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Juneteenth 2026:

California-Born Astronaut Victor Glover Honored at State Capitol After Historic Artemis II Mission



The California Legislative Black Caucus and Assembly Democrats invited Pomona native Capt. Victor J. Glover Jr. and his family to the State Capitol to honor his historic achievements as pilot of the Artemis II lunar flyby mission, which made him the first Black astronaut to travel beyond low-Earth orbit and into the vicinity of the Moon. Shown from left are Glover's daughter Joia Glover, his wife Dionna Glover, Capt. Victor J. Glover Jr., and his daughter Maya Glover. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.



Capt. Victor J. Glover Jr.'s visit to the California Legislature drew attention from lawmakers across the political spectrum. Asst. Jeff Gonzalez (R-Indio), right, poses for a photo with the Artemis II mission pilot on June 18, 2026. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.



Capt. Victor J. Glover Jr., left, poses for a photo with Asst. LaShae Sharp-Collins (D-San Diego) following Juneteenth activities on the Assembly floor on June 18, 2026. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

By Antonio Ray Harvey
California Black Media

The California State Senate and Assembly welcomed U.S. Navy Capt. Victor Glover Jr., a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) astronaut, to the State Capitol on June 18, honoring his achievements in space exploration and his role in the historic Artemis II mission.

In a tribute presented in partnership with the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), lawmakers gathered in both chambers to recognize Glover's accomplishments, including his service as the pilot of the Artemis II mission, which completed a crewed flyby of the Moon in April.

A guest on the floors of both houses of the California Legislature, Glover spoke about the importance of inspiring the next generation.

Glover was also recognized during the reading of Assembly Concurrent Resolution 214 (ACR 214), the legislative measure commemorating Juneteenth in 2026.

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle joined in celebrating Glover's achievements.

"Seeing them approve ACR 214 was amazing, overwhelming, and inspiring," Glover told California Black Media (CBM).

"To see them all come together like that about something they agree on, and are excited about, instead of things solely about me personally, shows what we are capable of as people," Glover said. "I hope that this is a small piece of this theme as we look forward to thinking about ways we can continue to serve and lead the nation and the state

by working together."

Glover added, "Let's focus on what brings us together rather than what tears us apart, and we'll get more done."

Accompanied by NASA colleagues and members of his family, including his wife, Dionna Glover, and daughters Maya and Joia, Glover also greeted throngs of cheering young people who gathered at the Capitol to meet him.

"Capt. Victor J. Glover Jr., a native of Pomona, Calif., has a story that reflects the very best of our state and our nation," said Sen. Akilah Weber Pierson (D-San Diego), chair of the CLBC. "His journey from California to the stars is a testament to perseverance, service, leadership, and excellence."

Born on April 30, 1976, Glover graduated from Ontario High School in Ontario, California. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in general engineering from California Polytechnic State University in 1999 and received his Navy "Wings of Gold" in 2001. He also holds three master's degrees.

"In 2013, while serving as a legislative fellow in the United States Senate, Capt. Glover was selected by NASA as a member of its astronaut corps," Weber Pierson said. "He completed astronaut training and quickly became one of the agency's most respected leaders."

Before joining NASA, Glover served as a test pilot, flying aircraft such as the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet, an all-weather, twin-engine, multirole combat aircraft.

The Artemis II mission was the first crewed flight of NASA's Space Launch System (SLS) rocket

and Orion spacecraft. It carried four astronauts around the Moon before splashing down safely in the Pacific Ocean on April 10, 2026.

Joining Glover on the mission were NASA Commander Reid Wiseman, NASA mission specialist Christina Koch and Canadian Space Agency mission specialist Jeremy Hansen. During the 10-day mission, the Orion spacecraft traveled more than 252,000 miles from Earth, marking the farthest distance humans have ever traveled into deep space.

Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez (D-Ontario) described Glover as an "extraordinary American," a "proud son of Pomona," and a true inspiration to residents of the 53rd Assembly District and Californians statewide.

"His journey to the stars is nothing short of remarkable," Rodriguez said.

Many of the lawmakers attending were accompanied by their children and young people from their communities, giving them an opportunity to meet Glover in person.

"Here's the thing, the little Black and Brown kids look at me and see someone with a face that looks like theirs. That's super important," Glover told CBM. "What else is important is that some of those kids are from Marin County, Orange County and other places."

Glover concluded, "They are surrounded by successful, affluent people who look nothing like me, but were excited by us and my whole family. That speaks to my heart."



Donald Trump, Maryland Governor Wes Moore

Trump Tells Maryland's Black Governor He's "Not Worthy" of Attending a White House Dinner

Maryland Governor Wes Moore, who is Black, said President Trump's claim that he was "not worthy" to attend a White House dinner would not affect his leadership. Moore called the snub disrespectful but emphasized that his worth comes from God and the people of Maryland, not from Trump.

Trump announced that all U.S. governors would be invited to a White House dinner during the National Governors Association meeting, except for Moore and Colorado Governor Jared Polis. On Truth Social, Trump criticized Moore's leadership, labeled him "foul-mouthed," and questioned his military Bronze Star.

In an interview with CBS News, Moore said he is willing to work with anyone but will not bow down to anyone. He said, "If the point of the meeting is to turn it into name-calling... I will not go."

Moore added, "Respectfully, you do not determine my worthiness. God determines my worthiness. The people of Maryland determine my worthiness. They are who I answer to. Not him."

Reports show the Trump administration initially considered excluding all Democratic governors from the formal meeting but ultimately only blocked Moore and Polis from attending the dinner.

Most Democratic governors said they would skip the dinner in solidarity. Polis also said that regardless of invitations, he would continue working with other governors to improve people's lives.



Wanda and Tony Reynolds Meet the Black Couple Who Just Graduated from College Together While in Their 60s

Wanda and Tony Reynolds, a black couple from Chesterfield County, Virginia, recently graduated together from Virginia Commonwealth University in their 60s. They completed years of study while working full-time and supporting each other through school and family life.

The couple spent more than 30 years building their lives side by side. Wanda wanted to go to college earlier in life, but put her plans on hold to raise their children. Tony attended Virginia Commonwealth University on a wrestling scholarship but left when the program ended and moved into full-time work.

In 2015, Tony decided to surprise Wanda by gifting her classes at John Tyler, now Brightpoint Community College. While he was helping her enroll, he chose to sign up for the same classes so they could go through them together. "While I was enrolling her, it was like I can't let her grow and I don't grow too, so I enrolled myself with the same classes," he told WTVR.

They both worked full-time while taking classes part-time over several years. By 2020, they each earned associate degrees after staying consistent with coursework each semester.

After reaching that milestone, Wanda wanted to continue her education at a university. Tony agreed, but asked that they return to Virginia Commonwealth University, the same school he had left decades earlier. That decision set them on another long academic path together.

For the next six years, they studied psychology at VCU while continuing to work. They supported each other through assignments and exams and often treated grades as a friendly competition. Wanda said, "It was hard, but because we had each other pushing each other, you know, we were able to do it. We always competed to see who would get the highest GPA."

They eventually graduated together at the Siegel Center, walking across the stage hand in hand. The crowd gave them a standing ovation, and the ceremony briefly paused as cheers filled the arena. Tony later said the moment stood out because of the audience reaction, and VCU's president also shared their story on social media.

Today, the couple focuses on their private counseling service, where they work with couples using lessons from their own relationship. They chose psychology to support that work and to turn their shared experience into something practical.

They plan to take a short break, but Wanda is already considering further studies. Tony has said he would likely join her again if she decides to continue.

Wanda summed up their journey simply, saying, "It's never too late, whether it's education, whether it's you want to find your person, or whatever it is that you want to do, it's never too late."

Museum Display Asks California to See Black Women "in Full"

By Staff
California Black Media

In Los Angeles, visitors attending a Juneteenth weekend event at the A.C. Bilbrew Library were welcomed by a museum exhibit featuring a wall of faces — filmmakers and freedom fighters, Olympians and lawmakers — honoring Black women's achievement and leadership.

For many of the Black women in the room, the moment landed like a long-held breath finally released.

"The Museum of California Black Women is an invitation to see Black women in full," said Kellie Todd Griffin, president and CEO of the California Black Women's Collective Empowerment Institute, who curated the exhibition.

Titled "A Field of Beauty and Brilliance," the cultural exhibition opened to the public June 22 and runs through Sept. 30 at the library's Black Resource Center in Los Angeles. Admission is free. Presented in partnership with the Black Resource Center, it uses artifacts, immersive installations and interactive displays to trace the political, artistic, athletic and civic contributions of Black women across generations.

The featured names span California's cultural landscape: filmmaker Ava DuVernay, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee, U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA-43), authors Maya Angelou and Octavia Butler, scholar Angela Davis, and athletes Allyson Felix (track and field), Venus and Serena Williams (tennis) and Cheryl Miller (basketball).

The exhibition also marks the launch of Black California Love Stories, an oral history project collecting the family histories, traditions and milestones of Black Californians for preservation on the library's website.

For the lawmakers who spoke, the wall was personal. State Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles) noted she is only the 21st Black woman elected to the Legislature in its 175-year history and the first to chair the Senate Labor Committee.

"Our ancestors didn't just survive history," she said. "They changed it."

Smallwood-Cuevas tied the exhibition to her push to build California's first designated Black historic cultural district, an effort she said could protect some 4,000 Black cultural assets across South Central Los Angeles.

"If we don't tell our stories, no one will," she said. "If we don't claim our space, others will come



From left: Angela L. Minniefield, chief operating officer of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science; Sharol Caw; California Black Media Executive Director Regina Wilson; state Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas; Lakewood Mayor Cassandra Chase; California Black Women's Collective Empowerment Institute President and CEO Kellie Todd Griffin, who curated the exhibition; state Sen. Laura Richardson; Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly Mitchell; and Dr. Skye Patrick, director of the LA County Library, at the ribbon-cutting for the Museum of Black Women and Girls pop-up on June 20, 2026. (Photo by Karim Saafir Photography)

and claim it for themselves."

That theme of erasure and the work of resisting it anchored remarks by Dr. Donna Nichol, the first Black dean of the College of Liberal Arts at California State University, Long Beach.

She opened with the story of her grandmother, Catherine Tarpley, a USC-trained historian who helped open the first cooperative food market in Watts in 1980. When the Los Angeles Times covered the effort, Nichol said, every man in the room was named in the article. Her grandmother was not.

"My grandmother was not the exception," Nichol said. "She was the rule."

Nichol traced a lineage of California Black women who built institutions from nothing: Biddy Mason, who won her freedom in a Los Angeles courtroom and became one of the city's wealthiest landowners; Mary Ellen Pleasant, who funded John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry and sued to desegregate San Francisco's streetcars; newspaper publisher Charlotta Bass, the first Black woman nominated for U.S. vice president; and librarian

Miriam Matthews, who assembled one of the most important archives of Black California history.

The lesson, Nichol argued, is that records are never neutral. Historians, she said, are trained to read "against the archive" to ask not only what is preserved but what is missing and why.

"The archive is the foundation on which all future work rests," she said. "If we do not build it, no one else will build it for us."

Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly Mitchell, the second Black woman to serve on the board after Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, said she took pride that the exhibition lives at a county facility in her district. She urged attendees to bring the next generation including young men reminding the crowd that honoring Black women is not work for women alone.

Black Resource Center librarian Cheryl Paul, a former history teacher, told visitors the collection belongs to them and pressed them not to keep it to themselves.

"We are the diaspora," she said. "Every corner of it is represented in these four walls."

The center, established in 1978, has long worked to preserve African American history and culture. County Librarian Dr. Skye Patrick said the museum and accompanying oral history project ensure those stories "remain accessible for future generations."



Portraits of celebrated California Black women line the wall of the Museum of Black Women and Girls pop-up, "The Field of Black Beauty and Brilliance," ahead of its June 20, 2026, opening at the A.C. Bilbrew Library Black Resource Center in Los Angeles. (Photo by Karim Saafir Photography)

Africa University Gets First AME Member on Development Board

By Eveline Chikwanah

United Methodist News Service The Christian Recorder

Monifa McKnight, 50, an entrepreneur and educator from Maryland, is the first non-United Methodist to sit on the executive board of Africa University (Tennessee) Inc.

The African Methodist Episcopal lay member, who spent 26 years working in kindergarten to grade 12 education, was excited to be appointed to the board of a tertiary institution.

"I am excited to be on the AU (Tennessee) board as the first non-United Methodist. I was the first female superintendent of one of the largest school districts in the U.S. I understand God's mission when you are the first; God has prepared me," McKnight said.

"When you are the first, you create a path. I believe that's God's way to help create a path that didn't exist," she added.

Africa University, a United Methodist-related school serving the continent, has three boards. Africa University (Tennessee) Inc.'s board is the oldest. Doing business as the Africa University Development Office, Africa University (Tennessee) raises, holds, invests and distributes funds in support of the school, which is based in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

McKnight was the first woman superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, which consistently ranks among the 20 largest school districts in the U.S. by enrollment. The district also includes multiple schools that have received national recognition for academic achievement.

She is bringing to Africa University years of experience in education, working with young people, leadership, governance, and strategic

planning — and possibly more gifts that she hasn't yet discovered, she told UM News.

"I am hoping to broaden my horizon around studies from an international lens. I've had experience working with international students who come to the U.S.; now I get to learn as a leader from students and how things work in a different country, in the continent of Africa," she said.

"This is my first time seeing what that looks like, so that's going to be a big learning experience for me. And I'm hoping to also gain knowledge of things that are working well here to help influence that in the United States."

James H. Salley, president and chief executive of Africa University (Tennessee) Inc., and associate vice chancellor for institutional advancement, said McKnight was recruited because of her skills, professionalism and experience in primary and higher education.

"She proved herself in the previous positions she has held," he said. "McKnight has already made an impact and brought certain skills where we needed to close the loop on some of the areas we were deficient in."

The Africa University (Tennessee) Inc., bylaws do not state that someone has to be United Methodist in order to serve on the board, Salley said.

He noted that Africa University has had a relationship with the African Methodist Episcopal Church for more than seven years and has provided scholarships to the 20th Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church, which includes Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Botswana.

"We have more than 20 A.M.E. members currently enrolled who have been provided full

scholarships by an anonymous donor," he said. "So McKnight provides a bridge for us and our (AU Tennessee) Chair Bishop L. Jonathan Holston to interact with Bishop Gregory Vaughn Eason Sr. of the 20th District and research future possibilities."

The meetings held in March were the first to be chaired by Bishop Daniel O. Lunge of the Congo Central Episcopal Area, who took over from the Rev. Alfredo Zunguza of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

"This is a big responsibility which has been given to me at Africa University as the board chair," Lunge told UM News. "I am not considering it an honor, but it is a big task where God has added me to a group where others have started work, so that together we can drive Africa to where the Lord has planned."

He said his vision is to put in practice his passion and desire as a lecturer.

"Even after being elected a bishop, I didn't stop teaching."

Lunge has been a university professor since 2012 and is passionate about mission and evangelism.

"I would prefer that all of us — staff members, lecturers and students — should feel that we are called for a mission and go for the mission to bring people from the world and bring them to Jesus," he said.

Lunge is also chair of the board of the Protestant University in Congo, a member of the Faith and Order Committee in The United Methodist Church, an executive member of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, a member of the Central Conference Theological Education Fund under the United Methodist Board of Higher



Monifa McKnight (center) meets with some of the African Methodist Episcopal students studying at Africa University. McKnight, a lay member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, is the first non-United Methodist to sit on the executive board of Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. The meeting held in the Kwang Lim Chapel enabled McKnight to interact with students who are members of her denomination. Photo courtesy of McKnight.

Education and Ministry, and president of the Mid-Africa Regional Conference College of Bishops. He is president of the Protestant community in Sankuru province in Congo and an executive member of a publishing house in Kinshasa.

Other new members serving on the Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. board include Bishop Emmanuel Sinzohagera of the Burundi-Rwanda Episcopal Area and the Rev. Candace M. Lewis, president/dean of Gammon Theological Seminary — the first woman elected to the role in the school's history.

California Controller Malia M. Cohen Turns to Annual Audit to Present "Clearer" Picture of State's Financial Health

By Antonio Ray Harvey

California Black Media

A week before the California Legislature was required to pass a balanced budget on June 15, and send it to Gov. Gavin Newsom, State Controller Malia M. Cohen urged lawmakers to exercise fiscal discipline to guard against ups and downs in state revenue and the risk of future budget shortfalls.

Speaking at the UC Student and Policy Center's California Economic Forum in Sacramento on June 9, Cohen pointed to the state's 2024-25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) as an essential tool for understanding California's true fiscal condition.

The ACFR is the state's official audited financial statement, providing a comprehensive snapshot of California's finances based on actual revenues, expenditures, assets and liabilities.

Cohen noted that this year's report marked the first time since 2019 that California received an unmodified auditor's opinion and completed

the report before the release of the governor's May Revision budget proposal.

"Revenues are high, higher than expected. Expenditures are also higher than expected, but we are in a structural deficit," Cohen said. "We do need to make some changes; otherwise, the (California) government we all know and love will no longer be able to sustain."

According to the ACFR, California reported \$595.5 billion in revenue and \$582.5 billion in expenditures during the 2024-25 fiscal year, resulting in a statewide surplus of approximately \$13 billion.

Cohen said the report serves as a critical accountability tool during budget negotiations because it relies on audited financial data rather than projections.

The controller also addressed California's economic outlook in the wake of the latest UCLA Anderson Forecast, the quarterly economic outlook produced by economists at the UCLA Anderson School of Management. The forecast provides analysis of economic trends affecting California and the nation, including employment, inflation and economic growth.

Cohen highlighted concerns about the state's dependence on high-income taxpayers, the sustainability of stronger-than-expected tax revenues and the risk that short-term financial fluctuations could worsen long-term budget challenges.

She also cautioned lawmakers against relying too heavily on internal borrowing to manage deficits, urging them to limit borrowing and preserve reserve funds.

"ACFR is important to the fiscal health and wellness of the state of California," Cohen said. "Think about how it impacts our bond rating. Think about the bond rating as your personal credit score."

Cohen added, "For us to be creditworthy, for people to loan us money, borrow money to balance



From left, Gabriel Petek, legislative analyst for the Legislative Analyst's Office; Malia Cohen, California state controller; and Joe Stephanshaw, director of the California Department of Finance, participate in the 3rd Annual California Economic Forum in Sacramento. The panel discussion focused on California's economic outlook, upcoming fiscal policy challenges and the state's overall financial condition. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

our debts, we need (ACFR) to be out on time and to be clean."

The third annual California Economic Forum, organized by the UC Student and Policy Center in partnership with POLITICO, brought together economists and policymakers to discuss California's economic trajectory and the fiscal challenges facing the state.

Cohen participated in a panel discussion alongside California Department of Finance Director Joe Stephanshaw and Legislative Analyst Gabriel Petek of the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), the Legislature's independent, fiscal and policy advisor.

Petek said timely completion of the ACFR is critical because it provides policymakers, investors and bond markets with an accurate picture of the state's finances before major budget decisions are finalized.

"The lack of that information and analysis could have the effect of costing more interest on the debt when (states) go to the bond markets to borrow," Petek said. "I think it's a notable and important thing that the state (of California) has achieved in the document."

Stephanshaw, Newsom's chief fiscal policy adviser, said Cohen made completion of the ACFR a priority shortly after taking office.

While the Controller's Office compiles the report, state departments must reconcile their financial records with year-end figures submitted to the Department of Finance.

"The controller made this a priority when she took over. She met with me and expressed that task," Stephanshaw said. "I have to commend her for the work that was done over the last couple of years to have a timely reporting of our financial statement."

As controller, Cohen's constitutional responsibilities center on cash management, accounting and fiscal oversight. Her office issues monthly cash reports detailing actual General Fund revenues and expenditures, providing lawmakers with up-to-date information on the state's fiscal position.

California's fiscal year begins July 1. The governor must sign a final budget by June 30 to ensure the state can continue funding operations, employee salaries and vendor payments without interruption.

Cohen said the ACFR gives lawmakers and the public a clearer understanding of California's financial reality by grounding budget discussions in audited data rather than assumptions.

"ACFR should be a household name so that everybody knows about it," Cohen said.

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Black Alliance for Just Immigration Supports Black Voting Rights!

The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) condemns the continued gutting of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) and the broader assault on Black political power unfolding across the United States.

Black immigrants in the United States — whether citizens or not — share a common condition with Black Americans. Our ability to access housing, healthcare, education, labor protections, safety, and political representation is deeply tied to the political power of Black communities in this country.

When Black communities lose political power, all Black people across the diaspora become more vulnerable to displacement, criminalization, disenfranchisement, and state violence.

The U.S. cannot claim to be a multiracial democracy while systematically dismantling Black political representation and participation. An attack on Black voting power is an attack on all Black people across the diaspora and on the very possibility of a just democracy.

Voting is more than a civic exercise. Voting is about representation, access to resources, and the ability of communities to shape policies that determine whether we survive, thrive, or are left vulnerable to harm. It is both a right and an expectation of participation in public life.

For generations, however, Black people in the United States were systematically excluded from that right through both legal and extralegal violence — especially across the Deep South. The Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 was won through bloodshed, sacrifice, organizing, and mass resistance led by Black communities demanding full participation in democracy.

The VRA sought to remedy generations of racial exclusion by requiring states with histories of racist voter suppression to receive federal approval before changing election laws or voting procedures, a process known as preclearance. Section 2 of the VRA also created protections to ensure that Black voters and other historically marginalized communities could elect candidates who would represent their interests.

Historically, white conservative forces have sought to suppress Black political participation because Black communities have consistently organized, voted, and fought for policies rooted in justice, equity, and collective survival.

For more than a decade, the Supreme Court has steadily dismantled the VRA protections.



The logo for Black Alliance for Just Immigration uses an image of Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael), who fought for Black civil rights in the 1960s. Courtesy image.

In 2013, the Court's Shelby v. Holder decision removed the federal preclearance requirement, opening the floodgates for states to pass voter suppression laws and redraw districts designed to dilute Black political power.

On April 29, the Supreme Court ruled that Louisiana's congressional map was unconstitutional because it included two majority-Black districts. In a state where more than one-third of the population is Black, the Court has effectively declared that Black political representation itself is suspect.

This is not simply about maps or district lines. Gerrymandering is one tactic in a much larger project to weaken Black political power, undermine multiracial democracy, and consolidate power away from working-class communities and communities of color.

What the Supreme Court has done is allow racial gerrymandering to exclude Black people from political power, while the effort to ensure Black communities have representation is now considered unconstitutional. Gutting of the VRA is simply the latest chapter in a long history of efforts to silence Black voices and roll back the gains of the Civil

Rights Movement.

At the same time, the rise of authoritarian, xenophobic politics under Pres. Donald Trump and the broader far right seeks to codify anti-Blackness, anti-immigrant policies, attacks on women, LGBTQ+ communities, and other marginalized groups into law. These attacks are interconnected.

"The United States cannot claim to be a multiracial democracy while systematically dismantling Black political power," said Nana Gyamfi, executive director of BAJI. "Black immigrants understand that our conditions are tied to the conditions of Black Americans; together then, together now. When Black communities lose political power, all Black people become more vulnerable to displacement, criminalization, disenfranchisement, and state violence. Protecting Black voting rights is not just about elections. It is about protecting the possibility of collective freedom and self-determination for our communities."

BAJI remains committed to defending Black political power, strengthening Black migrant civic participation, and building a future rooted in Black freedom, dignity, and collective liberation.

Entertainment

Malia and Sasha Obama Steal the Spotlight at Their Dad's Presidential Library Launch



Malia and Sasha Obama in grand opening of Barack Obama's library

Malia and Sasha Obama attended the grand opening of Barack Obama's presidential library in Chicago. They appeared alongside family as the high-profile ceremony drew global attention and major public figures.

The sisters appeared on stage with their parents during the ceremony at the new center in Jackson Park. They smiled, waved to the crowd, and shared a brief public moment as cameras captured the scene.

According to the Daily Mail, Malia Obama, 27, wore a gray plunging St Agni blazer priced at about \$780, paired with a leather mini skirt and

pointed heels. Sasha Obama, 25, wore an all-white outfit with an asymmetric top and matching skirt, styled with a statement belt and Miu Miu heels valued at around \$1,320.

The opening brought together several former U.S. presidents and their families, including the Bidens, Bushes, and Clintons. The group posed for a photo ahead of the dedication ceremony, highlighting the rare political gathering.

The guest list also included well-known entertainers such as John Legend, Chrissy Teigen, Stephen Colbert, Oprah Winfrey, Tom Hanks, Rita

Wilson, Tyler Perry, and Steven Spielberg. Their presence reflected the strong mix of cultural and political figures at the event.

Political leaders also attended, including California Governor Gavin Newsom, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, and former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The White House did not invite Donald Trump, with Obama Foundation CEO Valerie Jarrett saying the focus remained on supporters of the project.

Jennifer Hudson opened the ceremony with

the national anthem, while other performers were scheduled throughout the program. Valerie Jarrett also spoke about the Obamas' early years, highlighting their shared commitment to public service before entering the White House.

The Obama Presidential Center, planned over several years after its 2017 announcement, spans 19 acres and includes a museum, library, public park, green spaces, and a full-size basketball court. The project cost around \$850 million and faced delays due to the pandemic and expanded design plans.



Clive Davis

Clive Davis Dies at 94 as Music Legend Who Built the Careers of Whitney Houston, Alicia Keys, Aretha Franklin, and More

Nationwide — The music industry is mourning the loss of Clive Davis, who died this morning at age 94, the legendary record executive whose influence helped shape the careers of some of the most successful and culturally significant Black artists in modern music history. Over a career spanning more than six decades, Davis played a pivotal role in discovering, developing, and elevating talent that transformed the sound of American music and reached audiences around the world.

Davis first rose to prominence at Columbia Records before going on to lead Arista Records, J Records, and other influential ventures. Throughout his career, he demonstrated a unique ability to recognize extraordinary talent long before it became mainstream. His vision helped launch and support the careers of numerous Black artists whose music became the soundtrack of multiple generations.

Among the artists whose careers were impacted by Davis were Whitney Houston, Alicia Keys, Aretha Franklin, Barry Manilow, Jennifer Hudson, Monica, Fantasia, OutKast, and many others. His work with Houston, in particular, is widely regarded as one of the most successful artist-development partnerships in music history. Under his guidance, Houston became one of the best-selling recording artists of all time.

Beyond commercial success, Davis helped open doors for Black performers at a time when opportunities within the music industry were often limited. He consistently invested in artists whose talent transcended barriers and whose work reflected the richness and diversity of Black culture. Through his leadership, countless musicians gained access to major platforms that allowed their voices and stories to reach global audiences.

Industry leaders credit Davis with helping bridge the gap between artistic excellence and mainstream success. His commitment to nurturing talent extended beyond chart performance. Artists frequently described him as a mentor who challenged them to achieve their full potential while remaining true to their creative vision.

The impact of Davis can be measured not only in awards, platinum records, and sold-out arenas, but also in the generations of artists who followed in the footsteps of those he championed. His influence helped shape R&B, soul, gospel, hip-hop, pop, and contemporary music, leaving an imprint on nearly every corner of the entertainment industry.

As tributes continue to pour in from around the world, Clive Davis is being remembered as more than a record executive. He was a visionary architect of modern music whose belief in Black artists helped change the industry forever. His legacy will live on through the timeless recordings, groundbreaking careers, and cultural milestones he helped make possible.



Whoopi Goldberg on the Knicks Accepting Trump's Invitation, "I Want Those Black Men to Stand in Our House"

Whoopi Goldberg comments about New York Knicks' invitation from the White House

After winning the NBA championship, the New York Knicks faced attention over a planned visit to the White House hosted by President Donald Trump. On "The View," co-host Whoopi Goldberg sparked debate after voicing strong support for the team attending.

Goldberg, a longtime Trump critic, said the players should go as a unified group and represent their journey as champions. She framed the moment as a chance to highlight Black athletes in a historic setting and what their success represents in public life.

During the discussion, she said, "I want all those Black men to stand in our house," and argued the visit could reflect resilience and achievement. She added that the appearance would connect

sports success with broader cultural visibility.

According to the New York Post, team owner James Dolan confirmed the Knicks had accepted the invitation after their title run. The team's visit would mark a notable moment, as it would be one of the first NBA championship teams during this period to accept such an invitation.

The invitation came after Trump attended Game 3 of the NBA Finals on June 8 at Madison Square Garden. However, individual players had not yet confirmed whether they would attend the White House event.

Center Trey Jemison III said he was still unsure when asked, noting the team would likely decide together. Other key players, including captain Jalen Brunson, had not publicly shared their final stance.

Goldberg continued to back the idea, saying the players represent more than basketball. She described them as athletes who overcame challenges and returned stronger, saying the visit would reflect that journey.

The conversation drew a strong reaction from the studio audience, with cheers following her

comments. Co-hosts then shared differing views on the situation.

Sara Haines said the invitation placed the team in a difficult position, while Alyssa Farah Griffin agreed it could make players uncomfortable.

Joy Behar said she felt divided, noting respect for the White House but uncertainty about its political context. Sunny Hostin added that several past NBA champions declined similar invitations, pointing to political concerns.

Hostin also said the decision could place pressure on team leadership and players as they weigh their response. She referenced how athletes often defer to team-wide decisions in situations like this.

The discussion later shifted to comparisons with a UFC event held at the White House, which included controversial remarks about former First Lady Michelle Obama. The panel used the example to highlight how public figures can become part of political debate during high-profile events.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO: 2026115015
 Doing business as:
E.T. LAUNDROMATS at 2028 N SANTA FE AVE, COMPTON, CA 90221

Mailing Address: 17041 MIRACLE LANE, RIVERSIDE, CA 92503
 County: Los Angeles
 Full name of registrant(s): **THOMAS MIXON** at 17041 MIRACLE LANE, RIVERSIDE,

CA 92503
 The business is conducted by: an Individual
 SIGNED: **THOMAS MIXON**, OWNER
 The registrant commenced to transact business under the

fictitious business name or names listed above on: 05/2026
 This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: May 26, 2026
 DEAN C. LOGAN
 Los Angeles County Clerk

By: JAMIE FU, 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: May 26, 2031
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Features

California Must Reinvest in the Next Generation of School Leaders Now

By Dr. Debra Duardo

Special to California Black Media Partners

Julian Rojas didn't grow up imagining himself as a school principal. He grew up imagining his students.

Now in his 13th year in education, Rojas is actively applying for assistant principal positions. What changed? A new program removed the barriers that stood between talented educators and school leadership and gave him the tools to lead differently.

That program is the Diverse Education Leaders Pipeline Initiative (DELPI), and California must act now to save it.

Our state is facing a leadership shortage that mirrors the well-documented teacher shortage. Principals and school leaders shape everything, from how teachers are supported to how families are welcomed through the door. Yet the pathway to becoming one is long, costly, and often inaccessible, with credentialing programs running tens of thousands of dollars at a moment when student debt nationally exceeds \$1.7 trillion. For educators of color, the very people whose presence in leadership most benefits our increasingly diverse student population, those barriers are often insurmountable.

DELPI was created to solve this. Through state funding, the program provides up to \$30,000 per candidate so educators can earn their administrative credentials at no cost. It pairs that financial support with culturally responsive training, anti-bias coursework and hands-on fieldwork designed to develop leaders who reflect and understand the communities they serve.

Rojas' experience illustrates what that development actually looks like.

When he entered LACOE's program, he was already a veteran educator, someone who had served as an interim assistant principal, coached fellow teachers and seen firsthand how school structures shape student outcomes. He knew he wanted to move into administration. "I want to expand my impact and support students at a systems level," he said. "The structures at a school site and family



A school administrator leads a data-driven presentation. Advocates say California must dramatically expand its pipeline of Black and diverse school leaders to meet the challenges facing public education in the state. (Photo: Adobe Stock)

partnerships directly influence student outcomes. I want to build on that work."

But DELPI pushed him further than he expected. "It helped me shift my practice from a transactional leader to a transformational leader," Rojas said. "I'm more intentional about including the perspectives of not just my colleagues, but families and students. Leadership is about creating spaces where people feel seen, heard and valued."

That shift shows up in his daily work, in the parent workshops he leads, the data conversations he initiates, the deliberate outreach to families that LACOE's program reinforced as non-negotiable. "I'm more thoughtful now about how I design supports that meet the needs of our diverse learners,"

he said, "and how I engage with families as partners in the process."

His advice to educators considering the program is direct: "Stay consistent and take advantage of the support LACOE provides. Being open to feedback from peers and coaches made a difference. Reaching out for one-on-one support helped me strengthen my work."

Rojas is not alone. Across California, approximately 300 educators are currently earning their administrative credentials through DELPI — and nearly every available slot has been filled. At LACOE, we are proud to serve as the fiscal lead for one of just 10 DELPI grants statewide, partnering with the Diversity in Leadership Institute, UMass Global, and a consortium of

school districts including Compton, Lynwood, Wiseburn, Centinela Valley, and Culver City. Our first cohort of 11 candidates completed the program in December 2025. Our second cohort of 15 is currently underway. A third cohort of 18 is set to begin in January 2027.

This is a program at capacity, with more educators ready to step forward than we can currently support.

The diversity imperative behind this work is stark. Today, roughly 70 percent of administrators in Los Angeles County are white, while our student population is among the most diverse in the nation. Research consistently shows that students benefit when they see themselves reflected in their leaders. DELPI is building a pipeline that begins to close that gap in Los Angeles County, in rural communities that struggle most to recruit qualified leaders, and across the state.

But here is the urgent reality: DELPI is funded on a one-time basis and expires on June 30, 2027. The state budget must be passed by June 15 and signed by the Governor by June 30 of this year. If DELPI is not included in this budget cycle, the program ends and the momentum we have built, the cohorts we are recruiting, the leaders like Julian Rojas who are ready to step forward, will have nowhere to go.

A renewed and modest reinvestment in DELPI will have far-reaching impacts across the state. We are urging state leaders to continue funding for DELPI in this year's budget without delay.

If we fail to invest in our leadership pipeline today, our schools will face greater instability, our teachers will lack the support they need and our students will be led by administrators who don't reflect or understand them.

Rojas is ready to be one of those leaders. There are hundreds more like him waiting for the chance. California must not close the door on them now.

About the Author

Dr. Debra Duardo, Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools.

The UC Davis Scale--When "Race-Neutral" Becomes Code for Illegal Race-Based Affirmative Action

By Craig J. DeLuz

California Black Media

On June 10, the U.S. Department of Justice announced the findings of a six-month investigation into the UC Davis School of Medicine admissions practices.

The probe focused on whether the university's "Davis Scale" violated the U.S. Supreme Court's 2023 ruling in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, which barred colleges and universities from considering race in admissions decisions.

Following that landmark decision, many institutions turned to race-neutral factors such as income, neighborhood conditions, parental education, and access to opportunity as ways to broaden student diversity. The central question in the UC Davis case is whether those factors were used as lawful measures of disadvantage or as a proxy for race to achieve outcomes the Court said could not be pursued directly.

True diversity in medicine is valuable. Different experiences and perspectives can strengthen the profession when they are earned through real preparation. But that kind of diversity must be built by better equipping underrepresented students to compete on equal footing—not by lowering standards or engineering racial outcomes through the back door.

When institutions choose shortcuts instead, everyone ultimately loses: the students, the profession, and the patients it serves. Nowhere is this clearer than at the UC Davis School of Medicine.

UC Davis has handed the Department of Justice a near-perfect exhibit of exactly how this misguided approach plays out in practice. School leaders created the "Davis Scale," a scoring system that gives extra consideration to applicants from lower-income families, those whose parents had less education, and those who grew up in underserved areas. On paper, it sounds perfectly race-neutral.

In practice, Associate Dean Mark Henderson explained the real point with refreshing candor: it was "class-based affirmative action," and "class struggles have a huge overlap with race — that's how we skirted the issue."

One almost has to admire his honesty. Most prefer to whisper such things in private emails. Here, the architect publicly described their workaround, promoted it to other medical schools, and celebrated the results. Internal documents and simulations showed they tested the scale specifically to increase Black and Hispanic enrollment. They tracked racial percentages like sports scores and proudly announced that "underrepresented in medicine" students had tripled, reaching levels that neatly matched California's demographics.

When the very people who designed the tool openly admit it was built to produce the racial outcomes the Supreme Court had just forbidden, their defense loses much of its force. Intent matters. As Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in the *Students for Fair Admissions* decision, "what cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly. The Constitution deals with substance, not shadows."

The law looks at reality, not the clever label. When administrators publicly confess they crafted the Davis Scale as a workaround — "that's how we skirted the issue" — they hand their critics the strongest evidence possible. As the old saying goes, once you've told the world how you evaded the law, it becomes much harder to claim you were following it all along.

The deeper problem is not just legal evasion; it is the quiet harm done to the very students these policies claim to uplift. Medical school is demanding. When students are admitted with noticeably weaker academic preparation—lower GPAs and MCAT scores on average—they often find themselves mismatched against classmates who arrived far better equipped. The predictable result is more academic struggle, lower performance on licensing exams, longer time to graduate, and, in too many cases, discouragement or outright failure to finish.

This "mismatch" effect is not speculation. Decades of evidence, including what happened in California after Proposition 209 banned racial preferences, show that Black and Hispanic students often succeeded at higher rates when admitted to schools where their academic preparation matched



Students walk the campus of the University of California, Davis. A controversial admissions scoring system used by the UC Davis School of Medicine has reignited debate over whether "race-neutral" policies can mask race-conscious decision-making in higher education. (Courtesy Photo)

the pace of their peers. Lowering the bar does not raise people up; it simply moves the finish line and leaves many still short of real competence. It hurts the students who struggle, the patients who deserve highly skilled doctors, and the profession's overall standards.

There is also the subtler cost of stigma. Talented students who would have earned their place on merit find their achievements clouded by doubt—both from others and, sometimes, from themselves. The soft bigotry of lowered expectations is still bigotry, and it carries a human price.

Medicine is not a demographic balancing act.

Patients of every background deserve doctors chosen for knowledge and skill. Real, lasting diversity comes from preparing underrepresented students to compete successfully at the highest levels—not from lowering standards to manufacture the desired mix. UC Davis's own documents and public statements have made the DOJ's job easier: intent was never truly hidden. Good intentions remain no substitute for clear thinking about consequences. True progress requires raising preparation long before students reach medical school—not inventing new ways to pretend the gaps do not exist.

Our Urban Hospitals Are at Risk. Billionaire Tax Cuts Are to Blame

By Debru Carthan

Special to California Black Media Partners

As a frontline healthcare worker, I know what happens when hospitals are stretched too thin: people wait for hours in crowded emergency rooms, nurses try to care for too many patients at once, families delay treatment because they're afraid of the bill. In many Black and working-class neighborhoods, this isn't a temporary crisis, it's a daily reality, and without intervention, it's about to get much, much worse.

The federal budget enacted by President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans cuts \$100 billion from California healthcare to pay for enormous tax cuts for billionaires. Now, hospitals that already operate on razor-thin margins are being told to absorb devastating losses so that California's richest 200 billionaires can continue to avoid paying their fair share.

A recent analysis by Public Citizen identified 83 California hospitals at heightened risk of closure, layoffs, or service cuts because of the new federal funding cuts — the highest number of any state in the country. Many are urban safety-net hospitals that primarily serve Black, working-class patients in communities where people already struggle to access care.

Facilities like Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital in South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles Doctors Hospital, Hollywood Presbyterian, and PIH Good Samaritan are lifelines for patients who rely on Medi-Cal, emergency rooms, trauma services, and public healthcare systems, and they're all at-risk of closing because California's billionaires

pay much lower tax rates than working people pay out of every paycheck.

That's why healthcare workers are supporting a modest, one-time tax on billionaires that will prevent hospital closures and ensure that the state's billionaires finally pay their fair share.

Black Californians already face higher rates of hypertension, maternal mortality, asthma, stroke, and preventable emergency room visits. Structural inequality has created enormous gaps in health outcomes, and cutting healthcare funding will only widen them. According to the Public Citizen analysis, hospitals at greatest risk from federal healthcare cuts disproportionately serve Black and Latino communities and higher-poverty areas.

Healthcare workers understand what happens when hospitals disappear. Ambulances travel farther. ER wait times explode. Patients delay care until small problems become life-threatening emergencies. Overcrowding increases burnout for nurses, technicians, respiratory therapists, and doctors who are already exhausted from years of understaffing.

And when city hospitals close, the damage spreads quickly. Community clinics lose referral partners. Trauma centers absorb impossible patient loads. Families without reliable transportation suddenly have to travel across counties for life-saving care, when every second matters. When these things happen, patients die unnecessarily. Families lose loved ones, and healthcare workers feel helpless.

Meanwhile, billionaires are doing fine. They continue benefiting from a tax system that allows their immense fortunes to grow largely untouched,

which is why California's billionaire tax proposal isn't just necessary, it's long overdue.

The idea is simple: if billionaires have accumulated extraordinary wealth while public systems collapse around us, they should contribute more to sustaining the society that made that wealth possible. A modest tax on extreme wealth could help stabilize hospitals, protect emergency services, preserve healthcare jobs, and keep care accessible for millions of Californians.

As healthcare workers, we're trained to recognize emergencies before they become catastrophes. California's hospital system is approaching that point right now. We can either act to protect the hospitals our communities depend on, or we can continue rewarding concentrated wealth while the hospitals and ERs we rely on close their doors forever.

This debate is ultimately about values. Do we believe billionaires deserve another tax break more than a child deserves an emergency room nearby? More than a mother deserves regular prenatal care and a maternity ward she can get to when she's in labor? Do we believe Wall Street portfolios matter more than if a grandmother can receive cancer treatment close to home?

Healthcare workers already know our answer. And this November, we hope you'll join us in voting our values by insisting billionaires finally pay their fair share.



Debru Carthan is a Radiologic Technologist at Kaiser in California.

Features

Political Playback:

California Capitol News You Might Have Missed



CLBC Concert at the Capitol June 17, 2026. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

Bo Tefu and Antonio Ray Harvey
California Black Media

Sacramento: California Legislative Black Caucus Leads Capitol Juneteenth Celebration

To kick off the holiday weekend, the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC) hosted its Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration on June 17 on the West Steps of the State Capitol.

Alongside other lawmakers in the Legislature, hundreds of people gathered for the free community event, which focused on reflection, community, and African American heritage.

"Juneteenth is more than just a commemoration of the past," said CLBC chairperson Sen. Akilah Weber Pierson (D-San Diego). "It's a celebration of Black excellence, Black joy, and ongoing pursuit of equality and opportunity for future generations."

The Juneteenth event featured live music from Oakland-born, Neo-Soul singer Goapele, Sacramento music producer and "NPR Tiny Desk" winner The Philharmonik, and the Grant Union High School Drumline.

Following the public concert, the celebration moved into the Capitol as the CLBC called on legislative colleagues to pass Senate Concurrent Resolution 183 (SCR183) to recognize the holiday officially.

The day after the public concert, CLBC members formally called on their legislative colleagues inside the Capitol to pass the resolution and officially recognize Juneteenth.

Assemblymembers and Senators delivered powerful remarks in honor of Juneteenth, with legislative leaders reflecting on emancipation and the ongoing pursuit of equality.

Juneteenth, a portmanteau that blends the words "June" and "Nineteenth," is a holiday commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans in the United States. It marks the day in 1865 when Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to announce that the Civil War had ended and that formerly enslaved people were free.

Black Freedom Fund Awards \$4.6 Million to Organizations Advancing Housing, Immigration and Economic Justice

Black Freedom Fund (BFF) has awarded \$4.6 million to 119 organizations across California, expanding support for nonprofits working on housing justice, immigration advocacy, economic equity and other community-driven initiatives.

The funding, announced as part of the organization's 2026 grantmaking cycle, will help community groups address immediate challenges while building long-term power in Black communities, according to BFF. The grants support organizations focused on keeping residents housed, protecting immigrant communities, increasing wages, expanding access to health care and improving educational outcomes.

The investment comes as philanthropic support for racial justice initiatives continues to decline nationwide. BFF said many community-

based organizations are facing growing financial uncertainty despite increasing demand for services and advocacy efforts.

This year's grantmaking round is the largest in the organization's history and reflects a strategy to broaden support across California while strengthening community-led organizations. The cohort includes 119 grantees statewide, with 24% receiving funding from BFF for the first time. The foundation also reported a 59% increase in funding for organizations in historically under-resourced regions, including Northern California, the Central Coast, the Inland Empire and the San Joaquin Valley.

In addition, funding for organizations focused on immigration justice increased by 140%, while support for housing and homelessness advocacy groups rose by 89% compared with previous grantmaking cycles.

"We believe it is more important than ever to invest in the organizations and leaders building lasting power in communities across California," said Marc Philpart, president and CEO of BFF. "This work is about helping build the conditions for Black communities to thrive; not only today, but for generations to come."

Fund leaders said the grants are intended to strengthen organizations rooted in the communities they serve and provide the resources needed to address both immediate concerns and long-term systemic challenges. Areas of focus include civic engagement, worker rights, health equity, criminal legal reform, housing stability and movement-building efforts.

Since its launch in 2020, BFF has awarded more than \$52 million to over 250 organizations throughout California. The organization said its latest investments are designed to help communities navigate current challenges while creating lasting opportunities for economic mobility, civic participation and community leadership across the state.

California's News "Career Passport" Program Aims to Connect Workers to In-Demand Jobs

California is launching a pilot program for its new Career Passport, a digital tool designed to help workers connect with employers by highlighting their skills, training and work experience rather than relying solely on college degrees.

The pilot phase began June 17 and runs through Aug. 24 as the state evaluates four vendors competing to build the platform. Officials say the Career Passport will help qualified workers, including those without four-year degrees, gain access to in-demand jobs while making it easier for employers to identify talent.

The initiative is part of Gov. Gavin Newsom's Master Plan for Career Education and reflects California's broader effort to promote skills-based hiring. The digital tool will allow users to securely share verified records of their education, job training, military service, work experience and professional credentials with potential employers.

"We're working to connect qualified Californians to employment opportunities they may have otherwise been overlooked for," said Newsom. "California's Career Passport will be a win-win for our workforce, ensuring that relevant skills, credentials and real-world experience are recognized, and that capable workers are not being filtered out simply because they lack a four-year

degree."

State officials say the Career Passport will combine traditional academic records, such as high school and college transcripts, with skills and credentials earned outside the classroom. The approach, known as a Learning and Employment Record, is intended to give employers a more complete picture of an applicant's qualifications.

Labor and Workforce Development Agency Secretary Stewart Knox said the platform will help create stronger links between education and career opportunities.

"The Career Passport will create connected pathways that help workers and students gain the skills and opportunities they need to thrive," said Knox. "California is committed to ensuring every person has access to family sustaining careers by building a workforce system that starts with the realities of workers, no matter where they begin."

The program is being developed in partnership with the California Community Colleges system and will involve collaboration among state agencies, educational institutions, workforce organizations and employers.

Officials say the Career Passport builds on California's workforce development efforts, including registered apprenticeships and earn-and-learn programs.

Secretary of State Weber: Measure to Limit Automobile Accident Insurance Payouts Makes It to Nov. Ballot



Sen. Akilah Weber Pierson (D-San Diego), left, and Asm. Mia Bonta (D-Alameda) await their introduction during the California Legislative Black Caucus Juneteenth Celebration at the State Capitol on June 17, 2026. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

California voters will have the opportunity to decide on a proposed constitutional amendment that would limit certain compensation and attorney fees in automobile accident cases after the measure qualified for the November 2026 ballot, Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber announced.

The initiative became eligible for the Nov. 3, 2026, General Election ballot on June 17 after supporters gathered enough valid signatures to meet state requirements. The measure is expected to be formally certified on June 25 unless it is withdrawn by its proponents before that date.

If approved by voters, the proposal would make several changes to how compensation is awarded in motor vehicle accident cases. Among its provisions, the measure would limit the fees attorneys can collect when representing accident victims on a contingency basis, requiring that victims retain at least 75% of any monetary recovery. The restriction would not apply to attorneys representing defendants.

The initiative would also increase the burden of proof for certain medical expenses claimed by accident victims and limit the amount that can be recovered for those costs. In addition, it would prohibit certain financial arrangements between attorneys and medical providers.

To qualify for the ballot, the measure needed 874,641 valid signatures, equal to 8% of the votes cast for governor in the 2022 election. According to the Secretary of State's Office, the initiative exceeded the threshold required to qualify through random sampling, a process that allows measures to advance if projected valid signatures surpass 110% of the required total.



The California Legislative Black Caucus hosted a free public Juneteenth celebration on the West Steps of the State Capitol on June 17, 2026. Shown from left are Asm. Corey Jackson (D-Moreno Valley), Asm. Mike Gipson (D-Carson), California Secretary of State Shirley Weber, and her grandson, Kadir Gakunga. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

A fiscal analysis prepared by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) and the Department of Finance found the proposal could produce annual savings for California trial courts ranging from millions to tens of millions of dollars. The savings would depend on how many motor vehicle accident lawsuits are filed and how quickly remaining cases are resolved.

The analysis also found the measure could increase Medi-Cal costs by millions to tens of millions of dollars annually because some accident victims may receive less compensation that would otherwise help offset health care expenses covered by the state program.

The initiative was submitted by proponents John Moffatt and Kurt R. Oneto. If certified later this month, the measure will appear before California voters in the November 2026 election.

"Nothing to Hide": Newsom and Wife Say They Are Not Worried About New Federal Gov Probe

California Governor Gavin Newsom said he and his wife, First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, have "nothing to hide" as they face what he described as a new federal investigation, accusing President Donald Trump of using government agencies to target political opponents and those closest to him.

Speaking in a video address, Newsom said federal agents have recently contacted family members, friends and former employees while seeking records connected to him and his associates. He argued the effort is politically motivated and tied to his outspoken criticism of Trump.

"In recent days, federal agents have knocked on the doors of family, friends and former employees, not because they found a crime, but because they're simply trying to find one," Newsom said.

The remarks mark a sharp escalation in the feud between the Democratic governor and the Republican president. Newsom contends that federal authorities are pursuing people in his orbit despite a lack of evidence of wrongdoing, while Trump and his allies have rejected accusations that investigations are politically driven.

Newsom said investigators could review any records they wished because "we have nothing to hide." He added, "Donald Trump picked the wrong target."

The governor reserved some of his strongest criticism for what he described as efforts to involve his wife in the probe. Calling her a dedicated public servant, Newsom said she had "done nothing wrong other than having the temerity to advocate for what she believes in."

In an emotional moment, Newsom addressed his wife directly.

"I love you, and I'm sorry he's doing this," he said. "You have not earned a single one of the indignities that he's trying to inflict on you and our children."

Newsom also accused Trump of profiting from the presidency and using the Justice Department to pursue political rivals. He claimed the administration has targeted a growing list of critics and said he was prepared to join them.

"One by one, anyone who has challenged Donald Trump has ended up on his hit list," Newsom said.

The governor concluded by vowing to continue speaking out against the president and rejecting any effort to silence him.

"Come after me," said Newsom. "I'm not going anywhere, and the country is watching."

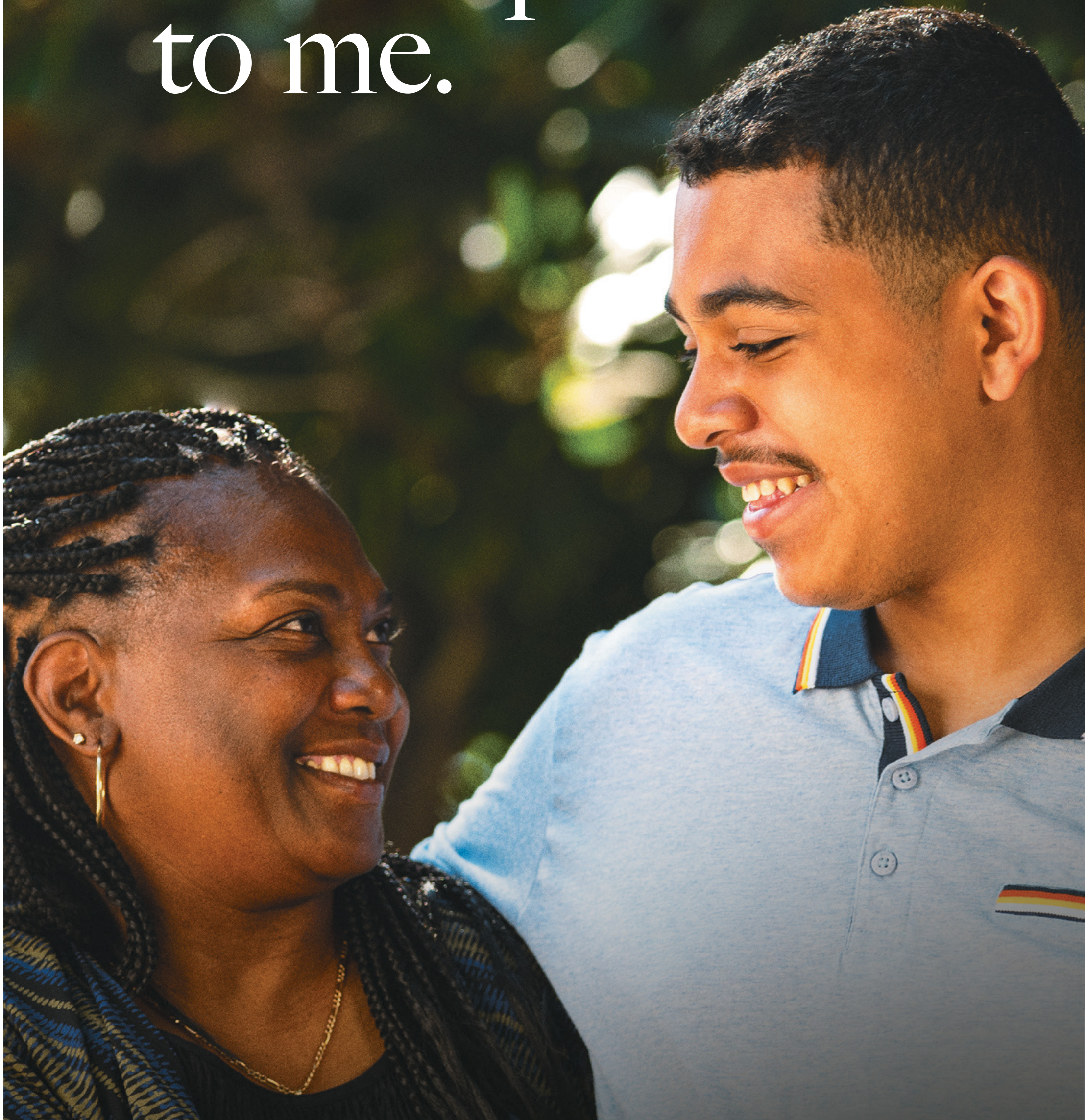


R&B and neo-soul singer Goapele was the featured performer at the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC) Juneteenth Freedom Celebration at the State Capitol on June 17, 2026. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.



California Legislative Black Caucus members Asm. Isaac Bryan (D-Los Angeles), left, and Asm. Sade Elhawary (D-Los Angeles) discuss ACR 214, a legislative measure recognizing and celebrating Juneteenth in California, during a Juneteenth event at the State Capitol. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

He's 6'1",
but he still
looks up
to me.



Adopt a teen.
You can't imagine the reward.



A D O P T U S K I D S . O R G

Standing with
you through
every challenge.

*Your voice in
uncertain times.*

— LEIMERT PARK —

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Sports

Stars and Stripes Are Rolling:

USMNT Unbeaten in Two, Advance to World Cup Round of 32 on Home Soil

Balogun's brace lights up SoFi Stadium in opener; Freeman delivers historic header in Seattle as U.S. eyes tournament run

By OGNSC Staff

Los Angeles News Observer

It's been the week Los Angeles — and really, all of America — has been dreaming about. The U.S. Men's National Team opened the 2026 FIFA World Cup right here at home, and through two matches, coach Mauricio Pochettino's squad has been nothing short of spectacular.

It started June 12 at Los Angeles Stadium in Inglewood, in front of 70,492 fans who shook the venue like a California earthquake. The USMNT welcomed Paraguay for its World Cup debut with a dominant 4-1 victory — the most goals the United States has ever scored in a single World Cup match.

The stadium erupted in the seventh minute when a Weston McKennie cross deflected off Paraguay's Damián Bobadilla into his own net. From there, Monaco striker Folarin Balogun took over. Balogun, converting a precise Christian Pulisic cross, made it 2-0 in the 31st minute. He then dribbled through two defenders to place a perfect strike to the upper corner in first-half stoppage time. Balogun's brace made him the first American to score two goals in a World Cup match since 1930.

Paraguay pulled one back through midfielder Mauricio in the 73rd minute, but substitute Giovanni Reyna put the finishing touch on a historic night with a curling shot off the outside of his right foot in the 98th minute to seal the 4-1 final.

"All in all, just an incredible start," said Pulisic, who was subbed at halftime as a precaution after taking a kick to the calf. "But there's a lot more we still have to do."

Seven days later, without their captain, the



Folarin Balogun celebrates a first-half goal as the U.S. opens the 2026 FIFA World Cup with a record 4-1 win over Paraguay at Los Angeles Stadium. (Photo Credit: AP Images)

Americans proved the point. Playing without Pulisic, who sat out with the calf injury, the U.S. headed north to Lumen Field in Seattle and beat Australia 2-0 before a crowd of 66,925 to clinch a spot in the Round of 32 — the first time the USMNT has advanced to the knockout round after just two group matches in the modern era.

Balogun again created the opening goal in the 11th minute, racing past his defender and whipping in a dangerous cross that Australia's Cameron Burgess accidentally turned into his own net. Then, in the 43rd minute, 21-year-old defender Alex Freeman — son of former NFL wide receiver and Super Bowl champion Antonio Freeman — headed home a deflected Sergio Dest free kick to make it 2-0. The goal survived a VAR review and cemented Freeman's place in USMNT history as the sixth-youngest American to score in a World Cup.

"I looked back and they all started running," Freeman said with a wide smile after the match.

Australia pushed hard in the second half, but the U.S. backline held firm. The result also got an assist from Group D action elsewhere: Paraguay defeated Turkey 1-0 the following morning, clinching the group for the United States.

The USMNT now sits atop Group D with six points and six goals scored across two matches — just one shy of the team's all-time single-tournament record. Up next is a final group stage showdown against Turkey on Thursday, June 25, at Los Angeles Stadium in Inglewood. Kick-off is set for 10 p.m. ET on Fox.

With the country watching and the World Cup right in their own backyard, there has never been a better time to be an American soccer fan.

Bumps and Blowouts: Dodgers Survive Rough Homestand, Roll Into Minnesota With Momentum

By OGNSC Staff

Los Angeles News Observer

The Los Angeles Dodgers had a week to forget at Chavez Ravine — and a week to remember on the road. After getting swept by the Baltimore Orioles at Dodger Stadium, the defending champions bounced back in Minnesota, winning the first two games of a three-game series to move to 51-29, the best record in the National League West.

The week started with promise. The Dodgers had just finished a three-game sweep of the Tampa Bay Rays June 15-17, riding a clutch pinch-hit homer from Miguel Rojas on Monday night, a dominant 1-0 shutout win behind Shohei Ohtani's 15th home run and Justin Wroblewski on Tuesday, and a come-from-behind 5-4 win Wednesday on Freddie Freeman's go-ahead two-run shot in the sixth. The Dodgers headed into the Baltimore series feeling good.

The Orioles had other plans. Baltimore opened the three-game set Friday, June 19, with the Dodgers rallying late for a 6-5 walk-off when a Dalton Rushing single tied the game and a throwing error by outfielder Tyler O'Neill scored the winning run in the ninth. But Saturday and Sunday belonged to the visitors.

On Saturday, June 20, Trevor Rogers was masterful, holding the Dodgers to one hit over seven scoreless innings in a 3-2 Baltimore win. Rogers walked just two and struck out six. Yoshinobu Yamamoto took the loss, giving up three earned runs in six innings. Ohtani homered in the ninth — his 16th of the season — but it wasn't enough.

Sunday's series finale was a rout. Baltimore exploded for 12 runs in a 12-1 drubbing that left Dodger Stadium unusually quiet. Pete Alonso launched a three-run homer, Colton Cowser tied his career high with four RBIs, and starter Emmet Sheehan was knocked around for six earned runs in just 3 1/3 innings. It marked the first time the Dodgers had dropped consecutive games since May 11-12.

But the Dodgers are built to bounce back, and they did exactly that heading into Minnesota. On Monday, June 22, Ohtani led off the game by parking the second pitch he saw deep into the right-field plaza for his 17th home run of the season. Eric Lauer threw six hitless innings after opener Will Klein allowed a Byron Buxton home run in the first, and Freeman added a sixth-inning solo shot to seal a 2-1 win. The game wasn't without concern — outfielder Kyle Tucker left with lower back spasms, and catcher Dalton Rushing was pulled for a concussion evaluation.

Tuesday's contest turned into a Dodger



Shohei Ohtani (Photo Credit: MLB Photos via Getty Images)

Baltimore sweeps home series; Ohtani, Freeman power wins over Twins as LA sits 51-29 atop the NL West

showcase. Behind seven strong innings from Wroblewski — who improved to 9-2 on the season — Los Angeles pounded out a season-high-tying 17 hits in a 12-3 blowout. Freeman and Andy Pages each collected three hits, and Mookie Betts, Alex Freeland, Alex Call and Chuckie Robinson all went multi-hit. A sacrifice fly from Ohtani and two-run

singles by Freeman and Betts in the fourth put the game out of reach early.

The Dodgers close out the Minnesota series Wednesday with Ohtani — pitching this time, with a 7-2 record and a sparkling 1.47 ERA on the mound — facing Twins right-hander Joe Ryan. Tucker is expected to remain day-to-day, with the club hopeful he returns this weekend.

At 51-29 and rolling, LA remains the team to beat in the National League. Wroblewski's emergence as one of the game's elite left-handers, Ohtani's consistent two-way brilliance, and a lineup deep enough to absorb injuries have the Dodgers in championship form heading toward the All-Star break.

LA Goes All-In on Youth: Clippers Land Top-5 Pick, Lakers Snag Athletic Wing in 2026 NBA Draft

Keaton Wagler heads to the Clippers at No. 5; Cameron Carr joins the Lakers after last-minute trade with New York

By OGNSC Staff

Los Angeles News Observer

The 2026 NBA Draft delivered big news for both of Los Angeles' professional basketball franchises Tuesday night, as the Clippers secured one of the most promising guard prospects in this deep draft class and the Lakers made a savvy move to land an athletic wing they believe can help reshape their roster.

The Los Angeles Clippers, picking fifth overall — a selection they acquired through a midseason trade that sent center Ivica Zubac to the Indiana Pacers — chose Keaton Wagler, a 6-foot-6 guard out of the University of Illinois. The pick is the highest the Clippers have made since selecting Blake Griffin with the top pick in 2009.

Wagler, a one-and-done freshman who was barely recruited out of high school in Shawnee, Kan., turned in one of the most remarkable single-season rises in recent college basketball history. He averaged 17.9 points, 5.1 rebounds and 4.2 assists per game while shooting 44.5 percent from the floor and 39.7 percent from three. He won the Jerry West Shooting Guard of the Year Award, was named Big Ten Freshman of the Year and led Illinois to the program's first Final Four since 2005 — scoring a game-high 25 points in the Elite Eight win over Iowa.

"He is a high-level shooter, ballhandler and passer with positional size," said Clippers President of Basketball Operations Lawrence Frank. "He is a high-IQ player with a great feel who makes smart decisions and winning plays, whether he's

on offense, defense or the glass. He approaches the game the right way."

Wagler joins a Clippers backcourt that already features All-Star point guard Darius Garland, acquired at the February trade deadline from Cleveland. Analysts see the pairing as a natural fit — Garland as the primary ball-handler, Wagler as a high-efficiency secondary option who can hurt defenses off the ball.

Meanwhile, across town, the Los Angeles Lakers wasted little time making their move. Entering the night with the 25th pick, the Lakers sent cash considerations to the reigning NBA champion New York Knicks to move up one slot and select Cameron Carr, a 21-year-old guard out of Baylor University, at No. 24.

Carr had a breakout 2025-26 campaign for the Bears, averaging 18.9 points, 5.8 rebounds, 2.6 assists and 1.3 blocks per game while shooting 49.4 percent from the field and 37.4 percent from beyond the arc. He put on arguably the best performance at the NBA Draft Combine this spring, posting 30 points in a scrimmage and ranking second in lane agility and top-three in vertical leap.

At 6-foot-4 with a reported 7-foot wingspan, Carr profiles as the three-and-D wing the Lakers have been targeting. His combination of length, shooting range, cutting ability and athleticism drew comparisons to Spurs guard Devin Vassell — who helped lead San Antonio to the NBA Finals this past season.

"We wanted to get better athletes," Lakers President of Basketball Operations Rob Pelinka



The LA Clippers selected Illinois guard Keaton Wagler with the fifth overall pick in the 2026 NBA Draft. (Photo Credit: Los Angeles Clippers)

said during his exit interview this spring. "Carr fits that archetype," noted one analyst. Tuesday's pick was a clear statement of intent from a franchise still searching for its identity heading into next season. The Clippers also hold the 36th and 52nd

picks in Wednesday night's second round. The Lakers surrendered their second-round pick as part of the Carr trade. Both LA franchises will now turn their attention to free agency, with a busy offseason ahead.

Inglewood:

Meet Marion Apio, Your Local News Reporter With the Observer News Group in Los Angeles



“I am Ready to Tell Your Stories”

That feeling deepened during my first Sunday service at Faithful Central Bible Church. Six months of shopping at local markets and navigating this community's rhythm have only proven how special it is.

My name is Marion Apio. As of this month, I am officially your new local news reporter with the Observer News Group in Los Angeles.

My journey to Inglewood has been unconventional. I started my journalism career in Uganda, earning a bachelor's degree in journalism and communication. Driven by advocacy and equity, I worked in communications for a continental organization tackling online violence against women. Later, I co-founded the Debunk Media Initiative, Uganda's first news verification platform, to train young people to combat online misinformation.

My commitment to impactful storytelling eventually brought me to the U.S., where I graduated from UC Berkeley with a master's degree in journalism and a minor in business journalism. Along the way, I've reported on human rights, education, local business, and journalist safety for outlets including Bloomberg News, the Berkeley Investigative Reporting Program, Oakland North, and Richmond Confidential.

Today, I am proud to step into this community as a USC California Health Equity Fellow, a California Local News Fellow, and a National Press Foundation Widening the Pipeline Fellow.

Joining the Observer Group this month directly matches my purpose. From my first meeting with Editor Joe Bowers and Publisher James Luckey, Jr.—who welcomed my transition with open arms—it was clear this paper shares my core mission: an unwavering commitment to diversity and spotlighting the voices of Black and underserved communities.

Attending my first Inglewood City Council meeting, I was struck by its efficiency. But beneath that local governance, my journalistic curiosity was piqued.

Inglewood sits at a crossroads, experiencing rapid transformation from its proximity to LAX, SoFi Stadium, and major entertainment developments reshaping the skyline. Living here, I see the advantages of our location. But as a reporter, I know proximity does not guarantee access. Major economic shifts bring fast changes, and the people who built the soul of this neighborhood are too often overlooked when those changes arrive.

Because I have navigated spaces of lack but have also been blessed to travel, study, and view the world, I approach my reporting with deep empathy. I refuse to look at Inglewood through the detached lens of an outsider. I am here to tell stories from the perspective of the people who call this place home.

I am not a journalist who only drops in when something goes wrong; I am deeply solutions-oriented. While it is vital to cover community challenges, I am equally dedicated to spotlighting the local heroes and grassroots models tackling these problems from the ground up.

I want to dive deep into the issues impacting your daily residential stability, local economy, and community health. For example, looking at Inglewood's unique housing protections, I want to explore who championed these policies and who genuinely benefits today. What gaps remain, and can other changing California cities learn from Inglewood's strategies?

Not every crucial story makes the front page of a major metro paper, but every story matters to the people living it. I want to understand your realities, joys, and concerns as Inglewood evolves.

To do that, I need to listen to you. I want to use my platform and skills to elevate your voice respectfully and authentically.

I am ready to meet you where you are. Let's grab coffee at Hilltop Coffee + Kitchen, walk through the park, or connect at a community event.

Please reach out with story ideas, news tips, or a warm hello at marionapio@berkeley.edu or 323-391-6188. I am grateful to grow alongside you. Let's tell Inglewood's authentic stories, together.

By Marion Apio
Contributing Writer | California Local News Fellow
Moving from the Bay Area to Inglewood was divine. I needed to see firsthand what God is doing in this city. Driving through downtown, an unexpected wave of warmth hit me. I praised God, knowing this is exactly where He wants me right

now—telling vital stories. Coming from Uganda, across borders and continents, I looked at the vibrant streets and thought: This feels like home. Walking around, seeing the bustling local businesses and people who look like me thriving, gave me an instant sense of belonging.

KBLA Talk 1580 5th Anniversary Celebration at The Beehive

By Ricky Richardson
Contributing Writer
Los Angeles, CA—Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, Juneteenth 2026 is going to be highlighted in the history books for future generations.

Juneteenth 2026 is the 5th Anniversary of President Biden signing Juneteenth National Independence Day into law on June 17, 2021. This established June 19th as an official U.S. Federal Holiday.

I saw people wearing t-shirts and other apparel with “The 2nd Independence Day” while attending celebrations around town this past weekend.

Juneteenth 2026 was the grand opening of The Obama Presidential Center on the south side of Chicago. The public was able to tour this historic building on Friday, June 19, 2026.

Last but not least, KBLA Talk 1580 celebrated five years of impact, information, and community service. The popular talk radio station celebrated its 5th anniversary, marking a half-decade of trusted news, meaningful conversations, cultural empowerment, and community-focused programming for listeners throughout Southern California and beyond.

You know that this is a cause for celebration. Tavis Smiley and the KBLA Talk 1580 family welcomed several hundred community members to the Beehive (950 E. 60th Street) on Friday, June 19, 2026, for an incredible celebration. If you weren't there, you can imagine the vibes at The Beehive, if you have attended a family reunion or class reunion (high school through university).

You would see everyone greeting each other with a hug, laughing, singing, having meaningful conversations, taking selfies with each other, and DANCING! A party of this magnitude isn't complete without some delicious, mouthwatering Southern food.

This important event was guaranteed to attract some prominent figures including Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, Los Angeles City Council Members Curren D. Price, Jr (9th District)



Luenell, Mayor Karen Bass, and Tavis Smiley (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

and Heather Hutt (10th District), Dr. Cornel West, Luenell, Al B. Sure, Kenney Lattimore, Assemblywoman Sade Elhawary (57th District), former state Senators Roderick D. Wright, and Steven C. Bradford, Capri Maddox-Executive Director, Los Angeles Civil Rights Department and Mark Ridley-Thomas-former State Senator, Assembly member, Los Angeles County Supervisor and Los Angeles City Councilmember.

The festivities officially got underway with “Celebration,” by Kool & the Gang, broadcast through the speakers. This selection, played by DJ Bad, set the tone for the evening.

Dr. Cornel West gave opening remarks to his dear friend of 45 years. Tavis arrived onstage to rousing applause. Tavis thanked his KBLA Talk 1580 family as well as the many people across the community for their support and for believing in his vision.

Tavis Smiley, KBLA Talk 1580 5th Anniversary Celebration, put a stop to cynics, doubters, and naysayers. KBLA Talk 1580 was launched with a bold vision to create a station that serves as a reliable community resource, to provide information people

can use to improve their lives and strengthen their families, and to engage more deeply in civic and cultural issues from a decidedly progressive perspective.

During the past five years, KBLA Talk 1580 has become one of the most influential voices in talk radio, serving nearly 12 million listeners across the region through thought-provoking programming, community engagement, and a commitment to amplifying voices often overlooked by mainstream media.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass gave remarks and presented Tavis Smiley with a Proclamation. Tavis invited the entire KBLA Talk 1580 family on stage for a group photo.

Special guest Luenell was presented with a Proclamation from Mayor Karen Bass and a Certificate of Recognition from the Los Angeles City Council, presented by Curren D. Price, Jr. (District 9) and Heather Hutt (District 10). The award kept coming. Tavis Smiley presented Luenell with a special award. Luenell was presented with the microphone to deliver some hilarious remarks to the delight of all in attendance.

The party people aka, grown folks, cut a rug or two to the upbeat, danceable selections played by DJ Bad, who was rocking the ones and twos all evening on this historic day in the “City of Angels.”

The evening concluded on an upbeat note. R&B singer Kenny Lattimore thrilled the captivated crowd with a powerful and outstanding performance of “For You” and “A Change is Gonna Come,” a relevant classic for the moment.

Tavis Smiley shared some good news with guests. Tavis Smiley was recently named #14 on Talkers Magazine's 2026 “Heavy Hundred” list, one of the most prestigious rankings recognizing the most influential talk media personalities in America.

Smiley is again the highest-ranked Black talk radio personality, underscoring the enduring impact on the national media landscape and his commitment to elevating meaningful conversations.

“Five years ago, on Juneteenth, we launched



KBLA Talk 5th Anniversary Event Flyer, Courtesy Photo

KBLA Talk 1580 to provide news and information to a part of Los Angeles that has been ignored or pushed to the side for decades,” concluded Tavis Smiley, owner of SmileyAudioMedia, Inc., and host of the nationally syndicated “Tavis Smiley” Talk Show. “We're now syndicated in almost 50 markets across the United States with more growth on the horizon. The best is truly yet to come.”



KBLA Talk 5th Anniversary Event Flyer, Courtesy Photo



Tavis Smiley (Photo by Ricky Richardson)



Al B. Sure, Luenell, Tavis Smiley, and Dr. Cornel West (Photo by Ricky Richardson)



Kenny Lattimore and Dr. Cornel West (Photo by Ricky Richardson)