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## "A Lot of Money to Be Made"

# Ahead of the 2028 LA Olympic Games the CA Black Caucus Encourages Black-Owned Businesses to Lock in Contracts

By Antonio Ray Harvey  
California Black Media

Assemblymember Tina McKinnor (D-Inglewood) wants business owners in her community and across the state to know that LA28 is committed to directing procurement spending in the Greater Los Angeles region toward small businesses for the 2028 Olympic Games.

The Assembly Select Committee on the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism met with LA28 leadership for the second time on April 6 at the State Capitol to review preparations for the 2028 Games and gauge small business involvement.

"I cannot stress it enough that they have to be engaged, prepared, and ready," McKinnor, a member of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), told California Black Media (CBM). "There are a lot of (financial) opportunities. There is a lot of money to be made."

McKinnor, chair of the Assembly Select Committee on the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, aims to ensure Black and minority-owned small businesses in Inglewood and surrounding areas fully understand the opportunities ahead of the Summer 2028 Games.

The LA28 Olympic Games will be held in Los Angeles from July 14 to July 30, 2028. The opening ceremony is set for July 14, and the closing ceremony will take place on July 30, marking the third time Los Angeles has hosted the Summer Games. The Paralympic Games will follow from Aug. 15 to Aug. 27, 2028.

Reynold Hoover, LA28 Chief Executive Officer, and Janet Evans, Chief Athlete Officer, provided updates to the Assembly. Paul Krekorian, executive director of the Los Angeles Office of Major Events, also spoke in person.

The commitment is part of a broader goal to direct 25% of spending to small businesses and



Janet Evans, Olympic gold medalist in swimming and Chief Athlete Officer for the LA28 Organizing Committee, presents an LA28 Olympic hoodie to Arnie Sowell Sr. for his 91st birthday at the California State Capitol. Sowell represented the United States at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, where he finished fourth in the 800-meter final. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

keep 75% of procurement within the Greater Los Angeles region. According to Discover Los Angeles, BuyBlack.org, and BlackOwnedFoodinLA.com, there are numerous Black-owned businesses in Inglewood.

The NAACP Los Angeles is actively engaging with LA28 to ensure economic equity, focusing on creating opportunities for Black vendors and businesses. The organization is advocating for inclusivity in procurement and workforce representation, emphasizing that the Games should benefit the local community.

According to NAACP Los Angeles, LA28 has established a supplier diversity program to identify and contract with minority-, women-, LGBTQ+, and veteran-owned businesses. Inglewood businesses are encouraged to become certified, register on procurement portals, and prepare to bid on contracts for services such as laundry, landscaping, and catering.

McKinnor said Black-owned businesses in Inglewood and the greater Los Angeles area are strongly encouraged—and in many cases required—to be certified to maximize their chances of securing contracts for the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"Get your paperwork ready. You cannot be a business running your business out of your house," McKinnor told CBM. "You must be certified. These businesses are going to be utilized for people who want to eat at restaurants, shop at boutiques, and be entertained (at venues) by Black businesses up and down Market Street."

Market Street is recognized as a historic and cultural commercial hub for Black-owned businesses in downtown Inglewood. Black-owned businesses interested in becoming vendors or suppliers can register their interest through the official LA28 website.

Vendors are also encouraged to reach out to

Black chambers of commerce to access contracting opportunities, navigate complex procurement processes, and ensure equitable participation in the estimated \$11 billion economic impact.

Hoover told McKinnor that the Assembly Select Committee's LA28 "procurement strategy" includes "hyper-local small businesses and micro-small businesses." He added that the leadership team plans to host roundtable discussions with various organizations to discuss procurement and how local businesses can learn about available opportunities.

"From that perspective, we are taking every step that we can," Hoover said.

In January, Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles), a member of the CLBC, hosted the LA28 Games Workforce and Procurement Symposium at Exposition Park, a 160-acre urban and cultural hub. Hoover was one of the featured speakers.

The event connected Hoover and LA28 leadership with South Los Angeles workforce and business leaders to discuss equitable access to jobs, contracts, and long-term economic impact.

"We partnered with LA28 to host this event to ensure South LA working families and businesses get a fair shot at the jobs and contracts created by the Games," Smallwood-Cuevas stated. "This event shows what's possible when our community is included early and treated as a valuable partner."

Vendors interested in securing contracts related to the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games are encouraged to visit RAMP LA at <http://www.rampla.org>.



The Assembly Select Committee on the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the LA28 Organizing Committee, and former Olympic athletes take a group photo before a committee meeting on April 6, 2026, at the California State Capitol. Shown left to right are Chief Athlete Officer for the LA28 Organizing Committee Janet Evans; Sen. Laura Richardson (D-San Pedro); Arnie Sowell Jr.; Arnold "Arnie" Sowell Sr.; LA28 Chief Executive Officer Reynold Hoover; co-chair Asm. Chris Ward (D-San Diego); co-chair Asm. Tina McKinnor (D-Inglewood); and Sen. Benjamin Allen (D-Santa Monica). CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

## Dave Chappelle Addresses Double Standards Against Black Performers, Responds to Saudi Show Backlash About "Dirty Money" Claims



Dave Chappelle responds on Saudi Arabia show backlash

Comedian Dave Chappelle responds to renewed criticism over his Saudi Arabia show appearance, where critics questioned his pay and principles. He argues that accusations of "dirty money" reflect double standards in how Black comedians are judged for earning abroad.

Chappelle performed in Saudi Arabia, where he headlined the first Riyadh Comedy Festival in 2025. He appeared alongside comedians like Bill Burr and Louie C.K., sparking debate over comedy, free speech, and money in restrictive regions.

Chappelle addressed the backlash during an April 15 episode of NPR's Newsmakers podcast with Michel Martin. He said his work continues to draw global demand and pointed out that Saudi comedy has moved from underground performances to large public shows over the past two decades.

According to Atlanta Black Star, he also described restrictions placed on his set, saying organizers gave him a list of topics he could not discuss. He said he incorporated those limits into his performance and turned them into part of the joke, which landed strongly with the crowd.

Chappelle said he had previously declined an earlier invitation to perform in Saudi Arabia due to political concerns, including the 2018 killing of Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey. He added that despite past concerns, he later observed ongoing business relationships between Saudi Arabia, US companies, and major investors.

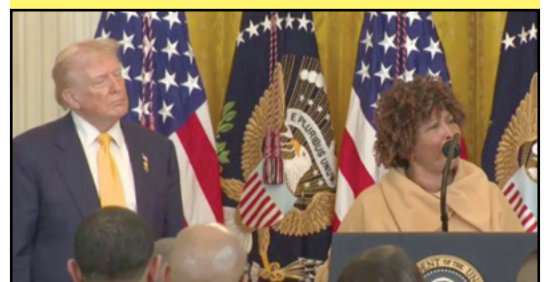
He also referenced his Netflix special *The Unstoppable*, and said he does not feel guilty about accepting international bookings. He argued that criticism of his earnings reflects a pattern where Black performers face harsher judgment when they earn money abroad.

He pushed back on claims that his Saudi earnings represent "dirty money." He said that the label appears selectively and does not account for how global entertainment deals operate across industries and governments.

The discussion also spilled into political commentary online, with references to President Trump and US-Saudi economic ties. Some users pointed to Jared Kushner, who secured a multibillion-dollar Saudi-backed investment for his private equity firm in 2021.

Reactions remain divided, with supporters backing Chappelle's argument about double standards, while critics question his decision to perform in Saudi Arabia.

## Black Grandma Defends Trump, Says "Get Off That Man's Back and Let Him Do His Job"



Forlesia Cook

Forlesia Cook, a Washington D.C. resident who lost her grandson to murder in 2017, spoke at a White House Black History Month event and defended Donald Trump. She told critics to stop attacking him and said he is doing his job.

Trump invited Cook to speak during the White House Black History Month celebration held in the East Room last February. She took the opportunity to speak directly about him, pushing back against criticism in front of the crowd.

Cook grew firm as she repeated her message. "Get off the man's back," she said, according to Fox News. "Let him do his job. He's doing the right thing. Back up off him." She added, "And grandma said it." The audience responded with loud applause and cheers.

She also expressed strong support in emotional remarks, saying, "I love him, I don't want to hear nothing you got to say about that racist stuff. And don't be looking at me on the news, hating on me because I'm standing up for somebody that deserves to be standing for."

Trump responded from the stage with praise and humor, calling her comments powerful. He suggested she should consider running for public office and said she had his endorsement, which drew laughter from the audience.

Cook has spoken publicly for years about her grandson, Marty William McMillan Jr., who was killed in 2017 at age 22 in Washington, D.C. She later testified before Congress and continued speaking about gun violence and its impact on families in her community.

She also referenced Trump's decision to deploy the National Guard to Washington, D.C., during her remarks and said she supported his approach to public safety. She described him by saying, "he keeps it real. I appreciate that because I can trust him."

# As US Birth Rate Falls, Feds' Response May Make Pregnancy More Dangerous

By Céline Gounder

The number of babies born in the United States fell again last year.

According to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 3.6 million births in 2025, a 1% decline from 2024. The fertility rate dropped to 53.1 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44, down 23% since 2007.

The Trump administration has said it wants to reverse this trend. President Donald Trump has called for "a new baby boom," and aides have solicited proposals from outside advocates and policy groups ranging from baby bonuses to expanded fertility planning. The administration is also proposing to reshape the federal government's only dedicated family planning program: Title X.

For more than five decades, Title X has been geared—with bipartisan support—toward giving low-income women access to contraception, screening for sexually transmitted infections, and reproductive health care regardless of ability to pay. At its peak, the safety net program served more than 5 million patients a year. Six in 10 Title X clients have reported the program as their sole source of health care in a given year.

In early April, the Department of Health and Human Services invited nonprofit organizations to apply for Title X grants for fiscal year 2027, which begins in October. The 67-page Notice of Funding Opportunity included only one mention of contraception—describing it as overprescribed, associated with negative side effects, and part of

a broader "overreliance on pharmaceutical and surgical treatments."

The grant notification reshapes the program from its traditional public health intervention efforts to focus on fertility, family formation, and reproductive health conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome, endometriosis, low testosterone, and erectile dysfunction.

While Title X will continue to help women "achieve healthy pregnancies," the grant document does not explicitly reference preventing unintended pregnancies—a long-standing goal



of the program. Jessica Marcella, who oversaw the Title X program as a senior official in the Biden administration, said the new funding notice amounts to a wholesale redefinition of family planning.

"What we're seeing is trying to use our nation's family planning as a Trojan horse for an

entirely different agenda," Marcella said, noting that Trump has proposed eliminating Title X altogether.

Birth Rates and Fertility Trends

The administration is overhauling Title X in the context of declining birth rates. But researchers who study fertility trends say the decline is driven by forces that have little to do with contraception access and that restricting it is unlikely to produce more births.

The most important factors, according to demographer Alison Gemmill of UCLA, are timing-related. "Childbearing is increasingly delayed as part of a broader shift toward later adult milestones, including stable employment, leaving the parental home, and marriage," she said.

Most American women, she said, still complete their childbearing years with an average of two children, suggesting a shift toward smaller families rather than an increase in childlessness.

"Having children has become more contingent and more planned," she said.

Much of the decline since 2007 reflects women postponing births rather than forgoing them.

"The average number of babies women are having in their whole lives has not fallen. It's still more than 2.0 for women aged 45," said Phillip Cohen, a professor of sociology at the University of Maryland.

Phillip Levine, an economist at Wellesley College, said the birth rate has declined due to shifts in how women approach work, leisure, and parenting. "Efforts to reverse those patterns would

Continued on page A2

# Our Genes Can Shape Our Health:

## The Importance of Early Diagnosis and a Fighting Chance

By **Quenton Turner-Gee**

When I was rushed to the hospital in 2020 for heart-related concerns, I was initially diagnosed with hypertensive kidney disease—meaning the cause of my kidney damage was high blood pressure. In May 2021, my kidney function dropped to less than 15%. I immediately began dialysis treatments, and today, I continue to receive in-center hemodialysis three times a week.

When I wanted to know what caused my kidney disease and why it progressed so quickly, no one could tell me. I was told that I didn't need to know.

That's when I knew that I needed to strongly advocate for myself if I was going to get answers about my kidney disease. I persisted and sought out more information. I learned about genetic testing on my own from a virtual educational event. After going through genetic testing, the results revealed that I had the genetic variants that put me at risk for APOL1-mediated kidney disease (AMKD), a serious and rapidly progressive form of genetic kidney disease.

A lot of people thought I would be devastated by the diagnosis. But receiving those test results

was like a rebirth. I now had a sense of my kidney identity.

Having the information equipped me with the knowledge to approach my doctor for further testing. Only after seeing the genetic test results did my doctor finally order a biopsy to confirm what the test told us. The biopsy showed scarring on the kidney that likely began when I was 18 years old and confirmed that I had focal segmental glomerulosclerosis (FSGS), a rare genetic kidney disease that can be associated with AMKD. While my treatment plan remains unchanged, this information could influence outcomes if I am able to receive a kidney transplant. I am working toward being placed on the transplant waitlist and am losing weight to meet eligibility criteria.

The diagnosis also enabled me to help my family be more proactive in their own kidney health. I encouraged my five siblings and parents to undergo testing. Those of us with ancestors from Western or central Africa, who may identify as Black, African American, Afro-Caribbean, Hispanic or Latino/Latina, are more likely to have APOL1 risk variants.

As someone living with end-stage kidney disease and a genetic form of a rare kidney disease, I've learned just how deeply our genes can shape our health. Many people, especially in the Black community, don't know they could carry mutations in the APOL1 gene that raise the risk of developing AMKD. This isn't just about statistics. It's about us, our families, our futures and our right to early diagnosis, better care, and a fighting chance.

I'm proud to stand with the American Kidney Fund (AKF) to help spread the word about AMKD and APOL1-Mediated Kidney Disease (AMKD) Awareness Day on April 28, an annual campaign to educate communities, healthcare providers, and patients about this serious genetic kidney disease impacting people of West and Central African descent. Knowing your risk today can help you take action now to protect your kidney health. More information about AMKD, including resources to share widely, can be located at [KidneyFund.org/APOL1Aware](http://KidneyFund.org/APOL1Aware).

Quenton Turner-Gee is a husband, father and resident of Richmond, VA.



## Sherry Tucker Brown: Forging a Family Heritage Despite Being Denied Another

By **Lloyd B. Davis**

*New York Amsterdam News*

Sherry Tucker Brown's family roots run deep in New York, and also in a familiar brand of alcoholic spirits.

Her grandmother, Francis Dewar Tucker, who was born in Montego Bay, Jamaica, was the daughter of John Dewar 2nd, the son of John Dewar, founder of Dewar Scotch Whiskey.

There is no known official record of Black family members who are descendants of the Dewar dynasty, but Brown says she is acquainted with numerous Black Dewar descendants in Jamaica.

"I have met Black Dewars in Jamaica, and there are still Black and white Dewars who live in

Jamaica," said Brown who turned 80 in January. Her grandmother, Brown says, was sent with her sister to New York, but they had other family members who could pass for white, and were sent to Scotland. However, none of her family shared in the Dewar family inheritance. She said her whole family in New York grew up knowing this family history and a rule was instilled that no Dewar Whiskey was not allowed in their home.

"That was really the story of the United States," she said. "I wasn't getting any of the money, so why was I supporting them?"

Even without the inheritance, the family made a prominent name for themselves. "Although we didn't inherit the Scotch whiskey money, the family, the Tuckers still did very well and did very well by their children and their children's children," said Brown.

Sherry's Uncle, Alfred Tucker, a World War I veteran became the eighth Black Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in America, and the second Black CPA in New York City, working in an office

on Lenox Avenue and 125th Street. He later went on to work as an accountant and field auditor at the New York State Transit Commission.

"No matter what was going on in the United States then, I mean the total segregation, he still went to law school and he graduated from Columbia [as] a CPA."

Brown, the youngest daughter of five girls, all born in the Bronx, attended the historically Black University Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. She later went to work for the New York Urban League Street Academy and also for the City of New York as a counseling department manager for a vocational training program located in what is now the Theresa Towers on 125th Street.

She is now co-principal of The Tucker Brown Group, a Cape Cod based consulting firm.

Brown was excited about sharing her family's story and wanted to let people know of her family's contributions to the fabric of New York and Harlem. Despite her family not inheriting anything from the Dewars, she said they did build a name for



*Sherry Tucker Brown (center) with friends Paula Peters (left) and Tanya Hart (right) Credit: Courtesy Sherry Tucker Brown (Credit: Courtesy Sherry Tucker Brown) Credit: Sherry Tucker Brown*

themselves and helped to enrich their communities. "It's actually a part of African American history. Some of us know where we came from and some of us don't."

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## As US Birth Rate Falls, Feds' Response May Make Pregnancy More Dangerous

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be more successful if they can make childbearing more desirable, not make it harder to prevent a pregnancy," he said.

Asked about the role of contraception in reducing maternal mortality and how the new funding notice advances that goal, HHS press secretary Emily Hilliard said in a statement: "Applicants for the 2027 Title X funding cycle will be expected to align with the administration's stated priorities in the released Notice of Funding Opportunity. HHS, under the leadership of Secretary Kennedy and President Trump, will continue to support policies that support life, family well-being, maternal health, and address the chronic disease epidemic. HHS remains focused on improving maternal outcomes and ensuring programs are administered consistent with applicable law."

Marcella said the new funding notice is the product of two converging forces: the Make America Healthy Again movement, with its skepticism of conventional medicine and emphasis on lifestyle and behavioral interventions, and a pronatalist agenda that seeks to boost birth rates by steering policy toward family formation.

The document's language reflects both: It repeatedly invokes "optimal health" and "chronic disease" while sidelining the contraceptive services that have defined Title X for half a century.

Clare Coleman, president and CEO of the National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association, which represents health professionals focused on family planning, said tying Title X to birth-rate goals replaces individual decision-making with a government objective. The program "is designed to facilitate access to family planning services, including services to achieve and prevent pregnancy," she said.

Title X's New Focus

The administration's changes have been welcomed on the right.

Emma Waters, a senior policy analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation, who has advocated for what she calls "restorative reproductive medicine," said the new funding notice reflects overdue attention to neglected aspects of women's health.

"I was particularly encouraged to see language that spoke to the delays in diagnosis for conditions like endometriosis, the need for women to practically understand how their cycle and fertility works, and to ensure that real root-cause was promoted through Title X," Waters said.

She described the notice as an expansion, not a narrowing, of the program's mission: "I see this iteration of Title X as the fulfillment of its purpose. The goal was never just 'more contraception' but a wholesale empowerment of women to govern their own fertility."

Waters also argued that untreated reproductive health problems may contribute to lower birth rates. "One of the interesting aspects of this debate,

and one that is often overlooked, is the degree to which painful and unaddressed reproductive health problems may suppress or create ambivalence around a woman's desire to have kids," she said, pointing to endometriosis.

An estimated 5% to 10% of women of reproductive age have endometriosis, and of those, 30%-50% experience infertility. Scientifically speaking, the relationship is an association, not a proven cause. Women aren't screened for endometriosis if they don't have symptoms, and the condition may be more prevalent than is recognized. Researchers still do not fully understand why some women with endometriosis struggle to conceive while others do not, and treating the disease does not reliably restore fertility.

Infertility rates in the U.S., meanwhile, have not risen. An analysis of federal survey data found them essentially flat between 1995 and 2019, even as the national birth rate fell sharply — a divergence that points away from untreated reproductive disease as an explanation.

Meanwhile, in February, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists issued new clinical guidelines enabling earlier diagnosis of endometriosis without surgery, a step toward addressing the delays Waters described. But the first-line treatment ACOG recommends is hormonal therapy, part of the same category of care the funding notice dismisses as part of an "overreliance on pharmaceutical and surgical treatments." The effect, reproductive health experts say, is a contradiction: Title X is now prioritizing diagnosis of endometriosis while deemphasizing the drugs clinicians use to treat it.

Treatments that have been shown to improve fertility in women with endometriosis, such as laparoscopic surgery and in vitro fertilization, are not covered by Title X. When President Richard Nixon signed Title X into law in 1970, he described it as a way to expand access to family planning services — helping women determine the number and spacing of their children by making contraception and related preventive care more widely available, particularly for those who could not afford it. Medicaid, not Title X, is the primary government health insurance program covering health care for low-income women, but, like many commercial insurance plans, it does not cover IVF.

Many of the conditions prioritized in the funding notice deserve attention, said Liz Romer, a former chief clinical adviser for the HHS Office of Population Affairs who helped write updated guidelines for the family planning program. But they fall outside the scope of what Title X can realistically provide.

"There's not even enough funding to support the core premise of contraception," Romer said. "And so, if you want to expand Title X funding, you can expand the scope, but you can't move away from the foundation."

The emergence of an anticontraception

ideology within federal health policy is striking, she said, given how broadly the public supports access to birth control. Eight in 10 women of childbearing age surveyed by KFF in 2024 reported having used some form of contraception in the previous 12 months.

Laura Lindberg, director of the Concentration in Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice at Rutgers School of Public Health, said, "If contraception is sidelined in Title X, it won't just change language on paper but will show up as fewer options and more barriers for patients." Funding could move away from providers who offer a full range of contraceptive care, she added, "toward organizations that are ideologically opposed to contraception and don't deliver the same standard of health care services."

The Stakes Are High

The United States already has one of the highest maternal mortality rates among wealthy nations — 17.9 deaths per 100,000 live births as of 2024. According to the CDC, 4 in 5 pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. may be preventable. Medical research shows that pregnancy carries substantially higher risks of blood clots, stroke, and cardiovascular complications than hormonal contraception.

And since the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision in 2022, which overturned the constitutional right to abortion established by Roe v. Wade, access to abortion has been significantly curtailed across much of the country. While national abortion numbers have risen, driven largely by telehealth and interstate access, research shows births have increased in states with bans, with an estimated 32,000 additional births annually, disproportionately among young women and women of color.

Dr. Christine Dehlendorf, who directs the Person-Centered Reproductive Health Program at the University of California-San Francisco, said "there is absolutely no evidence for any positive outcome of restricting access to contraception." Restrictions would instead increase demand for abortion care and make it harder for women to prevent high-risk pregnancies.

Since Trump returned to office, more than a dozen Title X grantees have had their grants frozen, forcing some health centers to stop delivering services, lay off staff, or close. During the first Trump administration, regulatory changes led to a decline in Title X participation from more than 4 million patients to 1.5 million. The program grew slowly under the Biden administration, reaching about 3 million clients, before the current round of disruptions began.

The second Trump administration's overhaul of the program, Marcella said, "directly undermines the public health intent of our nation's family planning program and will potentially exclude millions of individuals from getting the care they have relied on for decades. It's bad policy."

# Black Culture Takes Center Stage as 7th Annual Jazz & Arts Festival Returns to Celebrate Legacy and Community

In its seventh year, The Dymally Institute is bringing its annual Jazz & Arts Festival onto its home campus at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), to be held on April 25th, 2026, from 1pm to 8pm, with doors opening at 12 noon. A stellar lineup of incredible artists that includes the incomparable, five-time Grammy award-winning jazz vocalist, Diane Reeves, best known for her remarkable performance recordings of "I Got it Bad and That Ain't Good," "Quiet After the Storm," "That Day," "Bridges," and too many others to name. Cuban American jazz trumpeter, pianist, timbalero, and composer, and ten-time Grammy award-winning, Arturo Sandoval, who also won an Emmy Award for his composition and performances heard on "The Mambo Kings."

Arturo is world-renowned and the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama in 2013. He also received the 2024 Kennedy Center Honor. Additionally, performing will be Grammy award winner, Trevor Ware and the Positive People featuring jazz singer, Sidney Jacobs, and Grammy-nominated R&B artist Kenyon Dixon will be featured, best known for his R&B/Soul sounds including "Higher Ground," "Expectations," and "Come as You Are."

New Jazz Underground, the NYC-based trio of Juilliard alumni—Abdias Armenteros (saxophone), Sebastian Rios (bass), and TJ Reddick (drums). Known for blending traditional jazz with modern, often ironic, digital-age sensibilities, they have risen from street performances to a popular YouTube following and festival performances. Many other artists will be featured on the two-stage programs



Diane Reeves and Arturo Sandoval

and the day-long event with festival hosts, radio personality Pat Prescott, and comedian Jay Lamont.

This festival is co-produced by Rainbow Promotions. With over three decades of experience, they are the longtime promoters of Southern California's Long Beach and San Diego Jazz

Festivals. The Mervyn M. Dymally African American Political & Economic Institute (MDAAPEI) at California State University Dominguez Hills, through the development of a rich oral and digital history project, the MDAAPEI explores and

documents the professional lives and achievements of African American public-elected officials, business leaders, and policymakers. The Institute also examines the impact of its public policy efforts on the political and economic development of African Americans and other disadvantaged communities.

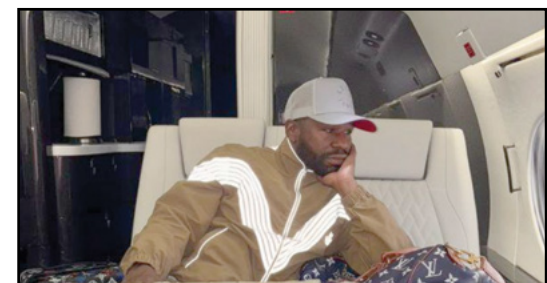
The MDAAPEI provides training programs for current and future leaders, including the Dymally Fellows Program, which allows students of color to travel internationally to expand their worldview and higher educational ambitions. The MDAAPEI also supports the African American Leadership Training Program for high school students and entrepreneur-directed training for local businesses. The Institute produces and promotes culturally relevant events for CSUDH students and the community at large, that highlight the Dymally influence on the African Diaspora.

Headed by Dr. Anthony A. Samad, Ph.D. current Executive Director of the Institute, their mission is recognized as a cultural staple not only on the campus of CSUDH, but around the world. Through cultural engagement, research, and leadership mentoring, Dymally Institute's goal is to build community and institutional memory through a digital archive of the history and contributions of African American elected officials, business, and community leaders who have influenced the progress of the State of California and the world.

To learn more or purchase tickets, please visit the official website at [www.csudh.edu](http://www.csudh.edu)

For press inquiries, contact Dr. Anthony A. Samad at (310) 243-2659 or Gail Gibson, GPR (323) 799-6266, email: [bayblack@aol.com](mailto:bayblack@aol.com)

## Private Jet Company Sues Floyd Mayweather Jr. Over Unpaid \$105K Bill



Floyd Mayweather Jr. sued for unpaid private jet bill

Floyd Mayweather Jr. is facing a lawsuit over claims he failed to pay a private jet bill linked to a 2025 charter flight. The case alleges he and co-defendants owe more than \$105,000 for aviation services used during the trip.

According to Complex, the complaint was filed in Los Angeles County by Jet Set Aircraft Inc. It names Mayweather, his company TBE Aviation, and others, alleging they did not pay for private aviation services tied to the charter arrangement.

Court records show the dispute involves at least \$105,690.01. The company says it provided full flight support at the defendants' request, including pilots, fuel, maintenance, and flight coordination.

An itemized invoice attached to the lawsuit outlines the charges. It includes flight planning, crew services, fuel costs, and maintenance work, all combined into the unpaid balance.

The lawsuit includes claims for breach of contract, unjust enrichment, and fraud. It states the services were used with assurances of payment, but the company says those promises were not kept.

Jet Set Aircraft Inc also claims the defendants accepted the services despite concerns about payment practices. It argues that compensation was expected throughout the arrangement, but the final bill remained unpaid.

As of now, neither Mayweather nor his representatives has publicly responded to the lawsuit. The case adds to ongoing legal and financial disputes involving the boxing star.

## Don Lemon Criticizes Kanye West's Fans, Says They're "Standing With Trump"



Don Lemon, Kanye West

Don Lemon criticized Kanye West's fans as the rapper continues to face renewed backlash during his music comeback. He said that supporting Kanye is closely tied to supporting Donald Trump, as debates around West's past remarks and recent performances continue to grow.

Lemon made the comments in a video posted Monday on Facebook. In the clip, he described Kanye West as a "bigot" and an "antisemite," and questioned why some fans continue to support him despite ongoing controversy.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, he also brought up how some Kanye West supporters criticize other controversial public figures. Lemon pointed to R. Kelly, the R&B singer currently serving a long prison sentence for sex crimes, and questioned what he called inconsistent standards among fans.

Lemon then connected West's fan base to politics. He said that backing Kanye West also signals support for Donald Trump, linking West's past political alignment with broader public debate about his influence and image.

The comments come as Kanye West continues performing in major U.S. shows. He recently staged two sold-out concerts in Los Angeles, marking one of his biggest domestic returns in years despite ongoing criticism tied to past antisemitic remarks and earlier public controversies.

At the same time, West has also faced setbacks internationally. He was blocked from traveling to the United Kingdom, which led to the cancellation of his planned Wireless Festival appearance after sponsors pulled support following renewed criticism.

Reactions to West's recent shows remain split. Some attendees said they chose to focus on the music and separate it from his past statements, while discussions about his reputation continue online.

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#### SUMMONS

#### (CITACION JUDICIAL)

CASE NUMBER (Número del Caso): 25SMCV05692  
 NOTICE TO DEFENDANT (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): MELODY SAHABI, FARAMARZ SAHABI, and DOES 1 to 50  
 YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF (LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO) EL DEMANDANTE): SHAHIN JABILI  
**NOTICE!** You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.  
 You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal

papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp)), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages,

money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site ([www.lawhelpcalifornia.org](http://www.lawhelpcalifornia.org)), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp)), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. **NOTE:** The court has a statutory lien

for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. **¡AVISO!** Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación. Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en

formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California ([www.sucorte.ca.gov](http://www.sucorte.ca.gov)), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia. Hay otros requisitos legales.

Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services ([www.lawhelpcalifornia.org](http://www.lawhelpcalifornia.org)), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California ([www.sucorte.ca.gov](http://www.sucorte.ca.gov)) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. **AVISO:** Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y

los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso. The name and address of the court is (El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Santa Monica Courthouse 1725 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401 The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is (El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del

demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Alan S. Turlington, Esq.; Victor Vera, Esq.; TUSH LAW LTD., 18071 Irvine Blvd., Tustin, CA 92780  
 Tel. (949) 575-8874  
 DATE (Fecha): October 31, 2025  
 David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court By J. Hernandez, Deputy (Adjunto) (SEAL)  
**NOTICE TO THE PERSON SERVED:** You are served.  
**LOS ANGELES NEWS OBSERVER**  
**PUB: Apr 16, 23, 30, May 7, 2026**

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Features

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SIGNED: George Rodriguez, CFO  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 02/10/2023  
This statement filed with the County Clerk of KERN County on: March 11, 2026  
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA  
County Clerk  
By: D HINOJOSA, 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 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 March 11, 2031  
**BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER**  
**PUB: Apr 22, 29, May 6, 13, 2026**

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**  
**FILE NO: 2026-B2030**  
Doing business as:  
**NITA'S CREATIVE SPACE** at 3117 HARROGATE LN, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309  
Mailing Address: 3117 HARROGATE LN, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309  
County: KERN  
Full name of registrant(s): **JUANITA MARIA LLAMAS** at 3117 HARROGATE LN, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309  
The business is conducted by: an Individual  
SIGNED: **JUANITA MARIA LLAMAS**  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A  
This statement filed with the County Clerk of KERN County on: April 3, 2026  
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA  
County Clerk  
By: S CEJA, Deputy  
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state

of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 ET SEQ., business and professions code). I declare that all information in this Statement is true and correct. (A) Registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of a crime  
This statement expires on April 3, 2031  
**BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER**  
**PUB: Apr 22, 29, May 6, 13, 2026**

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**  
**FILE NO: 2026-B2435**  
Doing business as:  
**PROVIDENCE PEAK PROPERTIES** at 9530 HAGEMAN RD STE. B123, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93312  
Mailing Address: 9530 HAGEMAN RD STE. B123, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93312  
County: KERN  
Full name of registrant(s): **PROVIDENCE PEAK PROPERTIES CORP.** at 9530 HAGEMAN RD STE. B123, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93312  
The business is conducted by: Corporation  
SIGNED: **NICOLE MARIE GOMEZ,**

**CEO/President**  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A  
This statement filed with the County Clerk of KERN County on: April 17, 2026  
AIMEE X. ESPINOZA  
County Clerk  
By: M CEJA, Deputy  
This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a 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 April 17, 2031  
**BAKERSFIELD NEWS OBSERVER**  
**PUB: Apr 22, 29, May 6, 13, 2026**

# When Wall Street Buys Up the Neighborhood – The Impact on Black Californians

By Craig J. DeLuz  
*California Black Media*

Homeownership has long been one of the most dependable ways for everyday families to build wealth—not through speculation, but through the steady accumulation of equity in a place they call home. For Black Californians, this path has always been narrower because of historical barriers to wealth building.

Today, that path is narrowing further, and not entirely for the usual reasons: inflation, zoning, or supply shortages.

A key factor is the large-scale acquisition of single-family homes by institutional investors. Hedge funds and private equity firms are not merely participating in the market; they are reshaping it in ways that hit Black Californians hardest. Because these buyers can make all-cash offers at scale, they outbid families relying on Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) loans before many even see the listing.

That is not competition. It is displacement.

The numbers require precision. In the second quarter of 2025, investors—individual and institutional—bought one-third of all single-family homes sold nationwide, the highest share in five years. Yet small “mom and pop” landlords (those with fewer than eleven properties) still own 91% of investor-held homes. Large institutional players represent a smaller national share, but concentration matters most locally. By 2022, 32 large firms owned 450,000 single-family homes; the top five owned nearly 300,000. Research shows investor purchases cluster in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, where cash deals dominate. These are precisely the neighborhoods where many Black Californians seek starter homes and where families are least able to compete with institutional cash.

The predictable results follow. Prices rise. First-time Black buyers are crowded out. Homes that could have anchored generational wealth become permanent rentals. The homeownership gap widens.

Not all institutional landlords operate the same way, but the largest have drawn serious scrutiny. Invitation Homes, managing more than 84,000 single-family rentals nationwide, settled with the FTC in 2024 for \$48 million over allegations of advertising rents that excluded mandatory fees totaling more than \$1,700 a year.

A 2024 California Department of Justice investigation reported that Invitation Homes’ portfolio in California had about 12,000 properties.

Families learned about charges for smart-home technology, utilities, air filters, and service packages only after paying non-refundable application fees and signing leases—with no opt-out. Between 2018 and 2021, the company’s average annual lease fees nearly doubled. It later spent millions fighting tenant protections against rent hikes and evictions. This is not an open market of informed equals; it is a market in which one side holds decisive informational and financial advantages.

Algorithmic rent-setting adds another layer. The Biden administration’s Council of Economic Advisers estimated that such tools raised renter costs by an average of \$70 per month—\$3.8 billion nationwide in 2023. Federal antitrust agencies have warned that feeding proprietary data into shared pricing platforms can amount to unlawful collusion even without explicit agreements.

Meanwhile, a Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta study found large corporate landlords file eviction



Craig J. DeLuz

notices 8% more often than smaller owners, with some institutional firms filing at rates 18%–19% higher.

Housing instability carries costs—disrupted schooling, family stress, neighborhood decline—that fall heaviest on Black renters with the fewest resources.

Invitation Homes is not an outlier so much as an illustration of what happens when oversight is weak and the incentives point in one direction. Financial engineering and community stability are not always in conflict, but when they are, the community rarely wins.

Research from the Charlotte Urban Institute found that higher corporate-landlord concentration in the Atlanta metro area was associated with lower Black homeownership rates, while investor-owned properties were more prone to dilapidation.

Black Californians face the same risk if institutional buying expands unchecked in the state’s tight markets. California’s Assembly Bill 1240, authored by Assemblymembers Alex Lee (D-San Jose) and Sasha Renée Pérez (D-Alhambra), would bar business entities owning more than 1,000 single-family homes from buying more for rental. It is not radical. It sets a size-based threshold while leaving room for small landlords who serve a real need. Federal Executive Order 14376, signed in January 2026, similarly directs agencies to stop facilitating mass purchases by large investors. Earlier, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac helped seed this market—backing over \$2 billion in loans to institutional buyers before the programs ended in 2018. It is reasonable to ask whether policy should now tilt back toward families.

Markets work when they reward genuine competition and broad participation. When they systematically lock out the very buyers they were meant to serve—especially Black Californians seeking the generational asset of homeownership—the intellectually honest response is to examine the outcomes, not the label “free market.” A family that owns its home gains compounding equity, stability that cannot vanish with thirty days’ notice, and something to pass to the next generation. Black Californians have long understood this. The evidence shows current policy, by design or drift, is not delivering that opportunity equitably.

Skepticism of any single legislative fix is healthy. But indifference to the problem is not. For Black Californians, the question is straightforward: will the housing market continue to widen the wealth gap, or will we insist on rules that keep the door to ownership open?

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Zohran Mamdani at the Resist Fascism Rally in Bryant Park on Oct 27th, 2024. Bingjiefu He / Wikimedia Commons.

# Black America's 2026 Urban Challenges: Mayor Mamdani Case Study

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

Today across the United States of America in some of the largest urban cities, Black Americans are having renewed nightmares about being taken for granted, ignored and being erase in history and in the public square.

Ethnic cleansing is an insidious form of systematic racism. In response to the increasing “Browning of America,” concerns are raised about the unfulfillment of prior commitments that were supposed to ensure racial equality in municipal politics, economics, and urban revitalization.

New York City is the nation’s largest city. The presence and contributions of African Americans to the centuries-long development and evolution of the city are rarely highlighted and saluted. The election of Zohran Mamdani would not have been possible without the huge turnout of African American and Latino voters. Yet the interests of Black America in the nation’s largest metropolis appear to be triage routinely by the Mamdani Administration.

We are the Black Press of America. For the past 199 years, since the first publication of Freedom’s Journal in New York City in 1827, we have had to call out those who pretended to be our political allies. Accountability from those we help to elect is A fair and just demand.

Voters of color – both Black and Latino New Yorkers – backed Andrew Cuomo heavily in the primary, but then ultimately decided to give Zohran Mamdani a chance: <https://manhattan.institute/article/how-mamdani-flipped-the-black-and-hispanic-vote-overcoming-their-skepticism-on-housing-transit-and-public-safety-and-reportedly-moved-by-his-affordability-agenda>.

This trust, on the part of Black voters in particular, may have been misplaced. Why? Several troubling early signs that the new mayor is disregarding New Yorkers of color, and treating them like Ralph Ellison’s iconic Invisible Man.

Thus far Mayor Mamdani has appointed no Black deputy mayors. This is a glaring signal

to Black voters who voted for Mamdani on the promise of racial equity in the city’s administration. Dose Mamdani value our insights, lived experiences, or our voices in crafting critical policies in City Hall? <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/15/nyregion/mamdani-black-latino-diversity.html>

Mamdani was forced to apologize to Black New Yorkers for overlooking the historical contributions of enslaved and indigenous people to building the city when he talked about a city “built by immigrants” in his inauguration speech. <https://www.blackenterprise.com/zohran-mamdani-apologies-to-black-new-yorkers/>

The Mamdani administration is holding a series of “Rental Ripoff” hearings, spearheaded by Cea Weaver, the director of his Office to Protect Tenants, who called homeownership a form of white supremacy. The mayor is reaching out to help private landlords instead of prioritizing fixing public housing (NYCHA) which has a dismal track record of terrible conditions (no heat, year-plus waits for repairs, rampant pests and mold).

90 percent of the more than 511,000 NYCHA residents are Black and Latino, which is part of a larger trend in which 95 percent of Black households in New York State live in highly segregated buildings and/or neighborhoods. NYCHA is the largest landlord in NYC, so the Mamdani administration telling residents to wait even longer for a solution to their long-standing sub-standard living conditions has to be challenged.

The unfolding case study of Mayor Mamdani in New York City reveals that we have to keep voting with record voter turnouts. But after the elections, we must hold mayors and other elected officials accountable. Mamdani still has time to ensure greater equity in NYC. But will he do the right thing at the right time?

Rev. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and can be reached at dr.bchavis@nnpa.org

# The Future of Work

By Louis J. King II  
*President & CEO, OIC of America*

The future of work is no longer a distant idea — it’s here. Automation, artificial intelligence, remote work, and the green economy are redefining the workforce, and at breakneck speed. For the communities we serve and partner with, this moment presents both a challenge and a huge opportunity. The question is: will we be passengers or drivers of this transformation?

At OIC of America, we’re preparing people to lead in this new world of work and not get left behind. That means teaching digital and AI skills, expanding access to technology, and making sure every learner has the tools to succeed in a tech-enabled economy. But it also means investing in emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability — skills that are just as important in a fast-changing and increasingly competitive world.

The World Economic Forum predicts that by 2030, up to 85 million jobs may be displaced by automation — but 97 million new roles will emerge. These new jobs will require new skillsets. The future will reward lifelong learners — those who are willing to train, pivot, and grow. And for the skilled trades where we focus on preparing people for the workforce, the possibilities to chart new paths are endless.

In Pennsylvania, our Delaware Valley Alliance (DVA) serves as the blueprint for this evolution. The DVA is an essential component of the infrastructure needed to ensure communities secure the necessary resources to thrive long-term. By integrating housing, public safety, career training, health and more into a cohesive advocacy framework, we aren’t just filling jobs; we are securing economic independence for Pennsylvania’s talented, yet untapped (and overlooked) workers. This coordinated effort is structured so that the Commonwealth’s booming industry surges in life sciences, data centers, and advanced manufacturing also benefit its citizens more equitably. These wins reflect a statewide victory for its citizens; as the “future of work” arrives, no community is left on the sidelines of progress. We look forward to scaling this approach in other communities where we serve. For communities that have historically been left out of opportunity and forgotten, the future of work must include justice, not just jobs. That means policy change, corporate investment, and community-based solutions that put people at the center. This is a defining moment. Let’s make sure our people are prepared to not just survive — but lead. For more information, visit [www.oicofamerica.org](http://www.oicofamerica.org)

## Features

# Asm. Mike Gipson Makes His Case for California Board of Equalization Seat in High-Stakes Race

By Edward Henderson  
California Black Media

As California heads into the 2026 election cycle, all four elected seats on the State Board of Equalization are up for grabs, with voters in each of the agency's four geographic districts choosing a representative. The board—which handles tax appeals, property tax oversight and equalization, and other key functions tied to California's revenue system—has taken on renewed visibility as debates over affordability, business climate, wildfire recovery and state revenues intensify.

This year's race is expected to draw a mix of current and former elected officials, with candidates positioning themselves around tax fairness, government accountability, and economic recovery as central themes shaping the contest.

Assemblymember Mike Gipson (D-Carson) is one of those candidates. He is running to represent District 3, which covers Los Angeles County and surrounding areas.

In a conversation with California Black Media (CBM), Gipson outlined why he is running for a seat on the board; explained how his legislative and tax policy experience has prepared him for the role; and shared what he sees as the path forward to ensure fairness, accountability, and stability in California's tax system.

Why is now the right moment for you to run? At a time of great uncertainty, when our district confronts a second Trump Administration after two years of steep deficits and the aftermath of the most devastating fires this region has ever seen, it is critical that our state has proven, effective leaders who will be diligent watchdogs of California's tax system. In

the coming years, California must have the resources needed to keep our residents afloat, including responding to wildfires and other disasters. That's why I decided to run for the Board of Equalization, because California needs experienced, forward-thinking leaders at the helm.

How has your legislative experience specifically prepared you to be effective on the board?

Throughout my career in the State Assembly, as a City Councilmember and working as a staffer inside the Board of Equalization, I have been a committed champion for my constituents in providing resources and funding for important programs in communities that have been historically underserved. As the longest-serving Assembly Democratic Caucus Chair in California history, I helped lead our state through significant budget shortfalls, while always protecting working families and our most vulnerable communities.

Currently, I serve as chair of the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee, where I lead policy discussions on revenue and taxation in California on a weekly basis, managing our revenue and protecting our state budget.

How would your vision, leadership and influence shape the work of the Board of Equalization to better serve Californians?

The State Board of Equalization is primarily responsible for administering the state's property tax system and certain state taxes and fees. Its core duties include setting statewide property tax assessment standards, ensuring uniformity and fairness in how property is assessed across California's 58 counties, and hearing appeals related to property tax assessments and BOE-administered taxes.

While I am not a fan of recent reforms curtailing the Board's responsibilities, these roles are intended to protect taxpayers' rights while ensuring that state and local governments receive the revenue needed to fund public services.

I believe the BOE needs to be incredibly aggressive in pursuing tax collections from delinquent payers, particularly those with a tremendous amount of wealth who are robbing our state coffers at a time when we face tremendous budgetary insecurity. As a member of the BOE, I will be steadfastly committed to enacting successful tax collection operations from delinquent payers.

What are your top priorities, and how will they improve tax fairness for everyday Californians?

On the BOE, I'm committed to ensuring big corporations pay their fair share, protecting taxpayers, and increasing transparency at the BOE to ensure our state has the resources we need to provide for the safety, security, and prosperity of all Californians.

How are you reaching and educating voters in a race where many people don't even know what this office does?

Over the course of my time in public service, I have amassed the breadth and depth of experience that it takes to win this race for the Board of Equalization. Throughout this campaign, I have amassed significant endorsements from prominent labor unions and esteemed elected officials. However, I take nothing for granted and I am continuing to hustle every day to expand my coalition of support and increase the size of my war chest. I look forward to continuing to expand my coalition in the weeks and months to come. We are utilizing all available



Asm. Mike Gipson (D-Carson), a candidate for the California Board of Equalization.

methods to reach out to voters, including digital. What sets you apart from your opponents, and what does success look like for you if elected?

I am the only candidate who has the wide-ranging experience needed for this role. Not only have I been a public servant for over two decades, but I've also worked directly inside the Board of Equalization and I understand how it works.

In one sentence, why should voters choose you on June 2?

I've dedicated my life's work to public service and on the Board of Equalization, I will bring in the funds needed to support quality health care, strong schools, and vital social services that sustain families and communities across our state.

# From Reconstruction to the SAVE Act

By Dr. Julianne Malveaux

Frederick Douglass did not know the day he was born.

Like many enslaved people, he was denied even the dignity of documentation. Birth dates were approximations. Family lines were severed. Identity existed in property ledgers, not in public record.

His mother, Harriet Bailey, called him her "little Valentine," and Douglass later chose February 14 as his birthday — an act of self-definition in a country that refused to define him as fully human.

That act matters. Douglass understood something fundamental: identity is not granted by paperwork. It is asserted through presence, voice and participation. He claimed authorship over his own life in a nation structured to deny it.

Today, we are debating whether documentation should determine access to democracy.

The SAVE Act would require documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote in federal elections. Passports. Birth certificates. Paper trails. Supporters frame it as administrative protection.

But the history of American democracy teaches us that administrative mechanisms are rarely neutral.

Paperwork has always been political.

After Reconstruction, when Black political participation expanded, new rules narrowed the electorate. Literacy tests. Poll taxes. Grandfather clauses. Each was presented as procedural. Each functioned as a barrier.

The methods change. The objective — control over who counts — does not.

Documentation requirements would fall hardest on those least likely to have ready access to formal records: seniors born at home in the Jim Crow South, low-income Americans without passports, married women whose legal names no longer match their birth certificates. Even producing paperwork can become a test of belonging.

Documented cases of noncitizen voting are exceedingly rare. The question is not fraud prevention; it is access.

Reconstruction was not only about emancipation. It was about participation. Black men voted. Black officials were elected. Black

institutions were built. And when those gains threatened entrenched power, backlash followed.

In 1898, in Wilmington, North Carolina, a legitimately elected multiracial government was overthrown. Black political power was dismantled. The ballot was replaced by the bullet. It was not disorder; it was organized suppression.

The lesson is sobering. When participation expands, resistance emerges.

Today's debates unfold in legislative chambers rather than in armed mobs. But the question remains: who has the authority to define citizenship?

Douglass claimed his identity in a system that denied him documentation. He did not wait for official recognition to assert his humanity. He understood that democracy depends not on perfect records, but on inclusive participation.

When paperwork becomes a prerequisite for political voice, we should ask whether we are strengthening democracy — or narrowing it.

The struggle over the ballot has never been merely procedural. It has always been about power. Douglass defined himself when the state would



Dr. Julianne Malveaux is a DC-based economist and author.

not. The question now is whether we will let the state decide who counts.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and author.

# From the Streets to Seminary, Morning Star Baptist Church Pastor Traded Happiness for Joy

By Kimberly Marsh  
Oklahoma Eagle

On Easter morning in 1970, 4-year-old Rodney Goss sat on the stoop of his Trenton, New Jersey home waiting for a father he never knew. Goss was outside for hours, dressed in his thick-heeled platform shoes and green plaid jacket.

When his mom told him to go inside, she uttered a phrase he hasn't forgotten: "He ain't comin'."

"That was the greatest disappointment of my life, and that was the beginning of my journey for happiness," he said.

That journey has taken him to the streets, jail, seminary, and, for the past 10 years, the pulpit.

The 59-year-old serves as pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church in north Tulsa. Even though he's older now, he says he's still in the pursuit of happiness.

"I got seashells and pockets of gratification, but that happiness is so fleeting," Goss told The Eagle. "It wasn't until I found the joy of God that I realized that I don't have to be happy every day."

It took time for him to get there. Growing up in his neighborhood, Goss remembers being different.

He said the other boys on his block idolized

flashy drug dealers and new cars, but he was more interested in books and school.

In the fourth grade, he and his mom moved to the suburbs, where life was completely different. Goss walked along picket fences in Lawrence Township, where he met white people for the first time and enjoyed Little League baseball.

"I knew what dreaming looked like," he said. "I knew what getting good grades looked like. I knew what talking about college was like and having friends that didn't look like me."

But it was short-lived as he eventually returned to his old stomping grounds. He got mixed up with drugs and crime, but, knowing more about life's possibilities, he turned himself in on Thanksgiving 1988.

Goss said the judge told him "because of the sincerity of your heart" he would only sentence him to six months in jail. "Everybody else was getting 25 years," he said. "I did 47 days."

During that short period, he found God on the inside and began using his words on the outside to help others dream bigger.

That moment affects his ministry even to this day. Part of his time as a pastor is focused on helping kids expand their horizons beyond their day-to-day circumstances.

Now he's on a mission to connect faith with real life and equip his congregation with the spiritual resources they need to serve the community.

"You come to church to worship. You leave church to serve," he said. "My job is to inform you so that you can make educated decisions and know what direction to walk in on your own."

Through it all, he says, the most important lesson he's learned is the difference between happiness and joy.

"Happiness is a personal journey. Happiness always comes with a condition. But joy is my contentment with the world as it is," Goss said. "I'm joyful when I love God for who he is and just loving him for who he is in spite of what he does. That's the joy that the world didn't give and the world can't take away."




Pastor Rodney Goss and congregants of Morning Star Baptist Church congratulate and welcome a group of children who chose to be baptized. They were presented with certificates and given a church wide welcome. Credit: Molly McElwain / Tulsa Flyer.



Congregants of Morning Star Baptist Church gather for a Sunday morning service, praise and worship and fellowship. Credit: Molly McElwain / Tulsa Flyer.




Pastor Rodney Goss speaks to his congregation during Sunday Service at Morning Star Baptist Church on Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026. Credit: Molly McElwain / Tulsa Flyer



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## Features

# Political Playback:

## California Capitol News You Might Have Missed

By Bo Tefu and Antonio Ray Harvey  
California Black Media

### Asm. Mia Bonta "Tells the Truth" About Bill Conservatives Say Would Silence Citizen Journalists



Assemblymember Mia Bonta (D-Oakland). File photo

Assemblymember Mia Bonta (D-Oakland) is pushing back against criticism of her bill, Assembly (AB) 2624, releasing a video statement on X defending the legislation and accusing critics of spreading misinformation.

In the video, Bonta said "right-wing agitators" — including Elon Musk — are misrepresenting the bill. She explained that AB 2624 would expand California's Safe at Home program to include immigrant service providers, allowing them to shield personal information like home addresses from public disclosure if they face threats, harassment, or doxing.

"This bill does not infringe on the First Amendment," Bonta said, adding that it targets harmful behavior such as sharing personal information "with the intent to incite imminent... bodily harm or place someone in fear for their safety."

The Safe at Home program already protects victims of domestic violence and certain health care providers. Bonta argues her bill simply extends those protections to workers serving immigrant communities, who she says increasingly face targeted harassment.

However, critics — particularly conservatives — say the bill goes much further.

Assemblymember Carl DeMaio (R-San Diego) has emerged as one of the most vocal opponents. Speaking during a recent Assembly committee hearing, DeMaio warned that AB 2624 could restrict investigative reporting and punish watchdogs who document potential wrongdoing.

"AB 2624 can only be described as the 'Stop Nick Shirley Act' — a bill designed to silence citizen journalists exposing fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars," DeMaio said, arguing that the measure could allow organizations to demand the removal of publicly recorded video and impose financial penalties.

The nickname refers to independent journalist Nick Shirley, whose viral videos have highlighted alleged fraud in government-funded programs. Critics say the bill could limit similar investigations by broadening privacy protections to organizations receiving public funds.

During the hearing, DeMaio also questioned whether the bill creates a "double standard" by extending protections to certain groups while not applying the same rules to law enforcement. Bonta responded that the legislation is narrowly focused on preventing threats and harassment, not restricting legitimate journalism.

As AB 2624 advances through the Legislature, the debate reflects a broader tension between privacy protections and press freedom. Supporters frame the bill as a necessary safeguard for vulnerable workers, while opponents warn it could chill transparency and investigative reporting.

On April 15, the Assembly Judiciary Committee voted 9-3 to advance AB 2624. It has now moved to the Assembly Public Safety Committee for consideration.

### Bill That Would Force Corporations to Disclose Slavery-Era Profits Moves Forward



Asm. Isaac Bryan (D-Ladera Heights), vice chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus, in this file photo. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

On April 14, 2026, Assembly Bill (AB) 2599, known as the Truth in Disclosure Act, authored by Assemblymember Isaac Bryan (D-Ladera Heights), passed out of the Assembly Judiciary Committee on a 9-3 vote.

Supported by the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), the bill would require qualifying corporations—specifically in industries such as banking, insurance, railroads, shipping, textiles, and tobacco—to submit affidavits disclosing whether they were engaged in or profited from chattel slavery.

"The Truth in Disclosure Act requires any company doing business in California with annual worldwide gross receipts of over \$100 million to verify and search their records for any transaction related to wealth gained during chattel slavery," Bryan said.

A coalition including the Alliance for Reparations, Reconciliation and Truth (ARRT), the Equal Justice Society, and the California Black Power Network participated in the Judiciary Committee hearing to support AB 2599.

While California was admitted as a "free state" in 1850, the state did not have a traditional plantation economy, and there was no single,

definitive list of businesses that participated in chattel slavery.

According to a report by Durham University, California's Reparations Task Force indicated that, through the 1850s, about 1,500 enslaved African Americans were brought to the state, with many businesses benefiting from this forced labor.

AB 2599's affidavits, which must disclose whether a company profited from or facilitated slavery-era transactions, are subject to penalties for perjury, according to the bill's language.

The bill requires an unspecified department to create a publicly searchable digital platform by Jan. 1, 2028, to display these affidavits.

### California Senate Unveils "Foundation for the Future" Budget Plan to Address Deficit; Protect Core Programs

California State Senate leaders on April 18 released a new budget framework for the 2026–27 fiscal year aimed at stabilizing the state's finances while maintaining funding for essential services, including health care, housing and education.

The proposal, dubbed the "Foundation for the Future" plan, focuses on three priorities: building reserves, preserving key programs and reducing the state's long-term structural deficit. Lawmakers say the approach is designed to address ongoing budget shortfalls without placing additional strain on working families.

"At the center of the Foundation for the Future budget plan are the people feeling the greatest financial strain: working families and the middle class," said Senate President pro Tempore Montique Limón. "California families are doing everything right, yet many are still struggling to keep up."

The plan calls for increasing the state's Rainy Day Fund and maintaining investments in programs such as housing assistance, childcare expansion and Medi-Cal. It also introduces a "Fair Share Contribution," which would require the largest corporations that do not provide employee health coverage to help offset public health care costs.

According to the Senate, about 42% of Medi-Cal enrollees are full-time workers whose employers do not provide coverage, shifting billions in costs to taxpayers. The proposed contribution could generate between \$5 billion and \$8 billion annually. Sen. John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), chair of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, said the plan reflects a balanced approach.

"We're setting aside more in reserves and holding the line on new ongoing spending, while continuing to fund the programs people rely on," Laird said.

Sen. Laura Richardson (D-Inglewood), who chairs a key budget subcommittee, emphasized the extensive review process behind the proposal.

"For the last several months, members have circumspectly reviewed the Governor's budget... while simultaneously working to identify areas where different approaches could produce greater results and financial saving solutions," Richardson said, noting that input from frontline public workers helped shape the plan.

The Senate's proposal now enters negotiations with the Assembly and Gov. Gavin Newsom ahead of the June budget deadline.

### Lawsuit Claims Amazon Forces Sellers to Charge Higher Prices — Atty. Gen. Bonta Announces "Victory" in Price-Fixing Case

On April 16, a San Francisco Superior Court denied Amazon's motion to dismiss key claims in its defense against allegations that it violated state antitrust and unfair competition laws by disrupting price competition.

The court denied Amazon's motion for summary judgment on its seventh crossclaim, finding sufficient evidence that Amazon's pricing policies potentially violate the California Cartwright Act.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta is suing Amazon over allegations that the company fixes prices and stifles competition through its seller agreements. The judge's decision allows the case to proceed.

"This victory is a key update in this case and sends a clear message to current and future behemoth corporations: The California Department of Justice will not allow consumers to be cheated," Bonta stated. "While consumers face a crisis of affordability, there is no room for anticompetitive pricing practices that impede free market competition and raise prices for consumers."

The lawsuit, initially filed in September 2022, claims Amazon uses its dominant market power to prevent third-party sellers from offering lower prices on other platforms such as Walmart, eBay, Target, or their own websites.

Amazon argues that sellers set their own prices and that the company, as a retailer, has the right not to highlight products that are not priced competitively. Amazon has stated that the claims in the lawsuit are "entirely false and misguided."

"Amazon is consistently identified as America's lowest-priced online retailer, and it is ironic that the attorney general seeks to have us feature higher prices in ways that would harm consumers and competition," the company said in a statement.

### 2026 Measles Cases in California Already Surpass 2025 Total; Health Dept. Urges Vaccination

California has reported more measles cases just months into 2026 than in all of last year, prompting renewed warnings from state health officials as outbreaks continue to spread.

According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), "more cases and outbreaks of measles have been confirmed in California in 2026 than in all of 2025," underscoring a sharp rise in infections early in the year.

State data show at least 39 confirmed cases statewide as of mid-April, compared to 25 total cases in all of 2025, a more than 50% increase with much of the year still ahead. Earlier in the year, CDPH reported 26 cases across nine counties by early March, with nearly all infections linked to people who were unvaccinated or whose vaccination status

was unknown.

The largest outbreak is centered in the Sacramento region, where health officials reported new cases within the past week. CDPH said recently that local health departments in Sacramento and Placer counties had identified "multiple recent cases," prompting the agency to urge immediate precautions.

To limit transmission, CDPH is advising that unvaccinated individuals exposed to measles "stay at home," and that anyone with symptoms contact a health care provider before seeking in-person care.

Public health officials say the surge is being driven largely by travel-related infections and spread from other U.S. outbreaks. CDPH noted that cases in California have been linked to travel abroad and to domestic outbreaks, including one in South Carolina that is connected to cases in Northern California.

The data also show the outbreak is disproportionately affecting younger populations. About 85% of cases are among people under age 20, and 95% involve individuals who are unvaccinated or whose vaccination status is unknown, according to state health officials.

Health officials continue to stress that measles — one of the most contagious viruses — is preventable. CDPH and local agencies are urging residents to ensure they are up to date on the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine as the state works to contain the spread.

### California Offers \$520 Million in Utility Relief: Households With Natural Gas to See \$40 Credit on Bills This Month

Millions of California households will receive utility bill relief this month, with natural gas customers expected to see an average \$40 credit, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced last week.

The credits are part of the California Climate Credit program, which will return \$520 million to residents through automatic reductions on utility bills. The effort is aimed at easing costs for households as part of the state's broader affordability strategy, according to Newsom's office.

The California Climate Credit, funded through the state's Cap-and-Invest program, provides direct financial relief to utility customers. Since 2014, the program has delivered about \$16 billion in bill credits to residential customers of investor-owned utilities.

"Thanks to the Legislature's partnership, the Golden State is delivering on its promise to put money back in Californians' pockets, and we're making it work smarter and harder for households across the state," Newsom said in a statement April 16.

This year, California plans to distribute a total of \$1.4 billion in residential utility credits, including \$894 million for electric customers and \$520 million for natural gas users. Additional funding will support small businesses and industry assistance programs.

Newsom said the credits reflect the state's efforts to reduce living expenses while continuing to invest in climate programs.

"California is delivering on its promise to put money back in Californians' pockets," said Newsom.

State regulators are also considering changes to how and when credits are distributed. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is set to vote April 30 on a proposal that would shift electric bill credits to the summer months, when energy use and costs are typically highest.

If approved, customers of Pacific Gas and Electric, Southern California Edison, and San Diego Gas and Electric would begin receiving electric credits in August and September starting in 2026, instead of the current spring and fall schedule.

Natural gas credits could also be adjusted. Beginning in 2027, those credits may be issued earlier in the year to better align with higher winter heating costs.

The proposed changes stem from Assembly Bill 1207, signed by Newsom in 2025, which extends the Cap-and-Invest program through 2045 and requires that credits be delivered when they provide the most benefit.

Customers do not need to take any action to receive the credit. The amount will appear automatically on their utility bills.

State officials say the program also supports climate investments, including clean energy projects and job creation, while providing direct financial relief to households.

### New DMV Technology Is Designed to Fight Identity Fraud; Reduce Wait Times for California Drivers

California is rolling out new technology at Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices aimed at strengthening identity security and reducing wait times for customers, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced April 14.

The updates include digital signature barcodes on driver's licenses and identification cards, along with a QR-code-based check-in system at DMV locations. State officials say the effort is designed to both combat rising identity fraud and improve the customer experience.

The announcement comes as identity theft continues to increase across the United States. The Federal Trade Commission reported \$15.85 billion in fraud losses in 2025, with identity theft accounting for the largest share.

In California, more than 435,000 fraud cases were reported last year.

The new digital signature feature will appear on the back of newly issued licenses and ID cards. It allows businesses and agencies to use card readers to quickly verify whether a signature is valid or has been altered or revoked. Officials say the tool adds a stronger layer of protection for residents' personal information.

"California is stepping up its fight against fraud," Newsom said, adding that the state is focused on protecting identities while improving government services.

Alongside the security upgrades, the DMV is introducing a QR code check-in system to streamline office visits. Customers can scan a code upon arrival to join the line and receive updates as their turn approaches. The system is expected to reduce congestion and shorten wait times.

The new feature expands on an online check-in option first launched in 2021 and is now being implemented statewide. Customers who cannot use

the digital system can still check in at information desks.

Officials said current driver's licenses and ID cards will remain valid until their expiration dates, and residents are not required to replace them. Those who want the updated version can request a replacement online, with standard fees applying.

The DMV upgrades are part of a broader push by the Newsom

administration to modernize public services through technology. Since 2019, the state has invested in digital tools and data-driven solutions to improve efficiency and service delivery.

State leaders say the latest changes highlight California's efforts to enhance security while making everyday interactions with the government faster and easier.

### Your Vote in 2026: Bill Banning Law Enforcement From Polling Stations Advances - Carrying Fines Up to \$1000 and 5-Year Max Prison Time

A California Assembly committee has advanced a bill that would ban law enforcement officers from being near polling places, with violations carrying penalties of up to \$1,000 in fines and a maximum five-year prison sentence.

The proposal would make it a felony for anyone in a law enforcement uniform or displaying agency insignia to be within the immediate vicinity of a polling location unless responding to a public safety emergency. Supporters say the measure is intended to protect voters from intimidation ahead of the 2026 elections.

Assemblymember Anamarie Avila Farias (D-Martinez) introduced the bill over concerns that federal immigration agents could appear near polling sites. She argued that such a presence could discourage participation, particularly among immigrant communities.

The legislation comes amid ongoing national debates over election security and immigration enforcement. While federal law already prohibits certain forms of election interference, Democratic lawmakers said additional safeguards are needed.

"The idea that this president would not send ICE agents to intimidate legitimate voters at polling places is laughable," said Assemblymember Marc Berman (D-Menlo Park), during the committee hearing.

Republicans opposed the bill, raising concerns about whether California has the legal authority to regulate federal officers. Assemblymember James Gallagher (R-Yuba City) questioned whether the state could enforce such penalties against federal agents.

Legal experts say the proposal could face constitutional challenges if it becomes law, as it tests the limits of state authority over federal enforcement actions.

In addition to polling place restrictions, the bill would also prohibit immigration agents from conducting enforcement operations near childcare centers.

The measure is part of a broader push by Democratic lawmakers to limit federal immigration enforcement activities in California. Other proposals moving through the Legislature seek to restrict operations on state property and limit state support for private detention facilities.

The bill now heads to additional legislative committees for consideration. Its outcome could shape how California balances voter protections with legal and political challenges ahead of the 2026 election cycle.

Supporters say the stakes are high, arguing that ensuring voters can cast ballots without fear is critical to maintaining confidence in the state's elections.

### Community Agriculture Advocates to Hold Prayer Breakfast at State Capitol

Community leaders, farmers, and state stakeholders will gather at the California State Capitol on April 21 for a prayer breakfast focused on agriculture, food access, and community-driven farming solutions.

The event, part of California Ag Day 2026, will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Gold Rush Grille in Sacramento. Organizers say the gathering is designed to bring together agricultural partners and policymakers to discuss ways to strengthen local food systems.

This year's theme, "Can We Just Grow Some Food?," reflects growing concerns about food affordability, sustainability, and access. The event will serve as a platform to highlight the importance of community-based agriculture and the role it can play in addressing these challenges.

A key focus of the event is honoring the legacy of William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr., an early California rancher and entrepreneur whose 35,000-acre Rancho Rio de Los Americanos helped shape the state's agricultural history. Organizers say his contributions continue to influence modern efforts to build more inclusive and resilient food systems.

"2026 California Ag Day is an opportunity to celebrate the people, land, and history that make our state a global agricultural leader," said Michael Harris, one of the lead organizers. "By uplifting this legacy and investing in community-centered agriculture, we are building a stronger, more sustainable future."

The event will also highlight the Carson Creek Demonstration Project, a modern initiative focused on regenerative agriculture, youth education, and local food production. Located on land historically tied to Leidesdorff's ranch, the project aims to serve as a model for community-led farming and food sovereignty.

Organizers are working with regional partners, including agricultural groups and community organizations, to expand workforce opportunities and promote participation in the farming sector. These efforts align with broader statewide goals to support sustainable agriculture and increase access to locally grown food.

Following the breakfast, additional California Ag Day activities will take place at the State Capitol, bringing together stakeholders from across the agricultural sector.

Organizers say the prayer breakfast and related events will help foster collaboration and spark new ideas to strengthen California's food systems while honoring its agricultural heritage.

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Sports

# Short-Handed Lakers Seize 2-0 Series Lead Over Rockets Behind LeBron, Smart and Kennard

By Observer Sports Desk

LOS ANGELES — Playing for the second straight game without their top two scorers, the Los Angeles Lakers leaned on a vintage LeBron James performance and another Marcus Smart shooting clinic to pull out a 101-94 victory over the Houston Rockets on Tuesday, April 21, giving the fourth-seeded Lakers a stunning 2-0 lead in their Western Conference first-round playoff series at Crypto.com Arena.

James, 41, finished with 28 points, eight rebounds and seven assists in his 19th NBA postseason. Smart poured in 25 points on 5-of-7 shooting from 3-point range and added seven assists, while Game 1 hero Luke Kennard kept rolling with 23 points, including three 3-pointers, off the bench.

It was an unlikely script. Luka Doncic (hamstring) and Austin Reaves (oblique strain) have both been out since April 2 with no timetable for return. Against a Rockets team that finished the regular season 52-30 and earned the West's No. 5 seed, the Lakers were widely expected to be overmatched without their two leading scorers. Instead, they have dictated terms.

"We executed the game plan offensively and defensively, shored up some of our mistakes from Game 1, and just got into a dogfight," James said afterward. "When we have two big guns out like we have, we've all got to pick up our play, and that's all it's about."

The script was similar three nights earlier. In Saturday's series opener, Kennard — acquired from the Atlanta Hawks in early February and the NBA's most accurate 3-point shooter this season — erupted for a career playoff-high 27 points, burying four 3-pointers and making nine of his first 12 shots. James contributed 19 points and 13 assists, and center Deandre Ayton added 19 points and

11 rebounds as Los Angeles shot a blistering 60.6 percent from the floor in a 107-98 victory.

Houston played Game 1 without superstar forward Kevin Durant, a late scratch after banging knees with a teammate in practice four days before the series opener. Durant returned for Game 2 but was largely neutralized by the Lakers' aggressive double teams, finishing with 23 points — but just three after halftime — while committing nine turnovers.

"They started doubling me from possession one," Durant said. "I've got to do better and not put my teammates in bad positions when I'm swinging the ball."

Tuesday's matchup was the fourth career playoff meeting between James and Durant, who previously clashed in the 2012, 2017 and 2018 NBA Finals. Durant won titles with Golden State in 2017 and 2018; James captured the 2012 championship with Miami. At 41, James is still writing chapters that no player before him has written — leading a short-handed team deep into late April on the back of nearly every category on the stat sheet.

Jabari Smith Jr. led Houston with 18 points and Amen Thompson added 16 on Tuesday, but the Rockets shot just 40.4 percent from the floor and converted only seven 3-pointers. They shot 37.6 percent in Game 1, and despite grabbing 21 offensive rebounds, never translated the extra possessions into a comeback.

Rockets head coach Ime Udoka was searching for answers after Saturday's opener. "We won a lot of areas, but just shot poorly," Udoka said. "That's going to be tough to beat, but there are some things we left on the table, opportunities missed."

Game 1 also featured a generational moment for the Lakers: 21-year-old Bronny James entered the game at the start of the second quarter, appearing alongside his father in his first significant



LOS ANGELES, CA - APRIL 21: LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers drives to the basket during the game against the Houston Rockets during Round One Game Two of the 2026 NBA Playoffs on April 21, 2026 at Crypto.Com Arena in Los Angeles, California. (Photo by Adam Pantozzi/NBAE via Getty Images)

NBA playoff minutes.

The series now shifts to Houston's Toyota Center for Game 3. The Rockets face a steep climb to extend their season; the Lakers have a chance to

finish the job on the road and book a trip to the Western Conference semifinals before the month is out.



Above, Shohei Ohtani #17 of the Los Angeles Dodgers pitches against the New York Mets during the first inning at Dodger Stadium on April 15, 2026, in Los Angeles, California. All players are wearing the number 42 in honor of Jackie Robinson Day. (Photo: Luke Hales, Getty Images)



Bob Kendrick, President of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, speaks near the Jackie Robinson Statue to the Los Angeles Dodgers and the New York Mets before the game at Dodger Stadium on April 15, 2026, in Los Angeles, California. All players are wearing the number 42 in honor of Jackie Robinson Day. (Photo: Luke Hales, Getty Images)

# Dodgers Honor Jackie Robinson's Legacy With Sweep of Mets on 79th Anniversary of Breaking the Color Barrier

By Observer Sports Desk

LOS ANGELES — Shohei Ohtani turned in a 10-strikeout masterpiece on the mound, and four home runs powered the Los Angeles Dodgers to an 8-2 rout of the New York Mets before 50,909 fans at Dodger Stadium on Wednesday, April 15 — Major League Baseball's annual Jackie Robinson Day.

The victory completed a three-game series sweep and improved the Dodgers to 18-4 all-time on Jackie Robinson Day, the best mark in the majors since the league first established the annual tribute in 2004 to honor the man who broke baseball's color barrier in 1947 with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Hours before first pitch, the Dodgers and Mets gathered at the Jackie Robinson statue in Dodger Stadium's center field plaza for a reflection ceremony. Every player, coach and umpire across Major League Baseball wore the iconic No. 42 in Dodger blue — Robinson's retired number — along with "42" side patches on their caps and royal blue "42" socks produced by Stance as part of the

league's "We Are Jackie" campaign.

On the field, Ohtani (2-0) made history of his own. The Japanese superstar pitched six innings of one-run ball, striking out 10 and walking two on 95 pitches. He generated 22 swings and misses — his most as a Dodger — and blew a 99 mph fastball past All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor to end the third inning, leaving Lindor laughing as he walked back to the dugout.

It marked Ohtani's first mound start without batting since May 28, 2021, when he was with the Los Angeles Angels. Manager Dave Roberts — one of only two African American managers in Major League Baseball, alongside Chicago White Sox skipper Will Venable — said Ohtani was still sore after being struck in the back of his right shoulder by Mets pitcher David Peterson two nights earlier.

Ohtani had thrown 33 consecutive innings without an earned run before the Mets' MJ Melendez, called up from Triple-A earlier in the day, ripped an RBI double in the fifth. It was Ohtani's

first earned run allowed since Aug. 27 of last season against Cincinnati.

The Dodgers gave him an early cushion when Hyesong Kim launched a two-run homer off Mets starter Clay Holmes in the second inning. Teoscar Hernández added an opposite-field solo shot leading off the sixth against reliever Tobias Myers, and the game broke open in the eighth when rookie Dalton Rushing, who had replaced Ohtani at designated hitter, blasted his first career grand slam off Mets closer Devin Williams. Kyle Lucker followed with a solo shot — his first as a Dodger at home — off reliever Austin Warren to make it 8-1 before Melendez doubled again in the ninth to account for the final Mets run.

It was the Dodgers' first three-game sweep of the Mets at home since June 19-22, 2017. Los Angeles (14-4) improved to 9-0 against National League opponents this season, while the Mets (7-12) dropped their eighth straight and were outscored 14-4 across the three-game set. New York

played the series without injured slugger Juan Soto, who is out with a calf injury.

Wednesday also marked the 79th anniversary of Robinson's Major League debut. A UCLA alumnus who lettered in four sports as a Bruin, Robinson played 10 seasons in Brooklyn, winning the inaugural Rookie of the Year in 1947, the National League MVP in 1949 and a World Series title in 1955 before his election to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. He remains one of the most consequential figures in American sports and civil rights history.

For the African American community in Southern California, Jackie Robinson Day carries a meaning that extends well beyond the ballpark. In the city where Robinson grew up and first proved what was possible, his legacy continues to shape what sport — and the country — can still become.

# Palou Captures First Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach



Winning IndyCar driver Alex Palou, center, celebrates alongside second place finisher, Felix Rosenqvist, left and third place finisher Scott Dixon during the 51st Grand Prix of Long Beach in Long Beach on Sunday, April 19, 2026. (Photo by Trevor Stamp, Contributing Photographer)

By Earl Heath  
Contributing Sports Writer

LONG BEACH, Calif. — Alex Palou captured his first Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach title in dramatic fashion Sunday, edging Felix Rosenqvist in the 51st running of the race after a late pit stop issue cost Rosenqvist valuable time.

A slow stop by Rosenqvist's crew late in the race opened the door for Palou, who took advantage and drove to the checkered flag for his third win of the season.

The race's first caution also marked the first yellow flag at Long Beach since 2024, after the event set a record with 200 laps run under green.

"All in all, we have to be happy," Rosenqvist said. "If you take things into perspective, it's been a very good weekend."

The victory was Palou's first at Long Beach and moved the Chip Ganassi Racing driver to the top of the IndyCar standings. He now holds a 17-point lead over Andretti Global's Kyle Kirkwood.

"It was incredible for me to win my first Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach," Palou said. "It's our biggest event of the season after the Indianapolis 500, and it just feels incredible to win. The atmosphere was phenomenal, and this is the momentum we need going into the month of May. We'll be looking to carry this success into Indy so we can do an amazing job there, too."

Chip Ganassi Racing teammate Scott Dixon, a former two-time Long Beach winner, finished third as Honda swept the top three spots.

Kirkwood finished fourth, followed by Pato O'Ward in fifth. Team Penske drivers Scott McLaughlin and David Malukas placed sixth and seventh, respectively. Graham Rahal, recent Long Beach Motorsports Walk of Fame inductee Alexander Rossi, and Kyffin Simpson rounded out the top 10.

"Huge weekend for Chip Ganassi Racing," Dixon said. "Hopefully it's something we can build on."

Local

# In San Bernardino County Healing Circles Help High Desert Black Families Build Community, Resist Hate



Dance and movement are essential to creating community through the Ubuntu Project  
PHOTO CREDIT: Photo courtesy of The Ubuntu Project



Participants have opportunities to display their art in public venues, which can build confidence and deepens their connection to the community  
CREDIT: Ubuntu Project

By Joe Kocurek

California Black Media

Jasmine Young wasn't sure what she had signed up for when a friend from church encouraged her to attend a Monday night Healing Circle in Victorville.

"I didn't know what it was about," said Young, a local business owner. "There was a sign-up sheet, so I signed my name and started coming."

What she found was relief from the pressures of daily life — and a sense of connection that can be difficult to come by in San Bernardino County's High Desert, where communities are spread across vast distances.

"Even though we have a large Black population up here, we're still spread out," Young said. "So, it's nice to see friendly faces. It's a great mix of African ancestral traditions and modern American culture. A lot of us don't know where we originally come from, so just having that sense of belonging is helpful."

The Healing Circles are part of the Ubuntu Project, an initiative designed to foster community and resilience among Black Californians living in the region. A rugged stretch of mountains separates the High Desert — where many Black residents live — from the rest of San Bernardino County, a geographic barrier that can also deepen social isolation.

"A lot of times, we have to scream and yell for services to come up here," said Nichole Williams-Artry, the project's program coordinator.

Rooted in African traditions and contemporary

African American culture, the Ubuntu Project creates spaces where participants can reflect on personal experiences, build relationships and develop tools for coping with bias and hate. The initiative has received funding from California's Stop the Hate program and provides the type of healing services people can find when they call the CA vs Hate hotline and online reporting system.

The project's name comes from the Southern African philosophy of ubuntu, often expressed as "I am because you are," emphasizing the interconnectedness between individuals and their



Cape Town Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a leading proponent of Ubuntu, defining it as "A person is a person through other persons."  
CREDIT: ID 199719280 | Desmond Tutu © Laurence Agron | Dreamstime.com

communities.

"We're experiencing hate. We're dealing with isolation. We're dealing with generational harm," Williams-Artry said. "And there were very few places where people could go for help. So, we're creating those spaces — through healing, culture and connection."

During Healing Circles, participants are encouraged to share lived experiences that are not always discussed openly.

"A lot of times in African American culture, we don't highlight how negative stereotypes have impacted us," Williams-Artry said. "The Healing Circle gives people a space to bring those experiences forward, grounded in community."

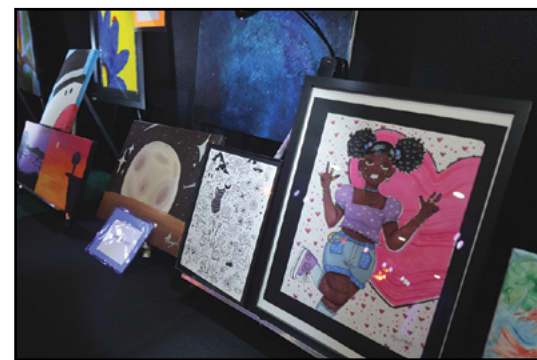
For Young, the experience was impactful enough that she later encouraged her daughter, Jaslynn, to attend. As a busy high school student and president of her school's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, Jaslynn initially hesitated to add another commitment to her schedule.

"I was like, 'I don't want to do it. I want to stay home — especially on a Monday,'" she said.

After attending, however, she quickly recognized the value of the space.

"We talked about problems I'm not able to talk about at school," Jaslynn said. "They also brought up things I didn't even realize were tucked away. We talked about how we could better ourselves — as women, as Black women and as a community."

She also gained confidence in her artistic abilities when the Ubuntu Project hosted a gallery



The Ubuntu Project uses art during their healing circles to not only provide participants with an outlet for creativity, but also to facilitate discussion and process traumatic experiences.  
PHOTO CREDIT: Photos courtesy of The Ubuntu Project

event showcasing participants' work.

"I'm a shy person, so I was hoping not a lot of people would come," she said. "But hearing other people's perspectives on my drawings gave me a new boost of confidence."

Williams-Artry is now working to expand the project's reach by facilitating smaller, neighborhood-based Healing Circles throughout the region, an effort, she says, will bridge both geographic and social gaps.

# From Stockton to Sacramento: Lt. Governor Candidate Michael Tubbs Shares His Vision for California

By Edward Henderson

California Black Media

As a former mayor of Stockton and a nationally recognized advocate for economic equity, Michael Tubbs has built his political career on challenging the status quo and advancing bold, people-centered policy solutions.

Rising from a childhood marked by housing insecurity to becoming one of California's most prominent young leaders, Tubbs gained national attention for launching one of the first guaranteed income programs in the country.

Now running for lieutenant governor, Tubbs is positioning himself as a champion for affordability, opportunity, and systemic reform. In a recent conversation with California Black Media (CBM), Tubbs discussed how his lived experience shapes his policy agenda, his plans to tackle homelessness and economic inequality, and his vision for a more inclusive and functional California.

You've spoken about your upbringing in South Stockton and how it shaped your path to public service. How does that experience inform your priorities as a candidate, particularly for Black Californians facing systemic barriers?

I tell people all the time—my lived experience is my first bridge to other experiences I may not have had. It also gives me a clearer perspective and a greater willingness to bet on people.

I didn't learn about poverty from Stanford or from being mayor. I learned from being housing insecure, from sleeping in shelters and motel rooms. Those are things I lived.

That gives me empathy as a policymaker and urgency to fight for a California where everyone has the basics—where people can afford to live and where government works for us, not against us.

It also shapes my belief in people's ability to rise despite circumstances—if government gives them the tools and opportunities.

As mayor of Stockton, you launched a guaranteed basic income program that gained national attention. What lessons did you take from that, and how would you apply them at the state level?

The biggest lesson is that things always seem impossible until they're done.

When we launched it, people said we were crazy. Now there are over 100 pilots across the country, and over \$300 million has been distributed. What started in Stockton is now part of a global conversation about affordability and AI.

It taught me you have to be bold. You can't just



Michael Tubbs candidate running for CA Lt. Governor.

accept the status quo—it exists because no one has challenged it.

As lieutenant governor, I'd push for a California that builds enough housing, ends homelessness, and explores guaranteed income. To do that, you have to take risks, build coalitions, and be willing to go first.

Speaking of homelessness and poverty, what specific policies would you prioritize in your first year as Lieutenant Governor and how do you propose funding them with current budget constraints?

First, we must raise revenue. I support Prop 13 split-roll reform, extending Prop 55, and implementing a data dividend—because data powers AI and tech profits.

As Lieutenant Governor, one major role is serving on higher education boards. My top priority would be building student and workforce housing across UC, CSU, and community colleges.

We can fund that through housing bonds and

new revenue streams.

I would also work with the legislature on guaranteed income programs focused on people exiting homelessness, as well as eviction prevention efforts.

In Stockton, you saw reductions in violence and improvements in economic conditions. What strategies drove that change, and how can they scale to Black communities across the state?

We used data and avoided simplistic explanations.

We found that about 80% of violent crime was driven by less than 1% of the population—mostly young men dealing with poverty, homelessness, and repeated incarceration.

Lieutenant Governor is the second-highest office in the largest state economy in the country—and when elected, I would be the highest-ranking Black elected official.

Instead of just locking people up again, we

focused on creating opportunities for change. That led to reductions in violence.

We need to move away from being "tough and dumb" on crime and toward being smart on crime. That includes prevention—like youth jobs—and targeted interventions that actually work.

The Lieutenant Governor role is often seen as limited. How would you use that office's authority to deliver measurable results for Black Californians?

Being Lieutenant Governor in California comes with responsibility.

I'd work with the Legislative Black Caucus to advance policies that improve quality of life. I'd also use my role on education boards to ensure Black-owned businesses have access to procurement opportunities.

And just as important, I'd use the platform to make sure Black Californians are not an afterthought—but central to what makes California thrive.

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