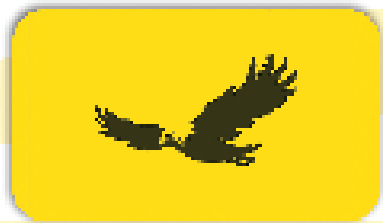


Sun-Reporter



A NEWS JOURNAL DEDICATED TO THE CAUSE OF THE PEOPLE • 77 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE ENTIRE BAY AREA

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.30¢
BEST BUY IN THE WEST

ICYMI: VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS KICKS OFF HER NATIONWIDE "FIGHT FOR REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOMS" TOUR IN WISCONSIN

On Monday, January 22nd, Vice President Kamala Harris kicked off her nationwide "Fight for Reproductive Freedoms" tour with a speech in Waukesha County, WI – exactly 51 years after Roe v. Wade was decided. During her remarks, she highlighted the harm caused by extreme abortion bans, shared stories of those who have been impacted, and outlined steps the Biden-Harris Administration is taking to protect access to health care.

The Vice President also called out extremists for proposing a national abortion ban, called on Congress to restore the protections of Roe v. Wade, and urged the crowd of more than 500 attendees to stay engaged in the fight for fundamental freedoms across America.

On Saturday, January 27th, Vice President Harris traveled to Las Vegas, NV. During her 10th visit to the Battle



"Because here's the deal about all of us: we trust women. We trust women to make decisions about their own bodies, we trust women to know what is in their own best interest, and women trust us to fight to protect their most fundamental freedoms." - Vice President Harris

Born State since taking office and her second of the month, she announced a forthcoming Small Business Administration rule that will make it easier for formerly incarcerated Americans to access SBA loan programs that help individuals start and run small businesses. The Vice President also toured a non-profit that was founded by

a local entrepreneur to help at-risk youth and those with prior involvement in the criminal justice system learn culinary skills for future employment

Yesterday, the Vice President participated in a moderated conversation with actress and activist Sophia Bush as part of her "Fight for Reproductive Freedoms" tour.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE HOSTS BLACK JOURNALISTS ACROSS CALIFORNIA FOR MEDIA ROUNDTABLE

WASHINGTON, D.C. –

With the 2024 March primary election just weeks away, Congresswoman and candidate for U.S. Senate Barbara Lee hosted a media roundtable for Black media outlets across California. Congresswoman Lee's goal is to have an open dialogue about the issues facing Black and Brown communities.

On January 30th, Congresswoman Lee hosted a virtual roundtable to speak with Black journalists and press outlets in California. This on-the-record discussion offers an intimate opportunity to meet with the leading progressive candidate and discuss her plans to address issues related to the Black Community in the U.S. Senate.

WHO: Congresswoman and U.S. Senate candidate Barbara Lee (CA-12)

Congresswoman Barbara Lee is the highest-ranking Black woman appointed to House



U.S. Senate Barbara Lee

Leadership, and was the first Black woman from Northern California to be elected to the California State Assembly and the State Senate. She is now serving in her twelfth term in Congress after winning reelection in 2022 with more than 90 percent of the vote.

Lee received her Masters of Social Work from the University of California, Berkeley, and went on to found the Community Health Alliance for Neighborhood Growth and Education

(CHANGE, Inc.) which provided mental health services to the East Bay's most vulnerable individuals.

As both a state legislator and in Congress, Lee has shaped and delivered on the progressive agenda, from passing California's first Violence Against Women Act to casting the only vote in Congress opposing the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) in the wake of the horrific events on September 11th.

SAN FRANCISCO LAUNCHES FREE TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND LOCATIONS TO HELP THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS

San Francisco, CA— Mayor London N. Breed, Treasurer José Cisneros, and the San Francisco Human Services Agency (SFHSA) announced today that free assistance is available to help eligible San Franciscans with incomes of under \$64,000 file their taxes and apply for the San Francisco Working Families Credit (WFC) and other tax credits that could help individuals receive up to several thousands of dollars in tax credits and refunds.

Mayor Breed, Treasurer Cisneros, and SFHSA are also celebrating two WFC milestones: 100,000 applications have been submitted for the WFC and more than \$10 million dollars have been distributed to low- and moderate-income San Francisco tax filers since the inception of the WFC in 2005.

"Many San Francisco residents who were impacted by the pandemic are still struggling to make ends meet.



Free tax prep centers help thousands of City residents, including undocumented and immigrant households, file taxes to help them receive their hard-earned local, state, and federal tax credits

In this current economic environment, especially in San Francisco, every extra dollar helps families in the City," said Mayor London Breed. "The City's free tax prep service helps eligible individuals file their taxes at no cost, and also helps families apply for tax credits, like the Working Families Credit, which can make a real

difference for families trying to stretch their dollars to the end of the month."

Free Tax Assistance

On average, American taxpayers spend over \$230 to have a tax professional file their return. San Francisco's free tax assistance centers allow filers to avoid

Continued on page 7

Three Black U.S. Army Reservists Killed in Drone Attack Near Syrian Border

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent @StacyBrownMedia

Three Black American reservists from the 926th Engineer Brigade, based at Fort Moore, Georgia, lost their lives in a drone attack on a U.S. base near the Jordan-Syria border. Pentagon Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh identified the fallen soldiers as Sgt. William Jerome Rivers, 46, of Carrollton, Georgia; Spc. Kennedy Ladon Sanders, 24, of Waycross, Georgia; and Spc. Breonna Alexsondria Moffett, 23, of Savannah, Georgia.

The tragedy occurred at the logistics support base at Tower 22 of the Jordanian Defense Network, where approximately 350 U.S. Army and Air Force personnel are stationed. That base plays a crucial role in providing support for the coalition's efforts against ISIS, according



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to Central Command.

The attack marks the third drone strike on the outpost in the past six months, with the first two occurring in the latter half of the previous year being unsuccessful. Lt. Gen. Jody Daniels, chief of the Army Reserve and commanding general of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, said the murders of the three Black

reservists cut deeply.

The U.S. government has determined that Iran was responsible for the attack, prompting President Joe Biden to vow a response. "There will be a response," Biden declared.

In her last conversation with her mother, Sanders reportedly expressed aspirations to

Continued on page 7

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1945-1997

Amelia Ashley-Ward
Editor/Publisher

Commemorating the Life and Service of the Hon. Margaret Richards-Bowers

Tanu Henry | California Black Media

The Hon. Margaret Richards-Bowers, 70, a retired registered nurse, community advocate, and former President of the Inglewood Unified School District (IUSD) Board of Education, passed away on Jan. 16, 2024, following a prolonged illness.

Born on April 15, 1953, in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, an island nation in the eastern Caribbean, Margaret Mundus Richards was the eldest of seven children born to Vernon Richards and Enid Banfield Richards.

Richards-Bowers graduated from the prestigious St. Vincent Girls' High School, where she served as class prefect in her senior year, a role held in high regard and viewed as second only to a teacher in terms of authority and respect. She was the first runner-up in the Miss St. Vincent Teenager contest, and she had the honor of having tea with the late Queen Elizabeth II of England.

In 1972, Richards-Bowers moved to Los Angeles. She worked part-time while studying for an Associate of Arts Degree in Nursing at East Los Angeles College. She later earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Service Management from the University of La Verne in Los Angeles County. Although she had interests in acting and singing, she chose a career

in nursing for its stability. However, notably, she played a crucial role in the formation of the Pan African Film & Arts Festival, according to Ayuko Babu, the festival's Executive Director.

"Margaret's unique perspective, stemming from her Caribbean roots in St. Vincent, and her Los Angeles experiences enriched the festival's Pan African outlook. Her contributions were pivotal to the festival's development and will always be cherished," Babu said.

After becoming a Registered Nurse, Richards-Bowers began her career as Nurse Manager at Pico Psychiatric Medical Clinic. She later joined Daniel Freeman Memorial Hospital in Inglewood, where she served in various roles, including Staff Registered Nurse in the Oncology Unit and Charge Nurse in the Coronary Care Unit. In 1990, she joined Kaiser Permanente, West Los Angeles, serving as a Staff Registered Nurse and Relief Charge Nurse in the Urgent Care Clinic.

While at Kaiser, Richards-Bowers served as the Chairperson of the Employee Congress Committee. She authored the committee's mission statement and initiated "The Culture of Courtesy" program that promoted an environment of courtesy and respect. In 1998, Richards-Bowers left Kaiser to focus on raising her sons.

Richards-Bowers was deeply involved in volunteer

activities. She served as a member of the Los Angeles County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Sheriff's Community Advisory Committee and as a volunteer deputy at the Ladera Heights Sheriff Community Service Center. She was a director and Vice-President of the Ladera Heights Civil Association in unincorporated LA County, and was a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., and the National Council of Negro Women.

Richards-Bowers was a community health advocate and Board member of the Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community. She testified before the LA County Planning Commission on the Inglewood Oil Field Community Standards District. She also advocated for environmental considerations and community involvement in a school construction project before the IUSD School Board.

Richards-Bowers, who became a U.S. Citizen in 1996, was deeply involved in political activism even before she could vote. She helped elect local and national candidates that shared her values, like Mervyn Dymally, a fellow Caribbean immigrant, to Congress. Eventually, she became a deputy registrar of voters.

Richards-Bowers participated in several campaigns for former LA Police Chief and City Councilman Bernard Parks who admired her dedication, saying, "Margaret channeled her unwavering political



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passion into tangible actions. Her journey from grassroots campaigning to becoming a national delegate is a testament to her relentless advocacy. Her legacy will continue to inspire us."

Furthermore, Richards-Bowers was a member of the New Frontier and Culver City Democratic Clubs, the National Women's Political Caucus' South Bay Chapter, and Organizing for America. In 2008, she served in various roles for the Obama for America Campaign, including Precinct Captain, and Volunteer and Resource Coordinator for the 33rd Congressional District. She was elected as a District Delegate for the 2008 Democratic National Convention held in Denver. She had the unique privilege of engaging in conversations with

Presidents Clinton and Obama.

Richards-Bowers was a passionate advocate for public education. She held leadership roles, including Co-President of the Frank D. Parent School PTA, and was a member of the IUSD Budget Advisory Committee and Measure GG Bond

Committee, which secured \$90 million for school facility improvements. She co-founded the Education Equity Coalition when IUSD went into state receivership and advocated for an audit of district management, appearing before the State Legislature twice until the audit was approved.

Richards-Bowers was not only a dedicated professional and community advocate, but also a published poet, runner, music enthusiast, and an art aficionado.

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Inequitable Algorithms: Facial Recognition's Alarming Pattern of Misidentifying Black Individuals Sparks Calls for Reform

By Stacy M. Brown

Recent research conducted by Scientific American Online supported fears that facial recognition technology (FRT) can worsen racial inequities in policing. The research found that law enforcement agencies that use automated facial recognition disproportionately arrest Black people.

The report's authors stated that they believe these results come from factors that include the "lack of Black faces in the algorithms' training data sets, a belief that these programs are infallible, and a tendency of officers' own biases to magnify these issues."

FRT was again cast in a negative light after the arrest of a 61-year-old grandfather, who is now suing Sunglass Hut's parent company after the store's facial recognition technology mistakenly identified him as a robber. Harvey Eugene Murphy Jr. was subsequently held in jail, where he says he was sexually assaulted, according to a lawsuit.

The robbery occurred at a Sunglass Hut store in Houston, Texas, when two gun-wielding bandits stole thousands of dollars in cash and merchandise. Houston police identified Murphy as a suspect, even though he lived in California. They arrested Murphy when he returned to Texas to renew his driver's license. His lawsuit claims that, while in jail, he was sexually assaulted by three men in a bathroom, causing him to suffer lifelong injuries.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office later determined Murphy was not involved in the robbery, but the damage was already done while he was in jail, his lawyers said in a news release.

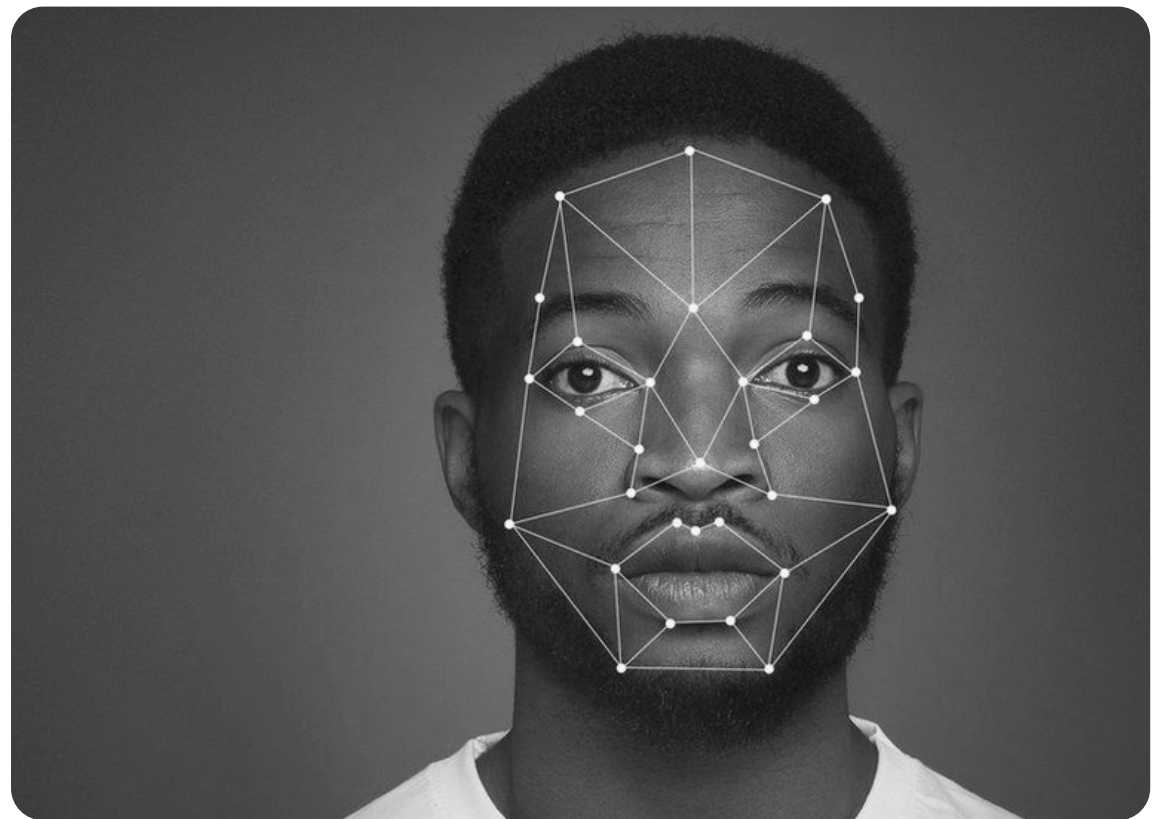
"This is precisely the kind of situation we've been warning about for years: that these systems, whatever their theoretical reliability, are in practice so finicky and consequential that they cannot be fixed," Os Keyes, an Ada Lovelace Fellow and PhD Candidate at the University of Washington, told Vice News.

"The only thing I'd push back on is Murphy's lawyer's claim that it could happen

to anyone; these systems are attractive precisely because they promise to automate and speed up 'business as usual,' which includes laundering existing police biases against people who are already in the system, minority groups, and anyone else who doesn't fit. This outcome is as inevitable as it is horrifying and should be taken as a sign to restrict and reconfigure policing in general as well as FRT in particular."

Scientific American researchers noted that the algorithms used by law enforcement "are typically developed by companies like Amazon, Clearview AI and Microsoft, which build their systems for different environments." They argued that, despite massive improvements in deep-learning techniques, federal testing shows that most facial recognition algorithms perform poorly at identifying people besides white men.

In 2023, the Federal Trade Commission prohibited Rite Aid from using FRT after the company wrongly accused individuals of shoplifting. CBS News noted that, in one



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incident, an 11-year-old girl was stopped and searched by a Rite Aid employee based on a false match. Also last year, the Detroit Police Department was sued by a woman whom their technology misidentified as a carjacking suspect. Eight months pregnant at the time, Porcha Woodruff was jailed after police incorrectly identified her using FRT.

The FTC acknowledged that people of color are often

misidentified when using FRT. "Disproportionate representation of white males in training images produces skewed algorithms because Black people are overrepresented in mugshot databases and other image repositories commonly used by law enforcement," Scientific American researchers determined. "Consequently, AI is more likely to mark Black faces as criminal, leading to the targeting and arresting of

innocent Black people.

"We believe that the companies that make these products need to take staff and image diversity into account. However, this does not remove law enforcement's responsibility. Police forces must critically examine their methods if we want to keep this technology from worsening racial disparities and leading to rights violations."

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Report: Black Enrollment at Calif. Colleges and Universities Remains Low and Flat

By Stacy M. Brown

A report the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released last week revealed that Black student enrollment at California's institutions of higher learning has remained relatively low and flat.

Over the last two decades, for example, the study found that, compared to all other ethnic groups, total Black student enrollment at the University of California (UC) has increased by a miniscule one percentage point.

During that period, Black young adults from 18 to 24 years old accounted for between 7% and 8% of the state's total population but the number enrolled at UC remained in a disproportionately low range, between 4% and 5%.

White student enrollment at

UC decreased the most over that time period from 42% in 2000 to 23% in 2021.

Latino student enrollment at UC increased from 14% to 31% and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) student enrollment remained relatively constant from 39% to 40%. But the AAPI total percentage of AAPI students attending UC remained at almost two times higher than the state's total population of college-aged AAPI students, which moved from 13% to 15% over that period.

Titled "Student Access," the report focuses on pathways and barriers to enrollment in higher ed, examines admissions policy, categorizes enrollment by academic specialization, and provides demographic information on students attending California's private universities and public

university systems: California Community Colleges (CCC), California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC).

"The series has two main objectives," the report's introduction reads.

"The first is to help legislators, staff, and the general public track many of the key changes that higher education has undergone over the past few decades," it continues. "The second is to help legislators and staff leverage their better understanding of the past to aid them in better navigating the future."

According to the LAO, the report highlights priorities it recommends members of the Legislature to consider in their decision-making around the budget or higher education policy.

The Sun-Reporter

EDITORIAL

We wish to plead our own cause.
Too long have others spoken for us.

Freedom's Journal, March 16, 1827.

The Biden-Harris Administration's LNG Decision is the Hope Young People Have Been Waiting For

By Ben Jealous

Years ago, James Hiatt lives in an area along the Mississippi River in Louisiana that has been dubbed "Cancer Alley." Teeming with chemical plants and oil and gas refineries, the air the residents of this area breathe contains more carcinogens than anywhere else in the country.

One of those oil and gas

facilities is the Calcasieu Pass liquified natural gas (LNG) terminal, which has further devastated public health, local livelihoods, and marine wildlife. Last week the Biden-Harris administration's Department of Energy (DOE) paused the permitting of new LNG projects. The decision stops the gas industry's plans for the even larger CP2 LNG terminal right next store.

This move was perhaps the boldest rebuke ever from a

US president against the oil and gas industry. President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary of Energy Granholm – whose support for the move was especially crucial – did the right thing.

Millions of us are celebrating along with James Hiatt, who says, "I'm thankful for this pause in granting gas export licenses; the DOE has finally heard the wake-up call. The gas industry was planning to inundate my hometown

with LNG terminals."

American families' pocketbooks will be thankful as well. Any word you hear from the fossil fuel industry or the politicians in their pockets about how this decision harms American consumers or the economy is a lie.

As Hiatt points out, "exporting LNG drives up domestic energy costs, affecting everything from home heating to food prices."

Pausing the LNG boom will keep global energy markets more stable. It will help move economies and electric grids towards using less expensive and more resilient renewable energy sources. It will keep 681 coal plants worth – or 548 million gasoline-powered cars worth – of planet-warming greenhouse gasses out of our atmosphere each year.

All of this is critically important. But so is James Hiatt's point about the "finally heard wake-up call."

For years, activists, along with scientists and others, have been sounding the alarm to get those in power to wake up. Some of the most powerful voices have been those of young people. And we should all appreciate what it has taken for those young people to maintain their determination.

The American Psychological Association defines "eco-anxiety" as "a chronic fear of environmental doom." In 2021, Lancet Planetary



Ben Jealous

Health surveyed more than 10,000 young people, ages 16 to 25, in 10 countries. Anxiety about climate change impacted the ability of more than 45 percent of these young people to function in their daily lives; 75 percent were "frightened" of the future. And it exposed a key feature of eco-anxiety: hopelessness.

Half the young people in the study described feeling helpless and powerless. Now, we know that despite the fear, young activists have been among our fiercest leaders in the fight against the climate crisis. They have not given in to the lingering despair. But, as a piece on eco-anxiety in the Harvard Political Review pointed out, young people have felt like they are alone in the fight. And, "if no one is listening and no change is happening, then pushing forward can feel hopeless."

That is why, aside from the

emissions numbers ... aside from the economic and energy security benefits ... the Biden-Harris administration's LNG decision is a win for hope. And hope is a powerful thing.

In his statement about the decision, President Biden said, "We will heed the calls of young people and frontline communities who are using their voices to demand action from those with the power to act."

This victory for climate-concerned people the world over – and the planet itself – is proof that organizing works. Grabbing the bullhorn and telling your story – even if the crowds don't listen right at first – matters.

This LNG decision is a momentum builder. And a clarion call for even more organized action on the climate crisis – especially from young people.

MISCARRIAGE IS NOT A CRIME, MEDICALLY NECESSARY ABORTION SHOULD NOT BE EITHER

By JULIANNE MALVEAUX

Brittany Watts wasn't seeking an abortion. At 21 weeks, she sought medical care at nearby Mercy Health-St. Joseph's Hospital in Warren, Ohio. A doctor told Ms. Watts that her water had broken prematurely, that her fetus was dead, and that she had to have labor induced. Then doctors entered into a morality debate and kept the pregnant 33 year old, who was in excruciating pain, waiting for eight hours. She left the hospital, not knowing when she would be seen, and went home.

Brittany returned to the hospital the next day. Again, she waited for hours without being seen. Again, she went home. At home, she miscarried, pushing her fetus out into the toilet. When she returned to the hospital for a third time, disclosing that she had miscarried, and a nurse called the police, suspecting that she had self-aborted. She was charged with felony abuse of the fetal remains that she passed in the toilet, although

the fetus was dead when it passed from her body.

Instead of focusing on grieving and healing, Ms. Watts was plunged into a legal labyrinth that started with her December 19 arrest, and ended a grand jury declined to charge her. For a month, this young woman was in a legal limbo that might have resulted in a year in jail and thousands of dollars of fines. The inhumanity that a Trumbull County prosecutor imposed on this woman is not unusual. Since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, abortion bans have forced women to endanger their lives by continuing dangerous pregnancies that would be ended but for rabid anti-abortion legislation.

Antiabortion legislation criminalizes ordinary pregnancy complications. According to some studies, as many as one in five pregnancies result in miscarriage, and one in 175 babies are stillborn. Yvette Cabrera, wrote When Pregnancy Becomes A Crime for the Center for Public Integrity. She notes that states have increased criminal

investigations of pregnancy loss, "including miscarriages, stillbirths, and self-induced abortions." Guess who they are most likely to investigate? Poor women, women of color, young women, and people with substance abuse issues. Those who advocate for the "right to life" seem to feel little for the lives of women they persecute because of their pregnancy outcomes.

Brittany Watts was blessed. A community rallied around her, raising more than \$190,000 for her legal fees and for counseling. While the grand jury declined to indict, Ms. Watts has been through quite an ordeal. If anyone should be indicted, it should be the doctors who debated the morality of inducing birth, while Watts waiting for hours for attention. At the same time, some doctors fear performing abortions lest they be charged and incarcerated.

Kate Cox left Texas to get a medical abortion when she learned that her pregnancy would have fatal consequences both for her and her child. She actually sued Texas to get the abortion she needed, but when

the courts sided against her, she left the state to receive necessary medical care. She had the resources both to sue Texas and to leave the state when necessary. What would have happened to a less resourced woman?

I am reminded of Regina McKnight, the first woman charged and convicted of child abuse because she gave birth to a stillborn child. Ms. McKnight was sentenced to twenty years, and required to serve twelve years of her sentence. Her conviction was overturned after eight years, but those years cost her dearly. She had other children, who she missed and was unable to nurture and raise. Her life came to a hard stop. The National Advocates for Pregnant Women, an organization that has been researching the increase in criminalized pregnancies, championed her.

The repeal of Roe allows the courts to criminalize pregnancy, and the zeal to unearth "criminal" behavior by those who miscarry or give birth to dead children is abhorrent. The fact that



Dr. Julianne Malveaux

so many Black women find themselves criminalized and, with limited resources, being pushed into courts speaks to the antipathy that our nation has for women, especially Black women.

More than thirty years ago, a group of Black women, including Dr. Dorothy Height, Essence editor Susan Taylor, Planned Parenthood leader Faye Wattleton, Rev. Willie Barrow, and about a dozen others (I was among them), came together to assert our right to reproductive freedom. Essence and Ms. Magazine

editor Marcia Ann Gillespie wrote the powerful statement that began with the sentence "Choice is the essence of freedom". Repealing Roe takes away our choice. Criminalizing pregnancy limits our choice. Those who use pregnancy and women's health as a political football don't see the faces behind their rhetoric, like Regina McKnight who lost eight years of her life behind political nonsense, Brittany Watts who faced criminal incarceration for miscarrying, Tricia Cox who had to leave her state to get medical system. Enough!

V.P. Kamala Harris: Americans With Criminal Records Will Soon Be Eligible for SBA Loans

By Tanu Henry

Speaking in Las Vegas on Jan. 27, Vice President Kamala Harris announced a forthcoming federal rule that will extend access to Small Business Administration (SBA) loans to Americans who have been convicted of felonies but

have served their time.

Small business owners typically apply for the SBA loans to start or sustain their businesses.

Harris thanked U.S. Rep. Steven Horsford (D-NV-04), the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, for the work he has done in Washington to support small businesses and

to invest in people.

"He and I spent some time this afternoon with business leaders and small business leaders here in Nevada. The work you have been doing to invest in community and to invest in the ambition and natural capacity of communities has been exceptional," Harris said,

speaking to a crowd of a few hundred people at the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Hall in East Las Vegas.

On her daylong trip, Harris was joined by Horford, SBA Administrator Isabella Guzman, Interim Under Secretary of Commerce for Minority Business Development Agency

(MBDA) Eric Morrisette, and Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev).

"Formerly incarcerated individuals face significant barriers to economic opportunity once they leave prison and return to the community, with an unemployment rate among the population of more than

27%," the White House press release continued. "Today's announcement builds on the Vice President's work to increase access to

capital. Research finds that entrepreneurship can reduce recidivism for unemployed formerly incarcerated individuals by as much as 30%."

THE SUN-REPORTER

RELIGIOUS SECTION

THE BAY AREA'S CHURCH NEWS & ACTIVITIES



Sunday School Lesson

By Shunda Criswell

Spiritual Armor

Lesson Text: Ephesians 6:10-24

Place from Rome
Time: A.D. 60

In the Christian life we battle against rulers and authorities (the powerful evil forces of fallen angels headed by the devil, who is a vicious fighter, see 1 Peter 5:8). To withstand their attacks, we must depend on God's strength and use every piece of his armor. Paul is not only giving this counsel to the church, the body of Christ, but to all individuals within the church. The whole body needs to be armed. As you do battle against the "mighty powers in this dark world," fight in

the strength of the church, whose power comes from the Holy Spirit. Life Application Study Bible. (Ephesians 6:10-17). These who are not "flesh-and-blood enemies." They are not mere fantasies—they are very real. We face a powerful army whose goal is to defeat Christ's church. When we believe in Christ, these beings become our enemies, and they try every device to turn us away from him and back to sin. Although we are assured of victory, we must engage in the struggle until Christ returns, because Satan is constantly battling against all who are on the Lord's side. We need supernatural power to defeat Satan, and God has provided this by

giving us his Holy Spirit within us and his armor surrounding us. If you feel discouraged, remember Jesus' words to Peter: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it" (Matthew 16:18). (Life Application Study Bible). (Ephesians 6:12). How can anyone pray at all times? One way is to make quick, brief prayers for your habitual response to every situation you meet throughout the day. Another way is to order your life around God's desires and teachings so that your very life becomes a prayer. You don't have to isolate yourself from other people and from daily work in order to pray constantly. You can make prayer your life and your life a prayer while living in a world that needs God's powerful influence. We also should pray for all believers in Christ; so, pray for the Christians you know and for the church around the world. (Life Application Study Bible. (Ephesians 6:18). Undiscouraged and undefeated, Paul wrote powerful letters of encouragement from prison. Paul did not ask the Ephesians to pray that his chains would be removed but that he would continue to speak fearlessly for Christ in spite of them. God can use us in any circumstance to do his will. Even as we pray for a change in our circumstances, we should also pray that God will accomplish His plan

through us right where we are. Knowing God's eternal purpose for us will help us through the difficult times. (Life Application Study Bible. (Ephesians 6:20). Several traveled with Paul doing the work of the ministry including his Beloved Brother Tychicus, a faithful minister in the Lord who is also mentioned in Acts 20:4, Colossians 4:7, 2 Timothy 4:12, and Titus 3:12. Spiritual armor is vital. Christians must keep fighting rather than give up when the days become difficult. Therefore, Paul listed each piece of the armor. God's purpose is that believers stand victorious in His power and His might. Before a Roman soldier put on his armor, he put a belt around his waist. This held his garments together and served as a place on which to hang his armor. The belt of truth refers not to the facts of the gospel but to truth, a believer's integrity and faithfulness. As a soldier's belt or sash gave ease and freedom of movement, so truth gives freedom with self, others, and God. Before the armor could be put on, the soldier had to bind the loose, flowing garments worn by people of that day, so he could enjoy freedom of movement. To tighten the belt meant a soldier was ready for duty, and to loosen it meant he was going off duty. In the Scriptures "loins" were used often to signify strength. Girded

loins meant the opposite of self-indulgence, ease, or carelessness. Paul compared the wide leather belt of the soldier to the belt of truth worn by the Christian who stands literally "in the realm of truth." The person who operates in the realm of the truth of God's Word will not be defeated in battle. (Complete Biblical Library Commentary - The Complete Biblical Library - Galatians-Philemon). "The breastplate" usually was composed of metallic scales, but sometimes it was made of leather or bronze. It covered the torso, and so protected the vital organs of the body—the heart, the lungs, etc. The breastplate often saved the Roman soldier from being mortally wounded. Similarly, the person who is just or righteous, because he has accepted the righteousness of Christ, will not be mortally wounded in the spiritual warfare in which he is engaged. Putting on the breastplate of righteousness means an individual has come to grips with the basic tenets of the gospel. Complete Biblical Library Commentary - The Complete Biblical Library - Galatians-Philemon. (Ephesians 6:15). "Above all" literally means "besides all." Believers should never be without the shield of faith. The large body-shield usually measured about 4 feet high by 2 1/2 feet wide. It normally was constructed of alternating layers

of bronze and oxhide. Many of Rome's enemies used arrows dipped in pitch which would be set aflame and propelled toward the Roman soldiers. The shield would break the arrow's force and cause them to fall harmlessly to the ground. Just as the soldier could not afford to be without this protective shield at any time, the follower of Christ cannot for one moment afford to be without faith. Complete Biblical Library Commentary - The Complete Biblical Library - Galatians-Philemon. (Ephesians 6:16). The fifth item, the helmet, was made of bronze with leather attachments, or of leather strengthened with metallic plates. It protected the head of the individual. Finally, Paul spoke of the offensive weapon, the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Complete Biblical Library Commentary - The Complete Biblical Library - Galatians-Philemon. (Ephesians 6:17). Because the proper attitude in battle is just as important as the proper equipment, Paul reminded the Ephesians of the need for prayer and watchfulness in this spiritual conflict. It speaks of the necessity of always being in an attitude of prayer, of having a consistent prayer life. If Christians truly practice prayer as a way of life, when the special times of need come, they will be prepared for them. Be blessed Saints!!!

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Free Tax Prep Continued from page 1

preparation fees and maximize their refunds through tax credits. To make it easier for San Franciscans to file their taxes, free tax assistance is available at dozens of San Francisco neighborhood locations in partnership with the United Way Bay Area, Mission Economic Development Association, Arriba Juntos, and several other local organizations. Additionally, SFHSA is providing free tax assistance at two SFHSA locations (170 Otis Street and 3120 Mission Street).

The free tax preparation program is available to everyone who qualifies, including but not limited to those with incomes under \$64,000 in 2023, older adults, those with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities who require assistance. IRS-certified tax experts prepare returns, answer questions, and

determine if filers qualify for tax credits, such as federal and state Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC), Child Tax Credits, and the WFC.

To have their taxes prepared, San Francisco tax filers should present income documents from all jobs worked throughout 2023 as well as their social security number or ITIN, bank account numbers, a valid photo ID, and reportable expenses such as child care. In addition to free tax help, SFHSA can connect filers to no-fee bank accounts, credit repair services, and financial counseling. The deadline to file is April 15, 2024 and while nearly all free tax sites close after that date, tax refunds can be claimed all year without penalty.

San Francisco's Working Families Credit

Established by Cisneros in 2005, the Working Families Credit was one of the first, and still remains as one of only a handful of tax credits administered by localities.

"We created the Working

Families Credit to encourage every eligible family to take advantage of the federal and now State Earned Income Tax Credit," said José Cisneros, San Francisco Treasurer. "As we celebrate this milestone, we must continue to advocate for the reinstatement of the Child Tax Credit and other ways to support San Francisco families to build wealth."

Administered today by SFHSA, the WFC is a \$250 tax credit for tax filers with children who qualify for the federal or state EITC and live in San Francisco. SFHSA uses IRS and California Franchise Tax Board filings to confirm applicants' eligibility for the WFC and qualifying families receive a \$250 check or bank deposit. WFC recipients—as well as other low- and moderate-income San Franciscans working toward financial stability and to build wealth—can also get free or discounted banking services, financial counseling, and free tax preparation services.

Tax Credits: Proven Poverty Fighters

Millions of Californians do not file their taxes, and therefore, do not get their tax credits and refunds each year, leaving billions of dollars unclaimed. However, tax credits and refunds can provide life-changing monetary resources: working families could get back as much as \$9,600 by applying for all earned income credits available to them. Even though \$9,600 includes only the federal and state EITCs and the \$250 WFC—child tax credits could add another \$4,600. Individuals and families with no income are encouraged to file their taxes because there are some financial assistance payments that can only be received through tax filing.

"Tax credits are an effective tool to get additional money into households that desperately need it. Our clients and many community members have a great deal to gain if they file their taxes, even though many may not be required to do so," said Trent Rhorer, SFHSA Executive

Director. "We're urging City residents with incomes under \$64,000 to come to our offices or other free tax sites around San Francisco for help with filing their taxes and claiming the refunds owed them."

Undocumented and mixed-status immigrant households who pay taxes but only have an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) are encouraged to file taxes to get the refunds that are available to them. Importantly, the California Earned Income Tax Credit and the WFC are both available to taxpayers filing with an ITIN, providing sources of hard-earned financial assistance that often sits unclaimed.

FHSA is also partnering with United Way Bay Area, John Burton Advocates for Youth, San Francisco Independent Living Skills Program/First Place for Youth, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in a campaign led by San Francisco CASA to provide free tax services and resources to help foster youth file their taxes. Foster

and former foster youth can register online to get tax support from SF CASA.

To find free tax assistance filing options, visit FreeTaxHelpSF.org or call 2-1-1. To use one of SFHSA's two in-person tax sites, the City encourages people to call ahead to schedule an appointment, as tax prep assistance is in high demand, or drop by between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday:

170 Otis Street
– (415) 209-5143

3120 Mission Street
– (415) 487-3240

Due to high volume, some locations may be drop-off only and may not be able to complete the filing process on the same day. If same-day tax preparation is needed, please check which tax sites offer that service by calling 2-1-1, reviewing the site information shown on the UWBA.org free tax help map, contacting a tax site directly, or asking a tax preparer before they start a tax return.

Black U.S. Army Continued from page 1

elevate her military career upon returning home from the Middle East. She also revealed her intention to purchase a motorcycle. Sanders was actively involved in coaching soccer and basketball in her hometown of Waycross, Georgia, and worked at a pharmacy. She was pursuing college courses to become an

X-ray technician.

Sanders' parents shared that she volunteered for deployment to experience different parts of the world. With a history of military service in the family, Sanders had previously deployed to Djibouti and later volunteered for Kuwait, including a stint in Jordan near the Syrian border.

Rivers enlisted in the Army Reserve in 2011 as an interior electrician, according to the

U.S. Army Reserve Command Public Affairs Office.

He served "with courage, honor, and a deep sense of duty, embodying the best of New Jersey and our nation," said Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.). "His death is a profound loss to his family, friends, colleagues, and our entire country, and a reminder of the heavy debt we owe to our military families for their sacrifice."

U.S. Rep. Andy Kim (D-N.J.), who represents Willingboro, said in a statement that Rivers served this country and local community with great honor and bravery.

"We are indebted to him and his loved ones for their service and sacrifice," Kim stated. "We will never forget what Sergeant Rivers and his fellow fallen soldiers, Spc. Kennedy Ladon Sanders and Spc. Breonna Alexsondria Moffett, gave for our nation.

May their memory live on in our continued service to our military families."

Moffett reportedly was no stranger to the military as both of her parents were veterans.

"I was like no you should, but you know she went anyway, because of her dedication to her county, she really really honored her job," Saryha Truell, one of Moffett's lifelong friends, told WTOG-TV.

"We are reminded that the brave men and women who defend our great nation put their lives on the line each and every day to keep our country safe," said Brig. Gen. Todd Lazaroski, Commanding General of the 412th Theater Engineer Command.

"Their service and sacrifice will not be forgotten," Daniels stated.

Federal Jury Orders Donald Trump to Pay \$83.3 Million in E. Jean Carroll Case

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

A federal jury in New York has slammed the twice-impeached and four-times criminally indicted former President Donald Trump with a massive sexual assault and defamation judgment. The panel ruled on January 25 that Trump, whom a judge declared guilty of rape, must pay \$83.3 million to E. Jean Carroll, the prominent writer who accused him of sexual assault. The hefty judgment comes on the heels of a previous \$5 million sexual abuse and defamation verdict issued against Trump last year.

In an almost surreal moment that appeared to leave Senior U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan in disbelief, the justice asked the jury about the significance of the "M" on their verdict form, to which the foreperson clarified it represented millions.

The announcement of the multimillion-dollar award elicited expressions of joy from Carroll, who warmly embraced her legal team at the plaintiff's table.

Carroll had fought Trump since 2019, when she publicly detailed her allegations against the then-president, who is also facing the possibility of paying hundreds of millions in fines for business fraud. The initial incident, recounted in her book "What Do We Need Men For?" and corroborated by a previous New York jury, involved a decades-old encounter with the Republican presidential frontrunner that was deemed sexual assault.

During Trump's presidency, Carroll accused him of raping her in the mid-1990s in the dressing room of Bergdorf Goodman, further alleging defamation when she came forward years later. Trump consistently denied the accusations, dismissing Carroll with the remark, "She's not my type," triggering a federal defamation lawsuit. Even in a later deposition, Trump mistakenly identified

Carroll with a picture of his ex-wife, Marla Maples.

Carroll's legal pursuit gained momentum when New York temporarily lifted the statute of limitations for sexual assault through the Adult Survivors Act. She filed a separate lawsuit under the statute, adding more defamation claims based on Trump's persistent denials and harsh language toward her. Last spring, a different jury awarded Carroll \$5 million for sexual abuse and defamation.

Earlier, Kaplan determined that the remaining issue in Carroll's lawsuit was to decide how much more Trump must pay for statements made during his presidency. The verdict, which holds Trump accountable for his words during his time in office, adds to the growing list of civil and criminal liabilities the former president faces.

With an unprecedented 91 felony charges from various state and federal cases, including hush-money payments, mishandling classified documents, and

allegations related to the January 6 U.S. Capitol attack, Trump's legal challenges continue to escalate. Earlier this month, a congressional investigation found that he took money from foreign governments while in office. It's widely believed that Trump is running a second time against President Biden in hopes of staying out of prison and more legal jeopardy, thinking he would either pardon himself or order prosecutions against him to cease. He has expressed a desire to jail or even execute his political opponents.

Meanwhile, a separate judge may impose a \$370 million penalty for fraudulently inflating assets if the ruling aligns with New York State Attorney General Letitia James' wishes. Carroll's lead attorney, Roberta Kaplan, emphasized that the previous verdict against Trump wasn't sufficient, stating, "Not even for 24 hours" could the former president stop defaming his client.

Trump, visibly displeased, left the courtroom but later



A federal jury in New York has slammed the twice-impeached and four-times criminally indicted former President Donald Trump with a massive sexual assault and defamation judgment.

returned for his lawyer Alina Habba's summations. Habba faced sustained objections during her address to the jury. The courtroom tension escalated when Habba, arriving late and disputing a judge's ruling, drew a stern warning from Kaplan.

Former federal prosecutor Mitchell Epner commented on the verdict, criticizing Habba's "scorched earth tactics" as "extremely self-

destructive." Epner told the Messenger news service that Trump had already posted cash for the first verdict and would need to pay more to avoid the execution of the latest award, potentially depositing around \$92 million in cash or an appeal bond.

"Otherwise, Carroll can start seizing personal assets around the country (and put liens on real estate)," Epner added.

Anti-Theft Bill With Jail-Time Requirement Gets Wide Ranging Support

By Tanu Henry

Fed up with the alarming frequency of retail theft across California, including smash and grabs, a diverse group of business leaders, law enforcement officials, policymakers and

public safety advocates joined their efforts in Sacramento on Jan. 24.

Their purpose: to increase public support for Assembly Bill (AB) 1772, a bill that would make jail time mandatory for repeat theft offenders.

C o - a u t h o r e d b y

Assemblymembers James C. Ramos (D-San Bernardino), Avelino Valencia (D-Anaheim) and Devon Mathis (R-Tulare), AB 1772 would require jail time "of one to three years for theft crimes depending upon the circumstances.

"Offenses would include grand theft, theft from an

elder or dependent adult, theft or unauthorized use of a vehicle, burglary, carjacking, robbery, receiving stolen property, shoplifting or mail theft," the bill language reads.

Ramos said the need to act is urgent.

"It's time for us to reverse

the spikes in theft crimes since the pandemic. Our law enforcement members and district attorneys need additional tools such as AB 1772. We must reverse the trend before the problem grows worse. Last year I requested a state audit of the impact of Prop 47 on

Riverside and San Bernardino counties," said Ramos.

Prop 47 is the California initiative, approved by voters in 2014, that reclassified some felonies to misdemeanors and raised the minimum amount for most misdemeanor thefts from \$400 to \$950.



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