

The Valley's News Observer

Serving the San Fernando Valley for Over 40 Years



Volume 41 Number 24

Observer Group Newspapers of Southern California

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Imagining Black Futures

Leaders Call for Bold Investment in Youth, Equity and Opportunity

By Anne To
Contributing Writer, California Local News Fellow
On Wednesday evening, Feb. 25, dozens of people filled the atrium of the California African American Museum (CAAM) to discuss solutions, futures, and opportunities for Black individuals, youths, and families.

Hosted by CAAM and St. Joseph Center, the event gathered four panelists who shared methods for improving Black futures: LA County Supervisor Holly Mitchel, CEO of The California Endowment Brenda Solórzano, CEO of Diffusion Venture Studio Henry Hips, and founder of ORO Impact George C. Fatheree, III. Joanna Jackson, CEO of Weingart Foundation, also provided opening remarks.

Ryan J. Smith, CEO of St. Joseph Center and moderator for the event, spoke to *The Observer* about the roles of Black youth in the future.

"We have no future without talking about how we invest in youth, and we have opportunities to right so many wrongs when not only do we think about ensuring that youth are in the room but also that they're a part of the solutions," Smith said.

He shared his personal experience where someone "invested" in him by giving him a job as a youth organizer at 15.

"So, imagine if we're at scale investing in youth development and workforce development opportunities for youth, making sure that they understand the economy, understand home ownership and embed that in their academic supports."

Mitchel emphasized the importance of imagination during the discussion.



Co-founder and CEO of Diffusion Venture Studio spoke about AI and the need to adopt it during the panel. Left to Right (George C. Fatheree, III, Henry Hips, Brenda Solórzano, Holly J. Mitchell, Ryan J. Smith) Courtesy of St. Joseph Center.

"I think that when we begin to collectively imagine the possibilities, the future for Black people ... where we're safe or it's well lived, where we do have housing security where we can own," Mitchel said. "I believe that if we collectively

imagine those possibilities. We will collectively build them in a real and meaningful way."

Mitchel recounted the time she spoke to a woman who participated in a dreaming exercise
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The California African American Museum's atrium was packed with attendees for the panel. Courtesy of St. Joseph Center.



Executive Director of the California African American Museum Cameron Shaw spoke about the exhibits featured at the museum that touch on the theme of "home." Courtesy of St. Joseph Center.

Inouye-Perez Now Tops Bruins' Coaching List

By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

Last weekend, Kelly Inouye-Perez surpassed Sue Enquist as the winningest softball coach in UCLA history — a milestone that cements her place among the legends of Westwood.

According to ESPN, Inouye-Perez, widely regarded as one of the most humble figures in college sports, quickly redirected praise to longtime assistant and best friend Lisa Fernandez. The two were teammates at UCLA and have worked side by side since Inouye-Perez became head coach in 2007.

A Legacy of Leadership Before Inouye-Perez coached her first game, I sat with then-retired Bruins coach Sue Enquist at the Mohegan Sun Coaches Convention in Connecticut. I asked about her successor. "I can tell you this, Earl," Enquist said. "The program is in good hands. If you're a Bruin fan, you don't have anything to worry about." Two decades later, those words ring prophetic. Inouye-Perez now holds a record of 888-225-1 (.797), surpassing Enquist's 887-175-1 (.835). Sharron Backus, the inaugural coach in UCLA softball history, retired with an 854-173-3 (.831) record. They remain the only three softball coaches in school history — a testament to the program's remarkable stability. "When we talk about the Bruin family, it's real, and that's all I'm trying to do is sustain this tradition of excellence for all those that built this historic program," Inouye-Perez said. "There is no other program that has sustained over six decades like UCLA softball, and Lisa and I are doing our best to be able to do that." Built in Westwood In her 20th season as head coach, Inouye-Perez's connection to UCLA spans nearly four decades. She arrived in Westwood in 1989 as a catcher and won three national championships as a player. After her playing career ended, she immediately joined Enquist's staff as an assistant coach. This season marks her 38th consecutive year with UCLA softball. She remains the only person in Division I history to win a national championship as both a player and head coach. Under her leadership, the Bruins have reached the Women's College World Series 11 times, most recently in 2025. From



Kelly Inouye-Perez at one of her several WCWS press conferences Courtesy Photo

2015 to 2022, UCLA made seven straight WCWS appearances. The Bruins have qualified for the NCAA Tournament in all 18 eligible seasons during her tenure and hold a 92-37 postseason record, including a 21-18 mark in Oklahoma City. Inouye-Perez claimed her fifth Pac-10/12 regular-season title and her first Pac-12 Tournament championship in 2024 — UCLA's final season in the conference. Her five regular-season titles rank third in conference history behind Arizona's Mike Candra (10) and Enquist (7). More Than Wins But numbers alone don't define her impact. Senior infielder Jordan Woolery, who leads the nation with 39 RBIs this season, has spent four years in Westwood alongside fellow seniors Megan Grant and pitcher Taylor Tinsley — the Bruins' only seniors this year. "We've been close since I got to UCLA, and our relationship has only gotten stronger these last four

years," Woolery said. "There's been a lot of moments where I've had to rely on her, and she's also had to rely on me, like a leadership role for the team ... we have a really good dynamic." For Inouye-Perez, the mission extends beyond championships. "Moments like this come because our focus is how they can become the best version of themselves and leave a stronger female than they were when they came into UCLA," she said. "Instead of just focusing on ball, we're focusing on developing strong women and understanding how to be present and take advantage of opportunities." That philosophy — rooted in mentorship, sisterhood and excellence — continues to shape a program that has long been a standard-bearer not only for college softball, but for women's athletics nationwide. And as history now reflects, the Bruins remain exactly where Enquist predicted they would be — in very good hands.

Hillary Clinton Testifies, Says Her Husband Bill Had No Knowledge of Epstein's Crimes

Hillary Clinton told Congress she had no knowledge of Jeffrey Epstein's or Ghislaine Maxwell's criminal activities and denied ever meeting Epstein. She also defended her husband, Bill Clinton, saying he was unaware of Epstein's crimes.



Hillary Clinton addresses the Epstein files.

Hillary gave a six-hour closed-door deposition in Chappaqua, New York, as part of a two-day process that will include Bill Clinton. According to the Associated Press, she answered every question from the Republican-controlled House Oversight Committee, which is investigating Epstein's abuse of underage girls.

"I had no idea about their criminal activities," Hillary said in her opening statement. She confirmed she had seen Epstein only in passing and only knew Maxwell as an acquaintance at events hosted by the Clinton Foundation. Maxwell had also attended the 2010 wedding of their daughter, Chelsea, but Hillary said Maxwell came as a guest of someone else.

The deposition comes after months of pressure from Republicans, led by Rep. James Comer, who threatened criminal contempt if the Clintons did not testify. Hillary also criticized the investigation as one-sided, saying it unfairly targeted her and her husband while ignoring similar questions for Trump and other Republicans.

Republicans are focusing on Bill Clinton, highlighting photos of him with Epstein and other women, though he has not been accused of wrongdoing. Hillary pointed to her work as secretary of state combating sex trafficking as another reason for her testimony and stressed the need to help survivors worldwide.

The deposition faced interruptions, including a rule breach when Rep. Lauren Boebert sent a private photo of Hillary to a conservative influencer. Democrats called for a full public record, pushing for the video and transcript to be released quickly. Lawmakers from both parties continue to pressure for transparency on Epstein's connections to powerful figures.

Hillary emphasized that she and Bill had no involvement in Epstein's crimes and condemned the abuse victims suffered. She also highlighted the need for a fair investigation and accountability across the board, saying the public deserves a clear record of the proceedings.

Black Teen Arrested in Dubai, Facing 20 Years in Prison For Underage Romance

Marcus Fakana, an 18-year-old Black teen from Tottenham, North London, is facing a potential 20-year prison sentence in Dubai after being accused of having a relationship with a 17-year-old girl while on vacation.



Marcus Fakana

Marcus was arrested in August after the girl's mother reportedly discovered their relationship and alerted authorities. Campaign group Detained in Dubai (DID) has been advocating for Marcus, highlighting his precarious situation in the United Arab Emirates, where the age of consent is 18.

According to My London News, the incident began while Marcus was on vacation with his parents in Dubai. During their stay, he met a fellow Brit at the same hotel, and a holiday romance quickly developed. The girl, also from London, returned to Britain, but Marcus and his family planned to follow shortly after. However, their trip took a shocking turn when police arrived at their hotel room, taking Marcus in for questioning without explanation.

According to DID, Marcus was detained at Al Barsha Police Station for three days without being allowed to contact his parents or make a phone call. He later learned that the girl's mother, unaware of their relationship at the time, had reported him to authorities after finding messages on her daughter's phone. Marcus described his experience as terrifying and explained that his girlfriend had kept their relationship secret due to her strict family.

"I never thought something like this could happen," Marcus said. "We liked each other and had a great time together. My parents knew, but she had to hide it from hers."

Trump's MAGA Allies are Creating Executive Order Plan to Steal the 2026 Midterms

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Correspondent

A group of MAGA pro-Trump activists, who say they are working in coordination with the White House, are circulating a 17-page draft executive order that would claim without evidence that China interfered with the 2020 presidential election. Donald Trump lost the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden by over 7 million votes. Since Trump lost to Biden in 2020, he has repeatedly claimed that the election was "stolen" without evidence. The report of a group of "Trump allies" preparing an executive order to give Trump power over elections was first reported by The Washington Post.

The lies around the right-wing campaign that pushed falsehoods that the 2020 election was stolen was trafficked through right-wing media,

particularly Fox News. Fox News was then sued for defamation for the claims by Dominion Voting Systems. Fox lost the case and had to settle for the largest defamation amount on record of \$787.5 million in April 2023.

The document that could lead to an executive order proposes using the claim that China interfered with the 2020 elections as grounds to "declare a national emergency." The move would be an unprecedented step that would grant Trump new authority over the voting systems in the U.S.

The story in The Washington Post arrives as Trump increasingly signals that he may take actions that would alter the result of the 2026 midterms. The Republicans are widely expected to lose as their approval ratings plummet as a result of a failing economy under Trump. Over 50 members of Congress have announced they will retire this year

and not return in 2027.

The Trump Department of Justice, which now has a large image of Trump on the side of it, "sued five new states Thursday [Feb. 26, 2026] demanding access to their unredacted voter rolls — escalating a campaign that has been rejected by multiple federal courts and faces resistance from Republican-led states as well," according to Democracy Docket, a group that works to protect voting rights.

Trump claimed back in late 2020, the last year of his first term, that he had the authority to issue an executive order related to mail-in voting for the 2020 elections — which he would then lose. But the Constitution states that control of elections lies with the states. As the GOP works to place hurdles in front of voting, Democrats worked to make voting easier. In March 2021, President

Biden signed an executive order calling on federal agencies to expand voting access as part of the Biden Administration's effort "to promote and defend the right to vote for all Americans who are legally entitled to participate in elections." Trump's focus is clearly on altering the November 2026 midterm elections. Trump's polling numbers and the elections and special elections that have taken place around the U.S. over the last year clearly indicate that Republicans are about to be hit by a blue wave of Democratic victories. Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent investigative journalist and the founder of Black Virginia News. She is a political analyst who appears on #RolandMartinUnfiltered and hosts the show LAUREN LIVE on YouTube @LaurenVictoriaBurke. She can be contacted at LVBurke007@gmail.com and on twitter at @LVBurke

Advancements in Solar Technology That Are Changing the Way We Power the World

Solar technology has come a long way over the decades and has made energy consumption cleaner across the world. Other solar energy advancements include a higher degree of both efficiency and affordability.

According to Big Think, the sun emits the energy equivalent of a whopping 4 million tons of matter, so it only makes sense to harness this power. The latest solar tech has given us the ability to fine-tune the use of the sun's energy to our advantage.

What's great is that this technology is accessible to big corporations, average households, and everyone in between.

What Are the Latest Breakthroughs in Solar Technology? Perovskite solar cells are one of the most promising solar power innovations that have come about in recent years. Perovskites differ from traditional silicon cells because they're possible to manufacture using lower-cost processes. What's more, you can layer them onto pre-existing panels to create what's called "tandem cells." Tandem tech combines the best of both worlds, including silicon and perovskite layers. Doing this makes it easier than ever to capture more of the solar spectrum. This leads to an increase in efficiency potential across the board. Demonstrations already show the record-breaking efficiency levels that have come about from this technology. It's only a matter of time before commercialization efforts find their way into people's homes and businesses worldwide.

Bifacial Panels
Bifacial panels get their name from their ability to create electricity from both sides. They do this by capturing reflected sunlight from other surfaces. Examples include the following:

Concrete
Sand
Snow

What makes them especially attractive as an

energy solution is that they yield a greater amount of power per panel. Their future in both commercial and utility-scale installations isn't far off. Best of all, improved durability and enhanced frame design have also made bifacial modules more practical in different types of climates. Floating Solar Farms This concept may sound like something pulled straight out of a science fiction novel, but the technology is actually within our grasp.

It would involve floating solar arrays installed on reservoirs and industrial bodies of water. Doing this can help reduce land use and other issues while also improving the panels' performance. What's neat is that water is a natural way to cool down the panels as they inevitably heat up. As such, this increases the general efficiency compared to ground-based panel systems. How Efficient Are Modern Solar Panels Compared to Older Models? Efficiency improvements are one of the main reasons why the industry has grown as fast as it has. Older panels, from some 15 to 20 years ago, for instance, work at 15% efficiency at most. Compare that to modern monocrystalline panels, which can reach or even exceed 20% efficiency, especially the higher-quality options. Smarter System Design Aside from the amazing advancement in panel materials, renewable energy solutions are now better than ever because of smart inverters and AI-driven monitoring systems. Aspects like these go a long way toward optimizing the panel's real-time electricity production.

Homeowners can track output with ease by using their mobile apps. Grid operators can more

effectively balance distributed systems as well.

Don't forget about digital integration, either. It allows solar arrays to act as part of an intelligent energy ecosystem rather than just separate equipment.

Solar Shingles Vs. Solar Panels

Savvy homeowners often compare solar shingles vs. solar panels before deciding on their systems. Traditional panels go on top of the house's roof and offer both high efficiency backed by a long track record of solid performance. The main difference between them and solar shingles is that the shingles become part of the roof's structure and have a sleeker aesthetic. When making a final choice, you'll want to consider the following: Installation costs

Roof design

Return on investment

Long-term performance expectations

Keep in mind that ongoing solar energy advancements will continue to improve on both of these options. It gives homeowners more flexibility than ever before. Frequently Asked Questions How Long Do Solar Panels Last? The exact answer to this question depends on all kinds of factors. The quality of the panels, the climate you live in, and more can affect the expiration date. On the whole, you can expect your solar panels to last for several decades, give or take.

One of the best ways to get the most out of them is by staying on top of maintenance. Just like with any piece of sophisticated tech, solar panels need to be regularly checked, cleaned, and more.

Are Solar Panels Worth It in 2026?

Since this technology has only gotten cheaper and more effective, it's never been a better time to make the investment. Plus, some state governments offer incentives that can sweeten the deal further. If you're tired of your energy bill climbing each year, then it's probably time to make the switch and enjoy the solar gift that keeps on giving. Can Solar Panels Still Work on Cloudy Days?

It's a myth that could cause solar panels to stop working. However, it should be noted that the panels work at a lower capacity. In these cases, you can always supplement the energy from solar panels with traditional sources. It's worth emphasizing that the latest solar panel technology is capable of getting more out of diffuse sunlight when direct sunlight is in short supply. You also have the option of battery storage, which can hold on to the power captured earlier, when the sky was clearer. Solar Technology Remains a Top Contender When Considering Energy Solutions It's clear that solar technology has come a long way since it was first introduced, so imagine how much farther it'll advance in the near and distant future. The sooner you invest in this technology, the greater your pay-off will be. As a homeowner, it only makes sense to join the future of clean energy technology and enjoy the sun's amazing power.

You can always stay informed on the latest and greatest news by reading our articles. Be sure to take the time to read our interesting back catalog. Remember to bookmark us so you can visit back with ease and avoid missing out on new scoops.

Civil Rights TV Launches in Selma as the World's First 24/7 Civil Rights Television Network

SELMA, Ala. — Civil Rights TV, the world's first 24-hour television network dedicated exclusively to civil rights history, education, and future equity, has officially launched on the Connect To Your City OTT platform powered by Connect2OTT. The network debuts from Selma, Alabama — one of the most historically significant cities in the American civil rights movement — marking a new chapter in how civil rights stories are preserved, amplified, and carried forward for future generations. Civil Rights TV operates continuously on the Connect To Your City OTT platform powered by Connect2OTT, offering documentaries, news analysis, live discussions, educational programming, global civil rights coverage, and cultural storytelling. The channel functions as both a historical archive and a living platform addressing contemporary civil rights challenges. Civil Rights, Technology, and the AI Era As technology and artificial intelligence increasingly shape access to information, media, and opportunity, Civil Rights TV launches at a moment when access to digital infrastructure itself is emerging as a civil rights issue. Media fragmentation, misinformation, and uneven access to technology continue to reshape public discourse. While on-demand platforms have expanded individual content access, large-scale live broadcasting still faces challenges related to congestion, latency, and energy consumption. Civil Rights TV leverages broadcast-efficient OTT architecture designed to reduce bandwidth usage and energy requirements, enabling continuous global distribution without

placing added strain on network infrastructure. Why Civil Rights TV Matters Now Civil Rights TV is not only a media launch—it is a signal. The network underscores the importance of preserving civil rights history using the most accurate and comprehensive sources available. For generations, the Black press has maintained some of the deepest and most reliable documentation of the civil rights movement, currents events, news and critical Black history, much of which remains underrepresented in modern digital media archives and inaccessible to artificial intelligence (AI) systems. As a result, Civil Rights TV will rely heavily on national Black press for news, historical archives and independent voices. Prominent digital news platforms, podcasts, and broadcasters—will play an instrumental role in shaping continuous coverage, historical interpretation, and public discourse. About Connect2OTT Connect2OTT currently manages more than 250 live 24/7 television and radio channels streaming to audiences in more than 190 countries. Civil Rights TV joins this ecosystem as a flagship channel, designed to foster global conversation while demonstrating how media distribution, energy efficiency, and AI readiness can coexist responsibly.

About Larry Witherspoon Larry Witherspoon is a technology entrepreneur and founder of Phoenix-based Connect2 Technologies, LLC, including Connect2OTT, Connect2AI, and Connect To Your City OTT Platform.

In 2006, Witherspoon launched FaithFone

Wireless, the world's first Christian-owned and operated mobile phone company—years ahead of today's fintech and mobile banking platforms. As a mobile virtual network operator (MVNO), FaithFone introduced mobile banking, digital tithing, live television and radio, content downloads, and branded debit- card-based person-to-person payment functionality before mobile commerce was widely understood by major telecom and financial institutions.

That early convergence of mobile, media, and financial technology laid the foundation for Witherspoon's current work across AI, energy efficiency, broadcasting, and infrastructure optimization.

Community Content Submissions Civil Rights TV welcomes article submissions from trusted community voices, journalists, and verified organizations. Content may be submitted through an official upload portal or via email for editorial review.

Submissions approved for broadcast will be scheduled during the network's community programming window from 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m., with select pieces considered for prime-time airing based on their significance, accuracy, and value to the broader civil rights dialogue.

Media Contact Tina Michelle Connect2OTT / Civil Rights TV Phone: (480) 740-7777 Email: Contact@civilrightstv.com Website: CivilRightsTV.com

Imagining Black Futures

Leaders Call for Bold Investment in Youth, Equity and Opportunity

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program for young women living in housing developments.

"This young woman, her mother had been diagnosed with HIV and [she was] afraid she might have to go in, in foster care," Mitchell said. "I'll never forget, her dream was a two bedroom apartment near a hospital. I was like, 'That's your dream?' So we don't spend enough time really dreaming about what the possibility could be before we even try to get there."

We look at any data set, there are significant disparities.

Black people make up 9% of LA County's population, but they also make up 31% of the county's homeless population, according to the LA County Chief Executive Office. From 2010 to 2020, all other ethnic minorities experienced some growth in homeownership status except for the Black community, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

"When we look at any data set, there are significant disparities, and when we look, the Black community is always circling the bad category," Solórzano said.



President and CEO of St. Joseph Center moderated the panel and shared his work in helping provide housing services within LA County. Courtesy of St. Joseph Center.

Fatheree recalled a 2016 study by the Corporation for Enterprise Development that stated it would take 228 years for Black families to reach the wealth of White families. According to the Pew Research Center, an average White household had 9.2 times more wealth than the average Black household.

"Slavery ended 160 years ago," Fatheree said. "What that means is we are closer to the slavery era than we are to that era of wealth equity."

Fatheree said that there were "three essential ingredients" to protecting and expanding Black wealth as a means for Black power: demanding evidence over erasure, allies based on shared interest, and thoughtful strategic, radical solutions.

He shared that he founded the nonprofit Black Land Loss Narrative Archive Project to document and preserve stories about policies and practices that took land, businesses and homes from Black families.

"We've never faced a time where there is more pressure towards erasure," Fatheree said as he referenced efforts within the Trump administration to ban books and alter information within museums about Black history and experiences.

Alongside the panel, the museum is currently hosting an exhibit by L.A. filmmaker J.J. Anderson called *Sometimes I Feel Like I am Almost Home*. The exhibit displays footage, imagery, and intergenerational interviews.

Event attendees were able to visit the exhibit before the event as they were served snacks and drinks from Black-owned businesses: Bread & Roses Catering, 1919 Wine and Events, and Chef Bly.

The Valley's
News Observer

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

Bulk Mailing Permit 724 Bakersfield, CA 93385

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

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Ass.
Associated Press, Better Business Bureau, GLAAC

President: Ellen Coley

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Operations Manager: James Luckey

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Southern California, Inc.:

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

Los Angeles News Observer 6060 Center Drive
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Entertainment



'Sinners' Takes Top Prize at the Actor Awards, Setting Up an Oscar Showdown

After a near awards-season sweep by "One Battle After Another," "Sinners" won best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild's 32nd Actor Awards on Sunday, shaking up the Oscar race and setting up a potential nail-biter finale in two weeks at the Academy Awards.

The guild's awards, formerly known as the SAG Awards, are one of the most closely watched Oscar precursors. Actors make up the largest slice of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and their choices at the Actor Awards often align.

The victory for Ryan Coogler's blues-soaked vampire saga showed that it has a strong chance to win at the Oscars, too, despite an almost unblemished run of awards for Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another." It's won at the Golden Globes, the Producers Guild Awards, the BAFTAs and the Directors Guild Awards.

But the win Sunday, in a Netflix-streamed ceremony at the Shine Auditorium in Los Angeles, flipped that awards-season script. Writer-director Ryan Coogler, whose "Black Panther" triumphed at the guild's awards in 2019, became the first filmmaker to steer two ensembles to the guild's top

prize. "From the bottom of our hearts, to the bottom of your hearts, thank you so much for everything," said Delroy Lindo, who spoke on behalf of the film's cast.

Moments earlier, Michael B. Jordan also won best male actor, upsetting the category favorite, Timothée Chalamet, and handing the 39-year-old Jordan the most significant prize of his acclaimed career. Even Jordan looked shocked as the audience rose to its feet and Viola Davis, the award's presenter, celebrated.

"I wasn't expecting this at all," said Jordan, who reflected on starting out as actor before he paused to appreciate the moment. "Yeah, man, this is pretty cool."

As expected, Jessie Buckley won best female actor for her performance in "Hamnet." But the other actor races have been harder to call. On Sunday, Sean Penn (who didn't attend) won best supporting male actor for "One Battle After Another" and Amy Madigan won best supporting female actor for "Weapons."

The 75-year-old Madigan, who had never

before been nominated by the guild, was visibly surprised. Partway through her winding and charming acceptance speech, she looked down at the statuette.

"It's like when you were little and you had the Barbie and then you got Ken and whipped down his drawers and went, 'Hey, that's nothing,'" joked Madigan before apologizing for getting distracted.

A posthumous prize for Catherine O'Hara Catherine O'Hara posthumously won best female actor in a comedy series for her performance as a movie executive in the showbiz satire "The Studio." O'Hara died at the age of 71 on Jan. 30 from a blood clot in the lungs. At the Shine Auditorium in Los Angeles, the crowd stood in a standing ovation for O'Hara after she was announced as the winner.

Seth Rogen, co-creator of "The Studio," accepted the award on her behalf. He recalled a passionate collaborator who would, the night before a scene, invariably send a polite email with suggested rewrites. Rogen said O'Hara "showed that you could be a genius and you could be kind."

"If you have people in your lives who don't know her work," Rogen said, "show them O'Hara dancing to Harry Belafonte in 'Beetlejuice,' show them O'Hara hurting her knee in 'Best in Show' and doing that amazing thing where she hobbles around, and tell the people as they are laughing that that's Catherine O'Hara and we were lucky that we got to live in a world where she so generously shared her talents with us."

A ceremony that skirted politics The ceremony, presented by the actors guild SAG-AFTRA, were hosted by returning emcee Kristen Bell, who kicked off the show on a light, song-and-dance note despite the war in Iran and entertainment industry upheaval. Sean Astin, SAG-AFTRA president, offered a "a prayer for peace" in

his remarks. The Actor Awards were the biggest Hollywood bash since Paramount reached an agreement to acquire Warner Bros. Discovery for \$111 billion. The merger, which awaits regulatory approval, sent shock waves through Hollywood. Netflix chief executive Ted Sarandos, whose company lost out to Paramount competing bid, walked the red carpet in jeans.

The win for "Sinners" insures that Warner Bros. will head into the Academy Awards with the two clear best pictures favorites in it and "One Battle After Another" — an awards-season coup for a studio set to be sold.

Before the ceremony began, the award for best stunt ensemble went to a Paramount release: "Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning." Among the TV awards, "The Studio" won for comedy series and "The Pitt" won for drama series. Individual winners included Keri Russell ("The Diplomat"), Rogen ("The Studio"), Michelle Williams ("Dying for Sex"), Owen Cooper ("Adolescence") and Noah Wyle ("The Pitt").

A Harrison Ford tribute Harrison Ford was honored with the SAG-AFTRA Life Achievement Award, a prize presented with warm sarcasm by Woody Harrelson. The 83-year-old actor said he was humbled.

"I'm in a room with actors, many of whom are here because they've been nominated to receive a prize for their amazing work, while I'm here to receive a prize for being alive," said Ford, who called it "the half point" of his career.

Ford teared up for much of his speech, reflecting on a career that he noted was "not an overnight success." He called the award "very encouraging."

"I'm indeed a lucky guy," said Ford. "Lucky to have found my people. Lucky to have work that challenges me. Lucky to still be doing it."

R&B Singer K. Michelle & Slutty Vegan Founder Pinky Cole Join "Real Housewives of Atlanta" Season 17



K. Michelle, Pinky Cole

R&B singer K. Michelle and Slutty Vegan owner Pinky Cole are joining the cast of Real Housewives of Atlanta for season 17. Both women bring music, business, and drama to the show, promising an exciting season of clashes and ambition.

K. Michelle is no stranger to reality TV. The singer, known for her sharp comebacks on VH1's Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta, is stepping into the Housewives franchise for the first time. "I just flipped the switch. I don't know nobody else that's doing this," she shared on Instagram.

Pinky Cole, founder of the plant-based restaurant chain Slutty Vegan, is bringing her entrepreneurial flair to Atlanta's reality scene. With multiple locations nationwide, including several around the city, Cole has navigated business

setbacks like buying back her own brand. She wrote on Instagram, "They counted me out...Bravo counted me in."

A sneak peek of season 17 shows both women involved in tense moments with the existing cast, according to 11Alive. K. Michelle is seen being held back during a heated confrontation, while Cole dives into the drama with her trademark boldness. Fans can expect plenty of lively interactions and behind-the-scenes revelations.

Real Housewives of Atlanta season 17 premieres Sunday, April 5, at 8 p.m. ET on Bravo. Viewers can look forward to new personalities, high-stakes drama, and the unique energy K. Michelle and Pinky Cole bring to the show.

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NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below. You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. **NOTE:** The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación. Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia. Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. **AVISO:** Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso. The name and address of the court is (El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Superior Court of California, County of Los

ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia. Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. **AVISO:** Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso. The name and address of the court is (El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Superior Court of California, County of Los

Angeles
 12720 Norwalk Blvd.,
 Norwalk, CA 90650
 The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is (El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
 Ali Nabavi, Coastal Crest Law Firm, APLC
 SBN 232910
 24310 Moulton Pkwy,
 Suite O-1007,
 Laguna Woods, CA 92637
 Tel. (949) 751-6788
 DATE (Fecha): January 27, 2025
 David W. Slayton,
 Executive Officer/Clerk of Court
 By V. Jimenez, Deputy (Adjunto) (SEAL)

NOTICE TO THE PERSON SERVED:
 You are served.

**LOS ANGELES
 NEWS OBSERVER
 PUB: Feb 12, 19, 26, Mar 5,
 2026**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO: 2026 025436

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
ANCESTRAL SOAPS at 1150 W Avenue J7, Lancaster, CA 93534
 Mailing: same
 County: Los Angeles
 REGISTERED OWNERS(S):
SHIRLEY J PRESSGROVE at 4083 W Avenue L 205, Lancaster, CA 93536
 The business is conducted by: an individual
 SIGNED: **SHIRLEY J PRESSGROVE, Owner**
 The date registrant started to

transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above: January 2026
 This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: February 3, 2026
 DEAN C. LOGAN, Los Angeles County Clerk
 By: Shameka Melton
 Deputy
NOTICE: IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBDIVISION (a) OF SECTION 17920, A FICTITIOUS NAME STATEMENT GENERALLY EXPIRES AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE ON WHICH IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK EXCEPT, AS PROVIDED IN SUBDIVISION (b) OF SECTION 17920, WHERE IT EXPIRES 40 DAYS AFTER ANY CHANGE IN THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 17913 OTHER THAN A CHANGE IN THE RESIDENCE ADDRESS OF A REGISTERED OWNER. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION. EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2014, THE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE AFFIDAVIT OF IDENTITY FORM. This statement expires on February 3, 2031

**LOS ANGELES
 NEWS OBSERVER
 PUB: Feb 12, 19, 26, Mar 5,
 2026**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO: 2026 031578

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
PERFECT PLACE INTERIORS & EVENTS / CURE-IOUS PODCAST at 1001 Wilshire Boulevard, PMB # 2071, Los Angeles, CA 90017
 Mailing: same
 County: Los Angeles
 REGISTERED OWNERS(S):
GRACE'S SON HOLDINGS, LLC 1001 Wilshire Boulevard, PMB # 2071, Los Angeles, CA 90017
 State of incorp. or org.: CA
 The business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company
 SIGNED: **BRYNWN COFFMAN, CEO**
 The date registrant started to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above: February 2026
 This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: February 11, 2026
 DEAN C. LOGAN, Los Angeles County Clerk
 By: Savannah Rodriguez,
 Deputy
NOTICE: IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBDIVISION (a) OF SECTION 17920, A FICTITIOUS NAME STATEMENT GENERALLY EXPIRES AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE ON WHICH IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK EXCEPT, AS PROVIDED IN SUBDIVISION (b) OF SECTION 17920, WHERE IT EXPIRES 40 DAYS AFTER ANY CHANGE IN THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 17913 OTHER THAN A CHANGE IN THE RESIDENCE ADDRESS OF A

REGISTERED OWNER. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION. EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2014, THE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE AFFIDAVIT OF IDENTITY FORM. This statement expires on February 11, 2031

**LOS ANGELES
 NEWS OBSERVER
 PUB: Feb 19, 26, Mar 5, 12,
 2026**

LIEN SALE

NOTICE OF LIEN SALE

Lien Holder:
**5350 W ADAMS BLVD.,
 LOS ANGELES, CA 90016**
 Vehicle:
2025 MERZ
 Vin: **W1KAF4GB6SR274471**
 License #:
 Date of Sale: **3/16/2026**
**LOS ANGELES BAY
 NEWS OBSERVER (E)
 PUB: Mar 5, 2026**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO: 2026 043500

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
WITHFOUND at 8605 Santa Monica Blvd #317595, West Hollywood, CA 90069
 Mailing: same
 County: Los Angeles
 REGISTERED OWNERS(S):
KEYANNA REES INC 8605 Santa Monica Blvd #317595, West

Hollywood, CA 90069
 State of incorp. or org.: CA
 The business is conducted by: a Corporation
 SIGNED: **KEYANNA REES, CEO**
 The date registrant started to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above: February 2026
 This statement filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on: February 25, 2026
 DEAN C. LOGAN, Los Angeles County Clerk
 By: Courtney Maffitt,
 Deputy

NOTICE: IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBDIVISION (a) OF SECTION 17920, A FICTITIOUS NAME STATEMENT GENERALLY EXPIRES AT THE END OF FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE ON WHICH IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK EXCEPT, AS PROVIDED IN SUBDIVISION (b) OF SECTION 17920, WHERE IT EXPIRES 40 DAYS AFTER ANY CHANGE IN THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 17913 OTHER THAN A CHANGE IN THE RESIDENCE ADDRESS OF A REGISTERED OWNER. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION. EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2014, THE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE AFFIDAVIT OF IDENTITY FORM. This statement expires on February 25, 2031

**LOS ANGELES
 NEWS OBSERVER
 PUB: Mar 5, 12, 19, 26, 2026**

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Features

Meta Deleted Me. I Still Don't Know Why. And neither will you.

A verified journalist was banned, reported to federal authorities, and given no recourse. A glitch in the system may be the point.

By Morris W. O'Kelly (Mo'Kelly)
I have long had a hate/hate relationship with social media. It is the place where people mainly try to impress people they don't know with knowledge they don't have, to fake lifestyles they don't live. And that's assuming we disregard the anonymous trolls, foreign bots, and random, garden-variety bad actors permeating the landscape.

Nonetheless, as a person who works in news media, social media is a necessary evil. It is necessary to promote oneself and one's work and to develop an overall footprint. In my business, it is a necessary and accepted form of currency. More generally, one's social media presence is used equally for job selection and job exclusion. I had already left Twitter/X due to it devolving into a racist hellhole, guided by "Apartheid Clyde" himself, Elon Musk. You know, the guy is more reminiscent of a poorly conceived Bond villain, with ethnostate sugar plums dancing in his head.

But I digress...
For me, Facebook, Instagram, and its companion Threads (Meta) were more than enough to satisfy my social media needs. I get it. I'm old. I'm not cool. Most importantly, I'm good with it. But what little social media I used was essential to my profession, which, as a political and cultural commentator, included discussion of any and all topics, from Donald Trump to Jeffrey Epstein to Palestine to even Diddy.

In fact, my blue check-marked profiles came from years of credibility construction, not from paying a monthly vanity subscription. This is very important. I'll come back to it later.

But just like that (snap), most of it disappeared. Recently, my IG (Instagram) and Threads accounts were disabled and deleted due to a supposed post where I violated the terms of service regarding the depiction of children.

Say what?! Children?!
According to Meta, my account was found to have either:

- Showed a child's genitals
- Showed sexual activity involving children
- Sexualized children

From Meta: "No one can see or find your account, and you can't use it. All your information will be permanently deleted. You cannot request another review of this decision."

No inclusion or mention of the supposed offending post was made. No recourse, review, or redress. All gone. But wait, it gets worse.

Meta also informed me that "We're required by law to report suspected cases of child sexual exploitation to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)."

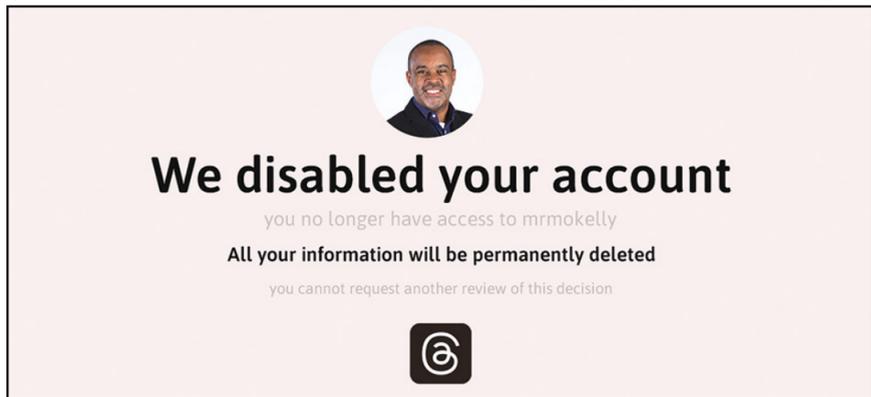
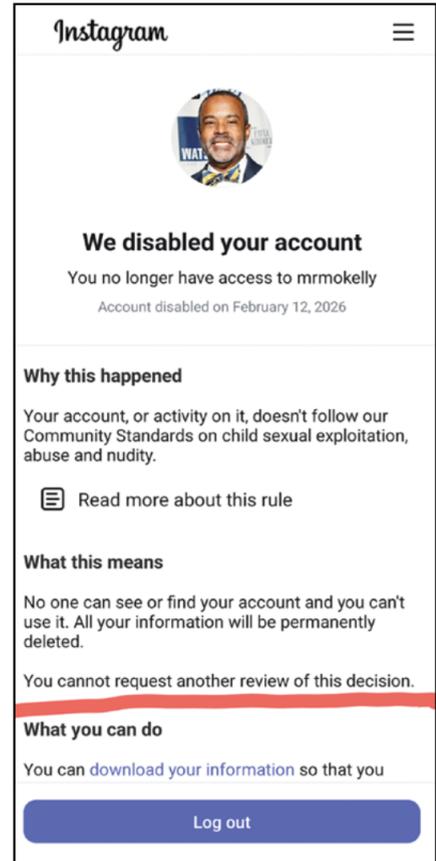
Was it a discussion of Jeffrey Epstein or some other news-related figure misinterpreted by AI?

I can't tell you—and Meta won't either—because I "cannot request another review of this decision," nor am I aware of the specifics of the supposedly violating post. If your social media experience is anything like mine, I'm called every racial slur imaginable with both regularity and impunity. Oddly enough, these trolls are almost never reprimanded or disabled. I've never been suspended for any online behavior on any platform at any time. That's relevant too.

Was my account hacked by a nefarious actor who posted some offensive and obscene material? I can't rule it in or out, as I don't have access to my account to perform a forensic analysis of any logins from suspicious devices or the like. That, and I "cannot request another review of this decision." Years of posts, pictures, commentaries, and discussions across TWO platforms, gone. And I can't even verify whether the supposed violation occurred on Instagram or Threads. But back to being a "verified, blue checkmark" user... Originally, before people had the option to simply buy a subscription and, with it, a blue checkmark, one had to be a person of some notoriety or credibility within a specific field of expertise. You had to earn it in some way. In addition, you were required to submit your actual driver's license or state ID as another layer of verification. Meaning, the repercussions of Meta being "required by law to report suspected cases of child sexual exploitation to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)" could have legal and professional repercussions—the full

extent of which neither of us can predict.

In addition, since I work with children in various capacities outside of work, I'm required to be live-scanned. Live Scan technology uses digital fingerprinting to instantly transmit biometric data to state (DOJ) and federal (FBI) databases. Its primary uses include rapid criminal background checks for employment (childcare, healthcare, and law enforcement), professional licensing, volunteer screenings, and firearm permits. We're talking about the same DOJ run by Pam Bondi and the FBI by Kash Patel. The consequences can be substantial and unlimited. I can rule nothing in and can rule nothing out. What I can say for certain is that NEVER has anything even remotely near the sexualization of children or associated imagery graced ANYTHING I do. Not privately. Not publicly. I have served on a federal grand jury for four months, and that service included child pornography cases, inclusive of the underlying photographic evidence. It was horrible. I have worked as an advocate for women pre- and post-Me Too movement. My life's work is both public and inarguable. There is no pornography on my phone to "accidentally" upload. There is no hidden double life. There is no behavior to apologize for or explain. The problem with that is I can neither prove it nor even plead my case. Again, I "cannot request another review of this decision," nor will I be informed of what might happen next in the form of a knock on a door from a federal agent or a federal file created (or added to) with my name on it. Today, it is me. Tomorrow, it may be you. There is a larger discussion to be had here. Against the backdrop of the politicization of mainstream and legacy media, it is reasonable to wonder whether this isn't both intentional and coordinated. We remember the blocking of Harris's presidential endorsements, such as with the Los Angeles Times and The Washington Post. I can't rule out the possibility that this is part of a larger attempt to suppress voices critical of this presidential administration. I can't rule it out and neither can you. Given the ongoing threats and outright censorship of late night broadcasts in both Jimmy Kimmel and Stephen Colbert, I can't rule out whether I was targeted, and neither can you. Given the recent FCC "investigation" of the Bad Bunny Super Bowl halftime show, which was controversial ONLY to the MAGA faithful and racists afraid of 12 minutes of Spanish from an American citizen, one could reasonably question whether these are all dots just waiting to be connected. I can't rule it in, and none of us can rule it out. That is saying nothing of the confirmed presidential "enemies list" and the tactics employed by ICE to monitor, target and intimidate protesters and legal observers. That is saying nothing of the firing of 300 Washington Post journalists and staff, simultaneous to its owner Jeff Bezos pouring 75 million dollars into support and promotion of "Melania" propaganda, which is presently cosplaying as a legitimate documentary, in theaters right now. Just this week, commuted Trump insider Roger Stone interviewed the owner of the aforementioned Los Angeles Times and avowed Trump supporter, Patrick Soon Shiong. And that's saying nothing of the ongoing efforts to delegitimize CBS News, a Paramount subsidiary firmly intertwined with the Trump administration. My account didn't disappear in a vacuum. If we check the leaderboard: The top print media, broadcast media, and social media are ALL owned by Trump acolytes, actively engaged in exerting public



pressure by way of their companies to suppress dissent and force compliance from its employees and users. Whether I am a consequence of bad luck and unforgiving terms of service... or part of a larger effort to squelch opposing voices, who is to say? I can't definitively say, and neither can you. Whereas I'm generally not a conspiracy theorist, I can't just ignore publicly available and relevant evidence either. This presidential administration may only be temporary in the grand scheme of things, but the internet is still forever, whether we like it or not. At this time, I'm not sure what my future social media involvement may be. If I hated social media before, I absolutely hate it even more now. I still have a Facebook (Meta) presence, but I have no desire to start over and rebuild elsewhere, with the same threat and consequences still looming. At the minimum, there is the opportunity to use this moment as a warning to highlight how dangerous a time it is in which we live and how that danger extends to all of us. Even you. Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of BlackPressUSA.com or the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

Morris W. O'Kelly (Mo'Kelly) is a political and cultural commentator across various media. Good luck trying to find him on social media.

One Hundred Years of Black Workers Telling the Truth

By Fred Redmond
Secretary Treasurer AFL-CIO

In 1917, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen launched The Messenger, a pro-labor, anti-war magazine that connected racism to exploitation and demanded justice for Black workers. Two years later, the federal government responded with tactics of targeted censorship—surveillance, harassment and threats of prosecution—and branded a small Black labor magazine "the most dangerous" publication in the country simply for encouraging Black workers to organize. More than a century later, two highly respected Black journalists—Don Lemon and Georgia Fort—are handcuffed and indicted for filming a protest inside a church. The tools have changed, but the oppressive government playbook has not. That continuity matters as we mark 100 years since the launch of Negro History Week, founded in February 1926 by Carter G. Woodson. Negro History Week rejected the lie that Black people had no history worth teaching and no role worth remembering. It challenged an education system that erased Black achievement and a public narrative that treated Black people as a problem, not a people. What later became Black History Month grew from that project of memory and resistance. From its earliest days, Black history celebrations were about more than remembrance. They also were acts of resistance, challenging the ongoing use of law, fear and surveillance to silence Black workers and suppress the truth about power in this country. That pairing matters: The birth of Negro History Week alongside the rise of an apparatus built to monitor and suppress Black labor dissent. The same government that denied Black people their history also treated them as a threat when they spoke collectively as workers. When Black workers asserted their right to organize and be heard, they faced not just employer retaliation, but state repression. Randolph went on to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first major Black-led union, and was under constant federal surveillance. As Black workers organized in factories, on farms and in service jobs across the country, local police and FBI "Red Squads" and federal counterintelligence programs infiltrated meetings, built massive files, and worked to neutralize leaders who linked racial justice to workplace democracy. That history provides a framework for understanding what happened in Minnesota this January, when Black journalists Don Lemon and Georgia Fort were arrested after covering a protest inside a church opposing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity in the area. The message was unmistakable: documenting dissent can itself be treated as a crime. At the same time, major media outlets are shrinking their newsrooms and walking away from race coverage. The Washington Post recently laid off some 300 journalists, including race and ethnicity reporters. In late 2025, NBC News shuttered entire teams dedicated to covering Black, Latino and Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander stories. In Pittsburgh,

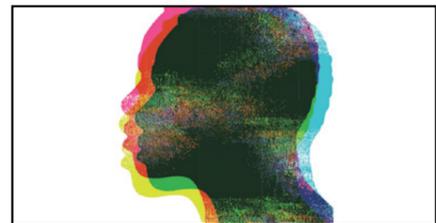


Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA.

the 240-year-old Post-Gazette is being shut down by its owners, who responded to a court order requiring them to honor the NewsGuild-CWA (TNG-CWA) journalists' contract after years of striking. When powerful newsrooms dismantle the very beats created after 2020 to cover racism and inequality, they send a different version of the same message: some truths about power are no longer welcome. The National Writers Union said the arrests "set a disastrous precedent for press freedom in the United States," and the National Association of Black Journalists called on the government to "halt all retaliatory posture toward journalists." SAG-AFTRA has condemned the arrests of Fort and Lemon, a member, and unions like TNG-CWA are warning that union-busting, mass layoffs, and criminal charges against journalists are part of the same effort to make it dangerous for workers to tell the truth.

This Black History Month, the labor movement must be clear: the right to organize and the right to dissent stand or fall together. There is no freedom of association if workers cannot gather, speak and be heard. When Black journalists are criminalized for documenting protest, the real target is the possibility of multiracial worker power. If true worker power and economic dignity are to have a future, it will be because the labor movement continues to refuse that silence. The AFL-CIO recognizes that the same tactics used to quash Black voices are used to suppress all our voices—on shop floors, in independent media, in the streets, on picket lines and in places of worship. We stand with our union brothers, sisters and siblings in insisting that the First Amendment is a right and a core worker protection, not a luxury. A century ago, Woodson insisted that Black people had a history worth telling and Randolph told Black workers they deserved more than exploitation. The government tried to silence them. This Black History Month, the question remains the same: Will Black truth tellers be honored or handcuffed? The labor movement's answer must be clear. We stand with Black workers and Black journalists in their right to dissent, to document, and to demand a better future. Fred Redmond, the highest-ranking African American labor official in history, is the secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, the nation's largest labor federation, representing 64 unions and nearly 15 million workers.

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Features

Political Playback:

California Capitol News You Might Have Missed



By Bo Tefu
California Black Media

Gov. Newsom Calls Pres. Trump's Attack on Iran "Reckless"

Gov. Gavin Newsom criticized President Donald Trump over the recent U.S. military strikes on Iran, calling the action "reckless" and warning it puts American lives at unnecessary risk.

In a social media post on Feb. 28, Newsom said while he agrees that Iran should not possess nuclear weapons, he argued that the president's decision to launch major combat operations was unjustified and dangerous.

"The corrupt and repressive Iranian regime must never have nuclear weapons. The leadership of Iran must go," Newsom wrote. "But that does not justify the president of the United States engaging in an illegal, dangerous war that will risk the lives of our American service members and our friends without justification to the American people."

Newsom's comments came as the U.S. and Israel carried out coordinated strikes across Iran early Feb. 28, actions that have triggered Iranian missile retaliation and raised fears of a broader Middle East conflict. The moves also drew strong international responses, with global leaders calling for de-escalation and a return to diplomatic channels.

At a public event in San Francisco later that day, Newsom reiterated his critique, describing the administration's approach as a distraction from domestic political challenges.

"It stems from weakness masquerading as strength," he said, accusing Trump of manufacturing a crisis rather than presenting a clear strategy to the American people," he said.

Newsom also emphasized the need for transparency and constitutional oversight, arguing that Congress -- not just the White House -- should be involved in decisions of war and peace. His remarks reflect mounting criticism from Democratic lawmakers and activists who say the strikes lack legal justification and could endanger U.S. troops without a clear exit plan.

In Los Angeles' Westwood neighborhood -- nicknamed "Tehrangeles" -- and home to the largest concentration of people of Iranian descent outside of Iran -- as well as in smaller Iranian American enclaves across the state, some residents took to the streets to celebrate. Reports described people honking car horns, waving Iranian flags and rejoicing after President Trump confirmed the death of Iran's supreme leader.

DOJ Joins Lawsuit Claiming LAUSD Program Discriminates Against White Students

The U.S. Justice Department has joined a federal lawsuit alleging that a long-running Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) program unlawfully discriminates against White students by using race-based classifications to allocate school funding and admissions preferences.

In a motion filed Feb. 25, the U.S. Department of Justice said LAUSD's Predominantly Hispanic, Black, Asian, and Other program, known as PHBAO, violates federal civil rights law by treating students differently based on the racial makeup of their schools. The case is pending in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

The lawsuit was brought by the 1776 Project Foundation, a Montana-based conservative group, and challenges a desegregation policy that traces back to a 1981 court order. While the original order aimed to address segregation, plaintiffs argue LAUSD has transformed it into a permanent system of racial preferences.

"Treating Americans equally is not a suggestion, it is a core constitutional guarantee that educational institutions must follow," Attorney General Pamela Bondi said in a statement. "This Department of Justice will never stop fighting to make that guarantee a reality, including for public-school

students in Los Angeles."

According to court filings, LAUSD labels schools in neighborhoods with less than 30% White residents as PHBAO and provides them additional benefits. The Justice Department said those schools receive extra funding to reduce student-teacher ratios by 5.5 students, increase parent-teacher conferences, and grant students preferences when transferring to magnet schools comparable to those given for overcrowded campuses.

Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon said the policy improperly categorizes students by race.

"Los Angeles County students should never be classified or treated differently because of their race," said Dhillon. "Racial discrimination is unlawful and un-American, and this Civil Rights Division will fight to ensure that every LAUSD student is treated equally under the law."

Fewer than 100 schools in the district lack the PHBAO designation, according to the lawsuit, which alleges that students at those schools, including White and Middle Eastern students, are denied equal access to resources.

First Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California Bill Essayli said the policy has exceeded its original purpose.

"Now in its sixth decade, LAUSD's desegregation program has outlived its usefulness to the point of being unconstitutional," said Essayli.

An LAUSD spokesperson said the district could not comment on the lawsuit because it involves pending litigation but reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring all students have meaningful access to educational opportunities.

Significant Drop: New Report Shows Major Decreases in California Crime Rates

California's violent and property crime rates declined sharply in 2024, marking the first statewide decrease in violent crime since the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new report from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

The report found that California's overall violent crime rate fell 5.3% in 2024, dropping from 508 crimes per 100,000 residents in 2023 to 481. Despite the improvement, violent crime remains 9.8% higher than in 2019, reflecting a sustained increase that followed the pandemic.

Several major violent crime categories saw notable declines. Homicides decreased by 13.5% in 2024, while reported rapes fell 1.2%. Robberies dropped 7.5%, and aggravated assaults declined 4.8%. Even with the year-over-year reduction, aggravated assaults remain 22% above pre-pandemic levels, highlighting uneven recovery across crime types.

The report notes that California's violent crime trends follow long-term historical patterns. After peaking in the early 1990s, violent crime fell steadily for two decades, reaching a 50-year low in 2014. Rates then began rising again in the late 2010s before surging during the pandemic years.

Property crime also declined significantly in 2024. The statewide property crime rate fell 9.9% to 2,084 incidents per 100,000 residents, the lowest level recorded since 1985. Larceny thefts and burglaries dropped 7.1% and 11.8%, respectively, and both are now well below their 2019 levels.

Auto theft declined 16.7% in 2024 but remains 19.3% higher than before the pandemic. Shoplifting continued to rise, increasing 14.2% last year and standing 48% above its 2019 rate. Theft of car accessories, including catalytic converters, fell 27%, marking the second consecutive decline since 2020.

Crime trends varied widely by region. The lowest violent crime rates were reported along California's southern coast and border counties, while the San Joaquin Valley recorded the highest violent crime rate. Property crime was lowest in the Sierra region and highest in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Most of California's 58 counties saw declines in both violent and property crime in 2024, including the majority of the state's largest counties, signaling broad but uneven improvements in public safety statewide.

On Your 2026 Ballot: Measure Would Allow Cities and Counties to Create Local Election Financing Systems That Prioritize Small Donors

A new ballot measure set to appear on the November 2026 ballot for California voters would allow cities, counties, districts, and the state to establish public campaign financing systems designed to amplify small-dollar donors and limit the influence of wealthy special interests.

The California Clean Money Action Fund, California Common Cause, and the League of Women Voters of California launched the campaign and will serve as chairs of the new ballot measure committee, Californians for Fair Elections.

If approved, the California Fair Elections Act would repeal the statewide ban on public financing and give local communities the option to implement systems that strengthen accountability, enforce spending limits, and protect taxpayer funds. Participation would remain voluntary, and programs would include strict criteria for candidates to qualify for public funding. Public funds could not be used for legal defense fees or fines.

Supporters argue the reform is needed because California campaigns are dominated by big money. Since 2020, more than \$1 billion has been spent on state-level campaigns, and polling shows 81% of California voters believe large donors exert too much influence over elected officials. Five charter cities, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and Long Beach, already run public financing programs that give everyday candidates a chance to compete. The measure would expand those opportunities statewide.

"The California Fair Elections Act is about restoring trust, strengthening accountability, and making sure everyday Californians have a real say in who represents them," said Trent Lange, California Clean Money Action Fund's executive director.

Common Cause California Executive Director Darius Kemp added, "This measure opens the door for teachers, nurses, small business owners, and community leaders to run competitive campaigns and win."

Legislative supporters highlighted the potential for broader representation.

"The California Fair Elections Act puts power back in the hands of the people," said Sen. Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana), author of SB 42, which placed the measure on the ballot.

Assemblymember Alex Lee (D-San Jose) said, "Public financing is the reform we need to bring power back to the people and level the playing field for grassroots candidates."

The measure is backed by a coalition of state, local, and national organizations, including the ACLU, AFSCME, Asian Law Caucus, California Environmental Voters, California Nurses Association, California Labor Federation, and others.

Gov. Newsom Sets Historic Goal to Secure 9 Million Acre-Feet of Water by 2040

For the first time in state history, California has a statewide water supply target: 9 million acre-feet by 2040.

On Feb. 26, Gov. Gavin Newsom formally launched the California Water Plan 2028, calling it the most ambitious water planning effort in state history and a critical response to climate change-driven droughts and floods.

"California is committed to protecting the water that families, farmers, and communities depend on for generations to come," Newsom said in a statement. "The 2028 Water Plan is a commitment to every Californian that we will capture, store, and conserve the water our state -- the 4th largest economy in the world -- needs to thrive, no matter what climate change throws at us."

The plan begins implementation of Senate

Bill 72, authored by State Sen. Anna Caballero (D-Merced), which mandates modernization of the state's water blueprint through improved data collection and measurable supply targets.

"For the first time, we are setting a clear statewide target of 9 million acre-feet of additional water supply and establishing measurable benchmarks that hold us accountable," Caballero said. "California must plan with discipline and act with urgency to secure a reliable water future for every part of our state."

The 9 million acre-feet target -- roughly equal to two Shasta Reservoirs or enough water for 18 million homes -- reflects what the state could lose as shrinking snowpack and intensifying drought strain supplies.

"California's hydrology is changing," said Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth. "Extreme wet swings to intensely dry within the same season. The work of crafting the next California Water Plan will help us plan smarter to deal with the way climate change is testing our water systems."

The Department of Water Resources will convene a diverse advisory committee in April, including urban and agricultural water suppliers, tribal representatives, labor, environmental justice advocates and business leaders. The California Water Commission will serve in a formal advisory role.

"We applaud the launch of the California Water Plan 2028 and the collaborative framework envisioned under SB 72," said Commission Chair Fern Steiner, pledging support for "sustainable water solutions for all Californians."

State officials say the plan will focus on improved data, localized supply targets and practical adaptation strategies -- with progress tracked publicly through a new project website.

"Fake Outrage": Gov. Newsom Pushes Back on Racist Allegations

California Gov. Gavin Newsom is pushing back against accusations of racism from conservatives criticized comments he made about his academic struggles during a public appearance in Atlanta tied to his new book.

The backlash followed a conversation on Feb. 22, between Newsom and Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens, where the governor spoke candidly about scoring a 960 on the SAT and continuing to struggle reading prepared speeches.

"I'm not trying to impress you, I'm just trying to impress upon you I'm like you, I'm not better than you," said Newsom. "You've never seen me read a speech because I cannot read a speech. Maybe this is the wrong business to be in."

Conservative commentators and Republican officials quickly circulated the clip, claiming that the governor's remarks were racially offensive because Newsom was speaking to a Black elected official. Fox News host Sean Hannity shared the video and claimed Newsom "thinks a 960 SAT makes him 'like Black Americans.'"

Newsom fired back, accusing critics of hypocrisy and selective outrage.

"You didn't give a s*** about the President of the United States of America posting an ape video of President Obama or calling African nations s***holes," Newsom said. "But you're going to call me racist for talking about my lifelong struggle with dyslexia? Spare me your fake f***ing outrage, Sean."

Newsom was referencing a Truth Social post shared by former President Donald Trump depicting former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama as apes. The post was later deleted after bipartisan backlash.

Republican Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina criticized Newsom, saying he suffers from the "bigotry of low expectations" and admonished the governor for "using your mediocre academics as a way to patronize communities."

Dickens rejected that interpretation, writing online, "That wasn't an attack on anyone. It was a moment of vulnerability about his own journey." He added, "We don't need anyone to tell us when to be offended."

Newsom's office called the criticism "fake MAGA-manufactured outrage," noting the governor has discussed his dyslexia and SAT scores publicly for years as he begins a national book tour that is fueling speculation about a possible 2028 presidential run.

Advertisement

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Sports

Dodgers Talent Goes Global as Players Join World Baseball Classic

By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

As the next World Baseball Classic approaches, several players connected to the Los Angeles Dodgers organization will represent their home countries on baseball's international stage. The tournament, which brings together many of the world's top professional players, will feature Dodgers stars and prospects competing for national pride while showcasing the club's global reach.

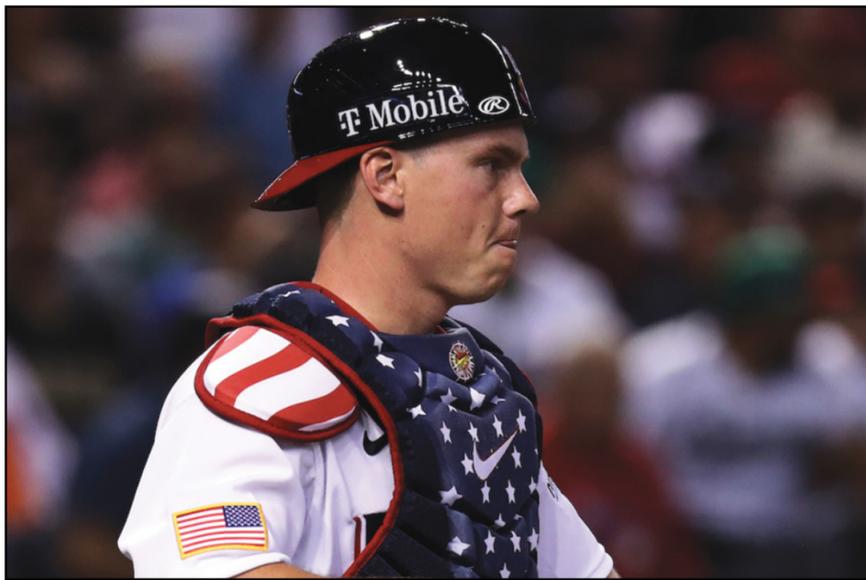
From established superstars to developing minor league talent, the Dodgers' presence in the international tournament reflects the organization's strong pipeline and its influence across multiple continents.

Star Power for Japan and Team USA Two of the most prominent Dodgers players expected to participate are Japanese standouts Shohei Ohtani and Yoshinobu Yamamoto, who will represent Japan.

Ohtani, one of baseball's most recognizable international figures, is expected to contribute at the plate during the tournament but will not pitch. His presence in the lineup alone adds considerable firepower for Japan, which has historically been one of the strongest teams in the World Baseball Classic.

Yamamoto, meanwhile, is confirmed to be part of Japan's starting rotation, bringing elite pitching talent to the defending powerhouse. His performance will be closely watched by Dodgers fans eager to see the right-hander compete in a high-stakes international setting.

Team USA will also feature Dodgers players. Veteran ace Clayton Kershaw is slated to participate as a pitcher, bringing leadership and postseason experience to the American squad. Dodgers catcher Will Smith will also suit up for Team USA, adding depth behind the plate and a



Team USA catcher Will Smith (16) will be behind the plate for team USA
Zachary BonDurant / USA TODAY Sports

reliable bat in the lineup.

For many players, the tournament provides a rare opportunity to represent their countries while competing alongside or against some of Major

League Baseball's biggest names.

International Representation Across the Dodgers System Beyond the major league roster, several players connected to the Dodgers

organization will represent their nations as well. Hyeoseong Kim is expected to play for Team Korea, continuing the Dodgers' growing connection with Asian baseball talent.

Pitcher Antonio Knowles will represent Great Britain, while Shawndrick Oduber is set to pitch for the Netherlands, a team that has consistently produced competitive performances in the tournament thanks to strong Caribbean and European baseball programs.

In addition, infielder Jake Gelof, currently in the minor leagues, is also expected to participate in the tournament, further demonstrating how international competition extends beyond the major league roster.

Another notable name in the tournament field is closer Edwin Díaz, who will represent Puerto Rico, one of the most passionate baseball nations in the event.

A Global Game For Dodgers fans, the tournament offers a chance to see familiar faces competing on a global stage while celebrating the international diversity that defines today's game. Baseball analysts often note that the World Baseball Classic has grown significantly in prestige since its debut in 2006, with many players now viewing it as a meaningful opportunity to represent their home countries. "Any time you can wear your country's uniform, it means something special," one longtime baseball observer said. "For fans, it's also exciting because you get to see teammates become rivals for a few weeks." For the Dodgers organization, the wide range of national representation highlights both its scouting reach and the international nature of modern baseball. As the tournament unfolds, fans in Los Angeles—and around the world—will be watching closely as Dodgers players help lead their countries in pursuit of international baseball glory.

Angels Well Represented in 2026 World Baseball Classic



The Angels Yusei Kikuchi (Japan) will be playing in the WBC
-Photo Courtesy/Angels

By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

Eight members of the Los Angeles Angels organization are set to take part in the 2026 World Baseball Classic, showcasing the club's international presence as players represent countries from across the globe.

The tournament, one of baseball's premier global events, will feature Angels players competing for teams in Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Americas.

Headlining the Angels' Delegation Among the most prominent Angels players participating is starting pitcher Yusei Kikuchi, who will represent

Japan. Kikuchi joins a Japanese roster that traditionally enters the tournament as one of the favorites. Infielder Yoán Moncada will suit up for Cuba, bringing veteran experience and power to the Cuban national team. Meanwhile, Matthew Lugo is set to represent Puerto Rico, adding depth to a roster that has consistently been competitive in recent World Baseball Classic tournaments. A Global Group of Talent Several other Angels players will also represent their home countries when the international competition begins. Outfielder Gustavo Campero will play for Colombia, while pitcher Samy Naterá Jr. is slated to compete for Mexico. Additional Angels players confirmed for the

tournament include: Najer Victor – Great Britain (Pitcher)

Lucas Ramirez – Brazil (Outfielder/Infielder)

Camden Minacci – Italy (Pitcher, Designated Pitcher Pool)

Francis Texido – Cuba (Pitcher, Designated Pitcher Pool)

The "designated pitcher pool" designation allows teams to carry extra pitchers during the tournament to help manage workloads and protect arms throughout the competition. International Baseball on Display The World Baseball Classic has grown into one of the sport's most anticipated events, drawing top talent from Major League

Baseball and professional leagues worldwide. For the Angels organization, the strong representation reflects the increasingly international makeup of the game. For fans, it also offers a preview of the diverse talent within the Angels system, with both established major leaguers and rising prospects taking the global stage. With players representing eight different countries, the Angels will have a presence across multiple WBC rosters when the tournament begins — giving the club a truly worldwide footprint in one of baseball's biggest events.

Construction Begins for 2026 Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach

By Earl Heath
Contributing Sports Writer

LONG BEACH, Calif. — The official build-up to one of Southern California's most anticipated motorsports events began last week as city leaders and race officials gathered for the ceremonial "breaking of the course" for the 2026 Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach.

Long Beach Mayor Rex Richardson, along with Grand Prix Association of Long Beach President and CEO Jim Michaelian and incoming President Jim Liaw, marked the occasion by dropping a ceremonial concrete block at Turn 10 of the famous street circuit. The tradition signals the official start of construction for the temporary track that will soon transform downtown Long Beach into an international racing venue.

The ceremony also launched the 50-day countdown to race weekend, which is scheduled for April 17-19.

Building a World-Class Street Circuit Over the next several weeks, crews will begin the complex process of converting city streets into the 1.97-mile, 11-turn race course that has become a staple of American motorsports. Construction teams will install more than 2,400 concrete barriers, weighing a combined 24 million pounds.

Four miles of fencing to secure the course and 14 grandstands for thousands of spectators.

The transformation requires careful coordination between city officials, construction crews, and race organizers to ensure the circuit meets strict safety standards while minimizing disruption for downtown businesses and residents. Once complete, the temporary track will wind

through the heart of Long Beach, including the waterfront area surrounding the Long Beach Convention Center and Shoreline Drive. A Historic Event for Long Beach The 2026 race will mark the 51st running of the iconic Grand Prix, making it one of the longest-running and most celebrated street races in North America.

Since its debut in 1975, the event has grown into a major attraction for motorsports fans while generating significant economic impact for the city. Each year, the Grand Prix draws tens of thousands of visitors to Long Beach hotels, restaurants, and local businesses.

Race weekend will once again feature a packed lineup of competitions across several racing series.

Among the headliners are:

NTT IndyCar Series, the premier open-wheel racing championship in North America

IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, featuring high-performance endurance sports cars

Formula Drift, one of the world's top professional drifting competitions

Additional races and fan events are expected throughout the three-day festival, including concerts, interactive exhibits, and family-friendly attractions. Community and Economic Impact City officials have long highlighted the Grand Prix as one of Long Beach's most important annual events, bringing tourism, media attention, and economic activity to the region. The ceremonial start of construction is a symbolic moment each year, signaling the beginning of preparations for a weekend that blends sports, entertainment, and community celebration. As barriers begin to line the streets and grandstands rise downtown, anticipation will continue to build for another high-speed



From left, Grand Prix Association of Long Beach President and CEO Jim Michaelian and Mayor Rex Richardson speak to members of the media in Long Beach on last week. (Photo by Drew A. Kelley, Press-Telegram/SCNG)

showcase along the Long Beach waterfront. Race fans can expect engines to roar once again when the green flag drops in April.

Sacramento Conference Tackles California's Stubborn Housing Crisis

By Antonio Ray Harvey
California Black Media

Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland), the keynote speaker at "A Conference on Housing" in Sacramento on Feb. 24, says solving California's housing crisis at all levels -- and providing affordable, environmentally responsible homes for low-income families and communities of color -- can go hand in hand.

Wicks, widely recognized as a leading legislative champion for housing production and affordability, delivered her remarks at the one-day event organized by Capitol Weekly and the University of California Student and Policy Center.



Asm. Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland), right, delivered the keynote address at Capitol Weekly's "A Conference on Housing" on Feb. 24 in Sacramento. Wicks emphasized the importance of building housing for low- and middle-income residents and advancing equity in housing solutions. At left is Rich Ehsen, editor-in-chief of Capitol Weekly, a nonpartisan publication focused on California politics. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

"I think we can do so in a way that still respects our environmental values," Wicks said in her keynote remarks.

The conference explored solutions focused on increasing supply, improving financing, and addressing labor shortages to make housing more affordable and accessible. It included policy experts, industry representatives, academic researchers, and state lawmakers with deep knowledge of California's housing crisis.

The event comes amid ongoing legislative efforts to tackle California's housing shortage, which disproportionately impacts low-income Asian, Black, and Latino households.

Wicks told California Black Media (CBM) that there is "not a single bullet to solve the housing crisis," but the solutions require building for all income levels, including affordable housing for low-income residents and middle-income, market-rate housing for professionals.

"I think we fundamentally need 2.5 million homes," Wicks told CBM. "We need low-income subsidized, we need the missing middle, the market rate, we need multi-family, single-family, and workforce housing. We need the all-above strategy. We need to be creative around that approach."

Last year, Wicks introduced Assembly Bill (AB) 1021 to accelerate the construction of affordable housing for educators and school employees on land owned by local educational agencies (LEAs).

Co-authored with Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance), the bill streamlines development, provides property tax exemptions, and eases California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements to tackle recruitment challenges. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Oct. 10, 2025.

"You look at Oakland. There are so few Black teachers serving a diverse student body, in part because of the housing crisis. We can't keep teachers because of the housing crisis," Wicks said. "I think it's an all-above strategy that we really need to

embrace."

According to an October 2024 report by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), approximately 35% to 37% of Black households in California own their homes -- a rate significantly lower than the state's overall homeownership rate of around 55% to 56%.

This rate has shown little growth over the past decade, placing it among the lowest for Black homeownership in the U.S. The California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) reported that for the entire 2010s, the state's Black homeownership rate was lower than it was in the 1960s, "when it was completely legal to discriminate against Black homebuyers," the report stated.

Black Californians frequently rent rather than own, with a homeownership rate of about 41% compared to 68% for White residents. This gap reflects the lasting impact of systemic racism, including historical redlining and lower generational wealth.

Assemblymember Tina McKinnor (D-Inglewood) is an outspoken proponent of increasing housing supply and improving homeownership rates for Black Californians through several legislative initiatives she has introduced.

McKinnor, a member of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), noted that California has some of the most expensive rental costs in the nation. Citing real estate brokerage Redfin, she reported that in April 2025, median rents were \$3,417 in San Francisco; \$3,285 in Los Angeles; \$3,116 in San Diego; and \$3,011 in San Jose.

"We can solve California's housing crisis through partnerships between government, developers, and nonprofit and faith-based organizations," McKinnor stated.

"By harnessing the innovative will of Californians, necessary public and private investments, and a legislature and governor truly committed to solving the housing crisis, I am

confident that we can help all Californians find a safe and affordable place to call home," she added.

At the conference, Wicks said she is awaiting results for the Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2026 (AB 736), a proposed \$10 billion bond measure designed to fund the construction and preservation of affordable housing.

AB 736, authored by Wicks, requires approval by California voters on the June 2026 ballot. The legislation aims to fund affordable housing to address the state's severe shortage.

"I'm done with bill-signing ceremonies," Wicks said at the conference. "I want ribbon cuttings, because ribbon cuttings mean we're actually moving people into homes. I'm done with all the performative bulls*t."



"A Conference on Housing," hosted by Capitol Weekly and the University of California Student and Policy Center, was held Feb. 24, 2026, in Sacramento and featured in-depth discussions on California housing policy. CBM photo by Antonio Ray Harvey.

"Check Your Vehicle for Recalls. Protect Your Family."

By Kimberlee Vaye, Assistant Director and Equity Officer, California New Motor Vehicle Board

Every day, we depend on our cars to get us places: to and from work, taking our kids to school, and more. But what many don't realize is that millions of cars on U.S. roads have open safety recalls. These risks increase in the Black community because of higher rates of commonly held myths about open vehicle safety recalls among Black vehicle owners.

I am excited to partner with the Office of Traffic Safety and Caltrans for Vehicle Safety Recalls Week (VSRW), March 2-8. We want Californians to know there are over 5.4 million open recalls, including 115,000 "Do Not Drive" notices—the most serious kind. This notice means the car is unsafe, and you should stop driving it right away and have it towed for repair.

As we recognize VSRW, I want to speak to Black families. I know firsthand life comes with many stressors. When you're juggling work, bills, and childcare, checking for a vehicle safety recall can feel like "one more thing." But a recall is not a small issue. It can be a defective airbag that could explode, a seat belt failure, or other

critical parts that need to work when you need it most. These dangers can harm not only the driver, but also passengers, people walking, riding bikes, using public transportation, and others using roads.

As the Assistant Director and Equity Officer at the New Motor Vehicle Board, I understand the barriers and challenges our community faces. Many Black families rely on older cars. Sometimes there's only one car in the household, and you can't afford to be without it. Maybe the dealership is far away. Maybe the recall notice never reached you. These are real challenges that deserve real solutions.

That's why Check to Protect is so important. Check to Protect is a national program through the National Safety Council that allows drivers to check for open safety recalls and schedule free repairs. It takes less than 60 seconds to visit CheckToProtect.org, enter your license plate or VIN, and see if your car has an open recall. You can even set reminders to check for recalls every three months. Rest assured; your information is only used to check the recall status.

And here's what many people don't know: recall repairs are always free. No matter how old the car is, its ownership history, or where it



Kimberlee Vaye

was purchased. Manufacturers are required by law to fix the problem for free. You can also ask the dealer important questions, including: Is the part available? How long will it take? Can I keep driving until the part arrives? Do you offer loaner vehicles or shuttles? Even if the answer is no, you have the right to ask.

I want us to think about recalls as an act of love. We take steps every day to protect our families—locking our doors, buckling our seat belts, and checking on older family members. We also take steps to ensure our vehicles are maintained properly, like changing windshield wipers, checking oil levels, and brakes. A vehicle safety recall repair is another step to make sure your vehicle is road-ready and safe. Checking and fixing recalls are a gift of peace of mind. It says, "My life matters. My family's life matters."

Safety is a right, not a privilege. And every Black family deserves to be safe on the road.

Check today. Share the message. Protect the people you love.

Visit www.gosafelyca.org for more informational resources and tips to stay safe on the go.

KEMET: THE TIME TRAVELER

WORLD BOOK DAY ACTIVITY SHEET

Hi Everyone!

Every year, the first Thursday in March is World Book Day! The theme for this year is "Go All In", which means jumping into reading with your whole heart and imagination! It's about exploring new books, stories, and discovering new worlds. When you go all in for reading, your imagination travels to faraway places, meets amazing characters, learns new things, and grows your mind every day. So grab a book, open it up, and GO ALL IN!

LEARNING TO LOVE READING

A child develops a genuine love for reading by:

- Being read to regularly
- Having access to books at home
- Allowing children to choose what they want to read
- Having trusted adults and peers sharing and recommending books
- The reading experience being enjoyable (not used as punishment)
- Having a designated time to read

World Book Day seeks to change children's lives by fostering a love of books and shared reading. The mission is to promote reading for pleasure and offer every child and young person the opportunity to have a book of their own.

POP-UP FACTS

The average American reads approximately 5 books a year. The average millionaire reads about 52 books a year. Highly successful people read about 50 books a year.

KEMET: THE TIME TRAVELER

By Joe Young
A Collection of Kemet Inaugural Comic Books & Comic Strips

Kemet, The Time Traveler, takes kids on journeys through time that he uses to help inspire them to learn from the accomplishments of Black trailblazers they meet along the way. Also included are funny and thought provoking comic strips of Kemet interacting with his friends.

The author, Joe Young, is an award-winning cartoonist, filmmaker, producer, writer, and teaching author. His past work has earned him a Guinness World Record Holder for creating the biggest comic strip with 5,000 youth participating. KEMET, who has millions of views and likes on social media, can be found on Tic Toc, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. Young's love for comic books started when he was a young boy. He states, "comic books help me learn to read when traditional methods of teaching failed me."

THE WEAVERBIRDS: FINDING HIS WAY HOME

By Robenia McKinley

The Weaverbirds is an imaginative, whimsical and adventurous fantasy of love, loss, toxic relationships and natural disasters. The animated adventure journeys to the home of our protagonist, Tahir, a south african weaverbird who loses his storm wrecked home, but yet learns to triumph over tragedy as he navigates his way through challenges along his path. The thread that runs throughout the book is that "to succeed you must believe in yourself and persevere against all odds."

DO YOU KNOW THEM?

By Shana Keller

Do You Know Them? is a story that takes place at the end of the American Civil War. With the selling of family members throughout the south, this is a moving story of how newly freed slaves search for their long-lost loved ones. Lettie, the main character, saved every penny she earned to place ads in newspapers in search of family members. Keller's story was inspired by actual "lost ads" that were printed in newspapers after the end of the Civil War.

TELL THE TRUTH!

Print the letter T on the line if the statement is True or F if the Statement is False.

TRUE FALSE

The Theme for 2026 World Book Day is "Go All In."
Millionaires read about 50 books a year.
The first Friday in the month of March is World Book Day.
10 minutes reading to a child makes a difference in their academic success.

ONE MINUTE MADNESS!

In one minute or less, unscramble all the words connected to World Book Day. The first letter of the word is in bold.

ifFs urdTshya ni cMah _____
roWid koBo aDy _____
diaegnr hCooei _____
oG lA i nI _____
adnieRg uheddiSe _____

THE OLD TRUCK

By Jarrett Pumphrey

The Old Truck, published in 2020, is a picture book by an award winning author-illustrator. After many years of service, the old beat-up rusted truck is restored to new life by an imaginative and creative young lady.

MATCH GAME!

Write the name of the author next to the book each one wrote.

Robenia McKinley Joe Young Jarrett Pumphrey Shana Keller

Do You Know Them? _____
The Old Truck _____
The Weaverbirds _____
Kemet: The Time Traveler _____

READY, SET, READ!!!

The average American reads five books a year. What's your five? Write the names of the books you will read this year. Book number 1 should be for the month of March (World Book Day).

KEMET

World Book Day 2024

MASTER CARTOONIST WALTER CARR CREATED THIS ICONIC CARTOON IN 1992. IT'S STILL TIMELY TODAY!

WRITE A 100 PAGE ESSAY (TYPED) ON WHAT THIS CARTOON MEANS TO YOU. ONCE I GET IT, I WILL SEND YOU ONE OF MY COMIC STRIPS "FREE OF CHARGE!"

SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO ME AT:
KEMET COMICS, P.O. BOX 777, HARTFORD, CT 06142-777

*INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME AND ADDRESS. YOUR SUBMISSION MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 5/5/26.

ANSWER KEY
TELL THE TRUTH
ONE MINUTE MADNESS
MATCH GAME!
DO YOU KNOW THEM?
THE OLD TRUCK
THE WEAVERBIRDS
KEMET: THE TIME TRAVELER

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