New Minneapolis Mural Imagines Black and Indigenous Futures Among the Stars

– Page A2

'Michael's' Billion-Dollar Success Meets a Stunning Family Reversal

– Page A3

Los Angeles News Observer

Serving Los Angeles County for Over 40 Years

38 Years Anniversary

Take One!

Volume 41 Number 44 | Observer Group Newspapers of Southern California | Thursday, July 23, 2026

Asm. Mia Bonta's AB 801 Targets Lending Bias and California's Persistent Racial Homeownership Gap

Assemblymember Mia Bonta (D-Oakland), author of AB 801, the California Fair Lending Examination Act, addresses the California State Assembly. The measure aims to help narrow the racial wealth gap, expand access to affordable housing for lower-income families, and require state-chartered banks, credit unions and independent mortgage companies to undergo fair-lending compliance audits at least once every four years. In a personal moment, Bonta's daughter, Reina Bonta, was visiting the Capitol and sat beside her mother's desk on the Assembly floor, recording her remarks on her cellphone. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

By Antonio Ray Harvey
California Black Media

Communities of color in California continue to face significant obstacles to buying and owning homes, along with gaps in government enforcement of fair-lending laws that limit their ability to build wealth proportionate to their share of the state's population.

That's why Assemblymember Mia Bonta (D-Alameda), Chair of the Assembly Health Committee, said she introduced Assembly Bill (AB) 801 in February 2025 specifically to address those disparities impacting communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. The bill is backed by the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC).

The bill, known as the California Community Reinvestment Act, if passed and enacted, would mandate financial institutions – including state-chartered banks, credit unions, and independent mortgage companies, to actively meet the credit needs of all communities where they conduct substantial business, prioritizing low- and moderate-income areas.

"The Reinvestment Act creates more transparency around our ability to understand whether or not (financial institutions) in the state are actually providing mortgages in Black and Brown communities to buy houses," Bonta told California Black Media (CBM).

In addition to gaps in oversight, people living in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in California face severe barriers to acquiring mortgage credit due to a combination of factors, including high property values and rigid underwriting standards.

The bill expands state-level oversight of financial institutions to ensure they actively reinvest in the historically underserved neighborhoods they serve, explicitly addressing the root causes of the racial wealth gap and predatory or discriminatory lending.

AB 801 also establishes rules that require the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI) to examine these lenders for compliance at least once every four years.

"We're in a position right now where we know there's a disproportionate number of Black and Brown people who don't have the ability to get credit from banks to buy their dream home," Bonta said. "This bill will allow us to hold banks accountable to understand the extent to which they are actually providing loans to Black and Brown communities over time."

AB 801 was first introduced to the California Legislature on Feb. 18, 2025. Bonta made it a two-year bill in the Senate to provide additional time to educate lawmakers on the legislation and address pushback from credit union groups. The bill last passed the full Assembly on June 3 with a 45-15 vote.

On June 17, 2026, the bill passed out of the Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Committee with a 5 -2 vote. On June 30, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to advance AB 801 with an11-2 vote. Now, the bill awaits its fate in the Senate Appropriations Committee after the legislature returns to the State Capitol on Aug. 3.

Bonta told the Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Committee that it was the California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans that called on the legislature to take structural action to address the ongoing economic harm caused by housing discrimination.

"This is the part of that response that we can focus on today. Since 2015, the Black and Latino borrowers have received conventional mortgage loan originations at roughly half the rate of White borrowers in California," Bonta said. "The homeownership gap between Black and White Americans today is approximately what it was before the Fair Housing Act passed in 1968."

AB 801 is primarily backed by civil rights groups, consumer protection advocates, and fair housing organizations aiming to prevent lending discrimination in communities of color.

The African-American Credit Union Coalition (AACUC) expressed concern that the bill undermines the unique structure of credit unions. AACUC is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the credit union movement and closing the racial wealth gap.

California Community Banking Network (CCBN) worked with the California Bankers Association (CBA), the California Credit Union League, Mortgage Bankers Association, and others

Continued on page A2

As They Seek Justice in the Death of Nolan Wells, Black Americans Wrestle with the Notion 'the South Is Still the South'

By WI Editorial Staff
Black Press USA Wire

It's been more than a week since the parents of Nolan Xavier Wells, a Black teenager eager to make his mark as a wide receiver on the football team at Southwest Mississippi Community College, received the call that no family ever wants to get.

After leaving home to celebrate the Fourth of July with friends on Horn Island — an uninhabited stretch of wilderness nestled among barrier islands located off the Mississippi coast — the teen's parents became alarmed after their son failed to respond to calls, and his whereabouts were unknown.

Two days later, the foreboding sense of fear that had undoubtedly haunted Wells' parents since his disappearance was confirmed: his body had been found by a U.S. Park Service Ranger, face down in the water just off the island's northwest tip.

The 18-year-old's friends made it safely back to the mainland. He did not.

Now, Wells' parents, Elmore and Christine Wonsley, must wait anxiously, hoping to learn what really happened to their son, and prayerfully find some semblance of peace.

Meanwhile, questions continue to mount. Why didn't the youth return with his friends? Why didn't he have his cellphone with him? Was he involved in an altercation? Did he remain behind to meet with a girl or someone else?

Mississippi state flag at the Old Courthouse in Vicksburg, Miss. (Kenneth C. Zirkel, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons)

Further, why did the Jackson County Sheriff's Office state that no foul play was suspected, even before official autopsy and toxicology reports had been completed?

Mississippi is known for its beauty: magnificent magnolias, lush bayous, cypress swamps, and moss-draped Southern live oak. But the Magnolia State also bears the ignoble distinction of the highest number of lynchings recorded in America, with an estimated 581 documented victims between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries, according to the Equal Justice Initiative.

As part of the rite of passage for their children as they reach adulthood, Black parents often recount the tragic narrative of 14-year-old Emmett Till, a Black teenager from Chicago, who, after allegedly whistling at a White woman, was abducted, tortured, and killed on Aug. 28, 1955, in the Mississippi Delta while visiting his relatives.

Mississippi is where three civil rights activists, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, were arrested by local police in Neshoba County on June 21, 1964, and later released into the hands of a Ku Klux Klan mob who severely beat Chaney, a 21-year-old Black man, before shooting and killing him and his two White colleagues.

During a news conference on July 10, the Rev. Al Sharpton said while he was reluctant to rush to judgment or speculate that racism may have led to Wells' death, he admitted, "This does not smell right."

The truth will eventually come to light, but since the days well before the Civil War, Mississippi has been a dangerous and deadly place for African Americans.

It seems the South is still the South.

Coalition Featuring Rev. Al Sharpton, Martin Luther King III Announces March on Washington 2026

By David Snelling
Black Press USA Wire

A coalition of national partners, including the National Action Network Founder and President Rev. Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King III, announced "March on Washington 2026: Defend the Vote" on Friday, August 28, 2026.

The event will also commemorate the 63rd anniversary of the historic 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Other March on Washington 2026 partners include the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), the National Urban League (NUL), the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), UnidosUS, the Working Families Party, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA), Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Lawyer's Committee), and Veterans Equity Project, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Common Cause, People Power United, United For Democracy, Vote.org, Family Equality, In the Public Square, Bet Mishpachah, Faith in Action Fund, Faith in Action National Network, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC), and the Interfaith Alliance.

U.S. Rep. Yvette Clarke (D- New York), chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, will be joined by a delegation of members at the march.

Martin Luther King III said 63 years have passed since his father and iconic Civil Rights Leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and declared his dream for America, the fundamental right at the heart of that dream, the right to vote, is once again under "direct assault."

He said the 2026 March on Washington comes at a moment of profound urgency, following the United States Supreme Court's decision to gut Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, a ruling Sharpton has called "a bullet in the heart of the voting rights movement."

Martin Luther King Jr. in Washington DC the 28 August 1963 during the speech "I have a Dream" speech — Wikimedia Commons

"Defending the vote means defending the foundation of our democracy," said Martin Luther King III. "Sixty-three years after my father stood at the Lincoln Memorial, we are called to march again, not only in remembrance, but in action."

Social justice leader Arndrea Waters King, the wife of Martin Luther King III, said The March on Washington 2026 is a moral call to protect democracy for every generation.

"We march to defend the vote, honor those who sacrificed for it, and ensure that every voice is protected," she said.

Under the banner "Defend the Vote," this year's march will bring together civil rights leaders, faith communities, organizers, and Americans from every corner of the country to demand the protection and restoration of voting rights for all citizens.

It is both a commemoration of the legacy of those who marched in 1963 and a call to action to protect the gains they fought, bled, and died to secure.

Registration for March on Washington 2026: Defend the Vote is now open.

Supporters from across the country are encouraged to register today at the National Action Network website. Additional details, including program information, speakers, and participating partners, will be announced in the weeks ahead.

Mailson Araujo

Fitness Star Suddenly Collapses and Dies at 35 Just Hours After His Last Instagram Post

Mailson Araujo, a professional bodybuilder from Brazil, has sadly passed away at age 35 after collapsing at his home in Alagoinhas. His mother, a nursing technician, attempted to perform CPR on him before firefighters arrived, but all efforts to revive him failed.

Araujo's death on Monday shocked fans and members of the fitness community who followed his bodybuilding journey. Just hours before he collapsed, he shared workout photos on Instagram, where he had gained more than 32,000 followers through his fitness content.

After Araujo collapsed, his mother immediately attempted CPR while waiting for help. Firefighters later arrived and continued life-saving measures, but they could not revive him, according to People.

The Brazilian athlete became a professional bodybuilder in 2023 after winning the Arnold Classic South America title in Sao Paulo. He was also preparing to compete in the Musclecontest event in Curitiba, Brazil, which was scheduled for July 17 to July 19.

Araujo had already made a mark in the bodybuilding world before his death. He placed third in the 2023 Muscleman competition and regularly shared training advice, nutrition tips, and updates about his fitness career with his followers.

In addition to bodybuilding, Araujo was a gospel singer and worked as a fitness consultant, helping clients with their health and training goals. His passion for fitness and faith earned him a loyal following online.

Professional bodybuilder Maiki Ono was among those who honored Araujo, writing that he would be "greatly missed." Fans also remembered him for his dedication to fitness and the inspiration he shared online.

Linda Sturdivant

Black Teacher Accused of Assaulting Students Found Not Guilty on All 13 Counts

Linda Sturdivant, a black special education teacher from Henry County, Georgia, was found not guilty of assault charges involving students after a jury cleared her of all allegations. The verdict ended a case that accused her of harming children with special needs at Stockbridge Elementary School.

A Henry County jury found her not guilty on all 13 counts of simple battery after a trial involving accusations that she physically assaulted several special education students. Sturdivant, who previously worked as a social worker before becoming a teacher, denied the allegations.

According to Fox 5 Atlanta, the case began after authorities arrested Sturdivant in December 2024 over claims that she assaulted students in August 2024 while working at the elementary school. Court records alleged that multiple children with special needs were involved.

The allegations drew attention from families and the local community. Portia Blanco, whose nonverbal child was named as one of the alleged victims, previously said school officials and law enforcement did not notify her about the investigation until two months after Sturdivant's arrest.

Following the verdict, Sturdivant said she felt relieved and became emotional in court. "There were some happy, happy tears," she said after the jury cleared her of the charges.

Sturdivant continued to maintain that she did not know what happened and said her classroom faced major staffing and organizational challenges at the time. She also credited her attorneys for pointing out what she described as inconsistencies during the trial.

"I wanted a jury trial because I just believe that to get this case in front of a jury, just regular folks like myself to hear that they would hear the truth," Sturdivant said.

She also defended her actions as a teacher and said she never harmed the children in her care. "Your children were never harmed, never harmed under my supervision," she said.

Although the acquittal clears Sturdivant to pursue future teaching opportunities, she said she will not return to the Henry County School System. She is also considering filing a lawsuit over the personal and financial effects of the case.

"It affected every area of my life. Career-wise. And, I lost my job as a result of that," Sturdivant said, adding that the experience also affected her finances and mental health.

World & Nation

From Blueprint to Breakthrough: Tackling Affordable Housing in New York City

By JP Morgan Chase
Black Press USA Wire

Finding an affordable place to live continues to be a challenge for many as widespread housing shortages persist across the U.S. Rising home prices and high interest rates have made homeownership inaccessible for a large portion of the population. Meanwhile, as rental demand increases, the number of renters facing affordability challenges is also growing.

The State of the Nation's Housing 2025 report by Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies reveals that cost burdens for renters reached another record high in 2023. Similarly, the JPMorganChase Institute reports that renter affordability is declining, forcing people to devote more of their take-home pay to housing costs. There is a growing need for affordable housing across the U.S. and that rings true here in New York City.

Renewing a Brooklyn Community at Scale

In Canarsie, Bay View Houses is the kind of place where generations of neighbors have built their lives. JPMorganChase is helping finance the substantial rehabilitation of this 1,608-unit affordable housing development. The goal isn't just to repair buildings; it's to improve everyday living. Planned upgrades include brighter, more welcoming common areas; refreshed lobbies and entryways; enhanced security; free Wi-Fi; ADA improvements; elevator upgrades; and even basic fixes that matter, like repaired sidewalks and fences. Families will also benefit from expanded outdoor and community features, including five playground areas and improved community facility spaces paired with social services for tenants. Part of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)'s PACT Program, the Bay View PACT Partner team includes RDC Development – a joint venture between MDG Design & Construction and Wavecrest Management – and Infinite Horizons.

"The rehabilitation of Bay View Houses is about more than construction; it's about strengthening the local Canarsie community. We're creating safe, modern, and welcoming spaces that will support families for years to come," said Matthew Rooney, CEO of MDG Design & Construction and Principal at RDC Development. "None of this progress would be possible without the support and partnership of the Tenant Association and every resident at Bay View Houses."

Strengthening the Bronx's Public Housing Stock

Edenwald Houses, in the Baychester neighborhood of the Bronx and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is the largest public housing community in the Bronx and functions like a small town—dozens of buildings, thousands of residents and a daily rhythm that depends on functioning shared infrastructure and services. JPMorganChase provided support to help rehabilitate 2,030-units across 42 buildings, in addition to utility, common area and community facility upgrades. For residents, this kind of work is about more than construction, it's about restoring reliability while respecting this community and history of the development: homes that are safer, better maintained and built to serve families for years to come. The project is part of the NYCHA PACT program, reflecting a sustained effort to keep a major piece of the Bronx's affordable housing supply strong and stable.

"Our firm's deep commitment to building and preserving affordable housing is made even stronger with steadfast partnerships at all levels, including financiers like JPMorganChase," said Rick Gropper, Principal at Camber Property Group. "At Edenwald Houses, we were able to completely rehabilitate and revitalize over 2,000 homes with the support of the great team at JPMorganChase. We are grateful for this partnership, and encourage developers looking for a bank that truly believes in the power of community impact to join us.

Modernizing Homes in the Heart of Harlem

In Central Harlem, the Jackie Robinson Houses are focused on something many New Yorkers want for their neighborhoods: keeping longtime residents in place while bringing homes up to modern standards. JPMorganChase supported the redevelopment of 1,052 units of NYCHA public housing across 10 buildings. The renovations

reach into the parts of a home that shape everyday comfort, including new unit interiors, common-area and accessibility upgrades and energy-efficiency improvements, along with major behind-the-walls work like full plumbing and electrical upgrades. And it's not just a few touchups: the scope includes full kitchen and bathroom renovations, ventilation improvements and heating optimization/electrification—the kinds of improvements that help a building feel healthier and more dependable for the people who call it home.

"Our partnership with JPMorganChase is making it possible to truly elevate the daily quality of life for residents," said Melissa Bindra, Principal at Vaya Development, a development partner for Jackie Robinson Houses. "Their commitment ensures that these affordable homes will continue to serve Harlem families and seniors at the standards they deserve for generations to come."

"We're proud of the far-reaching impact these projects are having and to work with these developers to uplift our communities and expand the supply of high-quality, affordable homes across New York City," said Sharmi Sobhan, head of J.P. Morgan Community Development Banking's East Region. "Every additional housing unit matters—and increasing the number that are affordable is critical."

A broader commitment to New York City's future

While these projects are foundational, the vibrancy of a community depends on much more. In New York City, the firm provides banking services to nearly 4 million customers and works across sectors to expand economic opportunity. Over the last five years, JPMorganChase has invested more than $130 million in local nonprofit organizations, supported 480,000 small business clients and delivered financial health education to thousands of residents—broadening access to banking, financial health resources, homeownership and other wealth-building tools.

"As we work with local stakeholders to expand housing options, JPMorganChase's goal is to create inclusive economic opportunity for all," said Robert Rodriguez, Divisional Manager, Business Banking and Chair, New York City Market Leadership Team at JPMorganChase. "When our communities thrive, we all thrive."

Learn more about affordable housing and community development at jpmorgan.com/commercial-real-estate.

You can also read more about what's happening in New York City at https://www.jpmorganchase.com/communities/new-york.

New Minneapolis Mural Imagines Black and Indigenous Futures Among the Stars

Belonging to the Entire Universe: Leslie Barlow's New Mural Reimagines Community and Cosmos

By Callisto Martinez
Black Press USA Wire

Callisto Martinez reports on visual artist Leslie Barlow's new mural, "Belonging to the Entire Universe," a 66-by-33-foot installation unveiled at the McKnight Foundation's Minneapolis headquarters. Named for a quote from astronaut Mae Jemison, the piece weaves constellations, textiles from Barlow's travels to Tanzania, and native plants into what she calls an "artistic roadmap" for sustained community care, painted in part during the height of Operation Metro Surge.

Growing up, visual artist Leslie Barlow wanted to be an astronaut. Now, her mural Belonging to the Entire Universe, titled in reference to a quote from astronaut Mae Jemison, the first Black woman to travel into space, brings Barlow's vision of a future universe to downtown Minneapolis.

Unveiled on June 12, the 66-by-33-foot installation faces the U.S. Bank Stadium and is displayed on the Minneapolis headquarters of the McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based foundation dedicated to advancing climate solutions, combatting housing instability and confronting other issues impacting Minnesotans.

"What I would love people to take away from it is this reminder of our relationship to the land, to each other, to our ancestors' lineage, and then, of course, as the title says, to the entire universe," said Barlow, a 2025 McKnight Visual Artist Fellow.

Barlow has long admired Jemison, enough to dress up as her for Halloween a few years ago, but the piece was not titled after Jemison until it was already finished. Barlow's initial inspiration for the piece came directly from McKnight's mission to "advance a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and [the] planet thrive."

"With the words 'just,' 'creative,' and 'abundant,' I was thinking of something that showed a large amount of something that was really colorful and vibrant, definitely something that had plant life and spoke to the environment and the planet, so that's where the cosmic imagery came in," Barlow said. "I wanted it to feel like it flowed between different images to encompass people and [the] planet."

Barlow's piece began with digital sketches that she presented to a committee of McKnight staff and board members, who gave feedback on the design and unanimously selected her from a pool of applicants.

Barlow began rendering her drafts into a 7-foot-wide and 3.5-foot-tall oil painting in February, when Operation Metro Surge was in full force.

"It was actually very difficult for me to start painting because of the way that we were pulled toward mutual aid and on-the-ground efforts," Barlow said. "It was a very dark time where so many of us were grieving and a lot of people were scared, rightly so, and still are. But at that time, I was also

Leslie Barlow in her studio with the painting "Belonging to the Entire Universe," which was scanned and printed on vinyl for the mural. The title is inspired by a quote from Mae Jemison, the first Black woman to travel to space. Credit: McKnight Foundation

"Belonging to the Entire Universe" is displayed on the south-facing exterior of the McKnight Foundation headquarters, 921 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis. — McKnight Foundation

wanting to create an image that felt really hopeful and felt like another world was possible."

Barlow describes the painting as an "artistic roadmap" that considers "if these aren't just moments that our communities come together, but we are continually caring for each other and supporting each other, what society could look like."

Constellations, textiles, native plants and the cosmic reconstruction of the Mississippi River function as "visual moments that could allude to multiple narratives, deeper meanings," according to Barlow.

Much of the mural's plant life was photographed outside the McKnight headquarters. The floral details grew out of McKnight's photo library, inspired by the foundation's work with local farmers of color.

Similarly, the textiles embedded within the mural "allude to a quilting of ideas, or histories, or stories" together, Barlow explained. Their designs primarily draw from Barlow's personal collection, which she has grown since she began working with textiles in 2016.

"The textile that's the biggest, which looks almost like DNA, which I really love, is both organic and geometric in shape," Barlow said. "Those pieces, I actually purchased from Tanzania on my very first trip to the African continent. … That trip was very meaningful for me as a Black person, and so I wanted that one to be central in the space."

While grounded in the local landscape, the symbols also draw from Afrofuturism and Indigenous futurisms. Barlow sees Afrofuturism and Black and Indigenous solidarity as parts of herself that she brought to the piece, given their significance in her work outside visual art. In 2023, she founded ConFluence, a two-day sci-fi convention in Northeast Minneapolis that centers Black people, Indigenous people and people of color.

Though the symbolism is personal for Barlow, she encourages viewers to form their own interpretations and connections to their own lives. The central image of three women from different generations standing together, each wearing a matching turquoise motif in a different way, was also created with this hope in mind.

"I wanted people to be able to see themselves in these people," Barlow explained. "They are painted as individuals, but they are also kind of symbols."

For Tonya Allen, president of the McKnight Foundation, each viewer's personal connection with Belonging to the Entire Universe also encourages connection with others.

"This mural is both a reflection and a call," Allen said. "Rooted in the history, cultures, and landscapes that shape Minnesota, Leslie's work honors what has shaped us while inviting us to imagine what's possible. It reminds us that a more just and hopeful future is something we must create together."

Belonging to the Entire Universe is the inaugural installation in McKnight's public art series, which will feature a different piece every three years. It is displayed at the McKnight Foundation's Minneapolis headquarters, located at 921 Washington Ave. S.

For more information, visit https://www.mcknight.org/news-ideas/mcknight-unveils-new-public-mural-by-leslie-barlow-launching-rotating-public-art-series/.

Los Angeles News Observer

Adjudicated a Newspaper of General Circulation on July 2, 1991, Los Angeles Superior Court Decree, Case No. BS007262, Government Code 6023.

Bulk Mailing Permit 724 Bakersfield, CA 93385

Published every Thursday by The Observer Group Newspapers of Southern California, Inc.

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Assc. Associated Press, Better Business Bureau, GLAACC

President: Ellen Coley
CEO: Jon Coley
Publisher/ Editor: James Luckey Jr.
Operations Manager: James Luckey
Intern: William Clark Coley

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.

The Observer Group Newspapers reserves the right to publish views and opinions that may not necessarily reflect those of the staff and management are soleley the product of the responsible individuals who submit commentaries published in these newspapers. Letters, articles and comments appearing in the Observer Newspapers reflect the opinions of the contributor and do not constitute the opinion or endorsement by The Observer Newspapers or its staff. The Observer Group Newspapers assumes no responsibility for photographs, articles, letters, press releases and unsolicited materials. Decisions as to the editiing and publishing of materials are at the discretion of the Publisher and Editors. All rights are reserved on materials accepted for publication unless otherwise specified.

The Observer Group Newspapers of Southern California, Inc.:

Bakersfield News Observer,
Los Angeles News Observer,
The Valley's News Observer

Los Angeles News Observer 6060 Center Drive Floor 10, Los Angeles, CA 90045 Mailing Address: PO Box 2341, Bakersfield, Ca. 93303 Phone (661) 324-9466 FAX (661) 324-9472
General Info: observernews@gmail.com
Advertising: observeradvertising@gmail.com
Online: www.ognsc.com

Asm. Mia Bonta's AB 801 Targets Lending Bias and California's Persistent Racial Homeownership Gap

Continued from page A1

to advocate in opposition to AB 801.

CCBN and CBA wrote in a June 5 letter addressed to the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana), stating that AB 801 "risks driving up costs for consumers already struggling to afford a home."

"AB 801 would require additional examinations and reporting obligations covering many of the same issues already evaluated through existing supervisory processes.

Although the bill contemplates consideration of examinations performed by other regulators, it does not eliminate the possibility of duplicative reviews, conflicting findings, or repetitive requests for information."

On June 17, Rob Wilson, executive vice president for California's Credit Unions, said AB 801 was "in a better place than it was last year," but "we do still have some concerns with the bill."

Wilson leads the organization's strategic direction, advocacy, and state government affairs, working directly with lawmakers and credit union leaders.

"AB 801 creates a new regulatory framework that we believe is unnecessary and duplicative of existing oversight," Wilson told the Senate Standing Committee on Banking and Financial Institutions. "We believe it may create some significant legal concerns, compliance, and most notably, cost concerns for California state-chartered credit unions."

In 2024, a minimum annual income of roughly $221,200 was required to qualify for the statewide median-priced single-family home, costing approximately $865,000 to $875,000, according to the California Association of Realtors (CAR).

In 2025, the median income for Black households in California hovered around $70,220 to $73,102. Only about 10% of Black households in the state had the minimum qualifying income required to purchase a median-priced home.

Max Vargas, president and CEO of Greenlining Institute, told the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary that "Without an examination structure, California's fair lending protections exist on paper, but not in practice," he said.

Founded in 1993, the Greenlining Institute is an Oakland-based policy, research, and leadership organization dedicated to racial and economic justice. Its mission is to fight the legacy of redlining practices while at the same time bringing investments and economic opportunities to marginalized communities of color.

Vargas shared that Greenlining analyzed the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data and discovered that 37 million mortgage applications submitted between 2018 and 2024 revealed that Black borrowers were 78% more likely than White borrowers to be denied at the final underwriting stage.

"Our families in California are already facing rising costs, growing financial instability, and fewer pathways to building wealth," Vargas said. "This is on top of federal deregulatory efforts. If California does not act, these gaps will grow and deepen."

Entertainment

'Michael's' Billion-Dollar Success Meets a Stunning Family Reversal

By Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Wire

As the blockbuster "Michael" crossed the $1 billion mark at the worldwide box office and cemented Michael Jackson's estate as the steward of the first music biopic ever to reach the milestone, another chapter involving one of the singer's closest relationships has moved into federal court.

A lawsuit filed by four members of the Cascio family has generated headlines around the world. But court records, public financial filings and interviews with people close to the estate and Jackson family reveal a far more complicated story involving bankruptcy proceedings, tax liens, foreclosure litigation, an alleged unpaid $600,000 loan from Jackson himself and a family that for decades stood among the superstar's most vocal defenders.

The federal complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, accuses Jackson of sexually abusing Edward Cascio, Dominic Savini Cascio, Marie-Nicole Porte and Aldo Cascio while they were children. It names the Michael Jackson Company, co-executors John Branca and the late John McClain, MJJ Productions, MJJ Ventures and others as defendants, asserting claims that include sex trafficking of children, negligence, fraud and breach of fiduciary duty.

For those who knew Jackson, however, the lawsuit represents an extraordinary reversal.

Jackson first met Dominic Cascio Sr. in 1984 while he was serving as banquet and general manager at New York City's Helmsley Palace Hotel. The chance meeting developed into one of the closest friendships of Jackson's adult life.

Over the next quarter-century, Jackson became a frequent guest at the Cascio family's home in Hawthorne, New Jersey. He celebrated holidays with the family, spent extended periods there away from the pressures of celebrity and developed close relationships with the Cascio children. Just as significant, the family became one of the very few outside Jackson's immediate relatives whom he trusted around Prince, Paris and Bigi Jackson, the children who today are among the principal beneficiaries of his estate.

That history makes today's litigation particularly striking.

For years, Frank Cascio emerged as one of Jackson's strongest public defenders.

In interviews, public appearances and his memoir, Frank Cascio repeatedly rejected allegations that Jackson abused children. He described Jackson as a loving friend and insisted the entertainer never behaved inappropriately toward him or members of his family. During appearances with Oprah Winfrey and Wendy Williams, he defended Jackson's character and dismissed earlier accusations against the singer. Years later, members of that same family are now asking a federal jury to hold Jackson's estate liable for allegations they say occurred decades ago.

People close to the estate and Jackson family say the lawsuit cannot be viewed apart from the family's financial history.

Public court records reviewed by The Informer show that James Victor Porte, the husband of plaintiff Marie-Nicole Porte, sought Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in South Carolina in November 2025 before the case was converted to Chapter 7. During those proceedings, a bankruptcy judge granted a lender relief from the automatic stay, allowing foreclosure remedies involving real property to proceed.

Public records also show plaintiff Edward J. Cascio previously filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy protection in New Jersey.

Additional public filings document federal tax liens involving the Portes.

Sources familiar with the estate also pointed to a residence in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, valued at approximately $1 million, while arguing that Jackson himself had already demonstrated extraordinary financial generosity toward the family years earlier.

According to multiple people familiar with Jackson's finances, the singer loaned Dominic Cascio Sr. approximately $600,000. Those sources contend they have never found evidence the money was repaid.

"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree," one family associate said. "They are just trying to get money that they don't deserve."

The latest lawsuit also follows an earlier dispute first reported exclusively by the Informer.

Last September, The Informer revealed that the estate had accused former Jackson associates of attempting to obtain $213 million while threatening to publicize allegations they had spent years publicly denying. At the time, Branca described the effort as "a shakedown" and declared, "Enough is enough."

Branca, who this week celebrated the new film's milestone with social media postings, has consistently rejected accusations that Jackson abused children, speaking from a position few others occupied.

Michael Jackson — (Constru-centro, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons)

His relationship with Jackson stretched over decades. Although the two occasionally disagreed professionally, Jackson repeatedly returned to Branca for advice. Eight days before Jackson died in June 2009, the two reunited at rehearsals for "This Is It" at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

"Trust was never easy for Michael," Branca told the Black Press in a recent interview. "We had a wonderful relationship in the '80s and a little more challenging as time went on because there were so many people in his ear… We parted ways on more than one occasion over the decades, but we always reunited when it counted."

When Jackson finalized his estate plan, he selected Branca and longtime music executive John McClain to serve as co-executors, a decision Branca said demonstrated the trust Jackson ultimately placed in them.

"In the end he chose to keep John McClain and me in the will as executors and that said a lot to us," Branca said.

People familiar with internal estate discussions say Prince Jackson has also made his position clear regarding future settlements involving allegations against his father.

According to multiple sources, Prince has instructed the executors that there should be "no more payouts."

"We always fought for Michael," Branca explained.

FIFA World Cup 2026 Halftime Show Featured Diverse Global Music, Dance, and Cultural Performances

FIFA World Cup 2026 halftime show featured diverse global music, dance, and cultural performances.

Performers included Shakira, Burna Boy, Uganda's Ghetto Kids, and Staten Island's PS22 Chorus.

IShowSpeed made history as the first content creator to perform at the closing show.

Spain may have captured its first FIFA Men's World Cup title since 2010, defeating Argentina 1-0 in the final. But it was kids from Uganda and Staten Island, New York, who stole hearts during this historic World Cup run.

FIFA World Cup 2026™ unveiled its first-ever halftime show, a Super Bowl-inspired masterpiece that brought music, dance and global culture to MetLife Stadium. Curated by Chris Martin of Coldplay in partnership with FIFA and Global Citizen, the performances underlined the diversity that has defined this year's tournament. The lineup reflected the global soundtrack of pop culture, with Afrobeats, Latin pop, K-pop, youth dance culture and even the Muppets sharing football's biggest stage.

Madonna opened the 11-minute halftime experience, ending her energetic performance of "Music" flanked by Afro-Brazilian football legends Ronaldinho and Ronaldo.From Speed's joy to the Ghetto Kids' unstoppable spirit, these performances turned the World Cup Final into a celebration of talent, community and pure global magic.

From Speed's joy to the Ghetto Kids' unstoppable spirit, these performances turned the World Cup Final into a celebration of talent, community and pure global magic.

Nigerian superstar Burna Boy and Shakira performed the tournament's official anthem, "Dai Dai," a blend of Afro-fusion, Latin rhythms and pop. They were joined onstage by the Ghetto Kids, a dance troupe from Kampala, Uganda.

Founded in 2007 by Dauda Kavuma, the organization provides young children with opportunities to improve their lives through dance and community. The global internet superstars, who

Shakira, Burna Boy and the Ghetto Kids perform at the FIFA World Cup 2026 | Credit: Lars Baron/ Getty

first gained worldwide attention through their viral dance videos, were personally invited by Shakira to perform with her after she saw their choreography for "Dai Dai."

Keeping it close to home, the PS22 Chorus sang Coldplay's "We Dance" to close the halftime show, helping to spotlight believeinlove.org, a new initiative launched today to inspire people all over the world to participate in small acts of love to help defeat poverty and defend the planet. The acclaimed elementary school chorus from Staten Island has been performing for more than two decades.

Before kickoff, Jennifer Hudson reminded everyone why she's an EGOT winner with a powerful rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The World Cup's closing ceremony was just as electric, with high-spirited performances from Brooklyn United, a music- and arts-based community organization that serves New York City youth; Fogo Azul NYC, a women-led samba reggae drumline marching band based in New York City; and the NYC Bucket Drummers. Swae Lee dueted with Post Malone while IShowSpeed became the first content creator to perform at the World Cup's closing show with "Champions."

Bringing together a cultural feast of music, FIFA's first halftime show proved that when music and sports come together, they can create global harmony. It also signaled that football's biggest stage is becoming as much a celebration of global culture as it is of the game itself.

World Cup Final Half-Time | Credit: Eugene Gologursky

Legal Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2026131755
Doing business as:
PREP DEEDS.COM at 25876 THE OLD ROAD STE 544, STEVENSON RANCH, CA 91381
Mailing Address: same
County: Los Angeles
Full name of registrant(s):
KUBBA, INC. at 25876 THE OLD ROAD STE 544, STEVENSON RANCH, CA 91381
State of incorp. or org.: CA
The business is conducted by: a Corporation
SIGNED:**OMAR KUBBA**, PRESIDENT
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 06/2026
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: June 16, 2026
DEAN C. LOGAN

PUBLIC NOTICE

Los Angeles County Clerk
By: TINA TRAN,
Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on: June 16, 2031

LOS ANGELES

PUBLIC NOTICE

NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Jul 2, 9, 16, 23, 2026

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2026134030
Doing business as:
PREPDEEDS.COM at 25876 THE OLD ROAD STE 544, STEVENSON RANCH, CA 91381
Mailing Address: same
County: Los Angeles
Full name of registrant(s):
KUBBA INC. at 25876 THE OLD ROAD STE 544, STEVENSON RANCH, CA 91381
State of incorp. or org.: CA
The business is conducted by: a Corporation
SIGNED:**OMAR KUBBA**, PRESIDENT
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 06/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: June 18, 2026
DEAN C. LOGAN
Los Angeles County Clerk
By: ISAURA CORREA,
Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be

PUBLIC NOTICE

false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on: June 18, 2031

LOS ANGELES
NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Jul 2, 9, 16, 23, 2026

LIEN SALE

NOTICE OF LIEN SALE
Lien Holder:
1233 W 257TH ST
HARBOR CTY, CA 90710
Vehicle:
2010 HYUN
Vin: **5NMSH4AGXAH365596**
License #:
Date of Sale: **8/6/26**

LOS ANGELES BAY
NEWS OBSERVER (E)
PUB: Jul 23, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

LIEN SALE

NOTICE OF LIEN SALE
Lien Holder:
6519 S VERMONT AVE UNIT B
LOS ANGELES, CA 90044
Vehicle:
2020 CHEV
Vin: **3GCPWCED8LG160895**
License #:
Date of Sale: **8/6/26**

LOS ANGELES BAY
NEWS OBSERVER (E)
PUB: Jul 23, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2026150827
Doing business as:
THE EVICTION COMPANY /

PUBLIC NOTICE

CONSOLIDATED LANDLORDS at 3010 WILSHIRE BLVD, 353, LOS ANGELES, CA 90010
Mailing Address: same
County: Los Angeles
Full name of registrant(s):
NABLONKA DURDEN at 3010 WILSHIRE BLVD, 353, LOS ANGELES, CA 90010
The business is conducted by: an Individual
SIGNED: **NABLONKA DURDEN**, OWNER
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 05/2005
This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: July 10, 2026
DEAN C. LOGAN
Los Angeles County Clerk
By: TINA TRAN,
Deputy
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in

PUBLIC NOTICE

the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime
This statement expires on: July 10, 2031

LOS ANGELES
NEWS OBSERVER
PUB: Jul 23, 30, Aug 6, 13, 2026

Features

The Power of Pink: Laila Leigh's Journey to Streamer University

By Marcus Craig
Black Press USA Wire

Laila Leigh's Streamer University journey started on cardboard in a pink room in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. From a young age, her family has taught her to speak things into existence: grades, internship opportunities and now the chance to build her brand as a social media influencer.

Streamer University, for those unfamiliar, is a week-long intensive bootcamp held on a U.S. college campus hosted by content creator and Twitch superstar Kai Cenat. The bootcamp focuses on helping rising creators elevate their platforms, master the art of streaming, and monetize their content. Leigh is set to join the Class of 2026 for the bootcamp.

"[Laila's father] believes in speaking things into existence. I believe in writing it down and making it plain. Laila's been around all these concepts," said Mai Leigh, Laila's mother. "She has books about manifestation."

Laila Leigh, who goes by "LailaSimoneTV" on Twitch, hopes that Streamer University is just one step in a path that leads to a career as an entertainment correspondent. She has memories of watching "Good Morning America" and "106 and Park," respectively. The show's hosts, Robin Roberts and Rocsi Diaz, were her role models. Watching them helped Leigh realize she wanted a life in front of the camera.

"Robin Roberts introduced a professional side and being a student of the game and real journalism," said Leigh, a 2026 Clark Atlanta University (CAU) graduate.

Shifting her goals

Initially, Leigh thought she wanted to be a newscaster, like Roberts. As she got older, she watched YouTubers like Queen Naija and Jordyn Lucas. She also went to events like the Black Sports Business Symposium. She learned how to network, but she also realized that she would rather interview

celebrities instead of learning about male athletes.

"I want to do something more fun…let me see what entertainment is like," she said.

From that day, she never looked back.

She started interviewing celebrities like Luhh Dyl, India Love and Latto. She also began posting videos of herself talking about celebrities. Her Instagram video covering celebrity couple Megan Thee Stallion and Klay Thompson's split has more than 170,000 views.

A relationship made through time

Mai Leigh and her daughter have built a special relationship. One that has roots in respect.

"My mom is like my best friend," said Laila Leigh.

"I think I was meant to be her mom. We have a relationship that's really unique. I respect Laila," said Mai Leigh.

When the duo traveled to Atlanta to film Laila's Streamer University application, Mai didn't know much about streaming. She questioned how people even get picked to attend Streamer University. She watched DDG's content to learn how he became rich from streaming.

"If kids are retiring their parents through streaming… go for it," Laila remembers her mother telling her.

Finding her way

For Leigh, "find a way or make one" is more than a motto. It's a way of life. At CAU, she founded "Meet a Panther," a platform designed to highlight students from the school's community. She also interned with the school's social media. She was also the Vice President of The Culture Collective. The organization refers to itself as a creative outlet that connects brands and students through culture.

She also interned as a podcast editor at TMZ, participated in the 2025 CNN Academy and worked as a BET Next Gen Ambassador at this year's BET awards. These programs taught her how to prepare for big moments, how to communicate with others and how to make a way past obstacles.

"As a freshman, it sounded like a struggle… I quickly learned finding your way is super important because it could end up with you landing your opportunity," said Leigh.

"Everything she's talked about, she's gotten done," said Kaden Lymon, a 2026 CAU graduate who worked with Leigh at The Culture Collective (TCC).

The duo have been friends since 2022, their freshman year of college. Across the last four years, Lymon has seen Leigh's positive attitude, curiosity and persistence take shape.

"That's really my dawg," said Lymon, a smile forming on his face. "It's really been a joy to watch her grow."

Her mother, Mai, believes that her daughter can achieve anything she wants because of her curiosity.

"The curiosity that children have, the wonder, it's beautiful. If you allow them to explore they can become whatever they want," said Mai Leigh, Laila's mother.

Professional practice

Lymon, who filmed Leigh's application to Streamer University, also touts the professionalism that Leigh has shown throughout their time working together. One month before filming the video, Leigh reached out to Lymon for help. She already had a plan, even flying back to Atlanta with her mother from Maryland to make sure her vision came to life.

Lymon and his creative team met with Leigh to work on details. The script was finalized. Choreography and props were discussed. When filming started, though, not everything went to plan.

Instead of giving up, the duo made the necessary adjustments. Just like Lymon, she wanted the video to be perfect. The final sentence of the video, "what we doing, Kai?" took 22 takes to perfect. The video was complete before Kai Cenat announced that Streamer University would be accepting applications.

This type of discipline is not only reserved for her application, which was one out of more than a million. When Laila was in sixth grade, her parents challenged her: stay on her school's honor roll for the whole school year, and they would reward her with a puppy. Laila took on the challenge. The puppy turned out to be a shih tzu named Cody, who is now 12 years old.

According to Lymon, the two would call weekly and talk about how to make TCC and "Meet a Panther" content better.

"I'm around a lot of people that do big things… It feels good knowing that I was able to help her get to [Streamer University]," said Lymon.

What's next?

Streamer University is only one part of Laila Leigh's plan. On her vision board, Leigh lives her dream life. Working at Complex. Interviewing celebrities. Maybe even a life as a TV host like her role model, Rocsi Diaz.

Laila Leigh lays her future in front of her. She prints out her goals, dreams and aspirations, pastes them onto a piece of cardboard and posts the vision board on a pink wall in her family's house. Then, she turns the vision into a reality.

Aftermarket Auto Parts Breathe New Life into Older Cars

By BlackPress
USA Newswire

From giving owners the opportunity to solve obsolescence issues related to discontinued parts to providing them with cost-effective repairs, these are some of the primary ways aftermarket auto parts breathe life into older or broken-down vehicles. They also offer upgrades that help boost vehicle reliability, comfort, and performance.

With those benefits, it's no wonder the aftermarket car parts industry is an economic powerhouse. A report from Mordor Intelligence shows that in the United States alone, the market's estimated size was $238.75 billion in 2026, a figure it projects to grow to $292.27 billion by 2031.

What Are Aftermarket Auto Parts?

Aftermarket automotive parts are accessory or replacement parts made by a third-party company, not the vehicle's or part's original equipment manufacturer (OEM). As they're often widely available and more affordable, many consumers use them as an alternative to dealer-carried OEM parts.

Indeed, automotive aftermarket industry newsletter AftermarketMatters.com reported on the recent survey, "Automotive Aftermarket Pulse 2025," which found that 57% of consumers now prefer independent aftermarket parts over OEM ones.

Are OEM Parts Still Better Than Aftermarket Auto Parts?

The primary difference between OEM and aftermarket performance parts or replacement components is that the former is the official recommendation of the company that made the vehicle. They're usually the same parts originally installed in the car when it first rolled off the assembly line.

Still, OEM parts are not always better than high-quality aftermarket automotive products. Some aftermarket parts can have the same quality as high-performance parts manufactured by the OEM.

You can even sometimes find aftermarket parts identical to the OEM ones, with the components coming off the same assembly line. In this case, the supplier sells the OEM part in an aftermarket box for much less than the one labeled "Genuine" OEM.

How Do Aftermarket Auto Parts Breathe New Life Into Older Cars?

Whether you wish to restore a car with parts that have already become obsolete or you just

want to extend the life of your current ride due to budgetary reasons, aftermarket auto parts can help. They can even aid in making cars more reliable, comfortable, and better-performing.

Solving Obsolescence Issues

Automakers usually stop manufacturing parts for discontinued models after several years, depending on warranty obligations and market demand. If you have an old car you want to fix or restore but can't due to obsolescence concerns, consider looking into aftermarket parts.

Aftermarket part makers often step in to bridge inventory gaps, even for discontinued models.

Providing Cost-Effective Repairs

Regardless of the car repairs you need, you'll most likely find the aftermarket auto body parts, engine components, or suspension pieces you require. Not only are they more widely available, but they're also typically cheaper than OEM parts.

As Diesel World Magazine points out, the price of OEM parts can be 50% to 100% higher than aftermarket ones.

With aftermarket parts being your ticket to more cost-effective repairs, you can use them to your advantage and breathe new life into your ride. With high-quality, properly installed aftermarket components, you can make your vehicle roadworthy again for less than what you'd otherwise pay if you went with all OEM replacement parts.

Offering Valuable Reliability, Comfort, and Performance Upgrades

If your car is a base or lower-level trim, it may have parts made of basic or lower-end materials (e.g., hard plastics or fewer grease fittings in suspension parts). Replacing these with aftermarket parts made of upgraded materials can help slow down wear and tear or fix known defects.

You can, for example, swap out plastic parts with metal components or get suspension parts with more grease fittings.

Many aftermarket part makers also make products designed to meet, even exceed, modern creature comforts and are compatible with older cars. You can fit a vintage car, for instance, with a modern, aftermarket infotainment system and even an upgraded air conditioning and heating unit.

Many aftermarket auto parts also offer performance upgrades, allowing car owners to change the dynamics of their older car completely.

Adding heavy-duty suspensions and upgrading to electronic fuel injection are two examples of popular enhancements. You can also install modern, energy-efficient LED headlights inside vintage housings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are There Any Disadvantages to Aftermarket Automotive Parts?

While aftermarket car parts have many notable advantages like cost-effectiveness and wide availability, they're not perfect and can present several drawbacks. One of these is incorrect fitment.

Since aftermarket parts offer a "universal" fit, they don't always have the same dimension tolerances as their OEM counterparts. Buying these ill-fitting components can lead to installation headaches or incorrect alignment, both of which can cause issues with handling and tire wear.

Inconsistent quality is another issue car owners should be aware of when buying aftermarket car parts. While many brands make products that exceed original specifications, the cheapest or lowest-budget options may sometimes cut corners.

Such parts can wear and tear much faster and fail early.

How Can You Ensure the Quality of the Aftermarket Car Parts You Buy?

Always do your due diligence when buying aftermarket car parts, which involves careful research of each of your prospective makers/suppliers. Look for third-party quality certifications, such as from the Certified Automotive Parts Association (CAPA).

CAPA is one of the leading certifying organizations within the aftermarket automotive parts industry. It provides testing to verify and ensure aftermarket parts are functionally equivalent to their OEM counterparts.

You should also consider sticking to reputable manufacturers known for their superb engineering. Highly reputable brands usually make hefty investments in their research and development processes, sometimes even manufacturing parts that they supply straight to automakers.

Don't forget to read verified reviews. They can give you a way to gauge real-world experiences regarding proper fit and part longevity.

Restore Your Car's Glory With Aftermarket Auto Parts

Properly installed, high-quality aftermarket auto parts can help make your ride roadworthy again by giving you access to more cost-effective replacement parts, even discontinued ones. They can even make your car better by providing reliability, comfort, and performance upgrades.

She Is Me — You Are Your First Love Story

By Sherilyn Smith
Black Press USA Wire

There is something beautiful about women who love deeply.

We are the women who answer late night phone calls, sit in hospital rooms, pray for our friends' children, celebrate others while quietly carrying our own burdens, and somehow find a way to pour from cups that have been empty for quite some time.

We love hard.

Sometimes too hard.

We become the safe place for everyone else while forgetting that we, too, need somewhere safe to land.

Emotional intelligence teaches us that loving others is a gift, but understanding ourselves is wisdom. It is having the ability to extend both our hearts and our heads to provide care, guidance, support, and compassion while also recognizing when we are neglecting ourselves in the process.

How many times have you encouraged a friend to rest while running yourself into exhaustion?

How many times have you reminded someone of their worth while questioning your own?

How many times have you shown patience, commitment, grace, and unconditional love to others but withheld those very same things from yourself?

She Is Me because every woman has been there.

We have all loved family members who did not fully understand us. We have stood beside friends through storms and remained loyal even when life became difficult. We have loved mates with every fiber of our being, often placing their needs before our own.

But somewhere along the way, many of us learned how to become everything for everybody and very little for ourselves.

The truth is this:

You deserve the same care that you freely give.

You deserve the same concern that you offer others.

You deserve the same commitment that you extend to everyone else.

And most importantly, you deserve your own constant love.

Loving yourself is not selfish. It is necessary.

It is setting healthy boundaries without guilt.

It is allowing yourself to rest.

It is forgiving yourself for mistakes.

It is choosing peace over performance.

It is looking in the mirror and saying, "I matter too."

Because if we are honest, some of us have spent years making sure everyone else was okay while silently breaking ourselves apart.

A healthy love for self teaches people how to love us. It reminds us that our value is not based on what we do for others but simply on who we are.

Before you can fully love your family, your friends, or your mate, you must first know how to love yourself.

Not the polished version.

Not the strong version.

Not the version that always has it together.

But the woman who cries in private, who is still healing, who sometimes gets tired, who needs reassurance, who longs to be chosen, too.

Love her.

Care for her.

Speak kindly to her.

Protect her peace.

Be patient with her growth.

Commit to her healing.

And never abandon her.

Because the relationship you have with yourself sets the tone for every other relationship in your life.

Dear Me, continue being kind. Continue loving deeply. Continue being a safe place for those you hold dear.

But do not forget to become that safe place for yourself.

You cannot continually pour into others while denying yourself water.

She Is Me because she finally understands that loving herself does not take away from the love she gives others…..it multiplies it.

And perhaps one of the greatest acts of emotional intelligence is realizing this simple truth:

Love yourself first.

Then love others from the overflow.

We Will Be Well.

By: Sherilyn Smith

Follow me on Instagram @SheIsMeOrg

Political Playback:

California Capitol News You Might Have Missed

By Bo Tefu
California Black Media

Asm. Lori Wilson (D-Suisun City)

Shutterstock

Love From the Legislature: Assemblymember Lori Wilson Turns 50 With Bipartisan Birthday Surprise

On July 17, Assemblymember Lori D. Wilson (D-Suisun City), chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee and a member of the California Legislative Black Caucus, turned 50.

To celebrate the occasion, Assemblymember Anamarie Ávila Farías (D-Martinez) and Stephanie Nguyen (D-Elk Grove) organized a birthday bash for Wilson at the Capitol and arranged a video recording with birthday best wishes from a range of her Legislative colleagues from both sides of the aisle and staffers.

"I hope you're feeling the love from the legislature, Lori, and I'm so honored to be able to serve with you and have you as my seatmate," said Ávila Farías in the video message. "You're an amazing human being and I feel so privileged to be able to celebrate a huge milestone as you turn 50. Happy birthday."

Assemblymember Corey Jackson (D-Moreno Valley), a member of the CLBC, said, "Happy Birthday, Lori. Thanks for what you stand for and all the work that you've done in the legislature."

"You are a rock star," said Assemblymember David J. Tangipa (R-Fresno). Happy, happy, birthday and have a great one."

"Hugest of happiest birthdays of all time dear Lori. You are such a ray of sunshine in the legislature, you are an adult in the room, you are a badass warrior, and we love you and appreciate you," said Assemblymember Buffy Hicks (D-Oakland).

"Wishing you a very happy 50th birthday, Lori. You are an amazing woman and there's so much more to come for you," said Assemblymember LaShae Sharp-Collins (D-San Diego), a member of the CLBC.

Assemblymember Sade Elhawaray, a member of the CLBC, said,

"Lori, we are so happy that you are the fearless queen that you are. Happy 50th. Enjoy. You deserve it."

"Happy birthday. I believe you're an amazing individual an amazing person and I love your housing policies so thank you, and again, happy birthday. Have some fun today," said Carl DeMaio (R-San Diego).

"There's a saying that when you become older you become wiser, but I want to say that you're already there," said Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom (D-Stockton).

Starting This Summer, California Car Buyers Can Get an Instant $3500 Off the Cost of Electric Vehicles

California residents purchasing their first zero-emission vehicle will soon be eligible for an instant rebate of up to $3,500 under a new state program aimed at making electric vehicles more affordable.

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 168 on July 16, creating the MyFirstEV program as part of California's 2026-27 state budget. The initiative dedicates $135.5 million in state funding for point-of-sale rebates, which participating automakers will match dollar for dollar. State officials said the combined investment will provide $270 million in savings for first-time electric vehicle buyers.

Beginning later this summer, eligible Californians can receive a $3,500 rebate on new zero-emission vehicles with a manufacturer's suggested retail price of up to $50,000. Buyers purchasing qualifying used electric vehicles priced at up to $25,000 can receive a $1,750 rebate. The rebate will be applied directly at participating dealerships, allowing buyers to receive the discount immediately instead of waiting for reimbursement.

"With our new instant rebate program for electric vehicles, we're making it easier for families to drive clean, breathe clean, and keep more money in their pockets," Newsom said in a statement.

The MyFirstEV program is part of a broader $600 million investment in California's clean transportation economy included in the state budget. The funding package also provides $150 million for the Community Air Protection Program, $19.8 million for the Clean Cars 4 All program for lower-income residents, $35 million for clean off-road equipment through the Air Quality Improvement Program, $135.5 million for the Clean Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project, and $130 million for the Carl Moyer Program to replace older heavy-duty engines with cleaner alternatives.

According to the governor's office, the transportation investments are funded through Cap-and-Invest revenue and smog-abatement fees while maintaining a balanced state budget.

California continues to expand its zero-emission transportation network. The state surpassed 2.5 million cumulative zero-emission vehicle sales earlier this year, exceeding its original goal of 1.5 million sales by 2025. Officials also reported that California has more than 200,000 public and shared electric vehicle charging plugs statewide, in addition to an estimated 800,000 home charging stations.

Gov. Newsom Signs New Affordable Housing Legislation

Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed new legislation aimed at expanding affordable housing, reducing construction costs and speeding up housing development across California as part of the state's 2026-27 budget.

Assembly Bill (AB) 179, signed July 17, modernizes California's affordable housing finance system by streamlining project approvals, expanding funding for housing programs and creating new financing tools for homeowners rebuilding after disasters. State officials said the measure is intended to help increase housing production while strengthening efforts to address the state's housing affordability and homelessness challenges.

The legislation introduces a new "One-Stop-Shop" financing system designed to reduce duplicative reviews and accelerate affordable housing projects. According to the governor's office, the reforms are expected to lower construction costs by an estimated $60,000 to $70,000 per affordable housing unit, allowing existing state investments to finance more homes.

"When I took office in 2019, my goal was clear: to reverse decades of inaction on housing and homelessness and ensure there was enough housing and care for people to leave the streets," Newsom said in a statement. "I'm grateful for the Legislature's partnership, as together we add to this proven foundation with new laws that cut red tape, expand financing opportunities, and help communities build housing faster."

The measure also establishes a $100 million Disaster Rebuilding Fund to help homeowners repair or reconstruct homes damaged by disasters. In addition, the budget includes $900 million for another round of Housing, Homelessness Assistance and Prevention grants while adding new accountability requirements for certain cities and counties receiving state funding.

To support affordable housing development, the budget provides $500 million in enhanced state low-income housing tax credits and $200 million for the Multifamily Housing Program to build and preserve affordable rental housing for low-income Californians.

According to the governor's office, California has made progress in increasing housing production since 2019. Annual residential construction has risen by 59%, from about 70,000 homes in 2018 to approximately 111,000 in 2024. The administration also reported that more than 682,000 homes have been built statewide during that period and that the average time from development application to entitlement has dropped from 160 days to 68 days.

State officials also highlighted recent declines in homelessness, including what they described as the state's largest reduction in unsheltered homelessness in 16 years.

From 15% to 60% of Drivers: California Expands Digital License Program

California is significantly expanding access to mobile driver's licenses after Gov. Gavin Newsom signed legislation increasing participation in the state's digital identification program while modernizing Department of Motor Vehicles operations.

Senate Bill 169 raises the participation cap for California's Mobile Driver License Pilot Program from 15% to 60% of the state's licensed drivers, allowing millions more residents to obtain a secure digital driver's license on their smartphones. The measure, signed as part of the 2026-27 state budget, also streamlines DMV operations by reducing paperwork, updating customer communications and cutting administrative costs.

The expanded mobile driver's license program is one of several changes included in the legislation. The bill eliminates certain mailed notices, ends the requirement to print physical driver's handbooks and modernizes how the DMV communicates with customers about license renewals. State officials said the changes are intended to improve efficiency while making DMV services more accessible.

California Transportation Secretary Toks Omishakin said the legislation reflects the state's continued investment in improving public services.

"California continues to lead the way by making government services more accessible and efficient," said Omishakin.

The legislation also extends relief for transit operators and includes provisions to help prepare California's highway system for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

According to the governor's office, the DMV has expanded digital services since Newsom launched the DMV Reinvention Strike Team in 2019. More than 90% of DMV transactions are now available online, reducing transaction times by two-thirds. State officials estimate the agency's shift to digital services could eliminate approximately 2.4 million office visits annually.

The mobile driver's license program launched in August 2023, and more than 3.5 million Californians have already applied for a digital ID. The administration said the program includes privacy and security protections while giving residents a convenient way to carry and present identification.

State officials said the legislation continues California's effort to modernize government services by expanding secure digital tools and improving access to DMV services statewide.

One Less Spark: California Launches Wildfire Prevention Awareness Campaign

California has launched a statewide public awareness campaign urging residents to take steps to prevent human-caused wildfires as hotter temperatures and drier conditions increase fire danger across the state.

Governor Gavin Newsom announced the 2026 'One Less Spark' campaign July 15, saying the initiative is designed to educate Californians about wildfire prevention through safe vehicle operation, equipment use and outdoor activities. The campaign comes as California enters a period of elevated wildfire risk and builds on the state's broader wildfire preparedness efforts.

State officials estimate that human activity causes about 95% of wildfires in California. The campaign includes paid advertising on digital platforms, radio stations and billboards in State Responsibility Areas throughout Northern and Southern California. CAL FIRE has also developed a public toolkit with educational materials and social media resources that local governments, fire departments and community organizations can use to promote wildfire prevention.

"One less spark means one less wildfire, and every Californian can play a role in preventing them," said Newsom. "We're asking all residents to take prevention steps seriously. Combined with the strongest wildfire readiness and response system in the country, this is how we keep our communities safe."

CAL FIRE Director and Fire Chief Joe Tyler said reducing the number of human-caused fires requires public awareness and individual responsibility.

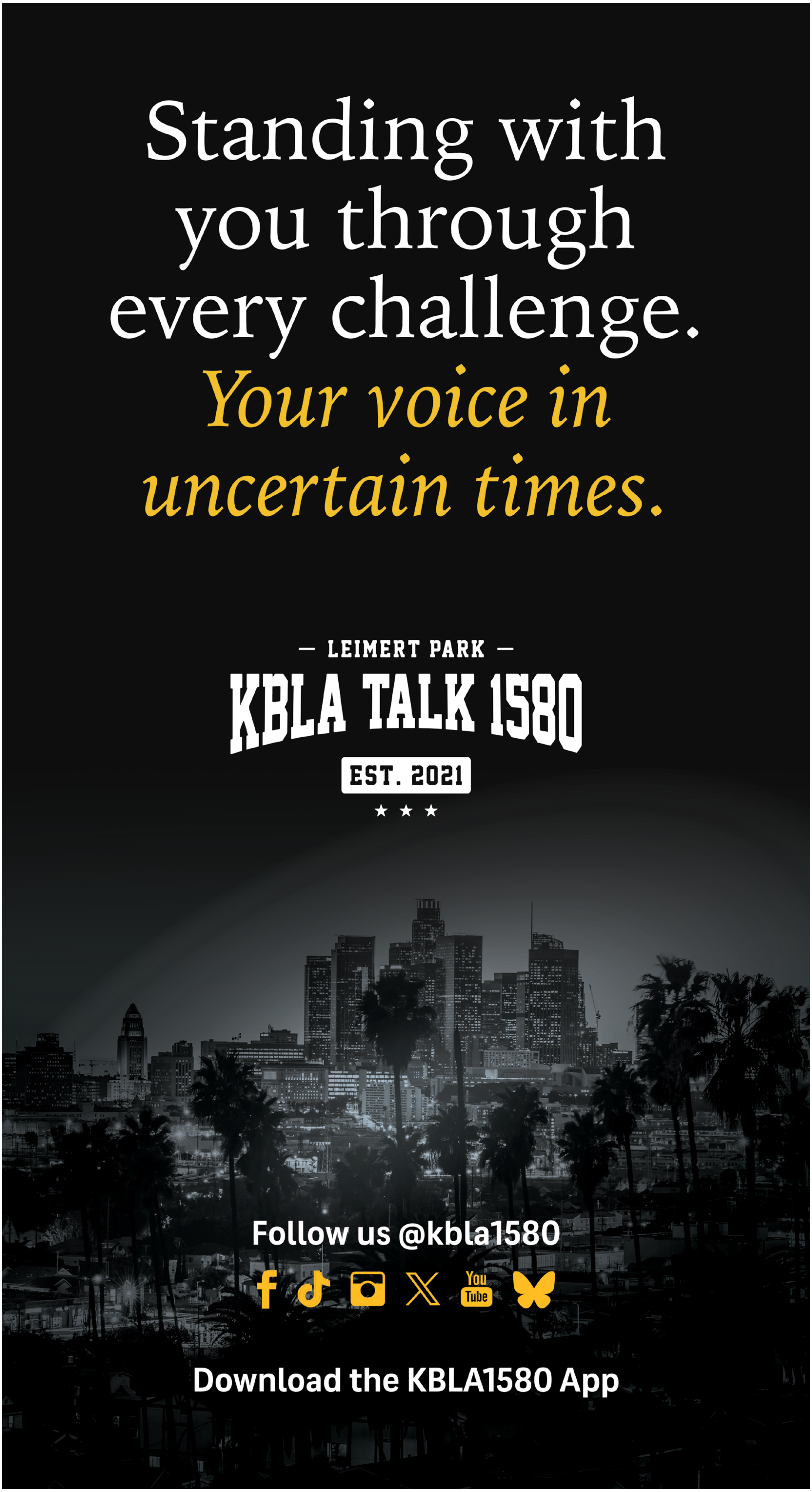
"CAL FIRE is committed to helping Californians understand that one less spark means one less wildfire," said Tyler. "As a state, we must work together to reduce the number of wildfires started each year by changing behaviors, increasing awareness, and taking simple actions that prevent ignitions."

The campaign encourages residents to mow lawns before 10 a.m., secure trailer chains to prevent sparks, obtain permits before burning debris, avoid parking vehicles on dry grass and use power tools carefully near dry vegetation.

According to the governor's office, California has accelerated more than 400 wildfire prevention projects covering nearly 100,000 acres following an emergency proclamation on wildfire-prone forests. The state has also made more than $100 million available this year for wildfire prevention grants, including funding for community-led projects and forest resilience efforts.

State officials said CAL FIRE's workforce has grown from 5,829 positions in 2019 to more than 11,400 positions. The agency has also expanded its use of technology, including AI-powered wildfire detection systems, drones, satellite monitoring and advanced fire mapping tools to improve emergency response.

Local


Standing with you through every challenge.
Your voice in uncertain times.
— LEIMERT PARK —
KBLA TALK 1580
EST. 2021
Follow us @kbla1580
You Tube
Download the KBLA1580 App

Shutterstock

Inglewood's School District Return to Local Control Offers Lessons for California

By Tanu T. Henry
California Black Media

Nearly 14 years after California intervened in the Inglewood Unified School District's (IUSD) fiscal crisis, the district is closer than ever to regaining full local control. That achievement deserves recognition. It also gives California an opportunity to evaluate what its longest-running school receivership can teach about helping school districts recover from fiscal crisis.

In July, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) announced that Inglewood Unified had met all 153 standards established by the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT). If the district maintains that progress through one more annual review, authority will return to the locally elected school board in 2027, although a state trustee will retain veto authority over certain board actions until the emergency state loan is repaid.

Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools Debra Duardo said the achievement is "about hope," "resilience" and "believing in what's possible," while reminding the community that one year of monitoring remains.

Board President Carliss McGhee, PhD, who has served throughout the receivership, reflected on the district's progress.

"I've been on this board for the last 14 years. It's been 14 years, nine state and county administrators. It's been a journey, but I want to thank the families, I want to thank our students, and I really want to thank our team at IUSD," McGhee said. She also thanked "the community that held strong" and "continued to do the work."

For Inglewood's Black community, the announcement marks the culmination of years of advocacy. Organizations, including the Education Equity Coalition and the Inglewood Area Ministers Association, fought to restore local control after state-appointed administrators eliminated programs such as Early Childhood Development and Adult Education.

The district entered receivership in 2012 after a cash-flow crisis developed during the Great Recession. Staffing levels had been miscalculated before the economic downturn, and as revenues declined the district drew down its reserves to continue operating. An audit also identified financial reporting problems, including overstated attendance, understated salary costs and deficit spending. Those factors prompted the Legislature to authorize emergency financing through Senate Bill (SB) 533 authored by former State Senator Rod Wright (D – Inglewood). Although the state authorized a loan up to $55 million, Inglewood ultimately borrowed $29 million. In 2018, Assembly Bill (AB)1840 transferred day-to-day oversight from the California Department of Education to LACOE while local governance remained under county supervision.

County Administrator Dr. James Morris said the district's progress extends beyond finances. "It isn't just a finance story," Morris said. "It's a story that's measured by what happens in classrooms. This is an achievement that was built by people, not just spreadsheets."

Those accomplishments are significant. They also raise an important policy issue.

Although Inglewood met every FCMAT standard, the agency also found that previously approved budget reductions had not been fully implemented, contributing to continued deficit spending and unnecessary use of reserves. Helping a district navigate a fiscal crisis is only the first step. The larger test is whether it returns to local control with a financial foundation strong enough to avoid repeating the same patterns that led to state intervention.

That challenge extends beyond Inglewood.

The Los Angeles Unified School District recently received a "Lack of Going Concern" notice from LACOE warning it could face cash-flow problems by late 2027. Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) projected deficit has grown sharply. Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)continue addressing structural budget challenges, while the state's May 2026 interim financial reports identified 33 districts with negative or qualified financial certifications.

Many of those districts educate large numbers of Black students. Their financial condition affects classroom instruction, student services, school facilities and educational opportunities for communities that have historically faced unequal educational outcomes.

California has developed a process for helping districts through fiscal crisis. Inglewood demonstrates that state and county oversight can restore financial controls, improve governance and put a district on the path back to local control. What remains less certain is whether the current intervention model consistently leaves districts with the long-term financial stability needed to avoid repeating the same problems.

That challenge becomes even more important as California implements a new education governance structure that gives the Education Commissioner responsibility for many of the California Department of Education's administrative and fiscal functions while county offices continue their oversight responsibilities under AB 1840.

Inglewood's return to local control marks an important achievement. It reflects the commitment of educators, employees, students, parents, community leaders and elected board members who refused to give up on their schools.

California's responsibility does not end when local control returns. Before another district requires state intervention, lawmakers, county education leaders and the new Education Commissioner should examine what Inglewood's experience teaches about building not only fiscal stability, but lasting financial sustainability.

Notice of Class Action Settlement
Authorized by the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York

— Notice of Class Action Settlement —

Si desea leer este aviso en español, llámenos o visite nuestro sitio web.

TO: All merchants in the U.S. who accepted Visa or Mastercard credit or debit cards at any time since December 18, 2020.

This notice ("Notice") is authorized by the Court to inform you about an agreement to settle the equitable relief claims in a class action lawsuit, called *In re Payment Card Interchange Fee and Merchant Discount Antitrust Litigation*, No. 05-md-01720 (BMC)(JAM)(E.D.N.Y.). The lawsuit claims that Visa and Mastercard, separately, and together with certain banks, violated antitrust laws and caused merchants to pay excessive fees for accepting Visa and Mastercard credit and debit cards, including by adopting interchange rules and rates, and other network rules, which the lawsuit has claimed constituted unlawful price fixing, unreasonable restraints of trade, and monopolization.

The defendants say they did nothing wrong. They maintain that their business practices are legal, justified, and the result of independent competition, and have benefitted both merchants and consumers. The Court has not decided who is right because the parties agreed to a settlement, which was preliminarily approved by the Court on June 9, 2026.

A. What Merchants Will Get from the Settlement

During the lawsuit, the Court previously certified an Equitable Relief Class under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(b)(2) and has now preliminarily approved a settlement of the Class claims (the "Rule 23(b)(2) Class Settlement" or "Settlement"). Under the Settlement, Visa and Mastercard have agreed to substantive changes to the Visa and Mastercard rules applicable to merchants who accept their cards as a form of payment.

The Class includes all persons, businesses, and entities that accept any Visa-Branded Cards and/or Mastercard-Branded Cards in the United States at any time during the period between December 18, 2020 and the date of preliminary settlement approval, or June 9, 2026. The Court has set **November 16, 2026** as the date for a final approval and fairness hearing (the "Fairness Hearing") in connection with the Settlement, after members of the Class have had the opportunity to evaluate the Settlement and exercise their rights, as set forth in the Notice. Further information regarding the Settlement and the Fairness Hearing will be posted on www.InterchangeEquitableReliefSettlement.com.

Under the Rule 23(b)(2) Class Settlement, Mastercard and Visa will modify certain rules to preserve, establish, or expand the circumstances in which merchants can, among other things, do the following:

- Decline acceptance of Visa- or Mastercard-Branded Commercial Credit Cards and/or Premium Consumer Credit Cards.
- Surcharge customers a fee for the use of any Visa or Mastercard-Branded Credit Cards, including based on the type of card used (*e.g.*, a different surcharge for rewards and non-rewards cards).
- Offer discounts to customers who do not pay with Visa or Mastercard-Branded Credit Cards, or based on the financial institution that issued the Visa or Mastercard-Branded Credit Card.
- Decline acceptance of Visa or Mastercard-Branded Cards at all outlets that operate under the same trade name or banner, even if that merchant accepts those same cards at outlets that operate under a different trade name or banner.
- Engage in Pilot Programs whereby they accept Visa or Mastercard-Branded Credit Cards at some but not all outlets operating under the same trade name or banner for a limited duration or test out various acceptance, surcharging and discounting options at some but not all outlets operating under the same trade name or banner, including not accepting Commercial or Premium Consumer Credit Cards, for a limited duration.
- Accept some digital wallets at brick-and-mortar locations but decline others and enable some digital wallets for on-line transactions but not enable others, and "steer" among the cards within a digital wallet under the same rules that govern steering among traditional cards.
- Receive the benefit of credit interchange rate reductions: Visa and Mastercard will reduce published and negotiated Credit Card interchange rates for U.S. merchants.
- Receive the benefit of Credit Card interchange rate caps: The Settlement Agreement reduces and caps "Standard" Consumer Credit Card rates at a specified level and otherwise caps Credit Card interchange rates, such that neither Visa nor Mastercard will increase any of its published Credit Card interchange rates above the rates effective as of March 31, 2025 and each will reduce its network-wide average Credit Card interchange rate to or below the specified level.
- Form Merchant Buying Groups that meet certain criteria to negotiate with Visa and Mastercard.
- Receive access to a Merchant Education Program, established and administered under the Settlement Agreement, to help understand and maximize the benefits of the rule changes, including how to effectively "steer" in States that restrict surcharging.

B. Monetary Aspects of the Rule 23(b)(2) Class Settlement

There is no monetary payment to members of the Class in this Settlement. This Rule 23(b)***(2)*** Class Settlement concerns only the Equitable Relief Claims set forth in the lawsuit. Claims for monetary damages arising out of the defendants' alleged antitrust violations are the subject of a separate settlement for the Rule 23(b)***(3)*** Class. For information concerning the separate Rule 23(b)(3) Cash Settlement Class, please visit the website: *www.PaymentCardSettlement.com*.

The Settlement does provide for Visa and Mastercard to make certain payments into the Rule 23(b)(2) Class Settlement Escrow Account, which money will be used to pay:

- The cost of settlement administration and notice, as approved by the Court,
- The cost of Merchant Education Program expenses, as approved by the Court,
- The cost of an Independent Auditor who will ensure that Visa and Mastercard comply with the credit card interchange-rate reduction commitments, and
- Attorneys' fees and expenses, including any named Class Representative service awards, as approved by the Court.

The money in this fund will be distributed only if the Court grants final approval of the Settlement, and the money for attorneys' fees and expenses, and service awards to Class Representatives, will be distributed only if the Settlement has become final and all appeals are exhausted, and the Court approves the application for attorneys' fees and expenses, and Class Representatives' service awards.

Attorneys' fees and expenses, and service awards to the Class Representatives: For work done through final approval of the Settlement by the Court, as well as any work they will be required to do in the future, Class Counsel will ask the Court for attorneys' fees and reimbursement of reasonable and necessary litigation expenses, and any service awards to the named Class Representatives that the Court may award, in an amount not to exceed $206,000,000. The Settlement Agreement requires Visa and Mastercard to pay these fees and expenses separately from the other Settlement financial obligations and they will not reduce any other benefits of the Settlement; members of the Class will not be required to pay any amount toward these fees and expenses.

C. Legal Rights and Options

Merchants who are included in this lawsuit have the legal right to **Object to the Settlement.** The deadline to object is: **September 14, 2026**. To learn how to object, visit: www.InterchangeEquitableReliefSettlement.com or call toll-free: 877-318-7713.

Note: **You cannot elect to be excluded from the Rule 23(b)(2) Class Settlement.**

For more information about these rights and options, visit: www.InterchangeEquitableReliefSettlement.com or call toll-free: 877-318-7713.

D. If the Court Grants Final Approval of the Settlement

If the Court grants final approval to the Settlement, members of the Rule 23(b)(2) Class will be bound by the terms of the Settlement and will release all claims against all released parties listed in the Settlement Agreement. The Settlement will resolve and release any claims by payment card acceptors against Visa, Mastercard and other defendants that were or could have been alleged in the lawsuit, including any claims based on interchange or other fees, no-surcharge rules, no-discounting rules, honor-all-cards rules, and any other network rules. The Settlement will also resolve any payment card acceptor claims based upon the future effect of any Visa or Mastercard rules as they were or are in place on December 18, 2020 and up to the Settlement Final Date (as defined in the Settlement Agreement), the modified rules provided for in the Settlement, or any other rules substantially similar to those rules. The release will not bar claims involving certain specified standard commercial disputes arising in the ordinary course of business.

For more information on the release, see the Superseding and Amended Rule 23(b)(2) Class Settlement Agreement at: www.InterchangeEquitableReliefSettlement.com.

E. The Court Hearing About This Settlement

On **November 16, 2026 at 11:00 am ET**, the Court will hold a hearing to decide whether to approve the proposed Settlement, Class Counsel's request for attorneys' fees and expenses, and service awards for the named Class Representatives. The hearing will take place at:

United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York
U.S. District Judge Brian M. Cogan
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, NY 11201

You do not have to attend the Court hearing or hire an attorney, though you may do either at your own expense. The Court appointed the law firms of Hilliard Shadowen LLP; Grant & Eisenhofer P.A.; Freed Kanner London & Millen LLC; and Nussbaum Law Group, P.C. to represent the Class ("Class Counsel").

F. Questions?

For more information about this case (*In re Payment Card Interchange Fee and Merchant Discount Antitrust Litigation*, MDL 1720), you may:

Call toll-free: 877-318-7713
Visit: www.InterchangeEquitableReliefSettlement.com
Write to the Class Administrator: Interchange B2 Class Administrator, P.O. Box 6340, Portland, OR 97228-6340
or Email the Class Administrator: info@InterchangeEquitableReliefSettlement.com

Sports


Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto (18) pitches against the New York Yankees during the second inning at Yankee StadiumMandatory Credit: Brad Penner-Imagn Images | Brad Penner-Imagn Images

Dodgers Take Two From Yankees in Bronx

By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

The Los Angeles Dodgers resumed play after the All-Star break by taking the first two games of their series against the New York Yankees in the Bronx, highlighted by clutch hitting and dominant pitching.

The Dodgers opened the series with a dramatic 2-1 victory as Max Muncy blasted a two-run home run in the seventh inning off Yankees ace Gerrit Cole.

Making their first appearance at Yankee Stadium since defeating New York in the 2024 World Series, the Dodgers found themselves trailing until Mookie Betts drew Cole's first walk of the game to open the seventh inning.

With Cole making his 103rd and final pitch of the afternoon, Muncy battled back from an 0-2 count before launching a hanging slider into the second deck in right field. The 416-foot blast, his 18th home run of the season, gave Los Angeles a 2-1 lead.

Cole (3-5) struck out eight over seven innings before surrendering the decisive home run. Yankees manager Aaron Boone visited the mound but elected to leave the former Cy Young Award winner in the game.

Dodgers closer Tanner Scott retired the side in order in the ninth inning to earn his 14th save in 16 opportunities.

Rookie right-hander Roki Sasaki turned in one of his sharper outings of the season, allowing one unearned run on five hits over 5 2/3 innings. Sasaki reached 100 mph with 21 pitches, a significant increase after throwing just 12 pitches at that velocity entering the game. Since May 23, he is 0-2 with a 5.05 ERA in eight starts.

Yamamoto Goes the Distance

The Dodgers completed the series victory Sunday behind a masterful performance from Yoshinobu Yamamoto, who threw a complete game in an 8-2 win over the Yankees.

Yamamoto retired 21 of the first 23 batters he faced through seven innings. The only blemishes during that stretch were a fourth-inning solo home run by Trent Grisham and a seventh-inning leadoff double by Ben Rice, who was left stranded.

He allowed another run in the eighth after a sun-aided double eluded center fielder Andy Pages.

The Dodgers backed Yamamoto with timely offense. Shohei Ohtani delivered an RBI double and Freddie Freeman added a run-scoring single during a three-run third inning. In the fifth, Tommy Edman was hit by a pitch before Pages followed with an RBI double that chased Yankees starter Cam Schlittler from the game.

Los Angeles broke the contest open with five runs against reliever Jake Bird in the eighth inning. Edman capped the rally with a two-run double. Following his two-hit performance, Edman is batting .351 with a .429 on-base percentage and a .486 slugging percentage, along with a 157 wRC+, in 24 games since returning from the injured list.

At press time, the Dodgers owned a 64-38 record and held an 11½-game lead over the Arizona Diamondbacks in the National League West.

Rams Training Camp to Feature Community Outreach, Youth Programs

By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

The Los Angeles Rams will once again combine football with community service as the team hosts its 2026 Training Camp, presented by CommunityAmerica Credit Union, at Loyola Marymount University for the third consecutive year.

Beyond preparing for the upcoming NFL season, the Rams will use training camp to highlight a series of community initiatives focused on youth development, education, mentorship and social impact.

Youth Football Takes Center Stage

Training camp opens Sunday, July 26, with Dedicated Youth Football Day, welcoming nearly 2,000 young athletes from across Southern California for football instruction, competition and entertainment.

Participants ranging from elementary through high school will represent communities throughout South Bay, South Los Angeles, Ventura County, the West Valley, the Inland Empire, the San Fernando Valley and Orange County.

The day will feature football skills and drills, flag football tournaments, fan tunnel experiences, autograph sessions, giveaways, photo opportunities and interactive fan zone activities.

Rams quarterback and reigning NFL Most Valuable Player Matthew Stafford will also present a $10,000 equipment grant to the Compton Dominguez High School boys football program. The donation will help purchase uniforms, practice jerseys, blocking sleds, protective equipment, film technology and other essential gear for the program, which emphasizes leadership, discipline and teamwork for student-athletes.

Fans attending the event will also have an opportunity to register for the Rams Football Academy, the team's youth fan club designed to connect the next generation of Rams supporters with players and team activities.

LA28 Community Ticket Program

On Monday, July 27, following practice, the Rams and LA28 will announce the first nonprofit organizations selected to receive complimentary tickets through the community ticket program funded by the Rams' $5 million donation announced last year.

The unveiling will take place during a post-practice press conference at training camp. The announcement remains under embargo until 6:30 p.m. PT on July 27.

Rams Blitz Promotes Inclusion

Also on July 27, the Rams will continue their Rams Blitz initiative for the ninth consecutive season in partnership with Project Blue.

The leadership program brings together high school football players from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds to promote inclusion, leadership and respect through sports.

This year's program will include student-athletes from South Gate High School and Birmingham High School, featuring both boys tackle football and girls flag football teams. Participants will attend one of the program's five sessions at training camp, where they will also observe the Rams' practice.

Mentoring the Next Generation

On Saturday, Aug. 1, the Rams will host another session of their Pathways to Success Mentorship Program, now entering its sixth year.

Approximately 30 high school students will participate alongside more than 40 Rams front office staff members during a development session focused on career exploration and personal growth.

Since launching the program in 2021, the Rams have provided mentorship opportunities designed to introduce students to careers in the sports industry. The program includes workshops on goal setting, interview preparation, financial literacy, technology, personal branding and professional development, along with job-shadowing opportunities during Rams home games at SoFi Stadium.

Coaches Learn Alongside the Pros

The Rams also will continue their High School Coaches Shadow Program for a fifth season.

The initiative allows 40 high school football coaches to observe Rams practices and coaching methods throughout the seven public training camp sessions. For the second consecutive year, the program includes both boys tackle football and girls flag football coaches.

Five coaches will be selected to participate during each open practice, giving them an opportunity to study practice organization, player development techniques and leadership strategies from the Rams coaching staff.

Through these initiatives, the Rams continue to use training camp as more than a preseason football event, creating opportunities that benefit young athletes, students, coaches and communities throughout Southern California.

104-Year-Old Mary Louise Reeves and the Fight for Black Education in Los Angeles

By Marion Apio
Contributing Writer | California Local News Fellow

By the time Mary Louise Reeves stepped off the train into Los Angeles in 1942, she had already accomplished what society told Black girls from Marshall, Texas, was impossible. She was just 20 years old, possessed a college degree from Bishop College that she earned at 19, and carried the quiet, unshakeable confidence of someone who had already managed classrooms of students in the Jim Crow South—some of whom were older than she was. She did not come to California to witness history. She came to organize it.

On June 8, 2026, Reeves celebrated her 104th birthday. Looking at Reeves through a lens of mere survival misses the entire essence of her lived experiences, contributions, and legacy. For Black and Brown Angelenos, Reeves is a living blueprint of institutional resistance.

She stands as one of the last surviving architects of the city's modern labor movement, a woman who put her livelihood on the line to organize Los Angeles teachers long before the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) had a dime of power or a shred of political leverage.

To understand Reeves' impact is to understand the grit required of Black educators in the mid-20th century. When she entered the Los Angeles Unified School District, the city was in the thick of the Second Great Migration. Tens of thousands of Black families were pouring into neighborhoods like South Central and Watts, escaping the overt terror of the South only to confront the structural racism of the West.

The reality of mid-century Los Angeles was a masterclass in spatial discrimination. LAUSD schools were rapidly segregated through redlining and predatory district boundaries that intentionally underfunded, overcrowded, and stripped classrooms serving Black and Brown children of baseline resources. For Black teachers like Reeves, the classroom was not just a workplace; it was a front line for the dignity of the next generation.

Courtesy photo from: Our Authors Study Club

Yet, Black educators faced a double bind. They were marginalized within the school system, yet they lacked a unified voice to fight back. The concept of a powerful, racially integrated teachers' union was a distant dream.

"In those early days, the union had neither money nor power, but Mary Louise stood at the forefront anyway," says Lura Daniels-Ball, President of the Our Authors Study Club. "She understood that lasting change requires courage, commitment, and a willingness to serve others."

Reeves became one of the foundational organizers who quietly did the grunt work—the living-room meetings, the whispered conversations in hallways, the building of solidarity across racial lines—that eventually birthed the UTLA. She understood that a union wasn't just about higher pay; it was about forcing an institution to respect the people teaching Black and Brown children.

Her activism was structural rather than performative. She understood that changing a city required occupying the very spaces that had shut her community out. When Tom Bradley broke barriers in 1973 as Los Angeles' first African American mayor—shifting the political tectonic plates of a city notorious for its hostile police force and deeply entrenched white political establishment—Reeves didn't just celebrate from the sidelines. She walked into City Hall, put on the iconic "Yellow Jacket" of a city ambassador, and stayed for more than forty years.

During those four decades, through multiple mayoral administrations, Reeves served as both a literal and figurative gatekeeper. When everyday citizens—particularly Black and Brown residents who had long viewed City Hall with justified suspicion—walked into the halls of local government, the first face they saw was a sharp, dignified Black woman who had lived through the Great Depression and Jim Crow. She made the center of civic power feel like it belonged to the people.

Perhaps Reeves' most urgent legacy for the current generation lies in what she actively saved. Long before today's political culture wars sought to ban books, criminalize diversity initiatives, and scrub Black history from American classrooms, Reeves was quietly weaponizing the narrative. As a decades-long pillar of the Our Authors Study Club—the historic Los Angeles branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)—Reeves aligned herself directly with the legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the "Father of Black History."

Preserving Black literature and history wasn't an academic hobby or a seasonal celebration for Reeves. It was armor. She understood that an accurate memory of the past is the ultimate defense against institutional oppression in the present. If a system can make you forget who you are, it can make you accept things as they are.

Today, public education remains an ideological and economic war zone. LAUSD is a vastly different district than the one Reeves entered; according to current 2025–2026 district enrollment data, Black students now make up just 7.0% of the student body, navigating an underfunded system where 82% of all students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The battles have shifted but intensified: community organizers are currently fighting federal challenges to protect LAUSD's $50 million Black Student Achievement Plan (BSAP), while educators march on picket lines for housing justice and livable wages.

The young activists leading these charges might not know her name, but they are speaking in a dialect that Mary Louise Reeves invented. She survived the economic devastation of the 1930s, the violent resistance to civil rights, the shifting landscapes of a changing Los Angeles, and the dawn of the digital age. Through a 30-year teaching career, the raising of three daughters, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren, her resolve never fractured. At 104, Mary Louise Reeves remains the ultimate proof that the floor did not fall out from under Black Los Angeles because women like her stood underneath it, holding it up.

The Los Angeles Parmelettes Drumline (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

Everybody Loved the 2026 FIFA World Cup

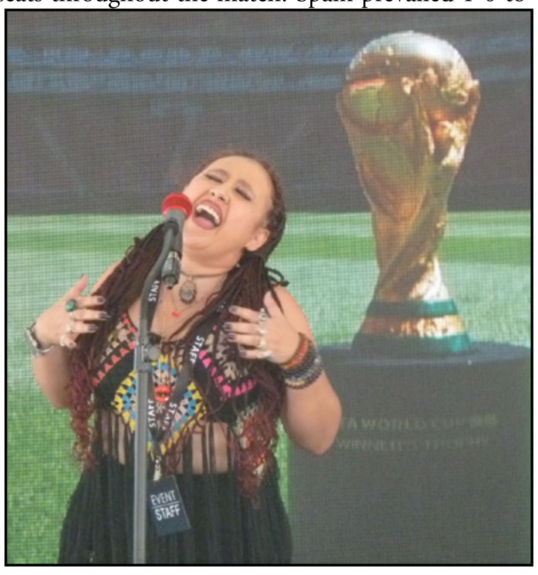
By Ricky Richardson
Contributing Writer

Hawthorne, CA- The global soccer community came together for the championship match between Spain and Argentina.

Soccer Game Activation Station (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

L2Live Transit-First Fan Zone in partnership with King Cali of FMWC Compton took place on Sunday, July 19, 2026, from 11:00 am-4:00 pm, at the Crenshaw Park & Ride/Metro Station. The address for the Park & Ride/Metro Station was listed as 3189 W. 120th Street, Hawthorne, CA. 90250.

Crenshaw Park & Ride/Metro Station was LIT! A lively crowd was split between rooting for Spain or Argentina. The championship match was nail-biting and intense, with fans on the edge of their seats throughout the match. Spain prevailed 1-0 to become the 2026 FIFA World Cup champions.



Lucyanna (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

This free, family-friendly Fan Zone was enjoyed by residents and visitors. A good time was had by all as they watched the match on a large-screen TV, experiencing the excitement of the largest summer sport.

Soccer fans strolled through the Autism Resource Village during breaks in the match. This event celebrated Autism Awareness through soccer, community, and inclusion.

The L2Live Transit First Fan Zone featured interactive sports games, community activations, giveaways, food vendors and more.

Daisy La Rue (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

The festivities cranked up a notch after the match with a stellar lineup of entertainment. Lucyanna performed a captivating and crowd-pleasing set. Her vocal range and styling were on full display as she performed "Give Me One More Reason" and "Hotel California," accompanied by Brian on guitar. She continued with an upbeat Cumbia entitled "Escándolo," and closed with "Show Me, Love."

The Los Angeles Parmelettes Drumline revved up the crowd with a high-octane performance to the delight of all in attendance. This popular, talented drumline, under the direction of Lakeisha Mack, has performed at various events around town. The students in the drumline obtain self-discipline, teamwork, and leadership.

The crowd and I were groovin' and vibing with Daisy La Rue as she performed an original track entitled "Energy."

A surefire cure for the 2026 FIFA World Cup blues is to start making plans to attend the next World Cup in four more years. It's never too early.

The 2030 FIFA World Cup will be hosted by three nations: Morocco, Portugal and Spain. The 2030 FIFA World Cup will take place from June 8, 2030, to July 21, 2030. The 44-day stretch will make it the longest World Cup ever, topping the 39 days in 2026. This is due to the multi-continental travel required for the 100-year anniversary celebrations.

The next FIFA World Cup will mark the tournament's 100th anniversary. To celebrate the centenary edition of the tournament, FIFA awarded three separate opening matches to Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay as a nod to the first-ever FIFA World Cup in 1930.