

Sun-Reporter



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BEST BUY IN THE WEST

SAY NO TO THE MALE CABAL – LONDON BREED FOR MAYOR

Opinion

By Dr. Julianne Malveaux
Economist/Author/Educator

San Francisco Mayor London Breed is running for reelection on November 5. She is being challenged by a cabal of men who all think they can do a better job. Their candidacies and the rhetoric around them are consistent with the attacks Black women have been experiencing nationally in the last year or so.

There are more than six months between now and the election, and many will think it is too early to concentrate on the mayor's race. But it is never too early to focus when a sister is under attack. And the machinations of ranked-choice voting remind us that we must be organized early on, educate voters, and build momentum toward November 5.

Mayor Breed deserves to be celebrated, not challenged. She is the first African



We must rally behind Mayor London Breed and counteract the challenges posed by ranked-choice voting, which allows her opponents to unite against her. Supporting Mayor Breed is crucial in defending against attempts to buy the mayoral seat and upholding justice, regardless of race or gender, in San Francisco's political landscape. Supporting Mayor Breed is essential in preserving representation for the dwindling Black population in San Francisco.

American woman to lead San Francisco, standing on the shoulders of both the late Senator Dianne Feinstein, who was the first woman mayor of the city (1978-1988), and the Honorable Willie Brown, the first Black mayor (1996-2004).

Mayor Breed steered San Francisco through COVID-19, and the city had the lowest death rate of any major city in the country during the pandemic. A native who grew up in public housing, London

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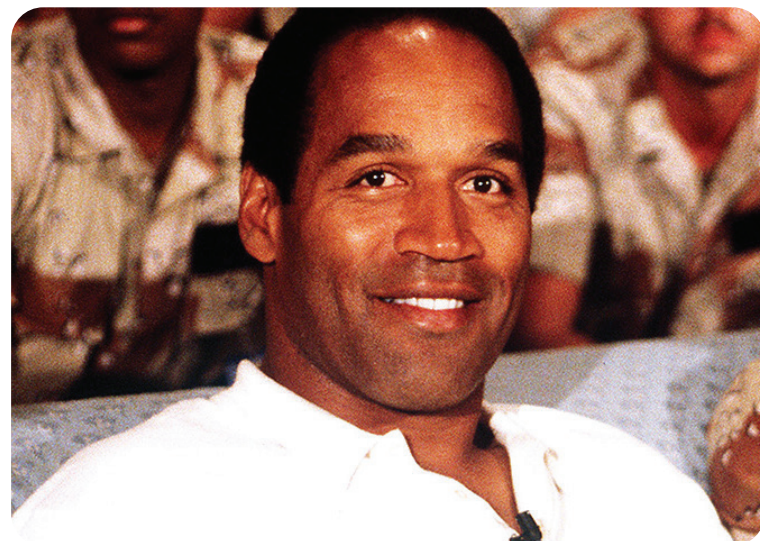
O.J. Simpson, Iconic Athlete and Central Figure in American Legal History, Dies at 76

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

O.J. Simpson, a towering figure in both the sports world and the annals of American legal history, has lost his battle with cancer at the age of 76. His family confirmed his death in a statement issued early on Thursday, April 11.

"On April 10, our father, Orenthal James Simpson, succumbed to his battle with cancer," read the statement shared by Simpson's family. "He was surrounded by his children and grandchildren."

Simpson's life story, a blend of unparalleled athletic achievement and enduring controversy, began in San Francisco, California, on July 9, 1947. His rise to prominence began at the University of Southern California (USC),



where his prowess as a college football star catapulted him into the national spotlight. His remarkable talent on the field, including a legendary game-winning touchdown against rival UCLA, solidified his status as one of the most electrifying athletes of his era.

Simpson's professional career initially experienced difficulties after the Buffalo Bills selected him with the first overall pick in the 1969 NFL draft. However, under the guidance of coach Lou Saban, he flourished, achieving feats that would etch his name in football history.

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Banning Menthol Cigarettes: California-Based Advocacy Group Joins Suit Against Federal Govt

Edward Henderson | California Black Media

A California based non-governmental organization, The African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council (AATCLC), has joined two other public health advocacy groups in a second lawsuit against the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the agency's inaction on issuing a final rule banning menthol cigarettes.

The suit, filed by Christopher Leung of Leung Law, PLLC on behalf of the AATCLC, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) and the National Medical Association (NMA) comes more than seven months after the FDA's established date for finalizing a new rule against menthol cigarettes.

"We are a group of Californians, although we have expanded now. We were formed in 2008 to inform and direct the activities of



The lawsuit also follows the FDA's 15-year delay in creating national policy that would ban cigarettes made with compound menthol, a minty substance that cigarette makers infuse into their tobacco products, making them more addictive and harmful.

commercial tobacco control and prevention as they affect African Americans and African immigrants in this country," said Carol McGruder, co-chair of the AATCLC.

McGruder was speaking during a press briefing April 2 organized to announce the lawsuit, with representatives from the ASH, NMA and

other organizations.

"Menthol cigarettes have had a devastating and disproportionate impact on the health of Black Americans," said Yolanda Lawson, President of the NMA. "Smoking related diseases are the number one cause of death

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Sen. Steve Bradford Introduces Reparations Bill

Edward Henderson | California Black Media

California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC) vice chair Sen. Steven Bradford (D-Inglewood) introduced new legislation related to reparations to the Senate Committee on Housing on April 2 in Sacramento.

Senate Bill (SB) 1007, "establishes the Homeowner's Assistance for Descendants of Enslaved Persons Program to make financial aid or assistance available to descendants for the purposes of purchasing, owning, or maintaining a home," the legislation states.

The Senate Housing Committee advanced the bill with an 8-1 vote. It will be referred to the Appropriations Committee for consideration.

Sen. Kelly Seyarto (R-Murrieta) was the only member who voted against the bill.

"SB 1007 is about starting a



Sen. Steve Bradford

long process of paying back a debt that is not only owed, but that was also promised, and is 160 years overdue, to African Americans," Bradford told the committee chaired by Sen. Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley). "It is the first step in closing the wealth and equity gap created by centuries of slavery and racial discrimination policies."

The bill aligns with one of the 115 recommendations listed in a two-year study conducted by the California reparations task force, of which Bradford was

one of nine members.

Bradford said the report reveals that, in the state of California, a typical Black-owned home is 22% less valuable than a White-owned home.

Various advocacy groups from around the state attended the hearing held at the State Capitol Annex Swing Space. The California Housing Partnership, Bay Area Regional Health and

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Millions Across North America Awed by Total Solar Eclipse Phenomenon

By Stacy M. Brown
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The eagerly anticipated celestial spectacle of a total solar eclipse finally descended upon North America after a seven-year hiatus, captivating millions of skywatchers on Monday.

With its grand entrance at the Mexican beachside resort town of Mazatlan, the eclipse marked the beginning of a mesmerizing journey along the "path of totality," stretching across various regions of the continent.

Eclipse enthusiasts congregated at numerous vantage points along the path, which spanned from Mexico's Pacific Coast through Texas, traversing 14 other U.S. states before reaching Canada. Cities like Wilmington,

Del., Philadelphia, Penn., Baltimore, Md., and New York City witnessed citizens stepping outside their usual routines to behold this historic event. Similar scenes unfolded in urban centers across Illinois, Ohio, and Texas, where individuals paused to witness the cosmic marvel.

At a duration of up to 4 minutes and 28 seconds, the 2024 total eclipse exceeded its predecessor's duration in 2017, which lasted up to 2 minutes and 42 seconds. According to NASA, total eclipses can range from a fleeting 10 seconds to an astonishing 7-1/2 minutes.

Other cities along the path of totality, such as San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas in Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Cleveland, Ohio; Erie, Pennsylvania; both Niagara Falls, New York, and Niagara Falls, Ontario,

along with Montreal, Quebec, hosted eager eclipse-watchers. Approximately 32 million people in the United States reside within the path of totality, with federal officials predicting an additional 5 million to witness the phenomenon.

Numerous eclipse-watching events unfolded at bars, stadiums, fairgrounds, and parks along the eclipse's trajectory, offering diverse opportunities for people to experience this rare event. Scientists estimated that the entire process, from the initial moment the moon begins to obscure the sun to the culmination of totality and the subsequent return to normalcy, took about 80 minutes.

Veteran eclipse observers have described the moments preceding totality as ominous, with shadows taking on a peculiar sharpness and

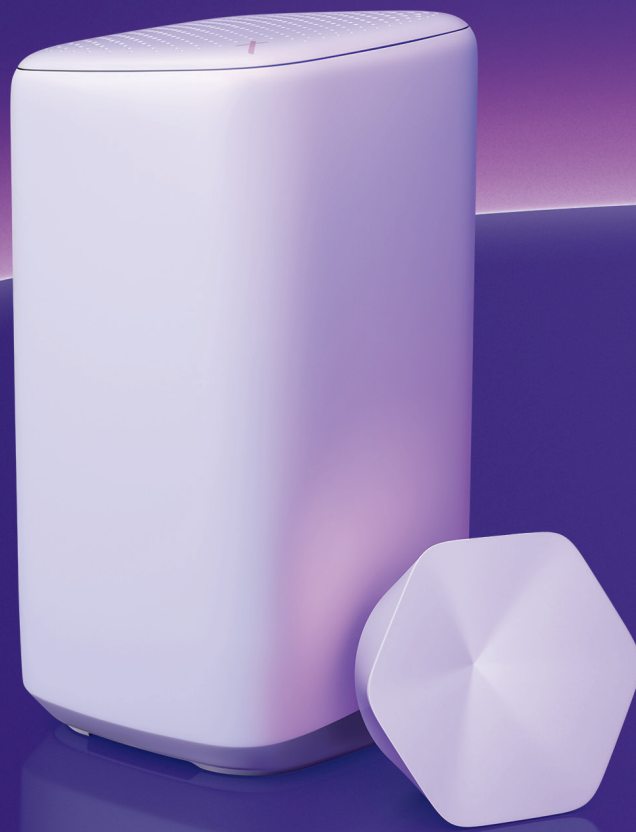


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sunlight assuming an eerie hue. Just before totality, a phenomenon known as "shadow bands" may manifest, creating shimmering patterns akin to those seen at the bottom of a swimming pool. As totality approaches, stars become visible in the midday sky, while the abrupt darkness causes temperatures

to plummet. "When a solar eclipse reaches totality, nocturnal wildlife sometimes wakes up, thinking that it's nighttime, and non-nocturnal wildlife might think it's time to head to sleep," NASA officials wrote on the agency's website. The final glimpse of brilliant sunlight before totality creates the enchanting "diamond ring effect," wherein a bright spot appears along the lunar edge as the sun's corona forms a luminous ring around the moon. According to NASA, the next solar eclipse that can be seen from the contiguous United States will occur on Aug. 23, 2044.

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Racial Bias Uncovered in Kidney Transplantation System: Thousands of Black Patients Prioritized After Years of Waiting

By Stacy M. Brown
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Five years ago, Arlette Ebanks experienced severe kidney pain that she believed suggested a criminal need for a transplant. Her doctors disagreed, but the 52-year-old Northeast, D.C., resident, and mother of two who worked for the Department of Transportation for more than half of her life until her deteriorating health landed her on permanent disability, had grown ever more anxious as health care providers attempted various measures of maintenance.

Recently, physicians at George Washington University Hospital told Ebanks that she should have been on the transplant list, and understandably, Ebanks wondered why previous doctors hadn't done so. Now, Ebanks knows why. "All this time, all this stress and worry, was all because I'm Black," Ebanks stated with intense incredulity in an interview with the Washington Informer.

At issue is a once widely used test that overestimated how well Black people's kidneys were functioning, making them look healthier than they really were. An automated formula calculated results for Black and non-Black patients that were far different from those of others, delaying organ failure diagnosis and, ultimately, proper evaluation for a kidney transplant.

The disparity only exacerbated existing inequities, with Black patients being more susceptible to needing a new kidney but less likely to receive one. "On the one hand," Ebanks remarked, "I have not only been put on the waiting list, but moved up to where I am now more confident that I will get a new kidney. On the other hand, it's infuriating that we keep seeing how racism in medicine, bias in healthcare, is causing unnecessary pain and suffering among African Americans."

The U.S. organ transplant network has now ordered hospitals and care facilities to use race-neutral test results only when adding

new patients to the kidney transplant waiting list. Further, the National Kidney Foundation and the American Society of Nephrology told laboratories to transition to race-neutral equations when calculating kidney function.

The policy shift has led to major adjustments, and between January 2023 and mid-March 2024, over 14,300 Black candidates had their wait times recalibrated, resulting in more than 2,800 successful transplants, including Ebanks.

Dr. Nwamaka Eneanya, an assistant professor at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania Health System, emphasized the detrimental impact of race-based equations on clinical decisions, particularly in assessing renal function.

Dr. Eneanya, a vocal advocate for removing race from medical equations, highlighted the lack of biological differences between races and the inherent flaws in using race-based multipliers. She told her university's newspaper that, despite mounting evidence, many clinicians continue

to rely on these outdated practices, perpetuating harm to Black patients.

"Human genome studies have shown there are no inherent biological differences between races," Dr. Eneanya stated. "Those studies reporting that Black people had greater muscle mass were flawed, but no one questioned them."

As the director of Health Equity, Anti-Racism, and Community Engagement at Penn Medicine, Dr. Eneanya spearheads internal initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion within the Renal Electrolyte and Hypertension Division. Additionally, she is actively involved in community outreach programs to address racial disparities in kidney disease awareness and screening.

"Not everyone approaches medicine with a health equity lens. Many clinicians are not aware of existing disparities — how Black patients do not get referred to nephrology as early as white patients and do not have sufficient access to transplant [procedures]," she asserted. "In medicine, the tendency is to say, 'This is



At issue is a once widely used test that overestimated how well Black people's kidneys were functioning, making them look healthier than they really were. An automated formula calculated results for Black and non-Black patients that were far different from those of others, delaying organ failure diagnosis and, ultimately, proper evaluation for a kidney transplant.

what a study showed, so this is what we should do,' focusing on biomarkers and statistical tests without examining issues of ethics or health equity."

Dr. Eneanya noted that the revelation of racial bias within the kidney transplantation system underscores the pressing need for reformative measures to ensure equitable healthcare access for all individuals, regardless of race or ethnicity.

"I sit on a joint American Society of Nephrology-National Kidney Foundation

task force that is revising formal eGFR reporting guidelines to exclude racial bias," Dr. Eneanya stated. "Many physicians across the country, including some at Penn, have stopped using the race multiplier already. And while the eGFR is a frontline test for kidney function, there are other tests that don't incorporate race. When there is any doubt about the accuracy of an eGFR score, other confirmatory tests that do not use race should be performed."

SACRAMENTO LAWMAKERS STEP UP PUSH FOR "SMART SOLUTIONS" ON CRIME, PUBLIC SAFETY

Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

Assemblymember Tina McKinnor (D-Inglewood) and Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Ladera Heights), both members of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), have joined other lawmakers and criminal justice reform advocates to address public safety in the state.

On April 2, CLBC members gathered outside the State Capitol for the unveiling of the #SmartSolutions Public Safety Policy Platform, a package of 30 bills that addresses the top concerns of retailers, retail workers, the fentanyl crisis, and support for victims and survivors of crime.

"Instead of being tough on crime, we need to be smart on crime," Smallwood said at the press briefing. "I am not saying that we're not going to be holding folks accountable for the actions that they

take. But we will not rely on incarceration as a solution."

McKinnor, Smallwood-Cuevas, a coalition of advocates, addiction treatment experts, and Yurok Tribal leaders joined Sen. Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley), and Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes (D-Colton) at the press conference organized to promote legislative solutions that ensure safety and justice.

Organizers say #SmartSolutions is an intersectional campaign that combats criminalization and mass incarceration by pushing for the redirection of state resources to fund housing, health care, schools, services for victims, and programs that reduce recidivism and promote accountability, beyond incarceration.

Opponents of the bills proposed in the #SmartSolutions campaign say their colleagues who support reform-focused strategies are looking the other way on crime and encouraging lawlessness.

For example, Assemblymembers Wendy Carillo (D-Boyle Heights), Carlos Villapudua (D-Stockton) and Mike Gipson (D-Carson) are supporting Assembly Bill (AB) 1990, legislation that would allow a peace officer to arrest shoplifters without a warrant or without witnessing the theft.

Assemblymember James Ramos (D-Highland) authored AB 1772 and introduced it in January. The legislation proposes sterner penalties for retail theft, particularly for repeat offenders.

The #SmartSolutions campaign is co-sponsored by Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Smart Justice California, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) California Action, Californians for Safety and Justice, and Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB).

Smallwood recently introduced two bills she hopes will provide solutions to the escalating retail

theft problem in the state. Senate Bill (SB) 1446 addresses theft, technology and job security in retail establishments and aims to minimize workplace violence, according to supporters. SB 1282 requires counties to expand the use of a diversion program for theft cases.

The Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee is currently reviewing SB 1446 and SB 1282 has been referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee for consideration.

McKinnor's Assembly Bill (AB) 2833, the Restorative Justice Integrity Act, supports survivors of crimes. AB 2833 was created to "address critical gaps in the current legal framework by providing comprehensive admissibility protections for people who participate in these Restorative Justice processes," as stated in the bill's language.

McKinnor said AB 2833 draws inspiration from successful models in 15 other

states, including the state of Illinois' SB 64. Later in the day, the bill passed out of the Assembly's Public Safety Committee with an 8-0 vote and is on its way to the Judiciary Committee.

"Restorative Justice is the essential pillar of making our criminal justice system more fair, just, and equitable," McKinnor said. "Restorative justice recognizes the trauma of victims and preparatory of crimes and provides a constructive space for victims to find healing."

Dr. Amiee Moulin, founder of the California Bridge program and chief of the Division of Addiction Medicine at the University of California (UC) Medical Center, said drug "addiction and overdose" are taking a toll on patients, families and the community.

"I believe that California's proposed legislation focused on expanding access to treatment is a crucial step towards saving lives," Moulin said. "By removing barriers to

care and embracing evidenced-based strategies we can provide patients the support they need to heal and recover."

Reyes's AB 1956 will require the state to support funding for crime victim services, including services normally funded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which she says expires this year. Advocates also urged support for bills that address the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous people.

"Public safety is a priority here in the California Legislature," Reyes said. "Legislation that I have introduced will eliminate barriers to accessing life-saving medication in our battle against fentanyl while another bill will ensure we do not encounter major reductions in victim services for those who have suffered from sexual assault, human trafficking, and various crimes."

The Sun-Reporter

EDITORIAL

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

Freedom's Journal, March 16, 1827.

Commentary: Plastics Are Strangling The Planet

By Ben Jealous

When we see a 75-year-old white man out in the woods with a group of Black and brown kids from low-income neighborhoods, teaching them about nature, few of us assume he is there because that is where he feels most comfortable.

Probably even fewer of us assume many of those kids look just like the ones he grew up with in public housing projects more than 60 years ago. Rocky Milburn grew up as one of the few white kids in a mostly Black

public housing development in southern Indiana. His family was very poor. They were still poor when they moved into an old farmhouse in the country. That was where Rocky fell in love with the outdoors. Even though his parents struggled financially – perhaps even worse than when they lived in the projects – Rocky did not care.

“We lived right across the street from a creek,” Rocky pronounces it “crick,” “and I spent my days running the fields. You can kind of say it was my drug at the time.” For more than 25 years, Rocky has been an Outings Leader with

the Sierra Club’s Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) program in Tampa, Florida. The program takes youth from underserved communities on outings such as camping and canoe trips and visits to the beach. Rocky says, “many of these kids live two miles from the beach but have never seen the ocean.”

His own experience has taught Rocky the importance of sharing his love of the outdoors. When the kids stand around Rocky and learn from him about nature, they do not see his age or his race. They see his heart. And they know his heart understands them and

the challenges they are facing because he is from the same type of place. People like Rocky who serve as nature’s ambassadors to young people, and people of any age who are nature-deprived, are heroes. The kids in his program learn how to appreciate and be good caretakers of nature. They experience firsthand the lessons nature has to teach us; how being outdoors benefits both our physical and mental health.

And they carry these lessons with them throughout their lives. Levi Randolph attended the Academy Prep Center of Tampa, which has a partnership with the ICO program. While at Academy Prep, a private middle school designed to give bright children from low-income families top-notch educational opportunities, Levi went on his very first camping trip: an outing led by Rocky Milburn. Now an adult, Levi is an Outings Leader with the Tampa ICO group alongside Rocky.

Levi is paying forward his experience. He is pursuing a career working with animals and investing his time to make sure other kids from his old neighborhood and school get the same chance he had to explore and enjoy nature. This is a story that repeats itself in families and communities in every pocket of our country. And we should encourage



Ben Jealous

and celebrate it.

As someone who comes from a long line of outdoors enthusiasts who passed the love of nature on to me, I try to do the same for my kids. Whether we are skiing in the winter, paddling and fishing in the summer, or visiting national parks year round, I try to do my part to make sure my family stays connected to the great outdoors. Everyone can do this, whether it is a community affair, a family affair, or both. Vedia Barnett is a disabled Air Force veteran.

After suffering a minor stroke, it was reconnecting with the outdoors and her love of nature that gave her a renewed sense of purpose to get back on her feet. “Just hearing the birds and feeling the sun on my face, it was like giving me life back.” Now Vedia works with Sierra Club’s Military Outdoors campaign, getting other

women veterans outdoors.

She recounts one woman who left the service in the 1970s: “This was the first time she felt like she was in community with veterans who looked like her. And I think it’s important even for veterans to understand that all these lands are for us – they’re for everybody.” Vedia’s mom, a Marine Corp veteran, has also gotten involved, bringing senior women veterans in their 70s out to join the group’s outings.

This month is Earth Month. It is a perfect time to get outside. Bring your friends and family out there with you. If there is a local program near you that helps get kids – or anyone – outside who doesn’t typically have a lot of access to nature, consider chipping in your time. A love of nature is infectious. And it is one infection that is very worth spreading.

Finding the Right Balance -- Addressing Organized Retail Theft While Upholding Civil Liberties

Assemblymember Tina McKinnor | Special to California Black Media Partners

Organized retail theft is a significant issue that impacts both consumers and businesses. While it is crucial to address theft and protect businesses from losses, we should also be mindful of safeguarding individuals’ constitutional rights, particularly the right to due process.

AB 1990 by Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo, also known as the STOP Act, raises concerns about the balance between addressing theft effectively and ensuring civil liberties are upheld. This bill allows law enforcement officers to make warrantless arrests for shoplifting offenses not witnessed by the officer, as long as there is reasonable cause to believe the individual committed the crime. This bill has a dangerous potential for overreach and infringes on civil liberties, particularly the right to due process.

While the stated intention behind the STOP Act is to combat organized retail theft and protect businesses,

there are valid concerns that this bill is an overreach and that existing law works, if properly enforced by our partners in law enforcement. A petty theft involving property stolen valued at \$950 or less may be charged as a felony or misdemeanor (called a wobbler) if the offender has the following prior convictions: 1) at least on prior petty or theft-related conviction for which a term of imprisonment was served, and 2) a prior conviction for a serious or violent offense, for any registerable sex offense, or for embezzlement from a dependent adult or anyone over the age of 65. A misdemeanor can result in a sentence of up to one year in jail, whereas a felon can mean incarceration for 16 months, two years or three years. Let’s look at shoplifting in California. It occurs when a suspect enters a store, while intending to steal property worth less than \$950. The crime is considered a misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in the county jail.

Granting officers the

authority to arrest individuals based on reasonable cause, without witnessing the crime firsthand, can lead to negative consequences and possible violations of individual rights. Probable cause is the legal standard by which police authorities have reason to obtain a warrant for the arrest of a suspected criminal and for the courts to issue a search warrant. A grand jury uses the probable cause standard to determine whether or not to issue a criminal indictment. The principle behind the probable cause standard is to limit the power of authorities to conduct unlawful search and seizure of a person or its property, and to promote formal, forensic procedures for gathering lawful evidence for the prosecution of the arrested criminal. Reasonable cause does not require any of this due process and only requires that an officer reasonably believes that a crime has been committed. It is essential to find a middle ground that effectively addresses organized retail theft without compromising the fundamental rights of individuals.

California’s current laws, including the use of witness statements and surveillance evidence are sufficient for addressing suspected shoplifting and organized retail theft. California Attorney General Rob Bonta recently prosecuted Michelle Mack, a suspected organized smash and grab ringleader who paid twelve women to travel around California and commit over \$8 million in retail theft at 21 different stores. AG Bonta used California’s current laws to have the suspect arrested and brought to justice.

The State of California is also making significant investments to address retail theft. Just this past year California invested an additional \$267 million to combat organized retail theft. It has been less than a year and our law enforcement partners should have the opportunity to address this recent spike in retail theft crime.

Los Angeles County recently applied for and received a grant for the State of California for \$15.6 million dollars to address retail theft



The State of California is also making significant investments to address retail theft. Just this past year California invested an additional \$267 million to combat organized retail theft.

enforcement. LA District Attorney George Gascon also recently formed

an organized retail task force that partners with LA County Sheriff’s Department, Glendale, Beverly Hills, Burbank, Torrance and Santa Monica Police Departments to integrate their response to retail theft across the region. These collaborative efforts, such as those seen in initiatives like the organized retail task force in LA County, demonstrate the importance of a united approach to tackling theft while maintaining a balance between enforcement and civil liberties.

As we move forward, it is

essential for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, businesses and communities to work together in finding solutions that effectively address organized retail theft without encroaching on individual rights. Ongoing evaluation and a commitment to thoughtful consideration will be crucial in navigating this challenge and fostering a safe and prosperous environment for all. Balancing the scales of justice to protect businesses while upholding civil liberties demands a comprehensive and conscientious approach from all stakeholders involved.

I am confident we can find that balance.

THE SUN-REPORTER

RELIGIOUS SECTION

THE BAY AREA'S CHURCH NEWS & ACTIVITIES



Sunday School Lesson

By Shunda Criswell

Jesus' Authority Over Demons

Lesson Text: Mark 9:14-29

Place: possibly near Mount Hermon

Time: A.D. 26

Golden Text: "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23)

Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down from the mountain and returned to the other nine disciples (In the gospel according to Luke 9:37, it says this occurred "the next day"). They came upon a crowd that surrounded the disciples and the scribes in a heated argument. The nature of

the argument is not stated, but we can assume that the scribes were arguing with the disciples about their power and authority, or the power and authority of their Master, because the disciples had tried and failed to cast out a demon (see Mark 9:17-18). (Life Application Bible Commentary – Mark). This is the fourth and last exorcism (is the religious or spiritual practice of evicting demons from a person, or an area, the is believed to be possessed) in Mark 1:21-28 and Mark 5:1-20). The disciples were unable to perform the exorcism, so Jesus performed it, emphasizing the necessity of faith (read

Mark 10:52). This is another example of Jesus' great healing ability and of the disciples' failure (also read Mark 8:32-38 and 9:5-7). In Mark 9:14, Jesus and the three disciples (Peter, James, and John) rejoined the other disciples, the crowd, and the teachers of the law. This account is similar to the story of Moses descending from Mount Sinai to rejoin the people of Israel (see Exodus 24:29-35). When Jesus unexpectedly arrived on the scene, the people ran to greet him. Their "wonder" (niv) at his very presence is a new twist and may indicate a glimmer of understanding on the part of the people. Usually, they were in awe of his teaching and miracles; here they were in awe at his very presence with them. It is unlikely that the awe would be caused by his radiant face, such as Moses had when he returned from receiving the law from God (read Exodus 34:29). If Jesus' appearance had been spectacular, it would have contradicted his instructions to his disciples in Mark 9:9 not to tell anyone about what had occurred until after his resurrection. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Mark). A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech." NIV The answer regarding the nature of the argument came from a man in the crowd, the father of the demon-possessed boy. Respectfully calling Jesus Teacher, he explained that he had come looking for Jesus to heal his son who was possessed by an evil spirit, making him unable

to utter any sound (and he could not hear, see Mark 9:25). This was not just a case of deafness and muteness; it was the work of an evil spirit, as the man explained. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Mark). The symptoms described by the father sound much like an epileptic (seizure disorders) convulsion, but the destruction of intent of the demon described in Mark 9:22 reveals that this was more than mere epilepsy. Mark stressed the dramatic effects of the demon possession four times (see Mark 9:18, 20, 22, and verse 26), and showed the great conflict between Jesus and the demons. Although they aggressively showed their power, Jesus' supernatural power is far greater. Of the thirteen healing stories in Mark's Gospel, four have to do with exorcism of demons. Having heard of Jesus' power to cast out demons, the father had come to Jesus, hoping for a cure for his son. Unable to find Jesus, he had asked the disciples to drive out the spirit, an appropriate request since the disciples had been given this power and had recently returned from a preaching tour where they had demonstrated that power (also read Mark 6:7 and verse 13). The disciples could not drive out the demon, however. This confused them and upset them (Jesus explained why in Mark 9:28 and 29). Mark recorded this story to show that the battle with Satan is a difficult, ongoing struggle. Victory over sin and temptation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, never through our own efforts (right John? See John 15:5). The

disciples' powerlessness to drive out the demon had apparently caused a commotion with the crowd and an argument with the prevalent and nosy scribes (Mark 9:14), who were seeking to discredit Jesus in any way possible. The disciples had been given the authority to do the healing, but they had not yet learned how to appropriate God's power. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Mark). The young boy was brought to Jesus. When the evil spirit saw Jesus, it knew that its rule over the boy would soon end. The demon responded with one more last attack, throwing the boy to the ground, showing its rebellion against Jesus. While it may seem odd that Jesus would ask this question, Jesus asked it not for his own sake, but for the father's sake. By answering the question, the father was indicating just what a difficult and seemingly hopeless case this was. Jesus was truly the man's only hope. The father had brought the son to the disciples, only to be disappointed in their inability to cast out the demon. Most likely, the demon was too strong or had been in possession of the boy for too long, or the disciples really didn't have the power, he may have thought. In any case, the failure of the disciples had cast doubt on the ability of their Master. Thus, the father pleaded that if Jesus was able to do anything, would he please have pity on them both. The father used the word "us," showing that he identified with his son's suffering and would also benefit from Jesus' help. (Life Application Bible Commen-

tary - Mark. The father's words in Mark 9:22 revealed his own doubt regarding Jesus' ability to heal his son. But Jesus repeated the father's words and turned them around to put doubt in the right place. In a sense, Jesus was saying, "If I am able to do anything? I can do all things—but it depends on whether you believe that I can." Spiritual power comes only when a person turns from self to God in faith. Then the possibilities are limitless: All things can be done. This father had placed limits on God's power. Jesus' words do not mean that we can automatically obtain anything we want if we just think positively. Jesus meant that anything is possible if we believe because nothing is too difficult for God, even when our experience seems to indicate otherwise. We cannot have everything for which we pray as if by magic; but with faith, we can have everything we need to serve Christ. We are free to ask whatever we want, as long as we realize that God will answer according to his will (1 John 3:21-22; 5:14). When we will what He wills, then we truly will have the mind of Christ and can ask anything, being assured of God's answers (John 14:13-14; 15:7). The Father finally called said with tears in his eyes, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." The demon came out of the boy, but in its rage, it convulsed the boy terribly one last time (Mark 1:26). The demon's shriek (high-pitched sound) also showed Jesus' power over the mute spirit. It could no longer rob this boy of his speech.

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Proposals shall be submitted to the following address:</p> <p>Attn: District Secretary's Office San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District 2150 Webster Street, 10th Floor Oakland, CA 94612 4/11/24 CNS-3799820# THE SUN REPORTER</p>
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Yahushua's Law: Senate Advances Bill to Protect Students From Extreme Weather

By Antonio Ray Harvey

In a significant move towards student safety, the California Senate Education Committee passed Senate Bill (SB) 1248, also known as Yahushua's Law, on April 3.

The bill is named in memory of Yahushua Robinson, a 12-year-old student from Lake Elsinore, who tragically died due to a heat-related illness during a physical education class in 2023. It is a pioneering effort to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Authored by Senator Melissa Hurtado (D-Bakersfield) and co-authored by Assemblymember Akilah Weber, M.D. (D-La Mesa), SB 1248 directs the California Department of Education to develop comprehensive guidelines for schools regarding student activity during all extreme weather conditions.

"No student should ever lose their life on campus to extreme weather when we can take steps to protect them by preparing statewide plans to minimize exposure to the

most harmful elements of exposure," Hurtado said after introducing SB 1248.

The bill stipulates that schools must implement safety measures which include monitoring weather forecasts, postponing or relocating outdoor activities during hazardous conditions, and ensuring students have

proper hydration and access to shade. It also requires schools to establish clear communication plans to keep parents, teachers, and students informed about potential weather hazards.

Supporters of the bill include the Robinson family, advocate Christina Laster, Bold Enterprises LLC, California Black Women's Collective Empowerment Institute, Familias Empoderadas del Valle Central National Action Network, The Black Student Advocate, and the Ventura County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Thanking Hurtado for introducing this crucial legislation, Weber said, "The story of Yahushua Robinson last year was heartbreaking. We have protections for



Yahushua Nyerere Robinson

farm workers and other industries in the case of extreme weather, now climate change is forcing us to also extend similar protections to students at school."

O.J. Simpson Dead Continued from page 1

Notably, Simpson's record-breaking 1973 season, during which he became the first player to rush for 2,000 yards in a single NFL campaign, remains an indelible mark of

his athletic prowess.

Off the field, Simpson's magnetic personality and commercial appeal transcended sports, propelling him to a cultural icon. His groundbreaking endorsement deals, such as the memorable

Hertz rental car campaign, revolutionized celebrity advertising and broadened his appeal to a diverse audience.

However, Simpson's legacy became irrevocably entangled with controversy following the brutal murders of his ex-

wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman, in 1994. The ensuing "Trial of the Century," characterized by its intense media scrutiny and stark racial divisions, captivated the nation, and resulted in Simpson's

dramatic acquittal.

Despite winning the criminal case, Simpson's life continued to be filled with upheaval, including his subsequent civil liability for the murders and his 2008 conviction on robbery and kidnapping charges.

In the following years, Simpson's story remained a subject of fascination, inspiring numerous television adaptations and documentaries that sought to unravel the complexities of his life and legacy.

Reparations Bill Continued from page 1

Inequities Initiative, Coalition for A Just and Equitable California, Disability Rights of California, the American Civil Liberties Union of

California, and California Community Builders all voiced their support of the bill.

Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas reparations Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 113 passed out of the Senate Judiciary

Committee with a 31-1 vote on Feb. 29 and was adopted with a 10-0 vote on April 2. The bill is a companion of Assemblymember Akilah Weber's Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 135.

SCR 113 would acknowledge the harms and atrocities committed by the State of California that "promoted, facilitated, enforced, and permitted the institution of chattel slavery and the

legacy of ongoing badges and incidents of slavery that form the systemic structures of discrimination" the bill's language states.

"For the first time, California is acknowledging

its role in the perpetuation of the harms and ongoing effects of slavery of Black people across the state and in the nation. This resolution simply acknowledges that," Smallwood-Cuevas said.

Beyoncé's "Cowboy Carter" Gallops to No. 1, Making History on Billboard 200 Music Chart

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

Beyoncé has once again proven her dominance in the music industry as her latest album, "Cowboy Carter," rides triumphantly to the top of the Billboard 200 chart. Released on March 29, the album's debut at No. 1 marks a stellar achievement for the superstar and stands as the highest-selling album of 2024 thus far.

With an impressive 407,000 equivalent album units, "Cowboy Carter" secures Beyoncé's eighth chart-topping album, solidifying her status as a musical powerhouse. Fans and critics

alike said the remarkable feat reflects her artistry's enduring appeal and influence.

With her latest achievement, Beyoncé becomes the first Black woman to debut at No. 1 on the Top Country Albums chart, highlighting her groundbreaking impact across genres and the album's wide-ranging appeal that resonates with audiences worldwide.

Streaming counted as pivotal in "Cowboy Carter's" triumph, with 232,000 units attributed to streaming equivalent albums. This marks Beyoncé's most significant streaming week ever, demonstrating her ability to captivate audiences across digital platforms.

In addition to digital success, the impact of "Cowboy Carter" is felt in physical sales, with

traditional album sales totaling 168,000 units. The album's limited edition vinyl releases also made a significant mark, selling 62,000 copies and claiming the title of the best-selling vinyl album of 2024, a testament to the enduring appeal of physical music.

Beyoncé's chart-topping prowess extends beyond "Cowboy Carter." She surpasses Janet Jackson to claim the fourth-most No. 1 albums among women on the Billboard 200, placing her alongside icons such as Madonna and Barbra Streisand.

"Cowboy Carter" represents the second chapter of Beyoncé's ambitious "Renaissance" trilogy project, a musical journey that intrigues with its diverse array of collaborators

and musical influences. The album's thematic depth and sonic innovation resonate with fans and critics alike, solidifying Beyoncé's status as a visionary artist.

Reflecting on the album's inspiration, Beyoncé recently recounted her journey to embrace the country music genre. "Cowboy Carter was born out of an experience that I had years ago where I did not feel welcomed," Beyoncé wrote on Instagram regarding her 2016 performance at the Country Music Association Awards, where backlash on social media was immediate and drenched in racial overtones.

"But, because of that experience, I did a deeper dive into the history of



With an impressive 407,000 equivalent album units, "Cowboy Carter" secures Beyoncé's eighth chart-topping album, solidifying her status as a musical powerhouse. Fans and critics alike said the remarkable feat reflects her artistry's enduring appeal and influence.

country music and studied our rich musical archive. It feels good to see how music can unite so many people around the world, while

also amplifying the voices of some of the people who have dedicated so much of their lives to educating on our musical history."

Rest in Peace: A.M.E. Pastor and L.A Civil Rights Icon Cecil "Chip" Murray Passes

By Antonio Ray Harvey

The Rev. Dr. Cecil L. "Chip" Murray, former pastor of First African Methodist Episcopal Church (FAME) in Los Angeles, died of natural causes April 6 at his Windsor Hills Home. He was 94.

"Today, we lost a giant. Reverend Dr. Cecil Murray dedicated his life to service, community, and putting God

first in all things. I had the absolute honor of working with him, worshiping with him, and seeking his counsel," said Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass of the dynamic religious leader whose ministry inspired and attracted millionaires as well as former gang bangers and people dealing with substance use disorder (SUD).

Murray oversaw the growth of FAME's congregation from

250 members to 18,000.

"My heart is with the First AME congregation and community today as we reflect on a legacy that changed this city forever," Bass continued.

Murray served as Senior Minister at FAME, the oldest Black congregation in the city, for 27 years. During that time, various dignitaries visited and he built strong relationships with political and civic

leaders in the city and across the state, as well as a number of Hollywood figures. Several national political leaders also visited with Murray and his congregation at FAME, including Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

Murray, a Florida native and U.S. Air Force vet, attended Florida A&M University, where he majored in history, worked on the school

newspaper and pledged Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. He later attended Claremont School of Theology in Los Angeles County, where he earned his doctorate in Divinity.

Murray is survived by his son Drew. His wife Bernadine, who was a committed member of the A.M.E. church and the daughter of his childhood pastor, died in 2013.



Dr. Cecil Murray

Menthol Ban
Continued from page 1

in the Black community.”

The lawsuit also follows the FDA’s 15-year delay in creating national policy that would ban cigarettes made with compound menthol, a minty substance that cigarette makers infuse into their tobacco products, making them more addictive and harmful.

The initial complaint sought to compel the FDA to act on its earlier conclusions that removing menthol cigarettes from the marketplace would benefit public health. The lawsuit specifically asked the Court to compel the FDA’s determination on whether to add menthol to the list of prohibited characterizing flavors – a determination that the FDA delayed making for over 10 years. The joint lawsuit followed the 2013 Citizen Petition from the

Public Health Law Center, which called on the FDA to prohibit the sale of menthol cigarettes.

“We already know that tobacco is a critical public health issue that remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease,” said Dr. Valerie Yerger founding member of the AATCLC said in a virtual press conference. “But apparently we need to keep

beating the drum about how Black Americans in particular bear the biggest burden, and it doesn’t even need to be that way.”

Despite significant reductions in overall smoking rates in the US, smoking among poor, less educated and marginalized groups remains high. Every year, 45,000 Black Americans prematurely die from tobacco-caused diseases. An estimated 85% of them smoked menthol cigarettes.

“This disproportionate

use of menthol cigarettes among Black Americans is not a coincidence,” Dr. Yerger continued. “I was one of the first tobacco documents researchers out of UCSF who exposed the tobacco industry’s systematic, predatory marketing schemes to dump highly concentrated menthol cigarette marketing into urban inner-city areas. The tobacco industry’s pervasive presence in these neighborhoods, along with its powerful corporate influences and building relationships with some Black organizations and their leaders have contributed to the racialized geography of today’s tobacco-related health disparities.”

In 2011, the FDA’s own scientific advisory committee concluded that the “Removal of menthol cigarettes from the marketplace would benefit public health in the United States.”

If the sale of menthol-

flavored cigarettes is indeed banned, the FDA projects a 15.1% drop in smoking within 40 years, which would help save between 324,000 to 654,000 lives. The agency also projects the ban would stop between 92,000 and 238,000 smoking-related deaths among African Americans—that’s up to 6,000 Black lives saved each year. The projected number of smokers who would quit due to the ban is almost 200,000 African American smokers.

As a result of the Plaintiffs’ first lawsuit, the FDA made the landmark determination to add menthol to the list of banned characterizing flavors in cigarettes. To begin that rulemaking process, the FDA issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to ban the sale of menthol cigarettes in the marketplace. Given that success, the Plaintiffs voluntarily dismissed their initial lawsuit.

Today, three years later, the FDA has yet to take the final step to formally promulgate and publish the proposed rule. After setting an initial date of August 2023 to issue this rule, the FDA has delayed this rule.

“It’s particularly disappointing given that the FDA has an obligation under the Tobacco Control Act to protect the health of all Americans,” said Christopher Leung, lead counsel involved with the suit.

“The Biden administration has certainly emphasized the need for health equity and to addressing the harms to particular members of society who are bearing the brunt of the tobacco company’s efforts. So, our lawsuit here is asking the court for help in compelling the FDA to issue a final rule consistent with the Tobacco Control Act and the Administrative Procedure Act.

On the contrary, tobacco-

aligned groups in the past have argued that banning menthol cigarettes would be impact federal and state budgets with the loss of nearly \$6.6 billion in cigarette

sales taxes. Menthol cigarettes account for over one-third of the U.S. cigarette market.

Other arguments from tobacco-backed groups include unintended consequences of a ban such as increased policing in Black and Brown communities due to contraband cigarettes. However, health advocates have dismissed this claim stating the ban would apply to companies that make or sell menthol cigarettes, not individual smokers.

By law, the United States has two months to respond to the lawsuit. The feds can respond to it or file a motion to dismiss.

If the suit is successful, the FDA would have 90 days to make a final ruling.

Vote London Breed
Continued from page 1

understands the challenges low and moderate-income people face in our city. She has championed initiatives to develop more housing, improve public safety, and provide opportunities for youth. She is doing an excellent job for our city and deserves a second term.

Everybody and anybody has the right to run; that’s a tenet of democracy. I remember the days when eclectic folks like Sister Boom and Brother

Biafra were fixtures on the San Francisco ballots, either as candidates for Mayor or the Board of Supervisors. I’m not sure what motivated them to run, but it seems to me that there is at least some misogynoir involved in the attacks on Mayor Breed. Too many Black women have been similarly vilified. Harvard President Dr. Claudine Gay was drummed out of her position, led by a rabid white billionaire, Bill Ackman, himself a Harvard grad. Most recently, young Angel Reese, the star basketball player

whose team kicked Caitlin Clark to the curb last year, was vilified by a so-called LA Times journalist, who described her and her team as “dirty debutantes,” a vile slur when you understand the context of the insult. Black men are not exempt from racist slurs. Baltimore mayor Brandon Scott was described as a ‘DEI’ mayor after a foreign vessel crashed into the Francis Key Scott bridge, crippling port traffic. It feels like “open season” on Black people. The attacks on Mayor Breed are part of that.

The four men who oppose her are in the race for specious reasons, and none of them offer better approaches to San Francisco’s problems than Breed offers. Indeed, their platforms seem to echo hers on homelessness and crime, but she is making progress in both areas. She already has a \$25 million supplement to the law enforcement budget.

Breed’s main challengers bask in their Caucasality (although one, Ahsha Safaï, is Iranian). Aaron Peskin, called “pesky” by some, describes himself as a progressive.

Still, he is a NIMBY (not in my backyard) activist who opposes Mayor Breed’s plan to build 82,000 new housing units in the city. Daniel Lurie, a Levi Straus heir, is trying to buy the mayoralty. His mama kicked off his campaign with a million-dollar contribution. He has no experience in governance and even fewer ideas. All he has is money. Mark Farrell is another white man who drips money. He was mayor for a minute (and that mayoralty was a function of bias against Mayor Breed), then left public service to make

more venture capital money.

We can’t let this cabal of men snatch the mayoralty away from Mayor Breed. She is an extremely capable administrator and a worthy representative of our famously liberal city. Any of the men who challenge her would be a step backward for the city and the nation. We need to stand with EMILY’S List, the women’s bundling political fundraising organization, in supporting this diligent and activist mayor.

GAO Study Reveals Persistent Underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic Faculty in Higher Education

By Stacy M. Brown
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A new study conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), commissioned by Congressman Bobby Scott (D-Virginia), has unveiled concerning trends regarding the representation of Black and Hispanic faculty members in higher education institutions. Despite modest increases in their numbers over the past two decades, Black and Hispanic individuals remain significantly underrepresented among college faculty.

The study, which examined data spanning from fiscal years 2003 to 2021, found that while the proportions of Black and Hispanic faculty members have seen slight upticks, they continue to lag behind their representation in the broader workforce, particularly among workers with advanced degrees and professionals. Further, the

study highlighted a stark disparity between the racial and ethnic composition of faculty and that of the student body, indicating a systemic issue within higher education.

“Addressing the underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic faculty is not only a matter of diversity but also impacts the overall quality of education and student outcomes,” study authors wrote. “It’s imperative that we hold institutions accountable for fostering inclusive environments that reflect the diversity of our society.”

The study identified the processing of employment discrimination complaints as one significant barrier. Both current and prospective faculty members have the option to file complaints with either the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Department of Education. However, the study revealed persistent delays in the referral of complaints from the Department of Education to the EEOC.

In fiscal year 2022 alone,

the Department of Education processed and referred 99 complaints alleging employment discrimination at colleges, with an average referral time of 71 days—well beyond the mandated 30-day period. Such delays not only prolong the resolution process but also perpetuate instances of discrimination and inequity within academia.

Additionally, the study uncovered deficiencies in the EEOC’s tracking and processing of complaint referrals. Despite receiving complaints referred to by the Department of Education, the study concluded that the EEOC needs a consistent protocol to ensure the timely receipt and processing of these referrals. The lack of accountability poses risks of oversight and further delays in addressing discrimination complaints, the authors stated.

In response to the findings, the GAO has issued recommendations aimed at enhancing accountability and efficiency in the processing of discrimination complaints.

Scott has urged swift action from both the Department of Education and the EEOC to address the systemic disparities and processing delays highlighted in the study.

“The good news is that faculty diversity has improved over the last twenty years. The bad news is that faculty diversity is still not representative of the students they teach,” Scott stated.

According to the study authors, historically Black colleges, and universities, among other minority-serving establishments, have had success in nurturing and advancing academic members of color into tenure-track jobs, which offer greater security than adjunct or part-time employment. The authors noted that these schools frequently prioritize the education of students of color in the recruiting and professional development of their professors.

The GAO research suggests that enhancing mentorship, conducting retention studies, and providing leadership



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opportunities are effective strategies to enhance the retention of faculty members who are of color. The survey also discovered that a positive campus environment affected teachers’ decision to remain at their schools.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Education both handle allegations of discrimination at colleges and universities inefficiently, according to the GAO study. The Education Department’s regulation mandates that complaints be sent to the EEOC within 30 days;

however, the average time it took to get a referral was more like 71 days.

“As we strive to create more equitable educational environments, it is incumbent upon federal agencies to prioritize the timely and thorough investigation of discrimination complaints,” the authors concluded. “Our nation’s colleges and universities must be bastions of diversity and inclusion, and addressing the underrepresentation of minority faculty is a critical step towards achieving that goal.”