



Black Americans Have Doubts About the U.S. Food System

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'Soul Train Awards' are Back BET Ceremony Returns to Celebrate R&B and Soul Legacy

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Street Medicine Brings Care to Unhoused Angelenos — But Housing Remains the Missing Prescription

Mobile street medicine teams treat the immediate health needs of the unhoused, but barriers to care, trauma, stigma and housing costs can leave the underlying causes of homelessness unresolved.

Marion Apio reported this story while participating in the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism's 2026 California Health Equity Fellowship.

By Marion Apio

Contributing Writer/California Local News Fellow

By the time a street medicine team met Alfred Flores last June along the Los Angeles River, two spider bites on his back had swollen with infection, untreated for three days.

Divorced a year ago, the 53-year-old had been living along the riverbank for three years without a car or phone, making it difficult to connect with housing programs or reach a doctor as the infected wounds worsened with redness, heat, pus and pain.

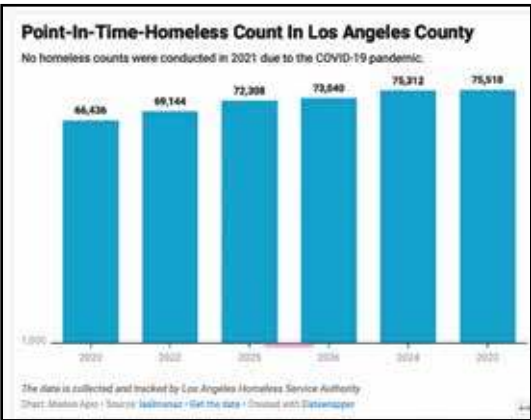
On her weekly outreach along the L.A. River, Bukola Olusanya—a nurse practitioner and a street medicine provider with St. John's Community Health—examined Flores on-site and wrote a prescription for antibiotics.

"My wound is infected," Flores said in Spanish through an interpreter. "It is normal to be bitten by a spider in this area but I need help finding a home."

Flores's experience highlights the steep barriers to receiving housing support and providing medical care among people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles. Many cannot access care because



Bukola Olusanya, a nurse practitioner, provides street-level medical care to an unhoused patient at the L.A. River. (Photo by Marion Apio)



of physical or mental health conditions, or can't connect to housing programs because they often lack a phone.

Traditional health care systems often require patients to have transportation, identification, a safe place to store medications and the ability to make follow-up appointments — barriers that can be difficult to overcome for people surviving on the streets.

Street medicine helps people whatever their circumstances

Street medicine challenges the traditional notion that health care must begin inside a medical facility, extending services to those in non-traditional settings and in urgent need.

These teams shift the delivery model by bringing health care directly to patients on the streets, rather than waiting for them to seek treatment in hospitals or clinics. They provide critical care that can stabilize health conditions while helping patients connect with benefits, housing and other services.

Jessica Sanchez, director of the Street Medicine team at St. John's Community Health, said the program receives about \$500,000 annually from L.A. Care Health Plan, \$365,000 from the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration and \$100,000 from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. The team also bills Medi-Cal for eligible medical services, though not all patients are insured or eligible for reimbursement.

Sanchez said the program's grants typically run for three to five years, providing funding stability.



Tanny and Benwell Hernandez receive medication from the street medicine team at their temporary shelter. (Photo by Marion Apio)

The "street medicine initiative is not currently facing a funding threat," she said.

Since 2023, St. John's Community Health—a network of non-profit, federally qualified health centers—has deployed a multidisciplinary street medicine unit in Los Angeles. The mobile vans are staffed by a nurse practitioner, a medical assistant, a health benefits counselor, a community health worker, a behavioral health clinician, a substance abuse counselor and a driver.

The teams provide primary care, behavioral health, and benefits enrollment on the streets, reducing administrative hurdles to head off medical emergencies and reach unsheltered patients.

Primary care and connections are what street medicine can do best

The teams work Monday through Friday and serve around 320 patients a month. Might you have a sense of how many "unique" patients they serve a year? If not, no worries but I assume some are repeat clients.

They treat acute wounds, manage chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension, conduct field blood draws, dispense medications, and connect patients to housing resources through the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's Coordinated Entry System.

"Three years ago when we had just started street medicine it was with one team and one

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Bill Repealing 'Racist' CalWORKs 'Man-in-the-House' Rule Clears Legislature

By Antonio Ray Harvey

California Black Media

A California rule requiring an unrelated adult man living with a family receiving welfare benefits to contribute financially to the household could be repealed if Gov. Gavin Newsom signs Senate Bill (SB) 1030 into law.

Authored by Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles), SB 1030 would eliminate the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) "Unrelated Adult Male," or UAM, rule. Smallwood-Cuevas called the policy "outdated and actively harmful," saying it relies on mid-20th-century gender stereotypes and subjects families to intrusive surveillance.

The Assembly approved the bill 77-0 on Aug. 19, followed by a 40-0 Senate concurrence vote five days later. Newsom has until Sept. 30 to sign or veto the measure.

"This is a law that helped divide our families. This is a rule that separated us from our mothers, fathers, and restricted men's access to their families mainly because of the discriminatory practices of public housing systems back in the 1960s and 1970s," said Smallwood-Cuevas, a member of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC).

Under Section 11351.5 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code, an unrelated adult man living with a family applying for or receiving CalWORKs must make a financial contribution based on his income and expenses. He and the mother must disclose their household expense-sharing arrangement under penalty of perjury. Benefits may be discontinued if either person knowingly refuses to cooperate.

SB 1030 would repeal those requirements beginning July 1, 2027, or later if the state's welfare computer system is not ready to implement the change.

Smallwood-Cuevas, a veteran journalist who has written about families relying on public assistance, said the law should be modernized as low-income households confront rising housing and food costs and broader economic uncertainty.

"We wanted to take that law off the books that limited men from being in the home with their families. We recognize Donald Trump is in the White House, and he will use all of the racist tools of the past to discriminate and surveil," Smallwood-Cuevas told California Black Media (CBM).

Smallwood-Cuevas also told the Assembly Human Services Committee that SB 1030 was a priority of the California Legislative Women's Caucus.

"Historically, the man in the house rule was disproportionately applied to Black women, women of color, reflecting a broader racialized system of surveillance and negative stereotypes and narratives. We know that was embedded in some of our early welfare policies," Smallwood-Cuevas said.

"California must act to modernize this provision. Our families are already carrying the weight of rising rent, grocery costs, economic uncertainty, and the last thing California should do is make it harder for mothers to put food on the table and a roof over their families' heads," she added.

"Man-in-the-house" policies emerged from



California State Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles) authored Senate Bill 1030, legislation designed to repeal California's outdated "Man in the House" rule affecting CalWORKs eligibility. The bill passed the California Legislature and was sent to Gov. Gavin Newsom for consideration. (CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey)

state welfare programs during the early and mid-20th century. They were later applied under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a federal assistance program established by the Social Security Act of 1935.

For decades, some state welfare agencies denied assistance to low-income families if an able-bodied man lived in or regularly visited the home, treating him as a substitute father regardless of whether he was legally or financially responsible for the children.

The U.S. Supreme Court addressed the practice in King v. Smith (1968). Alabama terminated AFDC benefits for a mother and her four children because a man who was not the children's father visited her on weekends. In 1968, the court unanimously ruled that Alabama could not treat him as a parent because he had no legal duty to support the children.

California later enacted Section 11351.5, replacing the outright denial of benefits with a cost-sharing requirement for unrelated adult men living in CalWORKs households.

Smallwood-Cuevas compared the rule's effect on Black families to the welfare policies depicted in the 1974 film "Claudine," starring Diahann Carroll and James Earl Jones.

"Remember the film Claudine that was about the way Black families, male and female relationships that could not be cultivated because of this law," Smallwood-Cuevas said. "We understand in this environment with unemployment rates, shutting

down of industries that employ, particularly men in our communities, that sometimes men can't contribute financially, but that doesn't mean they don't contribute to our families. These laws shouldn't divide and separate our families, and this is what this rule has done for so many years."

Rebecca Gonzales, senior policy advocate at the Western Center on Law and Poverty, told the Assembly Human Services Committee that such policies were used "to police the households of particularly Black women."

The Western Center is co-sponsored SB 1030 as part of the Reimagine CalWORKs Coalition, which advocates for making the program more supportive of families and less punitive.

"The man of the house law is an outdated, misogynistic policy that incorporates racist and sexist assumptions about people who receive CalWORKs," Gonzales said. "This provision, which is not required by federal law, presumed cohabiting men were substitute parents, regardless of financial contribution, and this was deemed unconstitutional in King v. Smith and further restricted by Lewis v. Martin (1970)."

"It also stemmed from outdated social mores, which disapproved of a couple who cohabitated without being married," Gonzales added. "We believe it is extremely important that California repeals outdated, unneeded laws that are based on racist and sexist presumptions of human behavior."

Young Black Influencer Dies After Male Organ Enlargement Procedure Gone Wrong

LOS ANGELES, CA — Igbo "Tiny" Ubiribo, a British-Nigerian influencer, has sadly passed away after a penis enlargement procedure in Thailand led to a fatal pulmonary embolism, according to a U.K. coroner. The 43-year-old businessman underwent the cosmetic treatment while on a luxury trip with his wife, Danielle Simba Allen, in March. Doctors later found that material from the procedure had reached his lungs, causing a blockage that proved fatal.



Igbo "Tiny" Ubiribo

According to TMZ, 40 milliliters of hyaluronic acid and lidocaine were injected into Ubiribo's penis at an unnamed Thai clinic. He was staying with his wife at a Marriott hotel in Bangkok when he underwent the procedure. Afterward, the couple went for a massage, but he soon began experiencing chest pain and passed out twice.

An ambulance took him to Sukhumvit Hospital, where he initially remained conscious enough to answer questions. Allen told doctors about the injections, giving them important information about the cosmetic procedure he had received. However, his condition quickly worsened. He lost consciousness before doctors could carry out a recommended CT scan.

Medical staff determined that he had suffered a pulmonary embolism, which occurs when a blood vessel in the lungs becomes blocked. He was moved to intensive care as doctors worked to save him. Medics performed CPR for more than 100 minutes, but they could not revive him. He died in the early hours of March 6.

A postmortem examination in the U.K. later found cellular material in his lungs that matched the hyaluronic acid used in the penile filler procedure. Coroner Jean Harkin concluded that the cosmetic treatment caused the pulmonary embolism that led to his death. The case has also highlighted the serious risks linked to injectable penis fillers. Hyaluronic acid treatments can cost as much as \$9,000 and generally last between six and nine months, while British urology experts have warned that complications can be severe.

Before his death, Ubiribo had built a large following on Instagram, with about 185,000 followers, and was known for documenting a lavish lifestyle. He owned a home in Los Angeles' Crenshaw neighborhood valued at about \$1.1 million and a London apartment worth around \$600,000. He and Allen, a fashion designer and socialite, married in Zimbabwe in 2022 in a ceremony reportedly costing \$473,000. After his death, he was buried in London in a gold coffin reportedly worth more than \$745,000. Nigerian music star Davido and Celebrity Barman Cubana Chief Priest were among those who attended the funeral.

Black Man Gets 22 Years in Prison for Self Defense Shooting During Armed Home Invasion

GAINESVILLE, FL — Dovico Raynard Miles, a Black man from Gainesville, Florida, who fought back during a violent 2022 home invasion, was sentenced to more than 22 years in federal prison after the case shifted to drug and weapons charges.



Dovico Raynard Miles

Miles, 47, was at home with his niece, D'Halani Armstrong, when the break-in happened on July 19, 2022. Court records say two men forced their way inside, searching for drugs, money, and jewelry. A struggle broke out, and Miles managed to wrestle a gun away from one of the intruders as shots were fired from both sides.

Amid the gunfire, Armstrong was fatally shot. Both intruders, Jason Ward and Alderious White, also suffered gunshot wounds. Investigators later confirmed that the firearm Miles used during the exchange belonged to one of the men who broke into the home.

Authorities said that after the shooting, Miles hid drugs and firearms in the backyard. According to a federal release, officers later recovered about 1,000 grams of cocaine, more than 70 grams of cocaine base, over 1,400 grams of methamphetamine, marijuana, several firearms, and \$10,000 in cash.

Miles was already on federal supervised release tied to a 2008 drug conviction. Prosecutors charged him with new drug and weapons offenses, along with violating the terms of his release. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 20 years for the new charges, plus an additional two and a half years for the violation.

Local charges involving firearm possession and evidence tampering were later dropped. However, a separate Department of Justice case moved forward and resulted in the final sentence. Gainesville Police Chief Nelson Moya said authorities maintain "zero tolerance for violent crime" and remain focused on removing guns and drugs from the community.

The others involved in the home invasion have also been sentenced. Ward received 30 years in prison in October 2023. White was sentenced to 50 years in October 2025. Patrick Owen Watson, identified as the organizer, received a life sentence in December 2025. Tiara Luckie, who served as the getaway driver, pleaded no contest and was sentenced to 15 years of probation.

'Soul Train Awards' Are Back



BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA - NOVEMBER 19: Janelle Monáe (C), winner of the Spirit of Soul Award, with Folayan Kurerede and Bobbi Lanea of Flyana Boss, attend Soul Train Awards 2023 on November 19, 2023 in Beverly Hills, California. (Photo by Leon Bennett/Getty Images for BET)

BET Ceremony Returns to Celebrate R&B and Soul Legacy

The Soul Train Awards are coming back to BET and premiering on CBS this November, after the ceremony was taken off the air for three years. After three years off the air, the “Soul Train Awards” are back. The BET award show, which celebrates the the biggest stars in R&B and soul music, will return to its home network and make its first broadcast on CBS this November, with BET stating in a press release that the upcoming show will feature honorees who defined the sound with the artists carrying it forward, celebrating a legacy that has influenced American music since ‘Soul Train’ first

went on the air in 1971.” Paramount Skydance’s channels VH1, MTV2, Logo, and BET Her will also run the program. Instead of airing live, the ceremony will be pre-recorded in Chicago, the city where the original “Soul Train” television series, hosted by the late Don Cornelius, began in 1971. Cornelius first created the music-and-dance show for the local indie station WCIU, which later became a nationally syndicated broadcast. BET president Louis Carr said in a statement, “As a Chicago native, I’m proud to bring the ‘Soul Train Awards’ back to the city where it all originated.

Coming off a landmark year for BET, this return reaffirms what we do best: bringing our community together around the culture, and connecting the artists who built this sound to the ones carrying it forward.” The last “Soul Train Awards” were hosted by Keke Palmer in 2023. Two years later, in 2025, BET announced that both the “Soul Train Awards” and the “Hip Hop Awards” were suspended. As of now, the network has not announced plans to bring back the latter award show. Per Variety, Connie Orlando, exec VP of specials, music programming and music strategy at

BET said the awards will be “reimagined” with a “bold new format.” “The ‘Soul Train Awards’ has always been the home for R&B and soul,” she said. “It’s about honoring the artists who shaped the genre while reinventing the night for where the music is headed.” The upcoming Soul Train Awards will air BET and CBS on November 27 at 8 p.m. The awards will come back with the help of Spotify as the broadcast’s exclusive music streaming sponsor and Toyota as a key sponsor.

Malcolm-Jamal Warner’s Mom Details Millions Set Aside Amid Widow’s Estate Fight

Late “Cosby Show” star Malcolm-Jamal Warner’s mother is pushing back against his widow’s multimillion-dollar estate claims, telling the court that her son made substantial separate provisions for his wife and daughter before his death — and that she tried to resolve the dispute privately. In new court documents obtained by TMZ, Pamela Warner disputes Tenisha Warner’s claims that Malcolm failed to fulfill financial obligations contained in the couple’s 2022 premarital agreement. Pamela is asking the court to approve a separate settlement involving Malcolm’s daughter, MacKenzie, and dismiss Tenisha’s Georgia lawsuit. Pamela Warner Details Where the Millions

Went Pamela says she proposed taking a one-time payment from Malcolm’s trust while allowing MacKenzie to receive the overwhelming majority of what remained. Her filing also points to other assets outside that arrangement: a \$2 million life insurance policy benefiting MacKenzie, a separate Georgia trust Malcolm used to purchase a home for his wife and daughter, and a retirement plan worth approximately \$2.4 million that Pamela says was left to Tenisha. The distinction matters. Those figures do not establish that Tenisha personally rejected a \$4



Pamela Warner says her late son separately provided millions for his wife and daughter as she seeks dismissal of Tenisha Warner’s \$1.2 million lawsuit.

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million cash settlement; Pamela’s filing describes different assets with different beneficiaries. Pamela alleges Tenisha declined her efforts to settle privately and proceeded with litigation. She subsequently reached an agreement directly with MacKenzie’s court-appointed representatives. Tenisha Says the Prenup Left Unpaid Promises Tenisha’s case centers on a different question: whether financial commitments Malcolm allegedly made to her under their premarital agreement remained unpaid when he died. As EURweb previously reported, Tenisha sued Pamela, who serves as successor trustee of the Warner Family Trust, seeking at least \$1,276,042. Her complaint alleges Malcolm agreed to maintain a \$1 million life insurance policy naming her as sole beneficiary, make annual \$16,000 payments, fund a Roth IRA and pay her \$5,000 monthly for working as his chief of staff and assistant. Tenisha contends those obligations were not fulfilled and seeks to recover the alleged debt from the family trust. The two women have also offered competing accounts of attempts to settle the matter privately, making clear that their disagreement extends beyond simply calculating the estate’s value. EURweb reported in August that Pamela reached a tentative settlement with her granddaughter’s representatives that would give

MacKenzie the majority remainder of Malcolm’s trust and estate. The agreement remains subject to court approval. At the time, Pamela denied claims that she wanted to prevent MacKenzie from receiving financial support and maintained that Malcolm provided separately for his wife and daughter. Tenisha was not involved in negotiating that agreement. An Old Estate Plan Complicates the Fight The conflict is further complicated by the age of Malcolm’s estate plan. TMZ previously reported that his trust was created in 1996, long before MacKenzie’s 2017 birth and his 2022 marriage to Tenisha. Pamela’s position is that Malcolm intended her to receive part of his estate because of their close relationship and her years working as his manager. Tenisha’s lawsuit, meanwhile, argues that separate contractual promises Malcolm later made to her remained enforceable. Malcolm died at 54 after drowning while vacationing in Costa Rica in July 2025. Now, more than a year after his death, the central dispute isn’t simply who receives the biggest share. The courts are being asked to sort out how Malcolm’s decades-old trust, later marriage, premarital agreement and provisions for his daughter fit together — while his mother and widow remain sharply divided over what he intended.



Malcolm Jamal Warner and his mother, Pamela Warner – via screenshot



Tenisha Warner – screenshot via ‘CBS Mornings’

Political Playback



California Capitol News You Might Have Missed

By Bo Tefu
California Black Media

Blacks and Latinos Clash Over LA’s Barrio Run; Mayor Karen Bass Calls for Dialogue Across Racial, Neighborhood Lines

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass urged Black and Latino Angelenos to resolve their differences constructively after a dispute over a Latino-led running event planned for Leimert Park escalated into racial hostility online.

“Los Angeles is strongest when we listen to one another, treat every community with respect and work through our differences constructively,” Bass said in a statement she shared on Facebook.

Barrio Athletics, a grassroots fitness organization founded by South Central Los Angeles native Henry Gallardo, planned a 5K for Sept. 6. Participants were initially scheduled to meet in Leimert Park before running along Crenshaw Boulevard. In a promotional video, an organizer said the group would “take over the streets of Leimert Park.”

The language drew objections from Black residents and community leaders, who said organizers had not adequately consulted local stakeholders. They were also concerned that the gathering, which included plans for a DJ and vendors, would disrupt the Leimert Park Sunday Marketplace and other scheduled activities.

Leimert Park is widely regarded as the cultural heart of Black Los Angeles. Its weekly marketplace, food vendors and drum circle have long provided an economic and cultural gathering place for Black residents. That history, compounded with lingering concerns about gentrification and the city’s declining Black population, intensified sensitivity to the event’s promotion.

“This is a historic Black district which we fought for and built up, its arts district, its cultural hub,” KBLA radio host Dominique DiPrima told a local L.A. news station.

“You’re saying that you’re going to “take over” is sort of like the last stand for Black LA is problematic.”

In another widely circulated video, a woman warned organizers, “We don’t want you to come into Africa Town,” adding that they would be “met with resistance from the Black community.” A separate Black social media user suggested, “We should call ICE,” drawing condemnation amid federal immigration enforcement concerns affecting Latino communities.

Barrio Athletics said it did not condone “racism, violence or hate.” Black and Latino community organizers later joined the group for what local L.A. radio station KJLH described as a “tough but necessary conversation.”

KJLH posted a video of the discussion.

Following “careful conversation with community leaders,” Barrio Athletics relocated the run to Elysian Park “to respect Leimert Park and the surrounding community.”

Bass denied claims that she had ordered the move, saying she had not known about the dispute before its resolution.

“Bringing people across racial, cultural and neighborhood lines together has been the foundation of my life’s work,” Bass said, “and it continues to guide how I lead this city today.”

“Ready to See These Bills Become Law”: Sen. Weber’s

Package of 15 Bills Advance to Gov. Newsom’s Desk

The California Legislature has sent Gov. Gavin Newsom a package of 15 bills authored by state Sen. Akilah Weber Pierson, D-San Diego. The measures address health care, education, patient safety and consumer protections.

More specifically, they include legislation focused on early math intervention, health care costs, artificial intelligence, nutrition information and physician accountability. The measures now await Newsom’s signature.

“This package represents the kind of change I came to Sacramento to fight for, change that improves people’s lives in real and tangible ways,” said Weber Pierson. “I’m proud of the work we’ve done, and I’m ready to see these bills become law.”

Among the measures is SB 1067, which would require annual math assessments for students in kindergarten through second grade to identify learning difficulties early and provide evidence-based interventions. The bill passed both chambers unanimously.

SB 869 would require chain restaurants with at least 20 locations to display a clear warning next to beverages with high levels of added sugar, including on drive-through menus. SB 977 would require those restaurants to offer at least one children’s meal that meets expert nutrition standards if they already offer a kids’ menu.

The package also includes SB 503, which would require developers and deployers of clinical decision-support systems to identify and mitigate risks of biased impacts in health care artificial intelligence tools and monitor the systems after deployment.

Other measures would strengthen protections for patients and consumers. SB 849 would restrict physicians from seeking reinstatement of a surrendered medical license in certain sexual misconduct cases involving patients. SB 950 would seek to ensure timely access to FDA-approved treatments for Californians with early-stage Alzheimer’s disease.

The remaining bills address Medi-Cal behavioral health treatment, CPR and automated external defibrillator education, the consideration of increased building heights under state environmental law, health insurance rate transparency, medical claims, biosimilar drugs and other state policies.

Report: Community Level Policy Is Impacting Homelessness and Drug Abuse in California

Local housing capacity, behavioral health services and criminal justice policies are playing a role in California’s homelessness and drug crises, according to a new report examining how policy decisions have affected outcomes across the state.

The report compiled by the Public Policy Institute of California found that counties that added more permanent housing beds per capita saw larger decreases in homelessness, while areas with larger declines in incarceration following Proposition 47 saw greater increases in homelessness.

“Places that saw larger increases in permanent housing beds per capita saw larger decreases in the homelessness rate,” researchers Magnus Lofstrom, Shannon McConville, and Sean Cremin stated in the report.

California’s homelessness rate has increased more than 60% since 2014, with unsheltered homelessness driving most of the growth. The state had the sixth-highest overall homelessness rate and the second-highest unsheltered homelessness rate among states in 2025.

Researchers found that counties with higher

rents tended to have higher homelessness rates. But they did not find a statistically significant relationship between changes in homelessness and changes in local housing markets, poverty or unemployment.

The report also examined Proposition 47, the 2014 ballot measure that reclassified some drug and property offenses from felonies to misdemeanors. Researchers estimate that the law contributed to a roughly 10% increase in California’s unsheltered homelessness rate, equivalent to about 7,000 additional people experiencing unsheltered homelessness between 2015 and 2019.

The researchers also estimated that Prop. 47 was associated with a 7% to 8% increase in serious drug use, measured through overdose deaths, hospitalizations and emergency department visits. Drug treatment admissions fell by roughly 20%, largely because of fewer referrals from courts and criminal justice agencies.

“Our findings suggest that Prop 47 likely did contribute to rising rates of homelessness and drug overdoses, as well as declines in drug treatment,” the researchers stated.

The report cautions that the relationship between homelessness, drug use and criminal justice policy is complex. Researchers found no consistent evidence that California’s 2011 public safety realignment or pandemic-era reductions in incarceration affected homelessness or drug use.

They also emphasized the role of the criminal justice system in connecting vulnerable people with services.

“Jails and prisons serve as sources of shelter for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness,” the researchers stated in the report. They added that courts and criminal justice agencies can help connect people with the drug treatment they need.

California has made major investments in housing and behavioral health services in recent years. The researchers said state and local agencies should continue evaluating whether those investments are reaching people most at risk and whether newer policies, including Proposition 36, are effectively connecting people with treatment.

California’s Legal Cannabis Market Hits \$8 Billion as State Touts Progress on Fighting Drugs, Crime

California’s legal cannabis market has generated nearly \$8.4 billion in tax revenue since 2018 as the state ramps up enforcement against illegal drugs and touts declines in crime, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced on Sept. 2.

The cannabis revenue includes nearly \$4.5 billion in excise taxes and nearly \$3.4 billion in sales taxes. In the second quarter of 2026 alone, cannabis retailers remitted \$261.7 million in cannabis excise and sales tax revenue.

The state uses cannabis revenue to support programs including childcare and early childhood development, youth substance abuse prevention, medical research and environmental recovery.

“We are building a legal cannabis market that generates billions for Californians, and going after the illicit operators who undermine it,” said Newsom. “That’s public safety: protect consumers, support the businesses playing by the rules, and put the revenue to work in our communities.”

California is also targeting illegal intoxicating products outside the regulated cannabis market. State officials have removed more than 15,000 illegal hemp, kratom and 7-hydroxymitragynine, or 7-OH, products from store shelves.

The enforcement effort resulted in the removal of 7,403 illegal hemp products and 7,888 kratom and 7-OH products. Officials reported compliance rates above 97% among Alcoholic Beverage Control licenses inspected for both categories.

The state has warned that kratom and 7-OH products have been linked to addiction, overdose and other serious health risks.

California is also using its law enforcement resources to target violent crime, drug trafficking and other criminal activity. Since 2023, CHP Crime Suppression Teams have made 15,197 arrests, recovered 7,042 stolen vehicles and seized 656 illicit firearms.

Since the teams expanded to six regions statewide in August 2025, they have also confiscated nearly 1.7 million grams of illegal drugs, including about 108 kilograms of fentanyl.

“Over the past few years, our Crime Suppression Teams have demonstrated the value of proactive, intelligence-driven enforcement,” CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee said.

The Newsom administration says the efforts are part of a broader public safety strategy that combines regulation, enforcement, prevention and partnerships with local agencies.

California has also reported declines in major crime categories since 2024, including an 18.6% drop in homicides and a 25.8% decline in motor vehicle theft.

California officials say the combination of a regulated cannabis market, targeted enforcement and state-local law enforcement partnerships is helping protect consumers, disrupt illicit drug activity and improve public safety across the state.

Election Watch 2026: 85% of Eligible Voters in California Are Registered

California enters the 2026 election cycle with a large pool of registered voters, as 85% of eligible adults were registered to vote as of May, according to a new report from the Public Policy Institute of California.

The report found that 23.2 million of California’s 27.3 million eligible adults were registered. Voter registration, political engagement and past voting habits will help shape turnout in the June statewide primary and November general election.

“Likely voters are registered voters who cast ballots regularly and are politically engaged,” researchers Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, Lauren Mora, and Deja Thomas stated in the report.

California’s likely voters generally lean Democratic. Democrats make up 46% of likely voters, while Republicans and independents account for much of the remainder.

Independent voters could be an important group to watch during the 2026 election cycle. Independent likely voters are more likely to lean Democratic, although many do not favor either major party or remain unsure.

The report found that likely voters do not fully reflect California’s broader adult population. They tend to be older, more educated and more affluent.

Older Californians make up a larger share of likely voters, while younger adults are less likely to participate regularly in elections. Likely voters are also more likely to own their homes and have higher household incomes.

The racial makeup of the likely electorate differs from the state’s overall adult population as well. White Californians are overrepresented among likely voters, while Latino residents make up a smaller share of likely voters than they do of the state’s adult population. Black Californians make up 6% of likely voters, slightly less than their share of the state’s total population.

The researchers said voter enthusiasm and past voting habits have played an important role in determining who participates in California elections.

Features

Young Black Men Suffering in Silence a Curse That Can Be Broken

By Dominic Boston
Source: Black Press USA Wire
 As a young Black man, I find this topic personal. When people discuss mental health, they usually don't picture someone who looks like me. Instead, Black men are often seen as strong, tough, or able to handle anything life throws at us. Growing up, I was taught exactly that. My elders always told me to be strong. If I got hurt, I was told to get back up. If I was upset, I was told not to cry. Showing emotion wasn't encouraged. It was seen as a weakness. Looking back now, I realize I wasn't just being taught how to be a man. I was being conditioned to hide my emotions. I was taught to believe that strength meant staying silent, no matter how much pain I was carrying. I know my family wasn't trying to hurt me. They wanted me to survive in a world that has never been easy for Black men. They wanted me to be prepared for life's challenges. When people discuss mental health, they usually don't picture someone who looks like me. Instead, Black men are often seen as strong, tough, or able to handle anything life throws at us. Growing up, I was taught exactly that. My elders always told me to be strong. If I got hurt, I was told to get back up. If I was upset, I was told not to cry. Showing emotion wasn't encouraged. It was seen as a weakness. Looking back now, I realize I wasn't just being taught how to be a man. I was being conditioned to hide my emotions. I was taught to believe that strength meant staying silent, no matter how much pain I was carrying. I know my family wasn't trying to hurt me. They wanted me to survive in a world that has never been easy for Black men. They wanted me to be prepared for life's challenges. But somewhere along the way, being strong became confused with pretending everything was okay. Instead of talking about our feelings, we learned how to bury them. Instead of asking for help, we learned how to deal with everything on our own. The problem is that emotions don't disappear just because you ignore them. They stay with you,

and eventually, they find another way to come out. I believe that is the reality for many young Black men today. We're expected to carry the weight of our families, our communities, our schools, our work, and our lives without ever breaking down. People admire our strength, but they rarely ask how much it costs to always be strong. The truth is, many of us are hurting in silence



because we've spent our entire lives believing that is what real men are supposed to do. For many Black boys, those lessons start early. Some grow up in neighborhoods where hearing gunshots or seeing police lights is normal. Others lose friends or family members before they are even old enough to understand why. Some are raised in communities where violence, poverty, and limited opportunities are part of everyday life. When you're constantly worried about making it home safely or helping your family make ends meet, you don't always have time to process your emotions. You focus on surviving. Then there is the way society sees us. Before some people even hear us speak, they have already made assumptions. Many Black

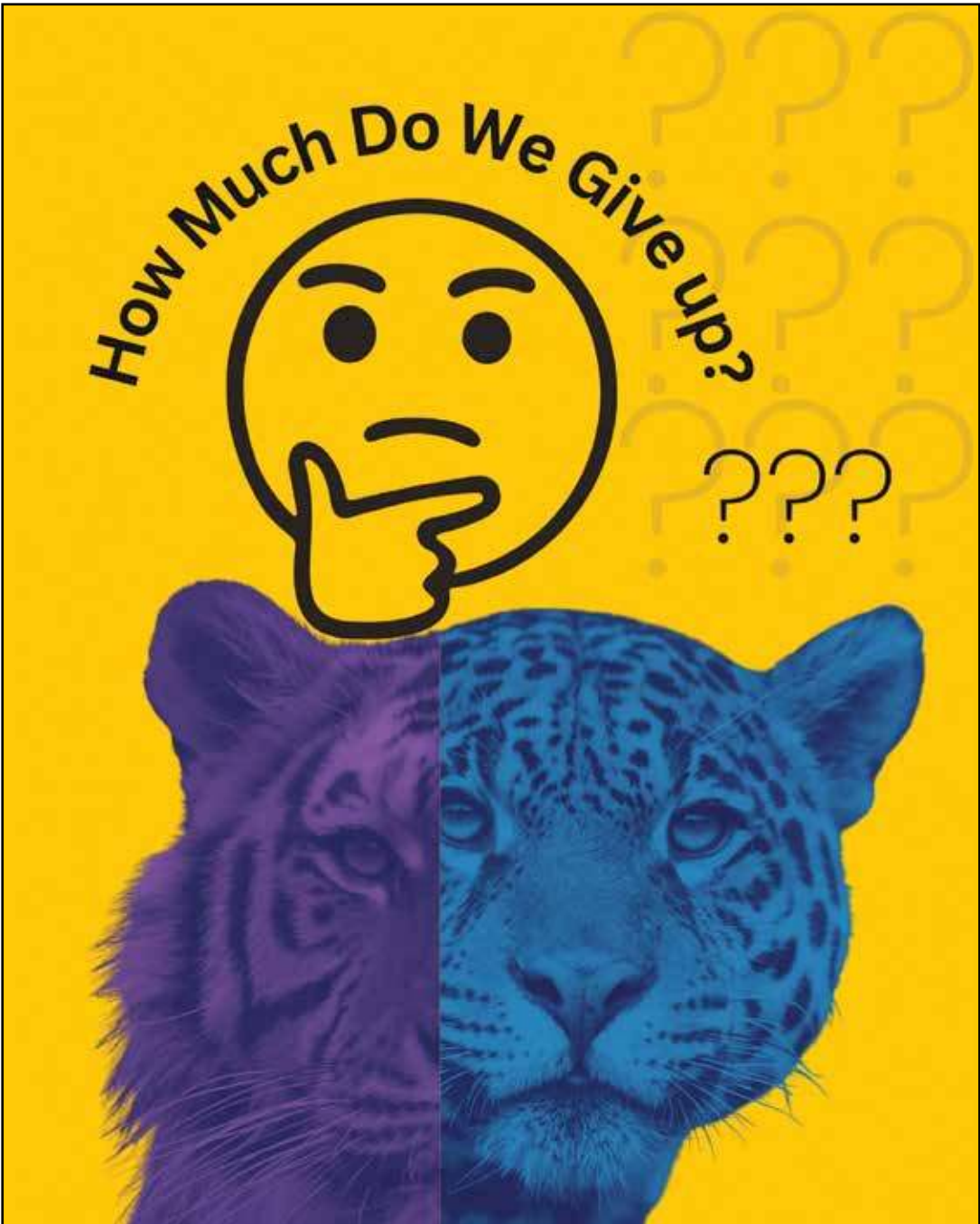
men know what it feels like to be watched while shopping, stereotyped because of the clothes they wear, or judged simply because they are Black. On top of that, many of us grow up having conversations with our parents about how to act if we are ever stopped by the police. We aren't taught those lessons because our parents don't trust us. We are taught them because our parents are afraid of what could happen if

You see schools that need more resources, neighborhoods that deserve more investment, and communities asking for change year after year. After a while, some people stop believing anyone is listening. But I also believe that is exactly why voting matters. The people we elect make decisions about education, mental health funding, affordable housing, community programs, healthcare, and criminal justice. Those decisions directly affect neighborhoods like mine and families like mine. If we want things to change, we can't sit back and expect someone else to make those choices for us. Our voices matter, and our votes do too. One of the biggest changes that needs to happen is the way we talk about mental health. We have to stop teaching young Black boys that crying makes them weak. We have to stop acting like asking for help is something to be embarrassed about. Real strength isn't pretending you're okay when you're not. Real strength is being honest enough to say you're struggling and courageous enough to ask for help. As I continue to grow into the man I want to become, I'm learning that strength and vulnerability can coexist. I can be determined, hardworking and resilient while still being honest about my emotions. I don't have to carry everything by myself, and neither does the next generation of young Black men. It's time we change the conversation. Instead of only telling young Black boys to be strong, we should also tell them it's okay to cry. It's okay to talk. It's okay to heal. Because when we create a generation of men who feel safe expressing themselves, we aren't making them weaker. We are giving them a better chance to live healthier, happier lives. And that is the kind of strength our communities have needed all along. Based on reporting by Jacksonville Free Press.

How Much of Our Community Are We Expected to Give Up

By Shyanne Burris, Staff Writer
Black Press USA Wire
 So right now, I have to ask: are we really supposed to take none of this at face value? First there was Unity Field. Now the African American Cultural Center is embroiled in yet another controversy, this one surrounding the latest changes to the facility that have left many Black students questioning the future of a space intended to celebrate and give them a sense of community. And no, before any of you rush to type up an excuse or a thought piece, there is not a single Black student who genuinely believes that none of this has anything to do with race. That usually comes up first when we begin talking about the changing landscape around us. Digest ArtThis is about security. This is about space. This is about logistics. This is about policy. This is apparently about everything in the world that isn't tied to the very special nature of a space that directly affects Black students as their own special thing. Convenient. This isn't about an intentional effort by LSU to deliberately make our lives uncomfortable. However, this has reached the point where it's difficult to simply dismiss what has happened with LSU after the Unity Field situation and call it "just a coincidence." Unity Field was a space of gathering. The African American Cultural Center is where African American history, culture, and community are concretely manifested on this campus, and you can't replace either by suggesting that there are other places that students can occupy space. Yes, technically. But that misses the heart of the whole issue entirely. You can provide a Black student with another room. But that room is not necessarily the same

because it holds a different kind of significance. You can issue a formally written and correctly worded announcement, but that's of no great comfort. And that "professional" explanation behind any decision, however valid it may be, can still provide Black students with an opportunity to see the bigger picture. From the perspective of Black students, I see all of this because I know that culturally significant spaces can be changed very quickly from being celebrated and special to being seen as simply an optional component of campus life. LSU can talk about being an inclusive institution. LSU can talk about diversity. LSU can showcase African American history with Black History Month. But if the actual spaces where that community thrives continue to shrink and grow more inaccessible each day, well what in the world is being celebrated? We need to stop allowing anyone to expect that Black students will keep quiet in acceptance and give thanks for our allowance to still exist on the outskirts of campus. That's not inclusion. That's accommodation. That's about accommodation not about inclusion. Unity Field. That was the first step. Next comes the African American Cultural Center. LSU should probably stop telling students to give their process a chance and instead give them a reason to give the current direction a chance. Because sooner or later, none of this can be attributed to chance. Because when the spaces keep disappearing, eventually, we have to stop asking what's next—and start asking who's next. Based on reporting by Southern University - SouthernDIGEST.



The Business of Educating Black Parents, Teachers and Kids

By Sylvester Brown, Jr.
The St. Louis American Black Press USA Wire
 Bolanle Ambonisyse knew she had stumbled onto something when parents began using her name to get their children to behave. "Lil' Johnny was acting up last night. I told him I'm going to tell Mama Bolanle and he straightened right up," she recalled parents telling her when she was a teacher at the Frederick Douglass Institute. Ambonisyse didn't take it as a compliment. "It's backward," she said. "I'm supposed to tell that child if you don't straighten up, I'm going to tell your mom or your dad." The experience helped shape an idea Ambonisyse would eventually turn into U&I-RISE, an education business offering parenting programs, books and training for schools and educators, with a particular focus on Black families. Nearly three decades after she began developing her approach, Ambonisyse has taken the business from parent workshops to public school contracts and educator training. Now she's working to expand its reach online. Ambonisyse didn't come to her theories by chance. After traveling extensively with her military mom, Ambonisyse, then Kelly Andrea Moore, left Germany with her mother and settled in St. Louis in 1979. She was in eighth grade with ambitions of becoming a teacher. That dream was dashed at Clinton Elementary, now closed, and Roosevelt High School, where she said disrespectful and unruly classmates led her to believe shed "wind up behind bars" if she taught in city public schools as an adult. After a stint at Florissant Valley Community College, Ambonisyse became pregnant with her first child, Folami, and vowed her child would never attend a public school. She was later introduced to the Frederick Douglass Institute, a tuition-based independent school centered on African-centered education. "I got immersed in 'Black stuff,'" she said with

a laugh. Ambonisyse enrolled Folami there while taking an evening course for parents on African-centered education. She said the school's founders were so impressed with her homeschooled daughter that they asked Ambonisyse to bring what she had done with Folami into the classroom. She became a full-time teacher certified through the Council of Independent Black Institutions. As the years passed, experiences like the "Mama Bolanle" comments led her to conclude that "as parents, we had given away our power." "We were undermining our power without even realizing it," she said. Ambonisyse came to believe parents needed to "teach their children to obey them," helping children develop the self-discipline needed to pay attention, cooperate, and do well in school. "At home it's called 'obedience,' everywhere else it's called 'following instructions.'" In 2007, she turned those ideas into her first educational program and parenting guide, "Tapping Our Parental Power (TOPP) In A Nutshell." Rather than focusing primarily on children's misbehavior, TOPP asks parents to examine their own actions. In a testimonial posted on U&I-RISE's website, Brandi J., the mother of a teenage son, said TOPP taught her "patience" and how to deal with her son's emotions while learning to "get myself together first." "I am and will be a better parent," she said. In 2011, Ambonisyse founded U&I-RISE with the admittedly ambitious purpose of helping solve "Black community and family problems." Public schools became customers. She marketed parent-engagement workshops first in the Ferguson-Florissant School District and later in St. Louis Public Schools. Securing contracts was one thing. Getting parents to participate was another. Ambonisyse said many Black parents reacted to a stigma associated with seeking parenting education. Looking for solutions, she took a job



as a family support specialist at Bertha Knox Gilkey Pamoja Preparatory Academy, an African-centered SLPS school. With the superintendent's approval, the school required parents to participate in her orientation workshop before their children could enroll. Some responded begrudgingly, she said, but attendance improved. The requirement remains in place today. Over the years, U&I-RISE expanded into school-home engagement and educator training. One program is FLARES, a classroom management system that Ambonisyse developed with Rashida Chatman, an SLPS curriculum specialist. Chatman said it was designed to help educators create "cohesive, manageable and safe classroom spaces for students who look like us." DeAndria Wallace, assistant principal at Pamoja, praised Ambonisyse and FLARES. "She is very organized and in tune with the

needs of the community," Wallace said. "Her program is easy to follow and implement, and it gets results when done with fidelity." The marketplace has changed considerably since Ambonisyse started. Parents can now find parenting courses, videos, social media groups, and other resources online, including programs specifically for Black families. That leaves Ambonisyse working to carve out an online niche for U&I-RISE's African-centered, Black parent-focused material. She continues using feedback from parent groups and workshop participants to hone and promote her courses, books and workshops. The delivery methods may have changed, but the mission she set for U&I-RISE remains the same: helping solve "Black community and family problems." Based on

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Prairie View Makes Bold Statement in Dominant Labor Day Classic Win

By Terrance Harris
Black Press USA Wire

Terrance's Take:

PRAIRIE VIEW — On the surface, it seems like Prairie View's dominant 52-14 win over Texas Southern in the 41st Labor Day Classic was a bold statement about what's to come.

But in Prairie View coach Tremaine Jackson's mind, the resounding early-season showing against a rival, SWAC opponent, and West Division foe was more of a testament to what it took for the Panthers to rise to the occasion like they did Sunday morning on an ESPN national platform.

"That they will punch you in your face," Jackson said when I asked what he learned about his team. "I'm not trying to sound any kind of way by saying that. You don't get to see behind the scenes with this squad. You didn't get to see fall camp; you didn't get to see summer training."

"So a lot of what I saw today is what we built in the summer and the spring when we go through D.O.G. training. We made them tap out. It ain't no secret about that."

The Panthers, the defending SWAC Champions, showed why they are the favorites to repeat as conference champs again and to represent the SWAC in the Black College Football national championship. They stole the drama out of this storied rivalry from the outset – literally – when Jahbari Kuykendall took the opening kickoff 90 yards for the touchdown.

It never felt like this one was going to be close from there. These are two good West Division teams that could finish one-two again.

Prairie View is just that much better in Year Two of Tremaine Jackson.

"We dominated. Our preparation. We prepare like nobody else," said Prairie View running back Chase Bingmon, who rushed for 60 yards and a touchdown on 10 carries. "The way we are built up, the way we are coached up; we're prepared. We dominated."

What was telling about Sunday's performance was that Prairie View just kind of did what it wanted to do when it wanted to do it. Texas Southern, behind the ground attack of running back Athean Renfro and quarterback Cam'Ron McCoy, won the rushing battle 216 yards to 160 and dominated the time of possession 40:22 to 17:35.

Yet it wasn't even close.

Quarterback Tevin Carter, in his first season as the solidified starter, was the pure definition of a dual threat as he picked up key yards on the ground, including a 24-yard touchdown, while he showed us what he can do with his arm and decision-making by completing 16 of 22 passes for 217 yards and four touchdowns.



Prairie View coach Tremaine Jackson says the way his team trained and prepared was difference in their dominance Labor Day Classic win over rival Texas Southern. (Photo Credit: Jimmie Aggison/Defender)

The Panthers' defense, which has shown some susceptibility to the rush over the past two weeks, showed it can pull it together and make plays when necessary. The unit kept McCoy mostly in check, with Malachi Williams and J.J. Jean-Louis combining for four of the six sacks on him.

"We forcefully dominated. We took their will," said Jackson, whose team improved to 1-1 overall after losing its season-opening game at Tarleton State last week. "And we still didn't play in the manner that we wanted to play. So I'm excited about where we still can go because we have a long way to go still."

Things toughened up for the Panthers considerably next week when they head to Waco to take on the Baylor Bears of the Big 12. These are commonly known as money games, where FCS schools line up for a beatdown and a nice payday for their trouble.

But Jackson has a message for the Bears if they

think it's going to be that easy.

"I tell you what, we are not going to Baylor to pick up no checks. So don't write that story," Jackson said. "Don't write no story about us; we're just going to have a good showing. We are going to Baylor to get a win. That's how we do things. That's how these guys prepare."

In the meantime, TSU and head coach Cris Dishman are having to figure out some things after coming into the SWAC opener feeling pretty good after a 42-30 season-opening win over North Carolina Central. The Tigers will play two of their next three games out of conference, beginning with a trip to El Paso next week to take on UTEP.

As bad a loss as Sunday was, Dishman said the best thing his players can do is put it behind them.

"The message was, we've got a game next week because one loss can turn into two losses," Dishman said. "I don't play Prairie View again until next year. I know on Twitter and social media, they play

each other all of the time, but I don't. I don't have to worry about Prairie View, and I wish them the best of luck. But I do hope they slip up so that we can slip in."

Jackson is sitting comfortably at the top of the West and does not currently need any help to get to where he wants to be.

"We get to sit it out and watch others fight it out for a little bit because we go non-conference for the next two weeks," he said. "This is what we wanted to do. The winner of this game was going to put themselves in the driver's seat in the West and control their own destiny and not need any help. That's what we wanted to do. We don't ever want any help from anybody else."

"We can't rely on other people. We can only rely on what we do within our program."

Based on reporting by Houston Defender.

U.S. Open Influencers Spark Backlash over Ring Lights, Filming as Gauff and Osaka Speak Out

CAU Panthers Extend Win Streak to Three Against Maroon Tigers at Inaugural Big Cat Classic



(Courtesy photo)

By Isaiah Louison
Black Press USA Wire

Excitement filled the air at the inaugural Big Cat Classic, where the Clark Atlanta University Panthers defeated the Morehouse College Maroon Tigers 31-21 to earn their third consecutive victory against Morehouse.

Clark Atlanta struck first in explosive fashion when Trayvon Pinder broke free for a 94-yard rushing touchdown, giving the Panthers an early 7-0 lead.

Morehouse responded with a field goal before Chase Devaughn found the end zone on the ground, keeping the Maroon Tigers within striking distance.

The two teams continued exchanging blows through three quarters. Devaughn scored his second rushing touchdown of the afternoon to cut Clark Atlanta's lead to three and give Morehouse an opportunity to complete the comeback.

The Panthers quickly answered.

Clark Atlanta quarterback Xzavier Jackson connected with Chry/Shawn Sellers for a 50-yard touchdown, swinging the momentum back toward the Panthers and putting Clark Atlanta firmly in control.

The Panthers held on from there, securing the

31-21 victory and another year of bragging rights over their neighbors across the street.

But even with the intensity surrounding the game, students believe the rivalry represents something larger than wins and losses.

"An example of what it is to disagree with one another and have a friendly battle but at the end of the day come back in love and unity so we can come together and elevate the Black community and push it forward," said Demarion King, a senior at Morehouse College.

Morehouse and Clark Atlanta's rivalry spans generations. In 1900, then-Atlanta Baptist College defeated then-Clark University 56-0 in their first rivalry game. Both schools shared a winning streak, with Clark Atlanta holding the longest at 12 games from 1942 to 1953.

For a few hours, Morehouse and Clark Atlanta battled for bragging rights. Despite the game's final score, both institutions remain part of the larger AUC community.

Scores change, players graduate and another team eventually earns the bragging rights, but for those who experience the rivalry themselves, the tradition never really ends.

Based on reporting by Morehouse College - The Maroon Tiger.

By SanAntonio Observer Staff
Black Press USA Wire

Tournament Expands Creator Access As Viral Disruptions Prompt New Reminders About Tennis Etiquette

The U.S. Open's effort to bring more social media creators into one of tennis' biggest events is generating plenty of attention — just not always for what is happening on the court.

The tournament nearly doubled its official content creator program this year, growing from 54 creators in 2025 to roughly 100 in 2026. But viral videos showing guests filming content, posing for photos, and using bright lights during matches have triggered criticism from longtime tennis fans and prompted organizers to reinforce rules against disruptive behavior.

The debate has also drawn responses from two of the sport's most recognizable Black stars, Naomi Osaka and Coco Gauff, who say creators can help tennis reach new audiences — as long as they respect the game's traditions.

Viral Videos Put U.S. Open Influencers Under Scrutiny

One of the biggest controversies erupted during Osaka's first-round match against Anastasia Zakharova at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Play was briefly interrupted after a disturbance from a luxury suite, where a group of women could be seen recording themselves during play. Video of the incident quickly spread across social media.

Another viral clip showed a woman posing for photographs inside Arthur Ashe Stadium while Madison Keys competed against Alina Korneeva below. A bright light was being used as play continued.

@katticuspfinch Tennis etiquette is that you don't even GET UP IN THE MIDDLE OF A POINT but now at @US Open apparently it's ring lights and photo shoots everywhere in the MIDDLE OF A POINT. Listen, I love bringing new people to the open and I'm all for getting more people into tennis because it's such a fun sport to watch but if you're going to disrespect the players, you shouldn't come to the match. And I LOVE content creators bringing tennis to everyone on social media but if you're not going to be respectful of the game being played that's NOT OKAY. You can see ring lights from all over the stadium and the umpire and players made it very clear that it's a HUGE DISTRACTION and it's now impacting the players ability to play the game we are all here to see. And apparently the us open and USTA are just fine with it because their staff is helping it happen. @influencersinthewild @Tennis Channel #nyccontentcreator #naomiosaka #usopen #tennistiktok #usopentennis original sound - There I Ruined It The incidents fueled complaints that content creation was beginning to interfere with a sport where spectators traditionally remain quiet during points and avoid flash photography.

Also Read: Naomi Osaka Turns Heads With Gray Hoodie and Iverson-Inspired Cornrows at U.S. Open The U.S. Open responded by posting additional notices around the stadium and VIP suites, reminding spectators that flash photography, ring lights, and other distracting lighting are prohibited during matches.

Not everyone caught up in the controversy was part of the tournament's official creator program. The women filmed in the suite during Osaka's match, for example, were guests rather than officially credentialed U.S. Open influencers.

Creators Meg Radice and Audrey Jongens also made headlines after losing their tournament access. The pair initially said they believed their credentials had been revoked after they posted photographs of their passes online. The USTA later said they had actually been improperly placed on a food vendor's staff credential list and that vendors are not authorized to credential media members or content



creators.

Osaka And Gauff See Opportunity — With Some Rules

Despite the backlash, Osaka said social media creators could help introduce tennis to people who otherwise might not follow the sport.

"It could be a good thing for people to make the sport of tennis popular to their specific audience, but I think it has to be managed a lot better," Osaka said. "You want people to continue to grow the sport. I just think it has to be in a way that everyone knows the rules and the etiquette."

View this post on Instagram A post shared by Yahoo Sports (@yahoosports)

Gauff offered a similar assessment, saying she welcomes creators and the new audiences they can bring.

"I think it's great to have a different demographic come to the sport," Gauff said, adding that many of the creators she follows already understand tennis etiquette.

She also said that brands inviting guests to major tournaments have some responsibility to ensure newcomers understand what is expected.

"With anything, any venue you go to, like if you're being invited to red carpet, you wouldn't show up in jeans," Gauff said. "So I think it's just follow the etiquette of the sport."

Gauff's comments reflect a broader tension for the tournament: tennis organizations want the visibility influencers can provide, particularly among younger audiences, without allowing content creation to interfere with competition.

That outreach comes as Black players continue to hold an increasingly visible place in American tennis. Gauff, Osaka, Madison Keys, Taylor Townsend and Frances Tiafoe are among the sport's most recognizable names, while participation among Black Americans has also been growing.

The USTA reported that about 3.7 million Black Americans played tennis in 2025, an increase of more than 450,000 from the previous year.

For the U.S. Open, the lesson emerging from this year's influencer experiment may be less about whether creators belong at tennis tournaments and more about making sure everyone who enters Arthur Ashe Stadium understands the same basic rule: create the content, but don't become part of the match.

Based on reporting by San Antonio Observer.

