three different times.” He said the man’s body hit others on the ride before falling onto the roof of a haunted house attraction below.

Representatives for Six Flags acknowledged the incident and said park officials and local authorities responded immediately, but declined to detail what led to the accident, citing privacy concerns for Kariem’s family.

“We are deeply saddened by the guest incident at our park today. Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with the guest’s family, friends, and loved ones. We are also providing support to the guests and team members affected,” a Six Flags representative said in a statement.

Six Flags announced it closed Goliath at the Over Georgia location and has temporarily closed several rides at other locations out of “an abundance of caution.”

The closures include Raging Bull at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, Ill., Goliath at Six Flags Magic Mountain in Valencia, Calif., Nitro at Six Flags Great Escape in Jackson Township, N.J., Leviathan and Behemoth at Canada’s Wonderland in Vaughan, Ontario, Fury 325 and Thunder Striker at Carowinds in Charlotte, N.C., and Orion and Diamondback at Kings Island in Kings Island, Ohio.

Sadly, this is only the latest in a series of safety concerns for the amusement park chain. Three people who rode X2 at Six Flags Magic Mountain have filed a lawsuit against Six Flags. The suit claims the company did not properly disclose to riders the safety risk that comes with the ride, and they have suffered severe brain damage as a result. The ride has been closed since July because of the lawsuit.

Missed the Registration Deadline? LA County Voters Can Still Cast a Ballot

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles County residents who missed California’s Oct. 19 voter registration deadline still have an opportunity to register and vote in the Nov. 3 general election.

California’s conditional voter registration process allows eligible residents to register and cast a ballot through Election Day, even after the regular registration period has closed.

In Los Angeles County, eligible voters may use this process at any participating county Vote Center.

Voters completing conditional registration will fill out a registration application and receive a ballot. Election officials will verify their eligibility and registration information before the ballot is counted.

Early voting begins Oct. 24

Los Angeles County Vote Centers will begin opening Saturday, Oct. 24, providing residents with an opportunity to vote before Election Day.

Participating Vote Centers will operate from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. during the early voting period, Oct. 24 through Nov. 2. On Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3, voting hours will be 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Not every Vote Center opens on the first day, so residents should check the county’s website before traveling to a location.

Registered voters who have received vote-by-mail ballots also have several options. They can return completed ballots through the mail, use an official ballot drop box or bring their ballots to a participating Vote Center.

More than 400 official ballot drop boxes are available throughout Los Angeles County.

Voters returning their ballots by mail should sign the return envelope and send it early. Mailed ballots must be postmarked by Nov. 3 and received by Nov. 10 to be counted.

Residents also are encouraged to review the candidates and ballot measures, confirm their registration information and select a convenient voting location ahead of Election Day.

For additional information, visit lavote.gov or plan.lavote.gov.

Statewide voter registration information is available at voterstatus.sos.ca.gov or through the California Secretary of State’s voter hotline at 800-345-VOTE (8683).

World & Nation

Cash for Moms: As Medicaid Cuts Loom, Cities Test a New Approach to Black Maternal Health

By Jennifer Porter Gore,
WordInBlack Black Press USA Wire

By now, there's little question that a maternal health crisis is rocking the Black community. The data tells the story: Black moms are dying during childbirth at three times the rate of white moms, a disproportionately high percentage of Black children are born prematurely, and Black infants are about twice as likely to die as white infants in states like Louisiana.

But new data from a handful of pilot projects also suggests a potential solution that could significantly improve outcomes for Black mothers and their babies: cash payments, no strings attached.

Studies show the unrestricted money led to fewer preterm births, higher newborn birth weights, and fewer critical-care infant hospitalizations. It also reduced stress among new moms who would otherwise struggle to attend prenatal check-ups, pay for food and formula, or keep a roof over their heads.

"This makes so much sense to me," says Tamara Mason, an official with the nonprofit March of Dimes who worked on an Atlanta project distributing money to low-income, pregnant women. "Why isn't everyone doing this?"

Sen. Cory Booker, a New Jersey Democrat, is among several sponsors of legislation that would provide direct financial aid to new mothers, similar to the expanded child tax credit in 2021. The credit sent monthly payments of up to \$300 per child straight to most families' bank accounts; experts credit it with lifting millions of children out of poverty.

When it expired, child poverty rose again. "I believe that we need to, for moms, flood resources to them through things like the child tax credit," Booker said during an August press briefing on the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act. "We were able to cut child poverty virtually in half for our communities, and that actually does affect child outcomes."

Those positive outcomes in part spurred the March of Dimes to launch trial programs providing universal basic income, or UBI, to pregnant women and new moms in two cities: Atlanta, which Bloomberg ranked as the most economically unequal large city in the country, and New Orleans, which March of Dimes gave an F grade.

No strings attached

In Atlanta, the Guaranteed Basic Income Program gave each participant \$1,000 a month during pregnancy and her baby's first year. Women most likely to live in poverty in that city are Black women of reproductive age; 25 pregnant women in two of the area's highest-need ZIP codes received the cash.

March of Dimes ran the pilot through an Atlanta collective-impact partnership known as the collaborative. It is modeled on San Francisco's

Abundant Birth Project and, organizers say, rooted in an idea the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. championed decades ago.

Funders Skeptical at First – Then All In

Mason said she spent months pitching foundations on the idea, which some considered outside her organization's lane.

"I was honestly surprised that a couple of foundations," Mason says. "Funders were like, 'Why is March of Dimes in this space? You all are the birth defects people. You're the preterm birth people.'"

The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta signed on as the primary funder. The Liz Blake Giving Fund and the Jesse Parker Williams Foundation funded data gathering and evaluation Emory University conducted.

The nonprofit Center for Black Women's Wellness handled recruitment, and more than 110 women applied for the 25 spots, Mason said. Applicants had to live in one of the two ZIP codes, earn no more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and be 12 to 28 weeks pregnant.

Cash, Diapers and a Network

Stipends were paid through a prepaid card, letting evaluators track spending without restricting it. Helping Mamas, a nonprofit focused on diaper insecurity, supplied 300 diapers and eight packs of wipes a month, plus a car seat and other essentials. The Georgia Black Doula Network encouraged, but didn't require, participants to hire doulas.

Early results from Emory's evaluation, as described by Mason, show a 20 percent decrease in financial stress and a 66 percent decrease in hopelessness, a figure she called striking. Prenatal outcomes trended better than average.

Mason was careful not to oversell what \$1,000 a month can fix. Several participants lost housing; one or two dealt with domestic violence.

Even though GBI reduced financial stress, "it still is one piece of the puzzle," Mason said.

New Orleans: Overcoming Crisis

March of Dimes runs a similar program in New Orleans, GBI Rx, offering pregnant patients in their first or second trimester \$12,000, as a lump sum or \$1,000 a month. Two partner medical clinics enroll patients for healthcare, and the payment card blocks cash withdrawals and spending on liquor and gambling.

In Louisiana, "we have a maternal and infant health crisis – specifically, a Black maternal and infant health crisis," said Robin Gruenfeld, director of collective impact for March of Dimes in New Orleans. "And it's been that way for a long time."

Black infants there died at about twice the rate of white infants from 2021 to 2023. Gruenfeld said Orleans Parish has the state's lowest prenatal care utilization rate.

Gruenfeld said the program's city seed money, federal pandemic relief funds, and foundation



Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA.

funding were "zeroed out" without notice. Most funds were later restored at a lower level, forcing organizers to scale down to 94 participants instead of the 100 planned. They also enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Recipients spent lump sums on housing, cars and insurance. But spending priorities for the participants changed when the federal government stopped paying out SNAP food benefits during last fall's federal shutdown.

"During that time, more than a quarter of the funds that we gave folks was going to groceries," Gruenfeld said.

Several New Orleans city government officials are now weighing a program modeled on Michigan's Rx Kids, which a study credits with nearly halving neonatal deaths in Flint, one of the poorest cities in the state.

"We are seeing policies pushed by the political will of predominantly Black women come into effect, and then also the backlash," says Danielle Atkinson of Mothering Justice Action Fund, a nonprofit advocacy organization. "In Michigan, we have Rx Kids, which is extremely popular [and] the data on the impact is undeniable."

But recent changes are endangering the success of such programs, particularly amid President Donald Trump's hostility towards programs focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

"We're getting this pushback around identifying race and parental status as systemic areas of oppression," Atkinson says. It remains to be seen,

she says, "whether or not we are going to be able to prevail with the political power and the popular will of these issues, or the rhetoric and the history of racism in our country."

Washington Looks Elsewhere

That includes the Republican-controlled Congress, which has shown little appetite for cash aid tied to pregnancy.

The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act, which Booker reintroduced along with Democratic Reps. Lauren Underwood of Illinois and Alma Adams of North Carolina, bundles 14 bills on housing, nutrition, WIC and the perinatal workforce, but not direct cash.

Still, signs suggest the issue – providing cash aid to low-income mothers and their babies – may stay on the front burner as the midterm elections approach in November.

This month, former Vice President Kamala Harris and Michigan Senate nominee Abdul El-Sayed, both Democrats, hosted a Black maternal health roundtable in Detroit. Danielle Atkinson of Mothering Justice took part.

"Black mamas deserve access to quality healthcare that sees us, listens to us, and understands us at every step of the way," Atkinson said afterward. "The responsibilities we carry do not end at pregnancy, nor do they disappear when we give birth and want to spend time with our newborn. They stay with us throughout all that we experience."

Based on reporting by Louisiana Weekly.

Beyond the Job Search: DC Black MBA Invests in Helping Black Women Reclaim Their Next Chapter

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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.

For Black women across the Washington metropolitan region, the changing employment landscape is about more than a paycheck. It can mean reassessing a career, redefining success and deciding what comes next.

The numbers underscore the challenge. Revised employment data show that approximately 251,000 Black women lost jobs between January and August 2025, accounting for more than half of the employment losses among women during that period, despite Black women representing just 14.1% of the female workforce. By the end of 2025, there were 113,000 fewer Black women employed than at the beginning of the year.

The impact has been particularly significant in the DMV, where federal employment has long provided economic stability and career opportunities for Black professionals. Maryland alone lost approximately 25,000 federal jobs in 2025, according to state employment data.

For DC Black MBA, those realities call for support that extends beyond helping women find their next job.

"I am focused on doing more and providing as many opportunities as possible for Black women to invest in themselves both professionally and personally," said Dr. Carletta S. Hurt, president of the DC Black MBA. "We know that when Black women proceed and prosper, everyone benefits."

That commitment is behind Leading with Intention by Investing in Self, a three-part, in-person workshop series hosted by DC Black MBA in partnership with Blu Topaz Inc. Educational Consulting.

The series builds on the chapter's August Women's Symposium, MastHERpiece: Designing a Life with Intention, which challenged women to see themselves as architects of their careers, wealth,

wellness and impact. The new workshops take that conversation a step further, asking women to consider where they can work next and who they want to become next.

The series opens Oct. 22 with "Recalibrating Your Compass," led by Geraldine P. White, Founder and CEO of Identity & Impact. White will guide participants through questions of identity, direction and purpose.

"You can be proud of what you've built and ready for something different. Both can be true," White said. "Investing in yourself includes giving yourself permission to revisit an earlier definition of success and consider what you want your next chapter to make possible."

Tonya Camille

On Oct. 29, Tonya Camille, creator of Me in the Making and Unstuck & Inspired, will lead "Successful, But Stuck: How High-Achieving Professionals Reconnect, Realign & Move Forward."

Her interactive workshop will help women identify fears, limiting beliefs and recurring patterns that may prevent them from moving forward.



Tokiwa T. Smith

The series concludes Nov. 5 with nonprofit leader, author and consultant Tokiwa T. Smith leading "Rest is Revolutionary." Her session challenges a familiar expectation placed upon Black women: that achievement and service to others must come at the expense of themselves.

Tokiwa T. Smith

Smith said Black women must recognize that prioritizing themselves, setting boundaries and making room for joy are not signs of diminished ambition. "I believe we thrive when we engage in self-care and community care," Smith said.

For Hurt, the goal is to create space for Black women to move beyond reacting to an uncertain economy and begin intentionally determining what comes next.

A job loss can require a new résumé. A changing workplace may demand new skills. However, a life transition can also become an invitation to reconsider purpose, boundaries, entrepreneurship, leadership, rest and the meaning of success itself.

For more information, visit the DC Black MBA website (www.dcbblackmbaa.org/).



Geraldine P. White



Tonya Camille while developing a concrete next step. "You can't

Becerra Discusses Diversity, Health Care, Housing and Education with California Black Leaders

Continued from page A1

"It costs way more money to pull you off the streets, to get you standing up, to get you sober, than it does to keep you in a home you're already in," he said.

Becerra warned that federal Medicaid reductions could threaten health coverage for millions of Californians while destabilizing hospitals, clinics and medical practices.

"If these families lose their insurance and still go in for care, now the doctors and the hospitals won't get paid," he said, warning that providers could eventually close or reduce services. "I want to make sure neither the patients nor the providers feel like Trump's cuts are going to undermine our health care system."

He said he has begun discussions with health care providers and insurers about a response but did not outline a financing plan.

Questions about technology prompted Becerra to address surveillance, artificial intelligence and privacy protections.

Asked about license plate recognition cameras potentially being used to track people by race, immigration status or protest activity, he called for safeguards and consequences for misuse.

"Once you give up your privacy, you can't get it back," he said.

On artificial intelligence (AI), Becerra expressed concern that even developers cannot fully predict how their systems will behave.

"It's hard to believe that you have safety when even the people who produce the technology can't tell you where it's going to go," he said.

He called for protections for children, workers and public safety, including exploring government authority to shut down dangerous AI systems.

Becerra also criticized federal immigration enforcement policies and called for comprehensive reform, recalling his unsuccessful efforts to overhaul the system during his 24 years in Congress.

"We've known that our system for immigration has been broken for a long time," he said.

He said uncertainty affects immigrant families and employers, particularly farmers who depend on immigrant labor.

On education, Becerra emphasized early childhood learning, stronger academic standards and experienced teachers in struggling schools.

"Keep your taxpayer dollars in our public community schools," he said. "Don't let those tax

dollars go to for-profit private schools first, because it's already tough enough as it is."

He argued that achievement gaps must be addressed before kindergarten, with expanded early learning opportunities and intensive tutoring for students who fall behind.

"Too many of our kids are starting even kindergarten, and they're not ready to learn," he said. "And is it surprising that by the third grade they're not reading or doing math at grade level?"

Becerra also challenged schools to stop advancing students who lack grade-level skills.

"We have to start to tell our schools, you're not going to be allowed to just pass a kid on just because they're a year older," he said.

He called for assigning experienced teachers to schools with the greatest academic needs while working with unions on compensation for additional work.

"You can't flood them with the least experienced teachers," he said. "You have to put skilled, ready teachers who can provide the training that a child who may be starting a little behind will need."

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Entertainment

Inside 820 S. Michigan: New Book Captures the Lost World of Ebony and Jet

By RTM Newsroom

Source: Black Press USA Wire

A new photography book is giving readers a rare look inside one of the most important buildings in Black media history.

820 Ebony/Jet: Visions of the Johnson Publishing Company, an American Icon, published Tuesday by MW Editions, features photographs by Chicago photographer Barbara Karant documenting the former Johnson Publishing Company headquarters at 820 S. Michigan Ave., the longtime home of Ebony and Jet magazines. Pasted markdown

The 240-page book preserves the building's striking interiors, many of which no longer exist in their original form, while also examining the larger cultural legacy of Johnson Publishing Company and its influence on Black media, design, photography and American culture.

Designed by architect John W. Moutoussamy and completed in 1972, the building was the first, and remains the only, high-rise in downtown Chicago designed by an African American architect. Built for publisher John H. Johnson, the headquarters became a physical expression of the ambition and influence of one of the nation's most important Black-owned media companies.

While the building's exterior reflected Moutoussamy's restrained modernist style, the inside told a very different story.

Designers Arthur Elrod and William Raiser filled the headquarters with bold colors, geometric patterns, mirrored surfaces, rich textures and dramatic materials across 11 floors. The result was a workplace that looked unlike the traditional corporate offices of its era. Pasted markdown

Karant began photographing the building after Johnson Publishing sold the property in 2010 and relocated in 2012. Between 2013 and 2015, and again in 2018, she documented the largely vacant interiors after employees and much of the furniture had been removed.

What remained were the colors, patterns and architectural details that had helped define the company's visual identity.

Her photographs capture spaces ranging from

the cafeteria's orange, purple and gold designs to Eunice Johnson's cream-and-honey office, mirrored dressing rooms and the executive floor's expansive views of Lake Michigan and Grant Park. Pasted markdown

Among the building's most memorable spaces was the famed Ebony Test Kitchen.

Known for its vivid colors, psychedelic patterns and distinctive cabinetry, the kitchen became a visual reflection of Ebony magazine's influence on food, lifestyle and Black culture. Karant photographed the kitchen as part of the larger architectural story of the headquarters. Pasted markdown

"The building was almost like a portrait of Johnson Publishing Company itself," Karant said. "Even after the people and furnishings were gone, the colors, patterns, textures and spaces still conveyed the creativity, confidence and extraordinary cultural presence of the company."

The photographs have taken on even greater significance because much of what Karant documented has since disappeared.

Following the building's conversion, substantial portions of the original interiors were removed. The Ebony Test Kitchen was dismantled and preserved separately, making Karant's images one of the most extensive visual records of how the headquarters looked during Johnson Publishing Company's decades on Michigan Avenue. Pasted markdown

The book also includes photographs of sculptor Richard Hunt's Expansive Construction, a work commissioned for the building's lobby, as well as images of the company's in-house photography studio and archival views of the original interiors.

But 820 Ebony/Jet goes beyond architecture.

The book includes a foreword by photography historian Deborah Willis, six scholarly essays and personal reflections from former Johnson Publishing Company employees. Together, the contributions explore the company's role in Black visual representation, media, photography, art and design, while offering firsthand accounts of what it was like to work inside the building. Pasted markdown

For generations, Ebony and Jet helped shape how Black America saw itself and how the country



saw Black America.

The magazines documented everything from politics and the civil rights movement to fashion, entertainment, family life and culture. Johnson Publishing Company also became an influential force in photography, beauty, design and popular culture.

That legacy extended well beyond the pages of its magazines.

The new book examines Johnson Publishing Company's continuing influence on artists including Theaster Gates, Hank Willis Thomas, Kwame Brathwaite, Lorna Simpson, Martine Syms and David Hartt. Pasted markdown

For Chicago, the book serves as both an architectural record and a cultural archive. It preserves a place where Black entrepreneurship, media, art and design converged at a scale rarely seen before or since.

820 Ebony/Jet: Visions of the Johnson

Publishing Company, an American Icon is available now from MW Editions. The hardcover volume includes 150 photographs and is priced at \$65. Pasted markdown

Karant is also scheduled to present the book during Modernism Week at the Palm Springs Art Museum on Feb. 15, 2027, where she will discuss the connection between the Johnson Publishing Company headquarters and the design legacy of Arthur Elrod and William Raiser.

The post Inside 820 S. Michigan: New Book Captures the Lost World of Ebony and Jet appeared first on Chicago Defender.

Based on reporting by Chicago Defender.

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14 Black-owned Media Companies That are Taking Over Entertainment One Film (or TV Series) at a Time

Spike Lee, Issa Rae, Viola Davis, and 50 Cent are among the names behind Black-owned media companies bringing some of our favorite stories to life.

BY Malcolm Trapp

We don't have to explain why our stories should be told by our people, especially when there's no shortage of incredible Black filmmakers, directors, and writers already doing the work. Behind just about every one of them is a media company — be it focused on production, distribution, development, or otherwise — helping bring those stories to life.

There are absolute legends like Spike Lee and Monty Ross, whose 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks helped bring us Malcolm X and Do the Right Thing. You also have modern-day pioneers like Issa Rae, who delivered the dearly missed "Insecure" through Hoorae, as well as Ryan Coogler, the powerhouse behind Sinners, Creed III, and a plethora of other Proximity Media-produced films. While we're at it, even former President Barack Obama and NBA greats like LeBron James have joined the party.

Without further ado, scroll through 14 Black-owned media companies shaping the entertainment industry one film or television series at a time (in no particular order).

1. Issa Rae's Hoorae

Issa Rae is really that girl. Her media



production company, Hoorae, has developed and produced projects such as "Rap Sh!t," "One of Them Days," and perhaps most importantly, "Insecure." Of course, the company also houses her music and podcast platform Raedio, as well as ColorCreative, which has worked with the likes of Sanaa Lathan and our very own Lynae Vanece.

2. Jordan Peele's Monkeypaw Productions

Jordan Peele attends Monkeypaw Productions' No Drama Initiative hosted by TIFF and The Universal Filmmakers Project during the 2025 Toronto International Film Festival at TIFF Lightbox on September 06, 2025 in Toronto, Ontario.

3. Tyler Perry's Tyler Perry Studios

Tyler Perry's name carries more weight than anything we could ever say about his trailblazing career, which we can only assume is why he named his production company Tyler Perry Studios. In addition to owning one of the largest production facilities in the country after purchasing a 330-acre property in Atlanta in 2015, the media mogul's eponymous studio is



responsible for Why Did I Get Married?, Daddy's Little Girls, and basically anything involving Madea or the filmmaker himself.

4. Spike Lee and Monty Ross' 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks

If there was one major Black-owned media company that walked so others could run, it's 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks. Technically the oldest of the bunch we mention on this list, 40 Acres was founded by Spike Lee and Monty Ross in 1979 before helping bring films like 1989's Do the Right Thing, 1992's Malcolm X, and 2025's Highest 2 Lowest to the big screen.

5. Ryan and Zinzi Coogler's Proximity Media

Ryan Coogler's Proximity, which he co-founded with his wife, Zinzi Coogler, and Sev Ohanian, has worked on several projects that went on to earn millions, if not billions, at the box office. Following the enormous success of 2018's Black Panther, the company has had a hand in Sinners, Creed III, Judas and the Black Messiah, and Space Jam: A New Legacy.



6. Ava DuVernay's ARRAY

What do 13th, Selma, The White Tiger, and shows like "Naomi" and "When They See Us" all have in common? Ava DuVernay's ARRAY ecosystem has had a hand in every one, whether through the legendary filmmaker directing them or the company distributing them on streaming giants like Netflix.

7. Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground

The Obamas launching their own media company definitely might not have been on many people's bingo cards, though it's not all that shocking considering Barack's years in public office and Michelle's later success with "The Michelle Obama Podcast" and "IMO." Its catalog includes the Colman Domingo-starring Rustin among a plethora of other films, in addition to several podcasts.

8. Kenya Barris' Khalabo Ink Society

Kenya Barris, who became vice chair of our very own REVOLT Labs in 2026, has built quite the résumé through Khalabo Ink Society. The company has "black-ish," You People, and Girls Trip all under its belt. If that isn't iconic, we don't know what is!

9. LeBron James and Maverick Carter's The SpringHill Company

Yes, LeBron James may have spent most of his career balancing one of the greatest runs in NBA history, fatherhood, and stakes in a few other sports teams, but SpringHill Company may just be one of his most exciting ventures off the court. Co-founded with Maverick Carter, the company has largely produced sports documentaries and films like What's My Name: Muhammad Ali and Black Ice. We'd be remiss not to mention that his barbershop conversation series "The Shop" also sits under that legendary banner. In 2024, SpringHill merged with British company Fulwell 73 to become Fulwell Entertainment, placing Carter as co-CEO with London-based producer Leo Pearlman. So, although the executive helm has changed a bit, we honor its roots as a



Black-owned company!

10. Charles D. King's MACRO

MACRO's contributions to Black entertainment include the Denzel Washington-led Roman J. Israel, Esq., Nas-directed docuseries "Supreme Team," Michael B. Jordan's Just Mercy, plus many more. While several of the aforementioned companies have operated under major platform deals, leaving them less freedom to shop projects elsewhere, MACRO has placed films and TV series on Apple TV+, Tubi, Roku, Showtime, Netflix, and HBO.



11. Kevin Hart's Hartbeat

While just about every Kevin Hart film from the late 2010s has Hartbeat involved somewhere in the process — which is definitely no small number if you've seen his résumé — the media company has also empowered plenty of Black women comedy writers. Through its partnership with the Sundance Institute, the Women Write Now initiative has helped bring short films like Hey Boo and Black Karen to life. The studio has also produced BET's "Couch Critics," "Cold as Balls," and "Hart 2 Hart," along with the action-comedy series "Die Hart."



12. Viola Davis and Julius Tennon's JuVee Productions

When it comes to film, Viola Davis and Julius Tennon's JuVee Productions has box-office hits like The Woman King, Troop Zero, and G20 under its belt. Outside of those, though, we might argue that "The First Lady" is one of its more memorable works, thanks in no small part to the EGOT winner's portrayal of Michelle Obama. We can't wait to see what comes out of the studio next.



13. Shonda Rhimes' Shondaland

What more is there to say about Shonda Rhimes' Shondaland when the ubiquitous "Grey's Anatomy" and "Bridgerton" are among the many shows it has produced? Fans of "How to Get Away with Murder" and "The Catch" can thank the company for those ABC favorites too.



14. 50 Cent's G-Unit Films and Television Inc.

There's no such thing as downtime for 50 Cent. After already blessing us with album after album of hits, he expanded into television through G-Unit Film and Television Inc., which has helped bring us the beloved "Power" franchise, "The Oath," and "BMF." You simply can't outwork him!



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Political

Political Playback:

California Capitol News You Might Have Missed

Shutterstock

By Bo Tefu and Antonio Ray Harvey *California Black Media* **Secretary of State Shirley Weber Pushes Back Against DOJ Demands Over California Voter Rolls**

California Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber criticized the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for demanding that state election officials investigate voters suspected of being noncitizens just weeks before the Nov. 3 general election.

“The U.S. DOJ’s relentless efforts to unlawfully gain access to states’ protected voter data and purge voter rolls serve only to cause chaos and fuel public distrust in our elections,” Weber said in an Oct. 14 statement.

Weber said her office received a demand to investigate an unspecified number of individuals the federal government believes are “likely noncitizens.” However, the DOJ did not provide her office with the list and gave California just 48 hours to obtain it, investigate and take action.

The demand comes as the DOJ, working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), seeks to block California from counting mail-in

outline the federal government’s demands.

“Raising a Child Shouldn’t Break the Bank”: California Is Helping Families Save on Childcare Costs

California families are paying less for subsidized childcare under new fee schedules introduced since 2019, according to information from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

The state has expanded subsidized childcare, introduced free transitional kindergarten for 4-year-olds, and increased access to before- and after-school programs as part of broader efforts to reduce the financial burden of raising children. However, childcare affordability remains a challenge for many families.

According to a PPIC chart cited by the administration, a family of three earning \$60,000 annually would have paid approximately \$7,000 a year in fees for full-time subsidized childcare under the 2019-20 schedule. Under the 2025-26 schedule, the annual fee is zero. The figures are adjusted for inflation.

“Raising a child shouldn’t break the bank,” Newsom said. He added that the state has lowered costs, expanded access to affordable care, and increased educational opportunities to help parents and children thrive.

Since 2019, California has added approximately 149,000 subsidized childcare slots and awarded 3,800 grants to providers to improve facilities and expand capacity. The state has also expanded before-and after-school care and summer programs for students in transitional kindergarten through sixth grade, offering activities such as homework assistance, arts, music, and science enrichment.

Universal transitional kindergarten is another major component of the state’s strategy. The free program is available to all 4-year-olds in California, providing early education while helping families avoid some childcare expenses. California enrolled 213,313 children in transitional kindergarten during the 2025-26 school year. The Newsom administration says the state has invested \$12.5 billion since 2019 to implement the program statewide.

Other initiatives include expanding paid family leave from six weeks to eight weeks and increasing wage replacement for eligible workers.

Those earning less than \$65,000 annually can receive up to 90% of their regular wages while on leave.

California has also provided free meals to public school students and established the CalKIDS savings program, which provides eligible children with accounts to help cover future college and career training expenses.

The state has further supported childcare providers through collective bargaining, committing more than \$800 million to health, retirement, and training benefits for members of Child Care Providers United.

While these initiatives have expanded support for families, the PPIC figures specifically illustrate changes in subsidized childcare fees, not the full cost of care for every household. Ensuring that affordable, accessible childcare is available to families across income levels remains an ongoing challenge for California.

Atty Gen. Bonta Sues Trump Admin, Blocking Decision to Close San Francisco National Archives

California Attorney General Rob Bonta sued the Trump administration to block the planned closure of the National Archives at in San Francisco, arguing that the move would limit access to historical records essential to families, Tribal communities, researchers and state agencies.

The lawsuit, filed Oct. 14 in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, challenges the National Archives and Records Administration’s (NARA) decision to close the facility in San Bruno and distribute its records among five federal archives locations across the country.

Bonta argues that the decision violates the federal Administrative Procedure Act because the agency failed to adequately consider the

consequences for California and other affected communities.

“These records belong here with the communities whose stories they tell, and I’ll fight to keep them here,” Bonta said during a press conference announcing the lawsuit.

The San Francisco National Archives houses more than 75,000 cubic feet of federal records covering Northern and Central California, Hawaii, most of Nevada, Guam, and American Samoa. Its collections include immigration and court records, genealogical documents, Indian boarding school records, and files related to the Chinese Exclusion Act and Japanese American internment.

The archives also hold records from Fred Korematsu’s legal challenge to his arrest for refusing to report for internment during World War II. Families use the records to trace their ancestry and establish citizenship, while Tribal communities rely on them to establish membership, seek federal recognition, and defend land and treaty rights.

“The federal government should not be putting up barriers between Californians and the records they depend on,” Bonta said, criticizing the federal government for proceeding without sufficient consultation or consideration of the consequences.

NARA informed employees in June that it planned to close the San Francisco and Chicago archives within the next few years, with transfers beginning within months.

In August, the agency announced that San Francisco’s holdings would be distributed among five facilities. According to Bonta’s office, transfers could begin as soon as this week, starting with NASA records moving to Fort Worth, Texas.

The state argues that losing local access could disrupt public projects requiring historical research to comply with environmental laws.

California State Parks, for example, consulted the archives more than 10 times while refurbishing the barracks on Angel Island. Officials warn that pending projects could become impossible to complete if records are temporarily unavailable or too costly to access out of state.

University researchers also depend on physical access to archival materials that are not available online. Bonta’s office says fewer than 4% of National Archives records nationwide have been digitized, and some fragile documents cannot be digitized without risking damage.

Bonta is asking the court to overturn NARA’s closure decision and prohibit the transfer of records from the San Bruno facility. The lawsuit seeks to preserve local access to historical materials used for research, education, and public projects

Report: As the Number of California Aging Workers Rise, Black Participation Holds Steady

California’s older workforce is expected to grow significantly over the next 15 years, reshaping the state’s labor market as its population ages. A new report from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) projects that the number of workers age 65 and older will increase even as overall labor force participation among older adults remains largely unchanged.

The report, *Older Workers in California*, by Hans Johnson, Eric McGhee, Daniel Payares-Montoya, and Sarah Bohn, examines workforce trends and projects changes through 2040. The policy brief was adapted by Vicki Hsieh and supported by the James Irvine Foundation.

By 2040, about 23% of Californians will be 65 or older, up from 14% in 2020. Meanwhile, the state’s working-age population is expected to remain virtually unchanged, creating challenges for the labor market and public programs serving older residents.

In 2024, approximately 1.3 million Californians age 65 and older were in the labor force. That number is projected to reach 1.8 million by 2040.

Older workers also accounted for about 30% of California’s labor force growth between 2006 and 2024, when the number of workers in this age group increased by approximately 754,000.

The report projects that the racial and ethnic composition of California’s older population will continue to change. White Californians accounted for 51% of the population age 65 and older in 2024, down from 64% in 2006. That share is projected to fall to about 41% by 2040, while the Latino share is expected to rise from 23% to 29% and the Asian share from 17% to 21%.

Black Californians are projected to remain

about 6% of the state’s older population through 2040. The report also projects that labor force participation rates among older adults will converge across racial and ethnic groups, reaching approximately 18% by 2040.

The findings highlight the financial pressures facing some older workers. About 20% of Californians age 65 and older were living in poverty in 2023 and 2024, with an additional 14% considered near-poor.

Wages help keep an estimated 800,000 older Californians out of poverty.

The report notes that some older adults continue working by choice, while others do so because their retirement income is insufficient. Rising living costs, limited retirement savings, and changes in public benefits can make continued employment an economic necessity.

As California prepares for an aging population, the researchers point to the importance of workplace flexibility, protection against age discrimination, and policies that support older adults’ economic security.

20 Years of California Climate Law: Gov. Newsom and Former Gov. Schwarzenegger Lead Milestone Celebration

California Gov. Gavin Newsom and former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger celebrated two decades of the state’s landmark climate law on Wednesday, Oct. 14, highlighting California’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while growing its economy and expanding clean-energy investment.

The Democratic governor and Republican former governor appeared together at the 15th annual California Economic Summit in Long Beach to mark the 20th anniversary of Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, which Schwarzenegger signed in September 2006. The law established a framework for reducing California’s greenhouse gas emissions and helped lay the groundwork for the state’s cap-and-invest program.

“We’ve shown the world what a state can accomplish,” Schwarzenegger said, highlighting California’s climate leadership.

Newsom credited Schwarzenegger’s decision to sign AB 32 with helping create the state’s cap-and-invest program, which requires companies to reduce their emissions, purchase allowances, or fund projects that offset pollution. Revenue from the program supports climate initiatives, affordable housing and transportation projects, as well as electricity bill credits for residents.

Newsom said California has reinvested \$16 billion to offset residents’ electricity costs since the program began and expects to receive another \$8 billion over the next four years.

He also argued that predictable climate policies encourage businesses to invest in California’s clean-energy economy, pointing to Tesla as an example of the opportunities created by the state’s regulatory framework.

“There’s no Elon Musk without what Gov. Schwarzenegger did because there would be no Tesla,” Newsom said.

Schwarzenegger agreed that long-term policy certainty helps attract investment, arguing that California’s climate initiatives demonstrate that environmental protections and economic development can advance together.

The state extended its cap-and-invest program through 2045 last year, giving businesses a longer-term framework for planning investments and meeting emissions requirements.

However, California’s approach continues to face criticism over energy affordability and regulatory costs. Wayne Winegarden, a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute, argued that assessments of the state’s climate policies should more fully account for the high energy costs faced by Californians. Critics have also questioned how much of the state’s economic growth can be directly attributed to its environmental regulations.

The governors’ joint appearance underscored their shared support for climate action despite their political differences. Schwarzenegger has criticized Newsom’s support for Proposition 50, the 2025 redistricting measure that temporarily allowed California lawmakers to redraw congressional districts.

The anniversary comes as California continues to pursue emissions reductions and clean-energy investment while facing questions about the cost of its climate policies for households and businesses.



CBM file photo

ballots from approximately 20,000 registered voters whose citizenship status the federal government has questioned.

“State-facilitated voter fraud is unacceptable in the United States of America,” said U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche. “If found responsible in a court of law, the State of California will have seriously undermined confidence in our electoral system and violated laws that protect our nation’s representative system of government.”

According to Weber’s office, the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk received the federal government’s list on a password-protected thumb drive, with the password written on a sticky note.

Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Dean C. Logan said his office declined to access the files because the device did not meet established security standards.

“We have not accessed the drive because doing so would conflict with established data privacy and information security protocols,” Logan said. “We do not consider the device a secure medium.”

Weber also challenged earlier federal allegations that California had 190,000 noncitizens on its voter rolls, saying the Trump administration had failed to provide evidence or explain its methodology despite requests from her office.

“California has robust state law requirements that only U.S. citizens can register to vote and that any non-eligible registrants are removed from the state’s voter rolls,” Weber said. “My office and California election officials remain committed – as always – to ensuring a fair and smooth 2026 general election.”

The DOJ’s letters to the California secretary of state and Los Angeles County election officials

Former Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez Backs Proposition 40 as Billionaire Tax Divides California Labor

By Joe W. Bowers Jr.

California Black Media

California Federation of Labor Unions President Lorena Gonzalez says Proposition (Prop) 40 would provide temporary funding to protect Medi-Cal, hospitals and health care jobs from federal cuts.

Opponents warn the tax could weaken California’s finances.

Prop 40, which is on the Nov. 3 ballot, would impose a one-time 5% tax on billionaires who were California residents on Jan. 1, 2026. Real estate and retirement accounts generally would be excluded.

The measure directs 90% of the revenue to health care. The rest would go to education, food assistance and administration. The money would be exempt from constitutional rules governing school funding and the state’s spending limit.

The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) estimates the tax would raise tens of billions of dollars over several years. It says changes in billionaire behavior, including leaving California, could reduce state income tax collections by less than \$1 billion a year.

Gonzalez, who represented the 80th District in the State Assembly from 2013 to 2022, said Prop 40 is needed because the federal tax-and-spending law signed by President Donald Trump reduced projected federal Medicaid spending while extending tax cuts. Medicaid is known as Medi-Cal in California.

Gonzalez said Medi-Cal is especially important in Black and Latino communities because it covers many children and families. Some union members also rely on the program.

“If we need to have a bridge to fund Medi-Cal while this president is in office, it makes sense to tax the billionaires,” Gonzalez told California Black Media (CBM).

The money could prevent cuts to Medi-Cal

and help keep hospitals and community clinics open, she said.

Gonzalez also linked health care funding to jobs. Cuts to hospitals and clinics would affect patients and employees, including Black and Latino workers in health care support positions. She pointed to Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital in Los Angeles, which serves predominantly Black and Latino communities, as a safety-net hospital already under financial pressure.

The federation, representing more than 1,300 unions and 2.3 million workers, overwhelmingly endorsed Prop 40 in August. SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West sponsors the measure. Other supporters include U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA-17).

Gov. Gavin Newsom says he will vote no, arguing that a California-only tax could drive billionaires, businesses and tax revenue elsewhere. He also objects to directing nearly all the money to health care.

Newsom instead supports a national approach. He called for “a true minimum tax on billionaires — a modern Buffett Rule — that ensures the people at the very top pay at least the tax rate their own workers pay.”

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Xavier Becerra and Republican candidate Steve Hilton also oppose Prop 40. The California Teachers Association said the measure would not provide sustainable, long-term funding for schools and communities.

Several health care groups agree federal Medicaid cuts threaten Medi-Cal but say Prop 40 is the wrong answer. Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California President and CEO Jodi Hicks said the measure’s uncertain effect on the budget and lack of detail about health care spending “will do more harm than good in the long term.”

California Primary Care Association President and CEO Francisco Silva said Prop 40 could “decimate the very safety-net and workforce

that Medi-Cal patients rely on.” The California Hospital Association said the tax would provide only temporary funding and threaten the state’s long-term finances. It also said the measure would create more uncertainty for hospitals already at risk of closing.

Rick L. Callender, president of the NAACP California/Hawaii State Conference, said the measure would “make many of our problems worse” by putting pressure on the budget and squeezing other public services.

Gonzalez replied, “I don’t know how that’s possible,” arguing that federal health care cuts, not Prop 40, would strain the budget.

Gonzalez said opponents have not identified another way to replace lost health care funding. “This is a solution, and I think it’s highly irresponsible to oppose this tax when there’s been nothing else laid on the table,” she said.

The California Medical Association supports a permanent extension of the state’s existing tax on high-income earners to fund Medi-Cal and education. It says Prop 40 could make that proposal harder to pass.

Opponents also cite a Hoover Institution study that says six billionaires publicly left California before Jan. 1, removing \$536 billion from the proposed tax base. Gonzalez called Hoover a right-wing think tank that sides with billionaires and rejected its projections.

United Domestic Workers and unions representing electrical workers, laborers, carpenters and operating engineers also oppose the measure.

Although the federation endorsed Becerra for governor, Gonzalez said labor does not expect to agree with a candidate on every issue. “At the end of the day, our loyalty is to working people,” she said. “We will take that over any politician any day.”

Prop 40 needs a majority to pass. However, Prop 40 could be blocked even if it passes. If



Lorena Gonzalez, president of the California Labor Federation and former California state assemblymember, was one of two keynote speakers at an affordability conference that brought together policymakers, elected officials and community leaders to discuss California’s affordability challenges. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey. (May 2026)

Proposition 41 or 42 also passes with more “yes” votes, and a court determines that the measures conflict, the conflicting measure with the higher vote total would prevail.

If voters reject Prop 40, Gonzalez said labor would continue seeking money for health care. One option is an assessment on companies whose workers rely heavily on Medi-Cal. Labor could also “take another shot at the billionaires,” she said.

“I’m a labor leader,” Gonzalez said. “I’m going to fight for more funding somewhere.”

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Rams Suffer Tough Home Defeat as Cardinals Rally for Last-Second Win

By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

The Los Angeles Rams suffered a tough home defeat as Chad Ryland kicked a 43-yard field goal as time expired, lifting the Arizona Cardinals to an 18-16 victory at SoFi Stadium. Jacoby Brissett passed for 218 yards while Arizona's defense delivered a strong performance, bouncing back after allowing 148 points over its previous four games. The victory marked the Cardinals' second win of the season at SoFi Stadium, where they also defeated the Chargers in Week 1. For new Arizona coach Mike LaFleur, the victory was especially meaningful. LaFleur, who served as Rams coach Sean McVay's offensive coordinator for the previous three seasons, earned his first win against his former boss. "These guys are a resilient group," LaFleur said. "We're learning how to play 60 minutes, and we hadn't done that yet." LaFleur acknowledged that Arizona still has work to do, particularly in the red zone, but praised his players for their determination. "Some people might disagree with me, but there's been times when we looked like a really good football team," he said. "We've got to finish better in the red zone, stuff like that, but I'm happy for these guys. They put in a lot of work, they heard a lot of (stuff), and they just went to it." Late Rally Falls Short

The Rams appeared to have escaped with a victory when quarterback Matthew Stafford connected with Colby Parkinson for a touchdown with 47 seconds remaining. The score put Los Angeles ahead 16-15, but the team's kicking situation added an unusual twist.

With Rams kicker Blake Grupe sidelined by a knee injury suffered while making a tackle in the



Oct 18, 2026; Inglewood, California, USA; Los Angeles Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford (9) handles the ball in the first quarter against the Arizona Cardinals at SoFi Stadium. Mandatory Credit: Jayne Kamin-Oncea-Imagn Images | IMAGN IMAGES via Reuters Connect

first quarter, punter Ethan Evans handled the extra point, giving Los Angeles a one-point lead. Arizona, however, had enough time for one final drive. Ryland's 43-yard field goal as the clock

expired completed the Cardinals' comeback and handed the Rams another disappointing loss. Stafford finished with 222 passing yards and two touchdown passes, while the Rams' offense

managed 286 total yards. Puka Nacua caught six passes, including three during Los Angeles' final drive.

The loss continued a difficult stretch for the Rams, who have dropped three of their last four games after entering the season with Super Bowl aspirations.

Despite leading the NFL in total offense entering the contest, Los Angeles struggled to sustain drives throughout the afternoon. The Rams also committed two turnovers in Cardinals territory during the fourth quarter, missed opportunities that proved costly in a close game.

Stafford connected with Blake Corum for an early touchdown, but the Rams struggled to build momentum. The absence of a reliable kicking game further complicated their effort.

McVay Calls for Accountability

After the defeat, McVay acknowledged that the team's performance fell short of expectations, regardless of the late rally.

"There were some gutsy individual efforts that I am appreciative of, but collectively, even if we had come away with the result, it's not good enough," McVay said.

"There's just so many things that aren't in alignment with what we need to be able to do. We've got to figure it out, and it starts with me."

For Los Angeles, the narrow loss highlighted the need for greater consistency on both sides of the ball and better execution in critical moments.

The Rams will look to regroup on the road against the Las Vegas Raiders this week as they attempt to get their season back on track.

Chargers' Shaky Start Leaves Questions Heading Into Bye Week



By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

The Los Angeles Chargers have reached their bye week at 0-6, a record few could have imagined before the 2026 season began.

Following Sunday's 22-6 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs, coach Jim Harbaugh and his team face difficult questions about what has gone wrong and how to turn the season around.

For Harbaugh, the bye week presents an opportunity to evaluate every aspect of the team, from offensive execution to situational football.

"0-6 does not give the privilege to rule out anything at this point," Harbaugh said. "And we're looking into everything."

The Chargers have shown flashes of effort, but they have struggled to turn that effort into consistent production when it matters most.

"Everything that relates to moving the ball," Harbaugh said when asked what needs attention. "Putting ourselves in a more advantageous position, efficient plays on first down, red-zone efficiency."

Harbaugh pointed to one sequence against Kansas City that illustrated the team's problems.

"Ball at the 1-yard line, we have to get it to the end zone," he said. "Backed up, third down, all situations. Like I said, 0-6 gives nobody comfort. Attacking everything we can."

Trailing by double digits Sunday, the Chargers had first-and-goal at the Kansas City 1-yard line but failed to reach the end zone. A holding penalty was followed by a shovel pass that lost a yard and two incomplete passes, forcing Los Angeles to settle for a field goal.

The missed opportunity reflected a larger problem for an offense that has struggled to sustain drives and finish possessions.

Offensive Struggles Demand Answers

The Chargers' offensive numbers paint a troubling picture. According to the supplied report, Los Angeles ranks 30th in the NFL in scoring, averaging 15 points per game. The team is tied for 31st in success rate at 40.1% and ranks 32nd in

expected points added per play at minus-0.190.

Those struggles have placed increased pressure on the coaching staff to find solutions during the bye week.

The Chargers must improve their execution on first down, become more productive in the red zone and capitalize on scoring opportunities. Small mistakes have repeatedly put the team in difficult situations, leaving little margin for error.

Harbaugh's willingness to examine every area of the team suggests that changes could be considered as the organization searches for answers.

Questions About the Future

With the season already in jeopardy, attention is also turning toward the Chargers' longer-term plans.

Potential roster moves before the trade deadline and additions during the offseason could help address weaknesses, but personnel changes alone might not be enough to reverse the team's fortunes.

Quarterback Justin Herbert's performance and the direction of the coaching staff are also likely to remain subjects of discussion as the Chargers evaluate their options.

Whether the organization chooses to make significant changes or gives its current leadership another opportunity, the immediate challenge is clear: Los Angeles must find a way to compete more consistently and restore confidence in a season that has quickly gone off course.

The bye week offers time to regroup, reassess and prepare for the remainder of the schedule. But with six losses already on the record, the Chargers have little room for further setbacks.

For Harbaugh and the Bolts, the road back begins with accountability, better execution and a renewed commitment to finishing drives.

The season has not unfolded as expected, but Los Angeles still has an opportunity to respond. The question is whether the Chargers can turn that opportunity into meaningful progress when they return to the field.

UCLA Bruins Improve to 6-0 With 17-7 Win Over Wisconsin

By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

The UCLA Bruins continued their impressive start to the season Saturday night, defeating Wisconsin 17-7 to improve to 6-0 for the first time since 2022 and move up to No. 9 in this week's poll.

Quarterback Ty Dieffenbach stepped into the starting role and delivered a solid performance, completing 22 of 33 passes for 264 yards in his first start as a Bruin. Running backs Wayne "Roadrunner" Knight and Anthony Woods each scored a rushing touchdown to help secure the victory.

Dieffenbach, who filled in for injured starter Nico Iamaleava, said confidence in his teammates helped him settle into the game.

"Just confidence in my receivers, confidence in my O-line. We've thrown these throws more than 100 times now. The receivers believed in me," Dieffenbach said.

He said he tried to keep the moment in perspective before kickoff, but the experience became especially meaningful as the game progressed.

"Before the game, I was just saying, it's just another game. Don't want to make the moment too big," he said. "In that fourth quarter, hearing 'California Love,' and just five years ago I was sitting in the stands watching guys do this and now I'm there. It was special to me."

Dieffenbach also credited the Bruins' preparation on third downs, saying the team had worked on those situations throughout the week.

"Starting on Monday nights, we're working every single day on third down," he said. "They showed a lot of man [coverage] on third down, which is good for us. Our guys go out there and make a play, and that's what happened tonight."

Beyond the victory, Dieffenbach said he appreciated the opportunity to inspire young athletes from his community.

"I think, for me, it's more about them. Being an inspiration to those guys. You can do this. Guys from our high school — you can play ball at the highest level," he said. "It was awesome seeing all of them show out, and I appreciate all of them coming out tonight."

Defense Sets the Tone

UCLA's defense played a major role in the victory, holding Wisconsin to 214 total yards, including just 66 passing yards. James led the Bruins in tackles with nine.

Fifth-year senior defensive back Mason Rivera credited the coaching staff and defensive front for limiting the Badgers' passing attack and containing their quarterback.

"Credit to the coaches, their plan going into the game. The front seven rushed the quarterback, and we knew that he was elusive and could make plays with his feet," Rivera said. "We just wanted to keep him in the pocket and to be sound on the forward two, going into this game, and I thought we did a pretty good job of that."

Editor's note: The quoted phrase "sound on the forward two" is unclear in the supplied copy and should be checked against the original recording before publication.

UCLA coach Bob Chesney continued his strong start, becoming the first coach in program history to begin his tenure with that many wins, according to the supplied report.

"That's the most important thing is that I believe in these guys," Chesney said.

The Bruins improved to 4-0 in Big Ten play despite playing without Iamaleava, who injured his leg the previous week at Oregon.

Wisconsin Struggles With Penalties

Wisconsin, which fell to 4-2 overall and 2-1 in conference play, cut UCLA's lead to 10-7 on quarterback Colton Joseph's 3-yard touchdown run in the third quarter. The Badgers had been held scoreless in the first half.

Joseph completed 6 of 16 passes for 66 yards and led Wisconsin in rushing with 71 yards on 18 carries.

Penalties proved costly for the Badgers, who committed 10 infractions for 102 yards, including four on their second drive.

"There's no way we can go on the road and have as many penalties and play as undisciplined as we did," Wisconsin coach Luke Fickell said. "We didn't have the consistency to do the little things well, and it showed up."

Wisconsin suffered two more setbacks in the fourth quarter. Safety Matt Jung was ejected for targeting during UCLA's scoring drive, which ended with Woods' 3-yard touchdown run to make it 17-7. The touchdown stood after a review despite an apparent bobble.

On Wisconsin's next possession, Darrion Dupree appeared to gain a first down with a 2-yard

run to the UCLA 46-yard line. Officials overturned the ruling after determining he had fallen just short of the line to gain following a big hit by Sammy Omosigo.

The Bruins will look to extend their winning streak next Saturday when they host Michigan State, continuing a stretch of three consecutive home games.



Sabir West 20 Mason Rivera 28- Help hold Badgers to 66 yards passing

Local

Falls Are a Leading Cause of Injury Among Seniors

Inglewood Study Finds Nearly 7 in 10 Wear Ill-Fitting Shoes

By Marion Apio
California Local News Fellow

More than one in four adults 65 and older reports falling each year, and a fall-prevention pilot in Inglewood found a potentially modifiable problem hiding in plain sight: Nearly seven in 10 participating seniors were wearing a shoe size that did not match measurements of their feet.

The interim report from the Blue Zone Access Model, or Blue ZAM, pilot found that 68.9% of participants had a mismatch between their reported shoe size and measured foot length and width.

At the same time, the pilot found a high level of measured fall risk among participants. Of the 136 people with a valid overall fall-risk classification, 128, or 94.1%, were classified as having moderate or high risk. Seventy-six participants, or 55.9%, were classified as high risk.

The findings do not establish that ill-fitting shoes caused participants to fall or that correcting shoe size would prevent falls. Instead, the pilot identified footwear fit as one potentially modifiable factor within a broader assessment that examined walking, balance, strength, muscle mass and other physical functions.

That distinction is important because falls among older adults are multifactorial. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says more than one in four adults 65 and older reports falling each year, making falls the leading cause of injury for that age group.

The pilot began with approximately 300 Inglewood Senior Center members expressing interest. Because the first-year capacity was 160 participants, available spots were allocated through a raffle.

Eighteen selected participants did not attend the required baseline assessment. Another 142 entered the baseline cohort, but six did not have a valid overall fall-risk classification. As a result, the 94.1% moderate/high-risk figure is based on 136 participants, not all 142 people in the baseline cohort.

The risk classification was not based simply on whether someone had fallen before, nor on a single balance or walking test. Researchers assessed 15 objective areas, including the Five Times Sit-to-Stand test, 10-meter walk, Timed Up and Go, functional reach, balance, lower-body strength, grip strength, muscle mass and left-to-right differences in strength and muscle mass.

That makes the footwear finding notable while also limiting what can be concluded from it. The participants were a selected group of senior-center members, not a representative sample of all older adults in Inglewood.

The Inglewood result is consistent with earlier research showing that footwear fit can be associated with mobility among older adults.

A 2020 study of 111 older adults receiving geriatric services found that 72% were wearing footwear that did not fit correctly on both feet. The study did not establish that ill-fitting footwear caused falls and emphasized that falls have multiple



A Participant wears fitting-shoes at the event. Photo by Edgar Medina



causes. Another study involving 85 community-dwelling older adults found that poorly fitting shoes were associated with slower walking, shorter strides and less regular gait. Participants who received newly fitted shoes showed improvements in several gait measures.

The four-year MOBILIZE Boston Study provides another piece of context. Researchers followed 765 community-dwelling older adults and recorded 1,829 falls. In 444 cases, or 24.3%, participants reported inappropriate footwear as one circumstance surrounding the fall. That finding describes what participants reported about their falls; it does not establish that footwear caused them.

The footwear finding became the focus of an Oct. 15 event at the Inglewood Senior Center called Inglewood Steps Forward.

According to organizers, the event offered 150 seniors donated athletic shoes, foot measurements and professional fittings. Participants had both feet measured for length and width, received information about shoe fit and foot health, and could customize their shoes.

Chia-Ding Shih of Keck Medicine of USC provided education on foot and ankle health and preventive care. The event materials said the program was intended to provide education and sizing support rather than individual medical diagnoses.

The event was part of the Blue ZAM pilot, which organizers describe as a six-step framework — Identify, Assess, Intervene, Access, Equip



and Engage — for addressing health risks at the community level. Fall prevention is the framework's first application, according to the project materials.

The most striking number from the pilot may not be the percentage classified as high risk. It is the 68.9% footwear mismatch, because it points to a problem that can be measured directly.

The finding raises a straightforward question for older adults: Does the shoe size used for years still correspond to the actual length and width of the feet?

Research suggests footwear fit can affect gait, while the CDC's STEADI fall-prevention guidance recommends properly fitted shoes and having feet measured for appropriate length and width. The guidance also recommends sturdy shoes with low heels, traction and adequate arch and heel support.

But footwear is only one piece of fall prevention. Older adults and caregivers can start with a simple footwear check without assuming shoes are the sole explanation for a fall.

The CDC recommends discussing fall risk with a health care provider, having feet checked regularly and seeking professional evaluation for foot pain or deformities. Its STEADI program also addresses other risk factors, including strength, balance, medications, vision and hazards in the home.

For Inglewood, the pilot's interim findings offer a practical takeaway: Measure both feet, check that shoes fit in length and width, and treat footwear as one part of a broader fall-prevention strategy.



City Officials and Event Organizers pose for photo. Photo by Edgar Medina



California's Billionaire Tax Promises Healthcare Relief. The Fine Print Is Murkier.

By Jackie Fortiér

The pitch behind California's billionaire tax proposal is simple: Tax the richest residents in the nation's wealthiest state to offset steep federal cuts to healthcare, food assistance, and education.

But if approved by voters in November, it's unclear how much money the ballot initiative would raise, how quickly the funding would become available, and how lawmakers would spend it.

The measure would steer proceeds from a first-in-the-nation wealth tax to a state healthcare fund, giving the governor and lawmakers the power to decide how to spend what California's nonpartisan legislative analyst estimated would be "tens of billions of dollars." Backers say it could raise up to \$100 billion over five years to keep hospitals and emergency rooms open and preserve insurance coverage for millions of Californians. Yet, community health centers, doctors, and other healthcare entities that might benefit from such a cash infusion argue that the union spearheading the measure has readied a blank check for politicians.

"I'm not sure that you can say, with full security, that this will stop clinics from being closed or healthcare workers from being laid off, or people from losing their healthcare," said Chris Hoene, executive director of the California Budget & Policy Center, a left-leaning nonprofit.

<iframe src="https://kffhealthnews.org/elections/california-billionaire-wealth-tax-healthcare-cuts-competing-ballot-measures/embed/" width= "600" height="200" frameborder="0" title="California's Billionaire Tax Promises Healthcare Relief. The Fine Print Is Murkier."></iframe>

Taxing the Ultrarich Put on the ballot by one of California's largest healthcare unions, Proposition 40 would impose a one-time 5% tax on roughly 200 Californians with a net worth of at least \$1 billion, including most of their stock holdings, yachts, and artwork. It would apply to those who were residents of California on Jan. 1, 2026. Real estate, pensions, and retirement accounts would generally be exempt.

The revenue raised is intended to offset the roughly \$30 billion a year in anticipated losses to the Golden State from congressional Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Over the next four years, state and federal funding cuts are projected to nearly double California's uninsured population, which stands at about 2.4 million people, according to the University of California-Berkeley Labor Center.

Securing additional tax revenue is essential because state lawmakers have yet to come up with a way to pay for healthcare services that will be affected by the cuts, said Dave Regan, president of Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West, which represents hospital workers and got the wealth tax on the ballot. It would earmark 90% of the tax revenue for healthcare, while the remaining 10% would be split between food assistance and education at lawmakers' discretion. Regan said such broad categories would give politicians flexibility to be more responsive to the looming cuts.

"Figuring out or predicting exactly what the fallout will be, of where reductions and cuts get made, in a complicated healthcare system, it's just too difficult to predict," Regan said.

Among the choices the next governor and lawmakers will face are whether to provide healthcare to people cut off by the new federal Medicaid work requirements, reverse state rollbacks limiting coverage for immigrants with legal status, or raise the low physician reimbursement rates that make some providers reluctant to accept patients enrolled in Medi-Cal, the state's version of Medicaid.

Lawmakers could also shore up subsidies on Covered California, the state's health insurance marketplace, whose enrollees have seen their

premiums skyrocket after losing millions in federal assistance after Congress last year let enhanced subsidies expire.

Most of the money must be spent on health, but healthcare experts said the measure's ambiguous language could allow lawmakers to use the new billionaire health fund to replace existing state dollars, contrary to the text of the proposition.

"A lot of times these propositions are written in a way to get attention and get support," said Glenn Melnick, a healthcare economist at the University of Southern California. "But in fact, they can be used for other things later."

Instead, the healthcare industry is pushing for a long-term funding plan. René Bravo, a pediatrician in San Luis Obispo County and the president of the California Medical Association, worries that a one-time infusion of tax dollars "is going to run out."

"We need to work on a more sustainable, durable funding mechanism for the Medi-Cal system," he said.

At the same time, doctors are asking him what will happen when the biggest Medi-Cal eligibility cuts begin to take effect next year. Even if voters approve the ballot measure, the money wouldn't be available for at least a few months while the state collects the tax. And billionaires could spread their payments over five years.

Californians Divided Pasadena resident Lynne Wines, a 72-year-old retired banker, knows the state needs the money. But she worries that wealthy investors will see the measure as a precedent and flee the state. Even though the ballot measure is clear that it's a one-time tax, Wines said it's a slippery slope.

"Taxes have a way of being needed over and over, and politicians have a way of finding those needs," Wines said. "So, I don't really feel secure that this is just a one-time thing."

She noted that Google co-founder and billionaire Sergey Brin bought a home in Nevada and moved some of his businesses to the Silver State late last year. He is backing ad campaigns opposing the measure. Brin has given more than \$100 million to a nonprofit promoting two competing measures, Propositions 41 and 42, designed to blunt or block it, according to contributions filed with the secretary of state's office. One would count some new state taxes toward California's overall spending limit and require the state auditor to review new state tax proposals before voters weigh in. The other would prohibit new state taxes on personal property, intellectual property, retirement accounts, and other assets.

GOP gubernatorial candidate Steve Hilton, who has been endorsed by President Donald Trump, warned on CNN in June that just the threat of the tax "has sent trillions of dollars, by some estimates, of wealth leaving the state." A March study by the conservative Hoover Institution at Stanford University projected that the billionaire tax would cost California \$25 billion, citing, in part, the lost revenue from billionaires who have already left the state.

California voters appear torn over departing billionaires. Two independent September polls suggested voter support for Proposition 40 varied from a low of 45% to a high of 52%.

Pasadena resident Steve Erler, 74, works full-time as a building manager because he can't afford to retire. He worries that federal cuts will hurt children and seniors.

"These people who are making all this money, they can never spend it all. What are they going to do, buy another house in the Hamptons, buy another jet? They don't need that," Erler said while out walking his dog in August. "They need to be able to say when they go to bed at night, 'I helped a child with healthcare, I helped a senior get fed.' That's what's important," he said.



Steve Erler of Pasadena, California, works full-time as a building manager because he can't afford to retire. He worries that federal cuts will hurt children and seniors, and he supports a California ballot measure that would tax billionaires. (Jackie Fortiér/KFF Health News)

Democrats are divided — one of many ideological fights playing out nationwide this election cycle as progressives take on more centrist candidates. U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and the California Democratic Party have endorsed Proposition 40, while Gov. Gavin Newsom, who is exploring a presidential bid, and Democratic gubernatorial nominee Xavier Becerra oppose it while saying that ultrawealthy or high-earning people should pay more. "It's time for an economic reset, a true minimum tax on billionaires that, well, ensures the people at the very, top pay at least the tax rate their own workers pay," said Newsom, who supports a federal wealth tax, although legislation for a federal wealth tax in Congress has stalled.

If voters approve the ballot measure, political

analysts said, it could show other states that taxing the wealthy may help close budget gaps and pay for essential services. Already several Democratic states, including Hawai'i, Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, have approved millionaire taxes, but those have been limited to income, not overall wealth. Voters in Washington state will decide this fall whether to keep their millionaire tax.

"I do think this is just the beginning of these proposals nationwide," said Melnick, the USC healthcare economist.

KFF Health News is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs at KFF— an independent source of health policy research, polling, and journalism. Learn more about KFF.

Local

A Little Taste of the 21st Annual Taste of Soul



Ramon Brisco, Triple R BBQ (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

By Ricky Richardson
Contributing Writer

It's that time of year again: hundreds of thousands of music lovers, foodies, and art patrons gather on "The Shaw" for the 21st Annual Taste of Soul.

You already know where everyone will be on Saturday, October 17, 2026. The Taste of Soul is scheduled for Saturday, October 17th. Guests can expect a great lineup of music, mouthwatering food options, a showcase of local businesses, an art pavilion, and insightful and educational materials from community resources.

Gather your crew, just in case you don't know. The free, family-friendly festival is from 10:00 a.m.-7:00 pm, along Crenshaw Boulevard, affectionately known as "The Shaw," and Stocker Street to the south and Obama Boulevard to the north. The Taste of Soul is presented by Bakewell Media and the Los Angeles Sentinel.

Bring your dancing shoes and get ready to party with music flowing from three stages and complemented by more than 200 vendors representing small and local businesses. Just a friendly reminder that Christmas is just around the corner.

Before attendees can enjoy the Main Course, Bakewell Media and the Los Angeles Sentinel hosted Taste of Soul Media Day, Friday, October 16, from 6:00 a.m. to noon. Danny Bakewell Sr. was joined by local media and special guests for a tasty review of the Taste of Soul.

On site were Greg Mack- 94.7 The Wave, KJLH Radio Street Team, LJ Moody, Jay Hunt and Ricky Ruckus, Jim Mangia, St. John's President and CEO, and a fabulous art display featuring works by Mohammad Mubarak and Mike Norice. These are two of the artists that will be part of the Taste of Soul Art Pavilion, aka Art Walk.

The following food vendors were on site.

Warning! Hopefully you will follow your taste buds to the Taste of Soul. Triple R BBQ, owner Ramon Brisco, based in Fontana, served up Korean Cheese Corn, Compton Baked Beans, Chicken Wings, St. Louis Ribs, and Hot! Hot! Links. I promised that I will stop by for seconds.

Marathon Burgers served up their signature burgers and fries. There are currently five locations to serve you and more to come. Don't forget to ask about McDucc Sauce, also known as Mukduck Sauce at the Marathon Burger Food Truck.

Don't discard your bibs yet! Wangs and Thangs (762 E. Slauson Ave): their wings were delicious and worth a trip. No meal is complete without dessert. PUDN, owner E.J. Smith based in Temecula, filled up your craving for dessert with a variety of his signature puddings.

Lemonade R US is a youth-owned, family-run business based in Long Beach, California, founded in 2020 by young entrepreneurs Londyn, Leyah, and Legacy, provided a variety of cool lemonade and Viuearth Water based in Santa Ana provided refreshing bottles of water.

Taste of Soul was founded by Los Angeles Sentinel Publisher Danny Bakewell Sr. as a celebration of black culture, music, food, and entrepreneurship in South Los Angeles. This is a popular signature event in the City of Angels each fall.

Taste of Soul attracts hundreds of thousands of people to "The Shaw" to move and to get their groove on. During Media Day, I found out that groups from all over California charter buses to attend the Taste of Soul.

For everything that you need to know to prepare to attend the Taste of Soul, from parking, transportation, rideshare, food vendors, community resources, vendors, and the stellar lineup of artists performing on three stages.



KJLH Radio Street Team, LJ Moody, Jay Hunt and Ricky Ruckus (Photo by Ricky Richardson)



Uncle Max and Scrooge McDucc, Marathon Burger (Photo by Ricky Richardson)



Greg Mack and Jim Mangia, President and CEO, St. John's Community Health (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

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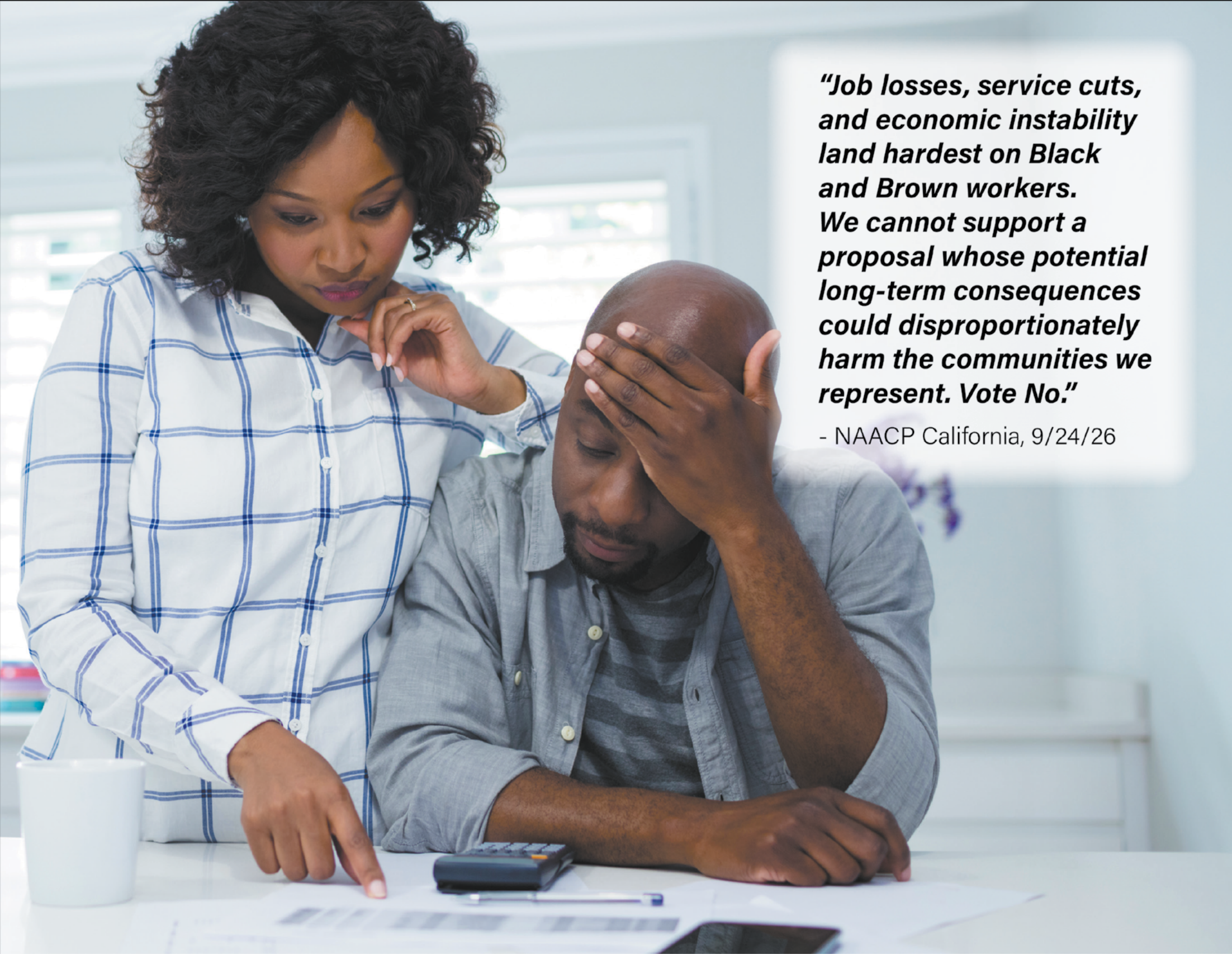
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