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# The Valley's News Observer

Serving the San Fernando Valley for Over 40 Years

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## IN MEMORIAM:

# Minister Louis Farrakhan's Wife, Khadijah Farrakhan, Dies

By Erick Johnson  
Chicago Crusader

Mother Khadijah Farrakhan, the wife she of Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan, has died, the Nation of Islam announced Saturday, June 27. She was 90.

Khadijah and her husband lived in Chicago's Kenwood neighborhood, less than mile from Operation Rainbow PUSH's national headquarters founded by the late Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr. Together, Khadijah and her husband for decades led the Nation of Islam at the Mosque Maryam in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood.

In a statement, the Nation of Islam said, "The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan with deep sadness yet with profound gratitude to Allah informs you that his beloved wife of 72 years, the First Lady of the Nation of Islam, Mother Khadijah has returned to Allah (may Allah be pleased).

"We thank Allah for the precious life of a loving wife, mother, a faithful devoted follower of The



Photo: Chicago Crusader

Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Mother Khadijah will forever be cherished and remembered. May Allah give His unequalled comfort to the family as we mourn this tremendous loss and lift the family in our prayers and thoughts.

"Allah, there is no God but He, He gives life and to Him is our eventual return. Funeral (Janazah)

services will be sent as soon as it's available."

Khadijah was born in 1935. She and Louis Khadijah Farrakhan married in 1953. They have 9 children. Their eldest son, Louis Farrakhan Jr., died at 60 in 2018. Another son, Joshua Farrakhan, died in 2023. He was 64.

Khadijah converted to Islam in 1955. As Farrakhan rose to become the leader of the Nation of Islam, Khadijah was by his side, serving as a stabilizing force for their family.

According to The Grio, at the 1997 Million Woman March in Philadelphia, Khadijah took the stage after her husband organized the 1995 Million Man March in Washington D.C.

"A nation can rise no higher than its women," Khadijah said. "We focus on women but cannot lose sight that we must rise as a family — men, women and children."

This is a developing story and will be updated as more information becomes available.

Based on reporting by Chicago Crusader.

## Karmelo Anthony's Parents Explain Why They Chose a White Attorney, "They Told Us To"



Karmelo Anthony

Karmelo Anthony's parents say one of their biggest regrets following his conviction is listening to repeated advice that their son needed a white attorney to receive a fair trial. Now, as Anthony begins the appeals process after receiving a 35-year prison sentence, his family has assembled a new legal team led by Black attorneys, with support from civil rights organizations, to challenge the verdict and pursue what they believe is justice.

Speaking publicly for the first time since the trial during an interview with Mimi Brown on The Breakfast Club, Andrew Anthony said numerous people—including Black attorneys he consulted—encouraged the family to hire a white lawyer. According to Anthony, they were repeatedly told that a white attorney would have a better chance of persuading the jury. Looking back, he said he believes that advice was a mistake. "I was told, 'Don't talk to this person. Don't talk to this person,'" Anthony explained. "They told us, 'Go get white attorneys.'" He added that he now feels the family was "set up" and believes those decisions prevented them from building the defense strategy they wanted.

Anthony also argued that his son became the target of what he described as a coordinated smear campaign. He disputed reports that Karmelo had previously been suspended for possessing a knife, saying those claims were false and contributed to negative public opinion before the trial even began. He said the experience convinced him that stronger Black legal and community networks are needed to support families facing high-profile criminal cases.

The family's legal strategy has now shifted dramatically. Anthony's appeal will be led by a newly assembled team of Black attorneys and advocates, working alongside national civil rights organizations, including the Innocence Project and the NAACP. The expanded legal team says it plans to challenge both the fairness of the trial and the legal issues surrounding Anthony's conviction while pursuing every available avenue on appeal.

Beyond the courtroom, his parents described the devastating impact the case has had on their family. They said relentless online harassment and threats forced them to remove their younger children from school after disturbing videos and abusive social media posts began circulating.

Although the guilty verdict has already been delivered, Anthony's parents say the fight is far from over. With a new Black-led legal team now directing the appeal, they hope the next chapter of the case will present what they believe is a stronger legal strategy and a renewed opportunity to challenge the conviction.

## Twin Brothers Marry Identical Twin Sisters Hope for Twin Babies



Taiwo and Kehinde Oguntayo and Taiwo and Kehinde Adediran

Fraternal twin brothers Taiwo and Kehinde Oguntayo have married identical twin sisters Taiwo and Kehinde Adediran in a rare joint wedding ceremony in Ibadan, Nigeria. And now both couples, who first met as university students, say they also hope to have twin children of their own one day.

Family and friends gathered on June 20 as the two sets of twins exchanged vows in a joint ceremony. While twins are common among the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria, marriages involving two pairs of twins remain unusual.

According to People, their story began about 10 years ago while they were studying at the University of Ibadan. A lecturer introduced the Oguntayo brothers to the Adediran sisters, believing the two sets of twins should meet.

At first, the sisters were not interested in starting a relationship. Instead, the four became friends. Over time, life took them in different directions as the sisters moved abroad and the brothers worked in countries including South Africa and the United States.

Years later, they reconnected. Their friendship eventually turned into romance, leading to their joint wedding ceremony.

The Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria are known for having one of the world's highest rates of twin births. In Yoruba culture, twins are considered a blessing, and traditional names are often given based on birth order. Taiwo is typically the firstborn twin, while Kehinde is the younger twin.

The brothers said they had long hoped to marry twins. "We know many twins, but this marriage feels like it was arranged by God," Taiwo Oguntayo said. "We have always dreamed of marrying twins."

During the ceremony, both couples featured matching outfits. The grooms wore white and green tuxedos, while the brides appeared in identical white gowns and veils.

Although the sisters look so alike, the brothers have no trouble recognizing their own wives. "Our wives look so alike that even their family members sometimes confuse them," Kehinde Oguntayo said. "We don't mix them up — we know our own wives very well."

Although they celebrated their marriages together, the newlyweds do not plan to live in the same household. Still, the two couples share one goal for the future: they hope to welcome twins into their own families.

# Black Caucus Bill Requiring Major Corporations in California to Disclose Links to Slavery Moves Forward

By Antonio Ray Harvey  
California Black Media

In August 2000, the California Legislature confronted a little-known chapter of American history after records uncovered in the state archives revealed that, before the Civil War, some insurance companies issued policies to slaveholders that insured enslaved people against injury, death or escape, treating human beings as property.

That same year, former state Sen. Tom Hayden (D-Los Angeles) authored Senate Bill 2199, landmark legislation requiring insurance companies doing business in California to disclose records of slaveholder insurance policies issued by them or their corporate predecessors.

More than two decades later, California lawmakers are seeking to expand that transparency.

Assembly Bill (AB) 2599, the Truth in Disclosure Act, authored by Asm. Isaac Bryan (D-Ladera Heights), builds on the disclosure framework established by SB 2199. The measure would require certain large corporations to search their historical records and submit sworn affidavits, under penalty of perjury, disclosing documented ties to chattel slavery or profits derived from slavery.

On June 23, AB 2599 passed the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana), on an 11-1 vote. The measure now heads to the Senate Public Safety Committee.

"We have a public accounting of the ways that our civic institutions have benefited from chattel slavery and built wealth in the process," said Bryan, vice chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC). "We even had cost estimates of what is true accounting for what that (wealth) would be."

Bryan continued, "This bill is simply about disclosure. We've had a conversation about the private sector's role in extracting that wealth, but this bill starts with that conversation around disclosure."

Known as the Slavery Era Insurance Policies Act, Hayden's SB 2199 required insurers licensed in California to examine their archives for antebellum policies covering slaveholders against the loss or death of enslaved people. The results were compiled by the California Department of Insurance.

AB 2599 would extend that transparency



Asm. Isaac Bryan (D-Ladera Heights), at the podium, presents Assembly Bill 2599, the Truth in Disclosure Act, before the California Senate Judiciary Committee on June 24. The committee approved the measure on an 11-1 vote. The bill would require major corporations doing business in California with more than \$100 million in annual worldwide gross receipts to search their historical records and submit sworn affidavits disclosing any ties to chattel slavery. Seated on the committee are Sen. Maria Elena Durazo (D-Los Angeles), left, and California Legislative Black Caucus Chair Sen. Akilah Weber Pierson (D-San Diego). CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

requirement beyond the insurance industry. It requires entities doing business in California with more than \$100 million in annual worldwide gross receipts to review their records for historical involvement in slavery-related transactions.

The bill specifically identifies industries

historically tied to the slave economy, including textile, tobacco, railroad, shipping, rice, sugar, financial and insurance companies.

AB 2599 is the CLBC's sole priority bill this legislative session, according to Sen. Akilah Weber

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# 10 New California Laws Taking Effect July 1 You Should Know About

By Edward Henderson  
California Black Media

Beginning July 1, several new California laws will take effect, bringing changes that affect workers, students, consumers, renters, and families across the state. While some of the new policies are administrative, others could have a direct impact on household finances, education, housing, and public safety.

Here are some of the most significant new laws Californians should know about:

**Healthcare Worker Minimum Wage (SB 525):** California continues the phased implementation of its landmark healthcare minimum wage law. Beginning July 1, workers at many hospitals and healthcare facilities will receive wage increases, with employees at some facilities reaching a minimum wage of \$25 per hour. The law applies not only to nurses, but also to certified nursing assistants, technicians, custodians, food service workers, and other support staff. Because Black and Latino workers are disproportionately represented in many of these positions, the wage increase is expected to provide meaningful financial relief for thousands of California families.

**Transit-Oriented Housing Development (SB 79):** New state housing policies taking effect July 1 make it easier to build higher-density housing near public transportation by limiting certain local zoning restrictions. Supporters believe the law will help address California's housing shortage, reduce commuting costs, and increase access to jobs and public transit. Housing affordability remains one of the state's most pressing issues, particularly for communities of color.

**All-Gender School Restrooms (SB 760):**

California public schools serving kindergarten through 12th grade must now provide at least one all-gender restroom for student use. Supporters say the requirement helps ensure that all students have access to safe and inclusive restroom facilities.

**Student Mental Health Resources on School IDs (AB 727):** Student identification cards for grades 7 through 12 and public colleges must include information about suicide prevention resources, including crisis services for LGBTQ+ youth. The goal, supporters argue, is to make life-saving mental health resources more accessible to students when they need them most.

**Limits on Student Smartphone Use:** School districts are expected to begin implementing policies limiting student smartphone use during the school day. The new law requires every school district, county office of education and charter school to adopt a policy by July 1 restricting or prohibiting smartphone use on campus, while allowing exceptions for emergencies, health needs and other specified circumstances. Lawmakers hope the changes will reduce classroom distractions, improve student engagement and support better academic outcomes.

**Restaurant Food Allergen Disclosure (SB 68):** Beginning July 1, chain restaurants in California with 20 or more locations nationwide must now provide customers with information about the nine major food allergens. The requirement is intended to promote public safety by helping people with food allergies make informed decisions when dining out.

**Standardized Food Date Labels (AB 660):** California is introducing standardized food date

labels such as "Best if Used By" to replace inconsistent phrases like "Sell By" and "Use Before." Lawmakers who supported the measure say the change, effective July 1, will reduce consumer confusion and help prevent unnecessary food waste.

**Local Minimum Wage Increases:** On July 1, several California cities and jurisdictions will raise their local minimum wages to keep pace with inflation. The largest increases include Los Angeles (\$18.42/hour), San Francisco (\$19.61/hour), Emeryville (\$20.34/hour) -- the highest citywide minimum wage in the state -- Pasadena (\$18.57/hour), and Santa Monica and unincorporated Los Angeles County (\$18.47/hour). The increases range from 30 cents to 66 cents per hour, providing additional income for workers in retail, hospitality, restaurants, healthcare support, and other service industries.

**Autonomous Vehicle Safety Requirements (AB 1777):** Companies operating autonomous vehicles must maintain dedicated communication systems that allow first responders to quickly contact operators during emergencies, helping improve public safety as self-driving technology expands.

**New Firearm Restrictions (AB 1127):** Beginning July 1, licensed firearms dealers are prohibited from selling certain semiautomatic pistols that can be readily converted into fully automatic weapons using a device commonly known as a "Glock switch." The law applies to future retail sales of qualifying firearms but does not ban possession of existing firearms or private-party transfers. Supporters say the measure is intended to reduce the availability of firearms that can be easily modified for illegal use.

# Black Women's Deaths Are Exposing a Crisis We Can't Ignore

By Garland Journal

Source: Black Press USA Wire

Sadly, not much has changed regarding how Black women are treated and viewed, as evidenced by the current Trump administration. However, there has been an alarming rise in Black femicide that has gone far beyond passing headlines and hashtags — it's become a devastating crisis that can no longer be ignored.

Within the last few weeks, the news has been dominated by the deaths of Black women at the hands of their domestic partners, such as Coral Springs Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen, Dr. Cerina Wanzer Fairfax, Pastor Tammy McCollum, and rapper Qualeisha Barnes. Influencer Ashlee Janae is also included on the list, as her family and many others suspect foul play in her alleged suicide.

These tragic and brutal deaths point to a heartbreaking trend that has only increased since the COVID-19 pandemic — the rise of Black femicide. Per research from Dr. Tameka Gillum, an associate professor at the University of New Mexico, and her colleagues, Black femicide is not only a call to action, but also a public health crisis.

According to their findings, in 2020, the year the pandemic began, "Black women were murdered at a rate of 11.6 per 100,000 people, while white women were murdered at a rate of three homicides per 100,000 people, that same year."

Per Dr. Gillum, the majority of these deaths were at the hands of a romantic partner or by someone the victim knew, as "more than half of Black women murdered in 2020 were killed by current or former romantic partners" and "90% of

Black women who were murdered knew the person responsible."

Research also revealed that pregnancy, which is supposed to be one of the happiest times in a woman's life, is when many Black women face an increase in domestic violence and murder.

In the 19-year period between 2000 and 2019, "homicide became a leading cause of death for Black women both during and after pregnancy, per the research. Additionally, studies also determined that 42% of Black women who died from non-childbirth-related causes died by a form of violence.

Following the recent deaths of Black women due to domestic violence, Pamela Tate, executive director of Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence, noted, while speaking with CNN, that deep-seated skepticism towards police and government child services agencies due to institutionalized racism makes Black women reluctant to seek help when dealing with domestic violence issues.

Tate's point of view directly correlates to Dr. Gillum's research, which found that, dating back to 2015, 20% of Black women are killed by police, despite only being 13% of the U.S. population. Of that number, over half of the black women killed were unarmed.

As the deaths of Black women make the rounds on social media with calls for justice and receive limited news coverage, there are many opinions that largely rely on mental health issues as the reasoning for Black femicide.

While that is certainly an underlying issue and a problem in the Black community, there has been



an alarming sense of using mental health issues to excuse those who commit violent murders of Black women.

"To say they're mentally ill, that doesn't cut it," Tate told CNN. "There are people who are depressed or people who have schizophrenia and don't harm ... their partners, much less kill them. The mental illness is not what we're talking about here."

Despite research like Dr. Gillum's and activism by the likes of Pamela Tate, Black femicide is not treated with the severity that it deserves, which further makes the lives of Black women even more at risk.

"For any other health disparity of this magnitude, we would be drawing due attention and investing appropriate resources," Dr. Gillum said. "But since it is Black women's lives at stake, the issue

fades to the background."

Dr. Gillum continued, adding, "These findings show a clear and severe disparity. The consistently higher homicide rates for Black women represent a critical public health issue that merits a focused response."

You can log on to social media at any given point and see the popular hashtag #ProtectBlackWomen, but the rising rates of Black femicide make you wonder if anyone is truly putting the safety of Black women at the forefront, or if it merely sounds good to say or portray.

The deaths of these Black women also severely impact the loved ones they left behind, specifically their children. A generation of Black children are now being raised without the love, comfort, and nurturing of their mother, a mother who was taken from them due to violence.

According to the National Organization of Women (NOW), the U.S. does not have an official crime category specifically for femicide. In contrast, homicides, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence are all tracked by local law enforcement and the FBI, but femicide is not included.

The result is femicide erasure in the public conversation, "policy discussions, misclassified in databases, and misunderstood by the public."

It should be noted that the most murders of Black women are committed via gun violence, but that shocking fact has yet to inspire legislation for protection; in fact, quite the opposite is currently in play.

## Community Still Demanding Answers Weeks After Black Teen Found Hanging in Charlotte

*Petitions, unanswered questions, and calls for a federal probe mark the aftermath of Juliana Nzita's death*

By OGNCS Staff

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — More than six weeks have passed since 16-year-old Juliana Nzita was found hanging from a tree on the grounds of The United House of Prayer for All People in Charlotte, North Carolina. But for the Black community — locally and nationally — this case is far from closed.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department classified Nzita's death as a suicide shortly after her body was discovered on May 8. As of late May, no public announcement had indicated that the case had been reopened or that investigators were pursuing alternative theories. And yet, the questions refuse to quiet down.

A Community Left in the Dark

No formal statement about the case appears on the police department's website, and there is no indication that police have reopened the investigation into Nzita's initial disappearance or launched a homicide inquiry into her death. Neither the United House of Prayer for All People nor any

of its leadership has issued any public statement about Nzita's death.

That silence has only deepened the frustration of those who knew Juliana and those following her case from afar.

The central issue for many community members is not simply the official ruling itself, but the limited amount of information released publicly about how investigators reached that conclusion. Critics have pointed to the lack of detailed public statements, the absence of publicly available investigative findings, and unanswered questions about Nzita's whereabouts during the 11 days between her disappearance and the discovery of her body.

Among the most persistent questions: she was missing for 10 days and no Amber Alert was sent at any point. Community members have also questioned the physical evidence at the scene — specifically, whether the blue chair and rope visible in video footage are consistent with the official conclusion.

Petitions Demand Justice

The outrage has taken organized form. Two separate petitions on Change.org have circulated widely, both calling for a full reinvestigation of Nzita's death. One petition calls upon local authorities in Charlotte, the FBI, or an independent oversight body to reopen and scrutinize the circumstances surrounding Nzita's death, citing a lack of transparency, disregard for thorough examination, and the possible dismissal of key evidence.

Community members are seeking additional

information about the investigation, forensic findings, the timeline of Nzita's disappearance, and the evidence authorities relied upon when determining that no foul play occurred.

A Pattern That Cannot Be Ignored

For many Black Americans, Nzita's case does not stand alone. Like the case of a 21-year-old college student whose body was discovered last September under similar circumstances in Mississippi, Nzita's death raises the specter of an old and deeply American pattern — one that echoes the terror lynchings of the Jim Crow South, an era in which Black families and civil rights advocates questioned official explanations surrounding mysterious hangings.

A report the civil rights organization JULIAN, which publishes the Crimson Record, issued this year identified over 70 deaths classified as suicides despite questionable circumstances over the last 25 years, spanning seven Deep South states, with Mississippi reporting the highest total of 20.

For many people, Juliana Nzita's death has become more than a local tragedy. It has become a test of public trust, accountability, and confidence in the institutions responsible for investigating unexplained deaths.

What Comes Next

Nzita was 16. She came from another country and made a home in Charlotte. Her family searched for her. Strangers searched for her. A community volunteer found her. And the official response that followed was brief, closed, and largely quiet.

Her name was Juliana Nzita. And as the weeks



**Juliana Nzita, 16, was found May 8 on the grounds of The United House of Prayer for All People in Charlotte, N.C. Weeks later, community members and civil rights advocates continue to demand a full investigation into the circumstances of her death. (Photo: Community/Social Media)**

pass with no new answers from authorities, the people who loved her — and thousands who never knew her — are making sure she is not forgotten.

The Observer Group Newspapers will continue to monitor developments in this case. If you have information related to Juliana Nzita's death, contact the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department at (704) 336-7600.

## Kamala Harris Says State and Local Leadership Matters as Much as Washington

By Joe W. Bowers Jr.

California Black Media

Former Vice President Kamala Harris said traveling the country since the 2024 Presidential election during her book tour gave her an opportunity to hear directly from Americans about the challenges they face every day, reinforcing her belief that many people feel unheard by Washington and increasingly look to state elected officials for solutions.

Speaking at UCLA on June 23 during a discussion hosted by The States Project, Harris said she deliberately used her travels to spend time listening to people rather than simply talking to them.

"After the election I needed to take a minute, but when that minute was over, I needed to listen," said Harris.

One conversation that stayed with her was with a single mother of three in Jackson, Mississippi, who was attending cosmetology school while raising her children on a \$150 weekly grocery budget. Harris said the woman also told her the tap water was sometimes too contaminated to bathe her children.

When Harris asked what she wanted others to understand about families like hers, the woman replied, "Don't they see me?"

"There are a lot of people who feel that they are not interested, and that their everyday fears and worries and hopes aren't being heard," Harris said.

"People are done with the status quo," Harris added. "They're done. It's not working for them."

She said political leaders must focus on solving everyday problems while presenting a broader vision for the country's future.

"It's about having affordable housing, affordable healthcare. It is about having a tax code that works for working people," Harris said.

Harris said those conversations reinforced her belief that state elected officials are often better positioned than Washington to understand the

everyday challenges facing their constituents.

"I support The States Project because the folks here and the folks we are supporting — state elected officials — are on the ground seeing and hearing these stories every day," Harris said.

The discussion was moderated by Daniel Squadron, co-founder of The States Project and author of The Fourth Branch: How State Government Can Save Our Union. The organization supports state legislative candidates in competitive states and advocates for greater investment in state legislative races.

Attending the event were legislators from states where The States Project is active, including North Carolina Senate Democratic Leader Sidney Batch and Maine Senate President Maddie Daughtry, who described how legislative majorities can shape policy on issues ranging from child welfare and childcare to paid family leave.

Batch, a child welfare attorney before entering public office, said she decided to run for office after representing a mother who nearly lost custody of her children because she could not afford childcare or legal representation to obtain child support.

"I finally started realizing that every single day we have a legislature that is being run by individuals that have no sense of what's happening to everyday North Carolinians," Batch said. She said that despite serving in the Senate minority, she has worked with Republican colleagues to help enact North Carolina's first major child welfare reforms in more than 50 years.

Daughtry said she entered politics after working four jobs without health insurance. She said Maine's Democratic majority enacted paid family leave, with benefits beginning in May, and eliminated the state's

childcare waiting list. "When you have the majority, everything changes," Daughtry said. "For the cost of one Senate race, we've transformed an entire state."

Harris also addressed voting rights, saying

recent court decisions and actions by some states have made access to the ballot more difficult.

She pointed to students at North Carolina A&T State University, where she said local election officials removed an early voting location from campus. Harris said the students later traveled to the state capitol to protest, where a Republican legislative leader told them, "You have five minutes, five minutes to leave." Harris said the episode illustrated how voting rights battles increasingly are playing out in state capitols.

Batch later described what she said were broader efforts by Republicans in North Carolina to reshape election administration, including moving oversight of the State Board of Elections under the Republican state auditor and removing early voting sites from college campuses. She recalled a Republican colleague opposing polling places on college campuses "because, he said, 'Those people don't vote for us, they vote for you.'"

Harris said protecting voting rights remains central to the broader civil rights movement.

"The fight for civil rights in America, born out of the struggle of Black Americans, has benefited so many groups," she said. "But when we look at what's happening across the country, the fight for justice, for equality, lives on."

Looking beyond the current administration, Harris said Democrats must present voters with more than opposition to President Donald Trump.

"We've got to have a mindset and a purpose that is about the day after this administration leaves the White House," Harris said. "The question is going to be, what are you going to do with the power if you get it?"

Harris closed by encouraging Americans to remain engaged in their communities and state government.

"I strongly believe nobody should be made to fight alone," Harris said. "Especially at this moment in time."

## Links to Slavery Bill Moves Forward

Continued from page A1

Pierson (D-San Diego), chair of the caucus and a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Weber Pierson cited several financial institutions and insurance companies that have acknowledged or documented historical ties to slavery, including JPMorgan Chase, Citibank, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, New York Life, AIG and Aetna.

During the 2010s, Illinois, Iowa and Maryland enacted similar laws requiring insurance companies operating in those states to search their archives for slavery-era insurance policies issued to slaveholders.

"This bill (AB 2599) is extremely important because it acknowledges that many disparities facing Black Americans did not happen by accident. It also talks about the fact that many of the economic opportunities that benefited major institutions did not also happen by accident — but by their participation in chattel slavery," Weber Pierson said.

The bill's primary co-sponsor is the Alliance for Reparations, Reconciliation and Truth. Other

supporters include Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA), Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Healing Justice Santa Barbara, the Black Power Network, the Inland Empire Black Worker Center, LA Voice, the League of Women Voters of California and Starting Over Inc.

Mike McBride, lead pastor of The Way Christian Center in West Berkeley, and civil rights attorney Don Tamaki, a former member of the California Reparations Task Force, testified in support of the measure during the committee hearing at the Capitol Annex Swing Space.

Sen. Maria Elena Durazo (D-Los Angeles) praised Bryan for bringing the legislation forward, emphasizing its historical and educational value.

"I think it's important for all of us to continue to understand the history and the depth that slavery caused, not only to Black Americans, but all Americans," Durazo said.

Michelle Connor, past president of the Frederick Douglass Foundation of California,

spoke in opposition to the bill. During Bryan's presentation, she asked whether the measure's disclosure requirements would also apply to corporations owned by Black people "who were enslaved by Black people" dating back to the 1860s.

The Frederick Douglass Foundation of California is the state chapter of the national Frederick Douglass Freedom Alliance, a conservative, faith-based public policy and educational organization aligned with Republican principles.

Bryan responded that he was unaware of any Black-owned corporations with more than \$100 million in annual gross receipts during that period. However, he said the bill would apply equally to any qualifying company, regardless of ownership.

"I think the question that was asked is largely ridiculous," Bryan responded. "But any corporation with over \$100 million in gross receipts, which would include Black corporations, which I hope there are many or someday will be many, with over \$100 million in gross receipts, has to disclose their historic ties to chattel slavery."

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Entertainment

Teyana Taylor Receives the Icon Award



Teyana and Janet Jackson at the 2026 BET Awards. Image: Earl Gibson III



Cardi B onstage at the BET Awards 2026 in Los Angeles. Image: Christopher Polk/Billboard via Getty Images

# The BET Awards 2026: Night's Best and Most Memorable Moments

From Druski to Lauryn Hill, some of the most iconic moments at the 2026 BET Awards.

By Delainia Dixon  
Ebony Magazine

Teyana Taylor and Lauryn Hill received Icon Awards with emotional tributes and performances. Lauryn Hill closed out the night with performances from her iconic album, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*. Cardi B, Kehlani, Leon Thomas, and Clipse won major awards amid standout performances. Host Druski promised a show we'd remember, and what a show it was. The 2026 BET Awards exploded onto the scene with T.I. descending from the ceiling in a huge crown. It was just the start of a night filled with stars and major highlights: BET Amplified Performers KWN and Keyee Iko making their BET Awards debuts; Jamie Foxx and his daughter Anelise duetting to open for Kehlani; Martin Lawrence taking the stage and so many more. Here are the moments that electrified the 2026 BET Awards stage.

Her eyes filled with tears before a word was spoken to Teyana Taylor, who received the Icon of the Year Award, presented by Janet Jackson. "In one year, Teyana Taylor accomplished more than most in a lifetime. Songwriter, choreographer, director, producer, mother, and now Golden Globe-winning actress. There's nothing that she can't do," Jackson stated.

Taking the stage, Taylor pointed out that she

didn't know her award was being presented by the legendary Jackson. "That's a surprise," said Taylor over her presenter and then praised Jackson for paving a path she could follow. She spoke on abandoning imposter syndrome and accepting one's greatness. "For a little minute, I wondered if I was supposed to feel uncomfortable saying that title out loud, but nah. I worked my ass off for 20 years for this ... So I'm not accepting what I've earned with arrogance. I'm accepting what I've earned with gratitude."

Taylor pointed out that she built her dream while helping others build theirs, because she never believed her success had to cost someone else theirs. "I will wear this title with pride," she declared before recognizing her greatest masterpiece, her children, reminding her doting daughters to be watching and "off those [bleeping] phones" per usual.

Lauryn Hill accepts the Living Legend Icon award onstage during the 2026 BET Awards in Los Angeles. Image: Kevin Winter/Getty Images

Lauryn Hill, one of the greatest voices in Black music history, received the Living Legend Icon Award. Introduced by Ice Cube, he spoke of her commitment to music at a young age, how she helped shape the sounds of other musical greats and her philanthropic efforts. After an electric musical retrospective of her hits, performed by Queen Latifah, Common, The War and Treaty, SZA, DoeChii, Tierra Whack, Doja Cat, Nas, her daughter Selah Marley and more, Hill took the stage and surprised all with a surprise performance of her hit, "Ex Factor" for a delighted audience.

"I do this because I love y'all," she said to the audience while accepting the award, explaining how important it is for her to pour into people through

music. "I'm rooting for everybody to be the best version of themselves that we can... I'm grateful that you're rooting for me sometimes, too." She closed down the awards ceremony with her 1999 hit "Everything Is Everything" from her award-winning album, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*.

Kelly Rowland praised music industry pioneer Sylvia Rhone, who received the Ultimate Icon Award as she took the stage amidst a standing ovation from the audience. The woman who shaped the careers of artists like Missy Elliott, Busta Rhymes, Travis Scott and Tyla, Rhone thanked BET for the honor, but said it belonged to all who create culture.

A tribute to the late, great D'Angelo was introduced by his three children and featured the members of his band, Vanguard, along with touching renditions of his hits featuring Ari Lennox, Raye, BJ the Kid, George Clinton and Durand Bernarr.

Gospel singer Erica Campbell sang Whitney Houston's rendition of "I Love the Lord" to honor the legacies of composer Richard Smallwood, producer Clive Davis and other luminaries who passed over the past year.

Awards ceremony host Druski leaned into what made him a household name, playing off his immensely popular viral skits. He opened the show with his "Mega Church Pastors LOVE Money" skit, lowered on stage via suspension, decked out in a GG-logo suit, with a full backup choir. His "Collect & Praise" opening featured a net-worth list of some of Hollywood's biggest power players, including Tyler Perry, Stevie Wonder (in Braille), and Ray J, whose donation check "was pending..." and then "bounced back."

Druski followed that with "Coulda Been Records," complete with his security checking

BBL ganstas, soulful white boys and an a cappella impromptu by Durand Bernarr (but he got booted out too), as well as his "WhiteBoy That's Accepted By 'The Hood'" dropping beats, with a whispered N-word. The skits showcased that Druski — the first content creator to ever helm the awards ceremony — wasn't afraid to poke fun at his own success.

The BET Awards featured performances from some of the biggest names in the industry. Giving Marvel and DC a run for their money, Cardi turned the main stage into the Cardiverse. The colorful, comic-book-saturated staging was the perfect backdrop for her rapid-fire delivery of hits from her second album, *Am I the Drama?*, as she went on to win the Best Female Hip Hop Artist award.

There was French Montana and Max B singing "Ever Since U Left Left Me" and repping for the NBA champs, the NY Knicks. They then joined Rick Ross on stage in full-length fur (in June, y'all) as they glided through more hits. Tems, Don Toliver, Kehlani and Baby Keem also performed.

The Night's Awards

Some of the biggest awards of the night:

Best Male R&B/Pop Artist: Leon Thomas

Best Female R&B/Pop Artist: Kehlani

Album of the Year: Let God Sort Em Out by Clipse

Best Female Hip Hop Artist: Cardi B

2026 BET Her Award: DoeChii and SZA for "Girl, Get Up"



Kelly Rowland presents Sylvia Rhone with the Ultimate Icon award at the 2026 BET Awards in Los Angeles. Image: Kevin Winter/Getty Images



Lauryn Hill accepts the Living Legend Icon award onstage during the 2026 BET Awards in Los Angeles. Image: Kevin Winter/Getty Images

Druski's Viral Parodies Hit the Stage



Druski at the 2026 BET Awards at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. Image: Kevin Winter/Getty Images

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 County: Los Angeles  
 Full name of registrant(s):  
**KUBBA, INC.** at 25876 THE OLD ROAD STE 544, STEVENSON RANCH, CA 91381  
 State of incorp. or org.: CA  
 The business is conducted by: a

Corporation  
 SIGNED:OMAR KUBBA, PRESIDENT  
 The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 06/2026  
 This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: June 16, 2026  
 DEAN C. LOGAN Los Angeles County Clerk  
 By: TINA TRAN, Deputy  
 This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in

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

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 State of incorp. or org.: CA  
 The business is conducted by: a Corporation  
 SIGNED:OMAR KUBBA, PRESIDENT  
 The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 06/2026  
 This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: June 18, 2026

DEAN C. LOGAN Los Angeles County Clerk  
 By: ISAUORA CORREA, Deputy  
 This fictitious Business Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the County Clerk's Office. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another to a trademark or trade name under federal, state, or common

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Features

# Your Home is an Investment: How to Create Generational Wealth

By JPMorganChase  
Black Press USA Wire

A Q&A with Greg Smith  
For most Americans, owning a home has long been considered a cornerstone to building and preserving generational wealth. A home purchase often symbolizes more than just securing a place to live – homeownership can help anchor families, support long-term financial stability and fuel local economic growth.

If you currently own a home or if homeownership is one of your financial goals, it's important to understand how your home can be a foundational pillar in helping you build and maintain generational wealth. A home can be an asset that appreciates over time as you build equity which can serve as a financial resource for you and your family for decades to come.

Greg Smith, a Community Home Lending Manager at Chase in St. Louis shares more about the connection between homeownership and building generational wealth, and how you can make sure your home becomes, or remains, your most important financial asset.

**Q:** How does a home create generational wealth?

**A:** There are several perks to homeownership, many of which contribute to building wealth. Owning your home may be cheaper than renting in the long term if you have a mortgage with competitive rates; however, it's important to keep in mind other home expenses, like insurance and taxes, when considering costs. Plus, since you own the home, that means you can build and tap into your equity for future expenses or profit when your home is sold.

Another way to think of homeownership as it relates to your financial picture is that it can influence your overall net worth. When you make monthly payments, you're slowly owning more of your home and it can become an asset. On the other hand, if you rent, your monthly housing costs are just an expense for a place to live and you don't own any of it when you leave. Put simply, owning a home may help you grow your money over time.

**Q:** Explain home equity and how building equity works.

**A:** The technical definition of home equity is the difference between the fair market value of your home and how much you still owe on your mortgage. Essentially, think of it as the part of your home's value that you truly own. It's made up of the amount you've already paid off, plus any increase in your home's value. So, if you're home's value goes up, so does your equity and vice versa. Equity grows as you pay down your mortgage and, as I mentioned earlier, the market value of your home increases.

**Q:** How can this be beneficial financially?



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There are a few ways. You can borrow against your home equity by taking out a loan, using your property as collateral to secure the loan. There are a variety of ways you can do this such as through a home equity loan, home equity line of credit (HELOC) or a cash-out refinance. You may use these funds to cover other expenses, like high-interest credit card debt, make home improvements, invest in another home or in an emergency. Home equity loans also tend to have more favorable terms than credit cards or other personal loans, potentially saving you money in the long run.

**Q:** What if you sell your home?

**A:** The more equity you have, the more you can profit from selling your home if you do so in the future. For example, if you've paid off your entire mortgage before you sell, you may get to keep all potential profits. If you haven't paid off your mortgage, any profits will pay off what you owe and

you'll keep the remaining funds— the more home equity you have, the greater your profit could be.

**Q:** What other benefits come from owning your home? **A:** Homeownership offers the potential opportunity for tax deductions. The interest you pay on your mortgage, insurance premiums, property taxes and even improvements to your energy efficiency may provide an opportunity for tax deductions. You can consult with your tax advisor if you're looking to understand how buying a home may impact your taxes.

There's no place like home. Homeownership has long been a powerful tool for building generational wealth in communities across the U.S. and can help you secure a solid financial future for yourself and your family. Your home is more than just the place where you rest your head—it can be your greatest financial asset.

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## Black Leadership Council Recognizes Assemblymembers Bonta, Jackson for Leadership and Service

By Antonio Ray Harvey  
California Black Media

The Black Leadership Council (BLC) honored Assemblymembers Mia Bonta (D-Alameda) and Dr. Corey Jackson (D-Moreno Valley) during its annual Legislative Awards Luncheon for their leadership in advancing racial justice, economic opportunity and community investment.

Both members of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), Bonta received the Education Equity Champion Award, while Jackson was presented with the Wealth Equity Champion Award.

The luncheon was held June 17 at the Sutter Club in Sacramento following a morning of meetings between BLC members and CLBC senators, assemblymembers and Capitol staff.

"Whenever you're in the same room and being honored alongside Oakland's own Mia Bonta, you must be doing something right. One of the things that's clear is that this nation needs Black leadership more than ever," Jackson said.

Jackson was recognized for co-authoring legislation that expands economic opportunity, strengthens the social safety net and supports youth and vulnerable communities.

Bonta was honored for establishing the bipartisan California Legislative Children's Caucus, a bicameral coalition that advocates for investments in childcare, health and education. The caucus promotes evaluating state budgets and public policy through the lens of children's well-being.

BLC and the CLBC work together to translate community priorities into legislative action. Both lawmakers said the BLC was among the first organizations they met with after taking office.

"The Black Leadership Council has been imprinted in my heart because I first met with you all when I was a first-year legislator and we talked about what we wanted for our children and our families," Bonta said. "It's just an incredible honor to receive this award and share this honor with my partner in this work, Dr. Corey Jackson."

Assemblymember LaShae Sharp-Collins (D-La Mesa) attended the luncheon to celebrate her legislative director, Jerika Edwards, who received the Next Generation Leadership Award. Sharp-Collins credited Edwards with building a distinguished record of civic engagement, public service, voting rights advocacy and social justice leadership.

Nikki A. Beasley, executive director of Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services, received the Housing Equity Champion Award. Carol F. Burton, a health care, criminal justice and behavioral health executive, received the Health



The Black Leadership Council (BLC) Legislative Awards Luncheon took place in Sacramento on June 17. The event is a core component of the BLC's "Black in Action" Day of Advocacy. The initiative brings leaders from public and private sectors to the State Capitol to engage with policymakers and push for systemic solutions advancing Black prosperity in California. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

Equity Champion Award. BLC member Joya Chavarin, a California-based education researcher, was presented with the Trailblazer Award.

"The Legislative Awards Luncheon offers a valuable opportunity to recognize impactful legislators, their staff, and community leaders," said Meron Agonafer, a member of the BLC Executive Committee. "The BLC has great potential to continue advancing policies and legislative initiatives that uplift Black communities, and I am excited and look forward to the future."

Established by PRC, formerly the Positive Resource Center, the BLC is a statewide coalition dedicated to advancing policy and systems change in education, housing, health and justice. Its overarching mission is to achieve "Black prosperity" through statewide advocacy and public policy.

"For too long, Black communities have been asked to survive systems that were never designed with our well-being in mind," said Tasha Henneman, PRC's chief of policy and government affairs. "Our advocacy is about shifting from scarcity and crisis management toward investment, prevention, and repair. Community reinvestment means putting resources where harm has been greatest and where the potential for healing is strongest."

The BLC supports a broad package of legislation focused on health, voting rights and economic equity.

Among its priorities is Jackson's Assembly Bill 96, which removes the high school diploma or equivalent requirement for individuals seeking certification as Medi-Cal Certified Peer Support Specialists.

The organization also backs Sharp-Collins' Assembly Bill (AB)1324, which expands CalWORKS eligibility for low-income working families by changing how the state calculates welfare benefits, and AB1433, which revises funding rules for community college noncredit programs.

Bonta's AB 225 and AB 801 also have the BLC's support. AB 225 would prohibit unnecessary

facility fees that contribute to surprise medical bills, while AB 801 strengthens protections against discriminatory lending by expanding community reinvestment requirements to additional financial institutions.

The council also endorses Sen. Sabrina Cervantes' (D-Riverside) Senate Bill 1164 and Senate Bill 1360, a legislative package that would modernize and strengthen the California Voting Rights Act.

Beyond legislation, the BLC advocates for state funding to support the Stop the Hate Program and

the California Civic Media Fund.

"The council targets a high volume of legislation," said Dr. Deborah Hawkes, PRC's chief executive officer, who oversees the BLC's statewide strategy and community initiatives.

"Freedom means opportunities. It means access to quality education, stable housing, good health, economic security, and the ability for every person to thrive," Hawkes said. "That work requires investments, it requires leaders who are willing to speak up, organizations that are going to do the work, and partners who are willing to sustain the movement."



Asm. Mia Bonta (D-Alameda), left, received the Education Equity Champion Award from CalVoices and the Black Leadership Council (BLC) in Sacramento on June 17. The award was presented by Brett Andrews, right, co-founder of the BLC. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.



Asm. Corey Jackson (D-Moreno Valley), right, received the Wealth Equity Champion Award from CalVoices and the Black Leadership Council (BLC) in Sacramento on June 17. The award recognizes his commitment to combating poverty, supporting working-class communities, and advancing economic equity across California. It was presented by Meron Agonafer, left, CalVoices' policy director. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.



Jericka Edwards, right, received the CalVoices and Black Leadership Council (BLC) Next Generation Leadership Award. She is pictured with Asm. LaShae Sharp-Collins (D-La Mesa), left, and Dr. Deborah Hawkes, center, CEO of PRC, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that provides integrated health, behavioral health and legal services. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

## Political

# Political Playback:

## California Capitol News You Might Have Missed

By Bo Tefu  
California Black Media

### Newsom, Legislature Reach Deal on \$355.9 Billion Budget That Protects Health Care; Averts Deficits for Two Years

Gov. Gavin Newsom and Democratic legislative leaders announced a final agreement June 26 on California's \$355.9 billion 2026-27 state budget, saying the spending plan preserves health care and other essential services while eliminating projected deficits through the next two fiscal years.

The agreement between Newsom, Senate President Pro Tempore Monique Limón (D-Santa Barbara), and Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas (D-Hollister) balances the budget while maintaining investments in health care, education, housing, public safety and other priorities despite continued economic uncertainty and federal funding challenges.

"A balanced budget isn't an end in itself—it's how we deliver for Californians," Newsom said. "This budget demonstrates responsible choices that protect our fiscal strength while continuing to invest in what matters most. In California, we support working families, create more opportunity, and build safer, healthier communities."

The budget includes \$300 million to lower health care costs, preserves \$0 monthly health plans for many lower-income Californians, and helps offset higher insurance premiums resulting from the expiration of enhanced federal Affordable Care Act subsidies. It also protects funding for behavioral health programs and continues implementation of Proposition 1.

Other major investments include a record \$2.4 billion in ongoing funding for special education, \$5 billion for TK-12 schools, \$500 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, \$200 million for affordable multifamily housing, a \$100 million Disaster Rebuilding Fund, and new funding to strengthen election security, voter outreach and protections against misinformation. The agreement also preserves free school meals, universal transitional kindergarten, universal preschool, summer school programs and childcare slots.

Limón said lawmakers worked to shield Californians from federal spending reductions while strengthening the state's finances.

"Today's budget agreement reflects our commitment to protect core programs and address our short and long-term financial future by building up our rainy day fund and making responsible budgeting choices," Limón said. "I am also proud that the Senate was able to secure critical funding for childcare slots, safeguard access to care, and take significant steps toward ensuring large corporations pay their fair share."

Rivas said the budget "protects health care, preserves food programs, invests in housing at record levels and builds reserves to fight back no matter what Trump and Republicans throw at us."

### Asm. Mike Gipson: California Hospitals Are Entering One of the Most Dangerous Eras in History

California hospitals are facing one of the most precarious periods in decades, Assemblymember Mike Gipson (D-Carson) warned as lawmakers debated Assembly Bill 109, the state's 2026-27 budget bill.



Included in that bill -- and the Senate version of it, Senate Bill (SB) 101-- is one-time emergency assistance of \$50 million designed to help hospitals in financial distress to stabilize and continue providing care to patients across the state. The bill also allocates an additional \$250 million to help California's 17 public hospital systems cope with mounting losses tied to federal health care cuts.

Speaking on the Assembly floor, Gipson said the legislation is critical to preserving access to health care, particularly for vulnerable communities that depend on public hospitals and Medi-Cal services.

"Our hospitals are entering one of the most dangerous eras that anyone has ever seen, at least in my lifetime," said Gipson. "Assembly Bill 109 helps preserve access to health care by providing much needed relief to hospitals across California that are struggling to remain financially viable and to continue to serve their communities."

Gipson said the financial support to hospitals will help them prepare for future emergencies while protecting access to care.

Drawing on his experience representing South Los Angeles during the COVID-19 pandemic, Gipson described the devastating toll the virus took on his district.

"I've seen the coronavirus devastate the Black and Brown communities," he said. "I've seen bodies ... piling up in refrigeration systems and delivered in trucks."

Without the funding, Gipson warned, hospitals would be less prepared to respond to future public health emergencies, increasing the risk of preventable deaths and worsening health outcomes for patients across California.

Gipson, a member of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), added that the state budget helps prepare counties for potential impacts from HR 1, arguing California must protect vulnerable residents from anticipated federal policy changes.

Gipson pointed to the financial struggles faced by Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital, saying he has repeatedly spoken on the Assembly floor over six terms about the importance of preventing hospital closures in his district.

"We cannot afford to let any hospitals close," Gipson emphasized. "Assembly Bill 109 helps all Californians at all hospitals."

Following passage of the budget, Gipson said preserving the hospital funding in AB 109 "meant the absolute world to me." Assemblymember pushes for funding for hospitals and Medi-Cal in budget bill.

### July 31-Aug. 2

The California Democratic Party is set to hold its 2026 Summer Executive Board Meeting from July 31 through Aug. 2 at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Resort, bringing together party leaders for three days of organizing, voting, and planning ahead of the November election cycle.

The meeting will gather Executive Board members and standing committee members to conduct official party business, including committee meetings, training sessions, and a Sunday General Session where credentialed members will vote on party matters. Party officials say the event is designed to coordinate strategy as Democrats in California look to strengthen voter outreach efforts and support national goals, including efforts to regain control of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Online registration and credentialing for Executive Board attendees is currently open and will close at 5 p.m. on July 8. Observer credential requests for non-board members close earlier, on July 2 at 5 p.m. Party officials are encouraging attendees to complete registration online in advance to streamline on-site credential pickup.

Executive Board members are required to pick up physical credentials in person during registration hours to be eligible to vote. Registration fees include \$85 for Executive Board members, \$80 for 2026 DSCC dues, and \$165 for combined dues and registration. Standing committee members may also register for \$85, while non-board members can attend the Sunday General Session by purchasing a \$95 observer pass.

The party is also organizing volunteer opportunities during the weekend, including an in-person phone bank focused on voter outreach efforts. Organizers say the activity is part of broader efforts to mobilize voters ahead of the general election.

Several logistical details remain in progress, including the release of the full executive board agenda, travel accommodations information, and Sunday voting procedures. A proxy submission portal is currently open for members unable to attend in person.

The hotel room block at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Resort has already sold out, though attendees can still access discounted parking rates during the event.

Party officials note that caucus meetings, standing committee sessions, and training events will remain open to all Democrats and do not require credentials. However, only credentialed members and approved observers will be allowed to participate in the formal Sunday General Session.

### Newsom Green Lights Measure Placing \$11.25 Billion Housing Bond on November Ballot

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed a measure placing an \$11.25 billion Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act on the November 2026 ballot, setting up a statewide vote on one of California's largest housing investment proposals in years.

The agreement between the governor, the Assembly and the Senate would fund affordable housing construction, preservation, and homeownership programs, with a focus on veterans, working families, and lower-income Californians. If approved by voters, the bond would finance both rental housing and down payment assistance programs, along with housing for farmworkers, students, tribal communities, and people experiencing homelessness.

In announcing the deal, Newsom emphasized long-standing concerns over housing access and affordability.

"Today's agreement builds on our work with the Legislature to expand opportunity and make homeownership and affordable housing more attainable for Californians," said Newsom. "For far too long, our state failed to build enough housing to meet the needs of growing families and communities."

He added that the proposal is intended to give voters a direct role in expanding housing access. "We're once again turning the page on decades of inaction and making bold investments needed to tackle one of our state's greatest challenges," he said.

Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas (D-Hollister) said the measure aligns with the goals of the state's broader housing strategy.

"This is California delivering," Rivas said, pointing to recent efforts to speed up construction and expand housing supply.

Senate President pro Tempore Monique Limón (D-Santa Barbara) said the agreement reflects bipartisan legislative coordination on housing policy.

"The Legislature continues to prioritize access to housing in the Golden State for everyone," she said.

The bond includes \$1.25 billion in self-supporting CalVet home loan bonds and \$10 billion in general obligation bonds backed by voters. Officials say it is designed to leverage additional federal, local and private funding to expand housing production.

### Report Examines Link Between Low Earnings and Incarceration Rates

Low earnings and unstable employment before incarceration may play a larger role in the cycle of imprisonment than previously understood, according to a new report from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) that tracks the work histories of nearly 170,000 people released from state prisons.

The report, *Employment Before, During, and After Prison in California*, found that many people entering prison had weak ties to the labor market, often working temporary, low-paying jobs that failed to lift them above the federal poverty line. Researchers said the findings underscore the need for stronger education, workforce development and employment programs to improve long-term economic outcomes and reduce barriers to successful reentry.

The study analyzed employment records for people released from California prisons between 2015 and 2019, examining their work histories before incarceration, jobs held while in prison and employment after release. Researchers found that nearly half of those studied never held a job outside prison during the period examined, while one in four had no recorded employment before, during or after incarceration.

"Policymakers have long sought to promote employment among released prisoners through policies and programs that reduce incarceration and broaden access to the labor market," researcher Heather Harris stated. "This descriptive report provides previously unavailable information about employment before, during, and after incarceration among released prisoners with the aim of highlighting opportunities for improvement."

Before incarceration, about one-third of employed individuals worked temporary jobs. After release, that share increased to 42%, suggesting employment remained unstable even after returning to the community. The report also found that prison jobs generally paid about 40% less than the national average, and nearly one-third of incarcerated workers received no wages at all.

Researchers found that low earnings were common throughout the employment histories they examined. Only 28% of people employed before incarceration earned more than the federal poverty threshold in at least one year. Although that share rose to 45% after release, many workers continued to earn too little to achieve lasting financial stability.

The report also identified significant disparities, with Black workers earning an average of 38% less than White workers and women earning about 20% less than men.

Despite those challenges, the report identified several factors associated with stronger employment outcomes. Individuals who worked before incarceration were nine times more likely to find employment after release, while prison jobs, vocational education, college coursework and substance use disorder treatment were all linked to improved employment prospects.


"Our findings suggest that improving access to education, job training and employment opportunities before, during and after incarceration could strengthen labor market outcomes for formerly incarcerated Californians," Harris stated.

The researchers said expanding evidence-based workforce and education programs could help break the connection between persistent low earnings and incarceration, while improving economic mobility and reducing the likelihood of future justice system involvement.


### California Dem Party Is Holding Its Summer Executive Board Meeting

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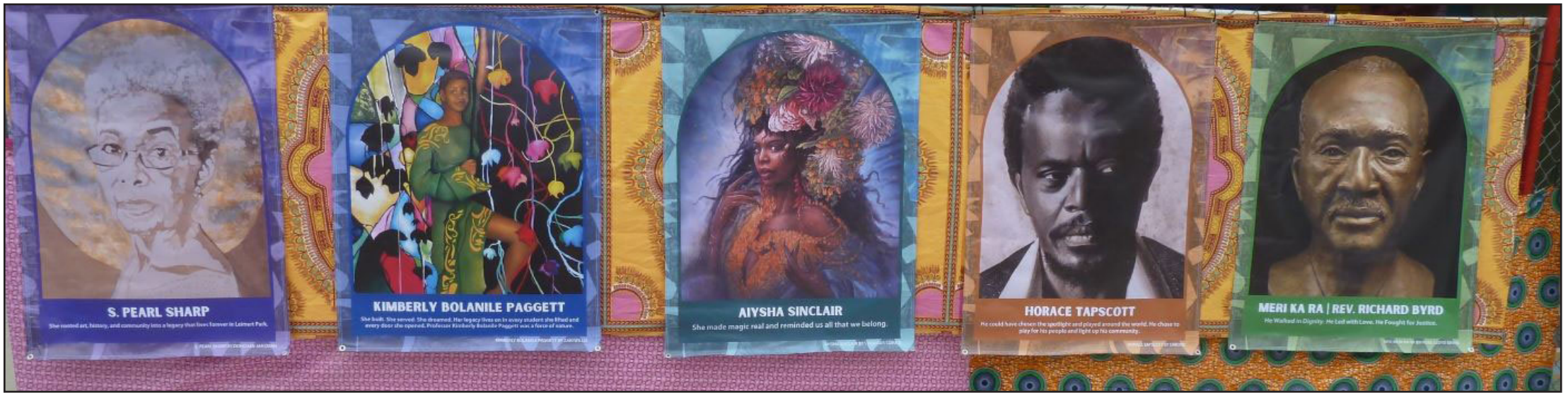
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2026 Day of the Ancestors (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

# Day of the Ancestors: On a Journey to Acquire Knowledge

By Ricky Richardson  
Contributing Writer

Los Angeles, CA- Leading arts nonprofit LA Commons hosted its annual Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks on Sunday, June 28, 2026, from 12 pm-5:00 pm. The culturally rich event was held at the Leimert Park Artwalk, located within the newly designated Historic South LA Black Cultural District.

Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks celebrated its 16th year as Los Angeles welcomed visitors from around the globe for FIFA World Cup 2026.

Festival of Masks artists and youth enhanced visitors' experience in the "City of Angels," bringing community activations to public spaces across the city throughout the tournament.

"As Los Angeles welcomes the World, the Festival of Masks is a reminder and celebration of our city's great strength which has always been its people, culture and stories," stated Karen Mack, Founder and Executive Director of LA Commons, in a

written statement. "I hope our city's World Cup visitors use their time in Los Angeles to connect with authentic narratives and traditions of our region."

Founded in 2016 by artists Najite Agindotan and Ben Caldwell in collaboration with LA Commons, the Festival of Masks is a multicultural, multigenerational and multimedia arts event grounded in the vast identities of Africa and the African diaspora. Over the past 15 years, Festival of Masks has welcomed thousands of participants and honored more than 75 ancestors selected by community members and stakeholders.

Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks provided residents and visitors with a day filled with top-notch, quality entertainment in Leimert Park Village-the heart of the African American community.

Gina Fields returned as host and emcee. "Every year I'm excited to participate in the Festival of Masks: Day of the Ancestors to honor the great



Puppets- Festival of Masks: Day of the Ancestors, (Photo by Ricky Richardson)



Najite Agindotan and Ben Caldwell (Photo by Ricky Richardson)



Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks Signage (Photo by Ricky Richardson)

work of the icons we lost in the past year," said Gina Fields, host and emcee of the event, in a written statement. "This is a must-see uplifting celebration of life, filled with music, dance, and bursting with color and creativity that inspires us all."

Event festivities got underway with the Blessing and Libation Ceremony performed by Baba Imodoye Shabazz. Next was a vibrant community procession through the historic neighborhood accompanied by live music, visual art, and performances. The procession serves as an artistic and cultural expression, symbolizing the people's power and capacity to take ownership of their community, address challenges, and create change. The procession connected with Ciclaviva along Crenshaw Blvd. before returning to The People's Street.

Each year, a theme is selected by the Festival of Masks artistic leadership team. This year's theme is represented by the Adinkra symbol Nea Onnim, which symbolizes lifelong education and the continued quest for knowledge. The theme Nea Onnim was selected to encourage young people to see ancestral wisdom as a living, dynamic, and lifelong journey that feeds both their present and futures.

The legacies of five ancestors were chosen to be honored during the 2026 Festival of Masks: Day of the Ancestors. Relatives or close associates spoke of each ancestor, followed by musical, drumming, dance, and spoken word performances.

Horace Tapscott- Acclaimed jazz pianist, composer, and founder of the Pan African People's Arkestra, whose commitment to mentorship transformed generations of artists and musicians.

Pan African People's Arkestra performed a musical tribute to honor Horace Tapscott. The crowd and

I were thoroughly entertained as they performed "Flight 17," "Dred Scott," and "Dark Tree."

Margaret Prescod hosted a memorial to honor black women who have been lost through violence, host and Executive Producer of Sojourner Truth with activist and human rights attorney Nana Gyamfi on Pacifica Radio's KPFK.

Arts Scholarship whose dedication to youth and the arts left a lasting impact throughout Los Angeles. Mama Bo impact was evident by the colorful and high-octane performance by Le Ballet Dembaya led by her daughter Mizan Willis. Their performance left the crowd wanting more.

Meri Ka Ra (Reverend Richard Byrd) - Spiritual leader, educator, community elder at KRST Unity Center. A revolutionary-minded man of heart and courage whose guidance inspired countless community members. Rev. Erica and Torrence Brannon-Reese honored the life and legacy of Meri Ka Ra. Torrence

Brannon-Reese and Everything with Soul musical tribute consisted of a touch of Crescent City/New Orleans soul marinated in a soundtrack of classic and timeless soul music. This final performance took the crowd and me down memory lane from back in the day.

Don't put your dancing shoes away! A Historic South LA Black Cultural District After Party was held on The People's Street from 5:00pm-10:00pm. L.A. Commons is thrilled to extend the Festival of Masks-Day of the Ancestors with an after-party to celebrate the day's World Cup match and to inform the South L.A. community of exciting updates from Black Cultural District organizers. For more information about L.A. Commons and upcoming events.

# Caring For the Skin We Are In

The ABCDE method to monitor skin cancer can help identify moles or spots that need attention.

Los Angeles, Calif. — As we head into another hot summer, it is important to be aware of the daily practices that we can use to protect our skin. While melanin offers some natural protection against the sun, it can also create a false sense of security. The truth is that Black people can develop skin cancer too — and when it's discovered late, the consequences can be devastating.

Melanin helps absorb some of the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays, but it does not completely shield the skin from damage. The Fitzpatrick scale categorizes skin into six phototypes based on melanin content and how the skin tends to burn or tan after exposure to UV light. Black people may fall into any of these phototypes because skin tone and the way skin responds to sun exposure are not the same for everyone. This is why skin care should be individualized rather than one-size-fits-all. Years of sun exposure can still harm skin cells and increase the risk of cancer over time. Using the ABCDE method to monitor the skin and identify moles and spots can be effective in early cancer detection and save lives.

"Skin health is an important part of overall wellness and preventive care services allow people to catch warning signs earlier, speak with specialists sooner, and address health concerns

before they become more serious," stated Dr. Monica Soni, Covered California Chief Medical Officer. "We want everyone to understand that too much sun exposure without protection can damage the skin, cause painful sunburns and premature aging, and increase the risk of skin cancer."

According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer can affect people of every skin tone and Black individuals are far more likely to learn they have the disease at a later stage, when treatment becomes more difficult, and survival rates drop. Skin cancer is America's most common cancer, but can often be prevented with daily habits.

The ABCDE method is a resource to help identify changes in the skin, especially the development of melanoma.

A - Asymmetry: One half of the mole does not match the other.

B - Border: The edges are irregular, ragged, notched, or blurred. Normal moles are round or oval.

C - Color: The mole is not evenly colored; it may include shades of brown or black, or patches of pink, red, white, or blue.

D - Diameter: The spot is larger than 6 millimeters across.

E - Evolving: The mole is changing in size,

shape, or color.

Another challenge is that skin cancer may not look the same on darker skin, and warning signs can appear in unexpected places.

The palms of the hands  
The soles of the feet  
Under fingernails or toenails  
Inside the mouth  
Dark spots, sores, or patches that do not heal

Besides applying the ABCDE method for early detection, small daily habits can go a long way in protecting skin health, including:

Wearing broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher  
Reapplying sunscreen during extended time outdoors

Using hats, sunglasses, and protective clothing

Limiting direct sun exposure during peak daylight hours

Checking the skin regularly for unusual changes

Scheduling routine medical and skin examinations

Schedule a check-up today with your doctor to get screened for skin cancer.





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## Local



Inglewood City Hall (Photo by Marion Apio)

# Inglewood City Council Urged to Protect Immigrant Residents From ICE Raids

By Marion Apio

*Contributing Writer | California Local News Fellow*  
Immigrant rights advocates are urging the Inglewood City Council to pass a local sanctuary ordinance aimed at blocking cooperation with federal agents ahead of international sporting events in the Los Angeles area.

Roughly 20 speakers addressed city officials at the June 9 city council meeting regarding the proposed ordinance, a local ordinance backed by grassroots organizers such as Healing LA Together, the ING Fellowship and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)-LA seeking to establish sanctuary-style protections and shield immigrant residents from potential ICE enforcement.

The Los Angeles area is the stage for a number of upcoming sporting events, including the 2027 Super Bowl and the 2028 Olympic Games.

Mayor James T. Butts and city council members did not formally address the requests during public comment.

Public pressure to shield immigrants from federal raids has intensified amid the ongoing World Cup, including games at SoFi Stadium.

Advocates say the influx of federal personnel for these events increases risks for undocumented residents. Activists noted that more than 1,000 residents have emailed the council demanding

action.

The local mobilization comes amid reported immigration enforcement operations in the area, including a June 4 incident in which advocates said two people were detained by ICE agents in Inglewood.

Dr. Ezekiel Andrade, a District 2 primary care physician whose family has lived in Inglewood for more than 40 years, told the council that fear among immigrant families has reached unprecedented levels.

"People are afraid to go to work, they're afraid to attend medical appointments, they're afraid to seek services for themselves and for their children," Andrade said, adding that the city must go beyond existing California state protections to take meaningful local action.

Community members said deportation fears are disrupting daily life and local labor sectors.

Gerson Navidad, an Inglewood resident who fled El Salvador alone nine years ago, said he was detained by ICE before reuniting with his mother in Inglewood.

He told officials that passing the ordinance would ease the daily terror felt by thousands of hardworking neighbors who fear being picked up by ICE while going to work or school.

Legal advocates at the meeting argued that

existing state framework guidelines do not fully protect residents, making municipal ordinances necessary. Localities like Los Angeles, Huntington Park, Lynwood, and Cudahy have already passed similar measures.

According to advocates, the proposed ordinance would ensure city resources are not used to support federal immigration enforcement, restrict ICE access to non-public areas of city property, and limit when municipal employees or contractors can collect and share resident-sensitive information.

The act would also require the Inglewood Police Department to document any interaction with federal immigration authorities.

Ben O'Hara, a UCLA School of Law student and fellow with the Ahilan Arulanantham Center for Immigration Law and Policy, pointed to similar ordinances in Washington, D.C., and Maryland as successful blueprints.

O'Hara said such policies help prevent improper data sharing and buffer residents from federal enforcement tactics.

Student activists also detailed the personal and emotional toll of the ongoing enforcement actions.

Giselle, a Yale University student raised in Inglewood, described the severe anxiety her family experiences, stating her mother faces constant nightmares regarding family separation.

Representatives from the hospitality and labor sectors joined the call for protection. Frustration over the council's perceived inaction and silence also mounted during the meeting.

Herminia Galvez, an Inglewood resident and CEO of Healing Los Angeles Together, joined others in criticizing city officials over a lack of communication, unity and urgency. Her organization started a rapid-response food delivery initiative for families who were losing breadwinners.

"We have emailed, called, and not once have we received a reply from none of you," Galvez said. "We started seeing that our numbers were dropping as the people that would come to pick up food from us," Galvez said. "The fear had caused people to stop coming."

Paxcelly Marquez, co-leader of LA Forward's Immigrant Justice Working Group and a member of the Sanctuary Coalition, urged the Inglewood City Council to meet with allies to develop a pathway forward rather than waiting for another family to be torn apart.

"One family is more than enough to be impacted by these raids," Marquez said. "And we need to prevent, not wait for the next one."

# Diabetes in Black California: Turning the Tide from Crisis to Control

By Charlene Muhammad

*California Black Media*

Crystal Lambert knew something was terribly wrong with her three-year-old granddaughter as she sped down the street trying to get her to the hospital.

"I thought she got a hold of some poison," Lambert recalled.

Doctors found Lambert's granddaughter had a blood sugar level over 800, diagnosing her with Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA), a state in which the body, starved of insulin, begins to shut down.

Lambert said she was born with a pancreas that was not fully functioning -- it lacked the specialized cells required to produce insulin.

Her granddaughter survived and is five years old today. Now, she gives herself insulin shots, asks endless questions about her condition, and runs like the spirited child she is. But the terror of that night transformed Lambert -- and ultimately inspired her to launch the We Fight Back Organization, a mobile health and food access initiative serving underserved communities across California.



*Crystal Lambert, creator and executive director of We Fight Back. She started the organization out of a need to learn more about diabetes on behalf of her granddaughter. Now she is looking to spread the impact of her organization to the valley. Friday, June 6, 2026. Photo by Solomon O. Smith/California Black Media*

Lambert is the executive director.

The Crisis by the Numbers

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data, nearly 17.9% of Black adults in California have been diagnosed with diabetes -- above the national Black adult average of 16.8%, and nearly five points higher than California's overall adult rate of 12.6% across all races. California ranks 24th out of 39 states with available data for Black adult diabetes rates.

Nationally, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Black Americans were 24% more likely than the overall U.S. population to have diabetes in 2024. They also died from diabetes 78% more often than the general population in 2022. Black Americans are also more than twice as likely as the overall population to develop kidney failure caused by diabetes.

According to the California Health Care Foundation's 2024 Health Disparities Almanac, Black Californians have the shortest life expectancy in the state at just

74.6 years -- due in part to chronic conditions like diabetes and its devastating complications.

Leon Rock, co-founder of the African American Diabetes Association, believes statistics, though revealing, only tell part of the story.

"There are a whole bunch of Black folks that don't tell you that they have diabetes

-- or don't know," he said.

And the disease itself, Rock is careful to note, is not what kills. "They die from the complications. That's heart attack, that's stroke, that's amputations of legs, of feet.

Going blind. All those complications are inherent in a system that has impacted Black folks with diabetes in California and across America."

An Information Gap Fuels the Crisis

For Rock, part of the solution is diagnosis. He says the medical and public health systems are failing



*Dr. Khadijah Lang, a family physician, meets with Roshanique Tate. Lang is Tate's family doctor. Lang is caring for Tate during her current pregnancy. Thursday, June 5, 2026. Photo by Solomon O. Smith/California Black Media*

Black Californians by the absence of information designed for them.

"That is the bottom line. We need good information. Information that is culturally specific," said Rock.

Telling people to eat healthy or exercise, he added, falls short when culturally specific alternatives are not provided, and when many residents of urban communities do not feel safe exercising in some neighborhoods -- or outside at night.

Dr. Khadijah Lang, a family medicine physician and president of the Golden State Medical Association, agrees that the roots of the crisis run deeper than individual behavior -- and blaming patients misses the point.

"We are not genetically predisposed to diabetes," Lang said. "But the system under which we live increases the likelihood that we will develop it."

What the Body Needs -- What Communities Are Denied

Type 2 diabetes, which accounts for 90 to 95% of all diabetes cases, according to the CDC, develops when the body can no longer use insulin effectively to regulate blood sugar. Left unmanaged, it damages nerves, kidneys, eyes, and the cardiovascular system. The hemoglobin A1C test is a blood draw that reveals how the body has processed sugar over the previous three months -- not just at the moment of the test. It is the standard tool for both diagnosis and ongoing monitoring.

That distinction matters, Lang emphasized, because patients cannot manipulate three months of blood sugar history the way they might fast for a day before a single blood draw.

"The pill is not meant to undo or control a sugar level that's being constantly stressed," Lang said. "It's meant to work in conjunction with a low-carbohydrate diet and exercise." She recommended at minimum 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week -- breakable into 10-minute sessions

for those who need it.

Lang stressed that education must be delivered in language people recognize and can relate to. The goal is to inform them of the choices that serve their health best, she said.

But for many Black Californians, even those informed choices remain out of reach, Lambert said. "They need access to healthy foods and medication, too" she said.

California has made some critical policy advances. The state has expanded access to the Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM), which has transformed diabetes care for state residents. Assembly Bill 365, introduced in 2024, proposed requiring Medi-Cal to cover the costs of CGM and other related medical equipment but it failed in the State Senate. Since then, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) reports that the core Medi-Cal CGM benefit now available to eligible patients was solidified through previous budget actions and pharmacy policy updates.

These measures, while meaningful, have not closed the gap for the communities most at risk, according to advocates.

Control Through Community

Health care advocates conclude that the solution must be communal, the celebrity grounded, and sustained -- not a fad, not a celebrity moment, not a single clinic visit. For example, observed Lang, lifestyle shaped by shared values and collective accountability can move the needle where individual prescriptions have not.

Rock is building infrastructure to match the urgency, establishing local chapters of the African American Diabetes Association across the country, with California next.

"We have to do for self, period," he said. "Health is wealth. We have to eat to live."

And Lambert, whose granddaughter unknowingly started all of this for her, keeps showing up.

"Diabetes advocacy is about dignity, education, prevention, and hope," she said.

Supported by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF)... Visit [www.chcf.org](http://www.chcf.org).



*Lesley Cox, a woman living with diabetes in Sacramento, injects herself with her medication. Russell Stiger/California Black Media.*



*Dr. Khadijah Lang is a family physician with a clinic in Los Angeles who specializes in several family medical practices, including prenatal care. Lang believes in family medicine. She says it is important to treat all members of a family. Thursday, June 5, 2026. Photo by Solomon O. Smith/California Black Media.*