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BEST BUY IN THE WEST

Biden-Harris Gun Safety Executive Order Reinforces California Gun Laws

By Stacy M. Brown

On Sept. 26, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris announced an executive order that directs federal agencies to improve school-based active shooter drills and combat the rising threat of violence from 3-D printed and converted firearms.

The directive aims to advance the Biden-Harris administration's agenda to reduce gun violence and save lives. The agenda aligns with Gov. Gavin Newsom's goal to strengthen gun laws and prevent traumatic incidents of mass violence. Two days before the White House announcement, Newsom signed 24 bipartisan bills enacting new measures that increase protections against gun violence and domestic violence, as well as mass shootings.

"California won't wait until the next school shooting or mass shooting to act," said Newsom.

"Data shows that California's gun safety laws are effective in preventing gun-related deaths



The Biden-Harris administration says, "Congress must act" and acknowledges that there is more work to do regarding gun violence prevention actions that can save lives.

— which makes the ongoing inaction and obstruction by politicians in the pocket of the gun lobby even more reprehensible," he said.

The executive order stated that President Biden is establishing an Emerging Firearms Threats Task Force that consists of federal leaders from key departments and agencies. The task force is required to issue a 90-day report assessing the threats posed by serialized 3-D guns and machinegun conversion devices and the

capacity of federal agencies to detect and intercept the creation of these devices. The task force will provide an interagency plan to combat the threats. Congress will grant funding and authority to federal agencies to help the task force achieve the mandated objectives.

The Biden-Harris administration says, "Congress must act" and acknowledges that there is more work to do regarding gun violence prevention actions that can save lives.

State Controller Malia Cohen Releases Report Providing "Best Practices" for Charter Schools

Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

On Sept. 26, State Controller Malia Cohen released a report from the Multi-Agency Charter School Audits Task Force, outlining recommendations for charter schools and local education agencies (LEAs) to follow. The report, titled "Audit Best Practices for Detecting and Curtailing Charter School Fraud," offers 20 recommendations aimed at preventing fraud within the education system.

"I was surprised to learn that while charter schools initiated this effort, most of the recommendations apply to all public schools, benefiting everyone involved," Cohen said.

According to Cohen, there are currently 1,300 charter schools operating in California.

The Task Force was formed by court order after 11 individuals connected to charter schools were convicted of fraud by the San Diego District Attorney's Office. This case became



State Controller Malia Cohen

the largest fraud scheme in California since the adoption of public charter school legislation in 1992, according to District Attorney Summer Stephan.

"Controller Cohen took immediate action after our successful prosecution of this widespread fraud," Stephan said. "The task force's work will help prevent future large-scale scams that previously exploited California taxpayers, parents, and students."

The report is divided into four key categories: CPA authorization, qualifications,

training, and K-12 Audit Guide compliance; CPA rotation and late audit report notifications; the K-12 audit guide itself; and audit report disclosures.

As California's chief fiscal officer, Cohen is responsible for ensuring the proper use of state financial resources and has independent auditing authority over agencies that spend state funds.

"This report ensures greater accountability, transparency, and protection of California's investment in education," Cohen said.

Mayor Breed and Chief Scott Announce Largest San Francisco Police Department Academy Class since 2018

Today, Mayor London N. Breed and San Francisco Police Chief William Scott announced the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) welcomed its largest police academy class since 2018, signaling a major boost in recruitment and hiring under the new staffing plan by Mayor Breed and the SFPD.

The 284th class of 50 SFPD recruits began training Monday alongside the 283rd recruit class, which began in May and was the largest SFPD class since 2019 – until now. The SFPD is on track to have more recruits in the academy this year than any time since the 2020 pandemic and subsequent national crisis in police recruiting and retention.

The 284th recruit class is



Contract agreement from last year has helped spur increase in applications, and improvements to the hiring process has helped fill Academy Class 284 with 50 recruits that started Monday

22% women and 78% men. The class is 34% white, 32% Asian, 26% Hispanic, and 4% Black with another 4% identifying as "other."

Mayor Breed's police

staffing plan sets the SFPD to be on track for full staffing by 2026. To meet this goal, Mayor Breed has prioritized recruitment of police officers

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State Leaders Urge Employers to Address Persisting Racial and Gender Pay Gaps

Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

State leaders concerned about the persisting gap between the incomes of Black and White Californians are urging the state to take steps to address the problem.

On Sept. 18, International Equal Pay Day, the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) released new pay and demographic data that show Black workers are more likely to be found in the lowest pay range in the state, earning, on average, \$32,239 a year or less.

"While I am proud that California has one of lowest gender pay gaps in the nation, pay for women and communities of color remains among the state's lowest for paid workers," said California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Secretary Tomiquia Moss at a news briefing in Sacramento organized to share the data.

"The latest employee pay data show we still have work to do and, more importantly, shows



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exactly where employers can focus their efforts to realize opportunity and success for all Californians," Moss added.

The CRD research is based on data collected from large employers in 2022, covering about 8.3 million workers across the state. While the state presents some of the nation's strongest equal pay laws and one of the smallest gender-pay gaps in the nation,

its third annual report of large employer pay data shine a light on the fact there needs to be more equity when it comes to the income of women and communities of color.

The CRD is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. Its mission is to protect Californians from unlawful

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John Amos, Beloved 'Good Times' Star and Emmy-Nominated Actor, Dies at 84

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
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John Amos, the Emmy-nominated actor and pioneering television star who brought to life some of the most beloved characters in entertainment history, died at 84. His son, K.C. Amos, confirmed in a statement that Amos passed away more than a month ago, on August 21, in Los Angeles of natural causes. The younger Amos didn't say why he kept his father's death under wraps for more than a month.

"It is with heartfelt sadness that I share with you that my father has transitioned," K.C. said. "He was a man with the kindest heart and a heart of gold... and he was loved the world over. Many fans consider him their TV father. He lived a good life. His legacy will live on in his outstanding works in television and film as an actor."

Amos' acting career spanned over five decades, with his most iconic role being that of James Evans Sr., the no-nonsense, hard-working father on the groundbreaking CBS sitcom *Good Times* (1974-1979). The show, which was the first sitcom to center on an African American family, became a cultural touchstone, and Amos' portrayal of James Evans Sr. made him a symbol of strength and dignity for countless viewers.

Photo of the Evans family from the television program

Good Times. From left: Ralph Carter (Michael), BernNadette Stanis (Thelma), Jimmie Walker (J.J.), Esther Rolle (Florida), John Amos (James)./ Wikimedia Commons

However, his time on the series was cut short after three seasons due to creative differences with the show's producers. Amos famously clashed with the show's direction, objecting to what he saw as the stereotypical portrayal of his on-screen son, J.J., played by Jimmie Walker.

"We had a number of differences," Amos recalled in later interviews, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*. "I felt too much emphasis was being put on J.J. in his chicken hat, saying 'Dy-no-mite!' every third page." Amos' insistence on portraying a more balanced, positive image of the Black family on television led to his departure from the show in 1976, when his character was written out in a dramatic two-part episode.

Born John Allen Amos Jr. on December 27, 1939, in Newark, New Jersey, Amos began his professional life with dreams of playing football. He played the sport at Colorado State University and had brief stints with teams like the Denver Broncos and Kansas City Chiefs. But after a series of injuries and cutbacks, Amos transitioned to entertainment, beginning his career as a writer and performer.

Amos got his first major acting break as Gordy Howard, the good-natured weatherman

on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, appearing on the iconic series from 1970 to 1973. He would go on to write and perform sketches on *The Leslie Uggams Show* and later landed roles in various television series and films.

In 1977, Amos received an Emmy nomination for his powerful portrayal of the adult Kunta Kinte in the landmark ABC miniseries *Roots*, a role that solidified his status as one of television's most respected actors. Amos' performance in *Roots*, one of the most watched and culturally significant TV events of all time, remains one of his most enduring achievements.

In addition to his success on television, Amos made his mark in films. He appeared in Melvin Van Peebles' groundbreaking blaxploitation film *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971) and *The World's Greatest Athlete* (1973). He was widely recognized for his role in *Coming to America* (1988), where he played Cleo McDowell, the owner of McDowell's, a fast-food restaurant parody of McDonald's. Amos reprised the role over three decades later in *Coming to America 2* (2021).

His filmography also includes the Sidney Poitier and Bill Cosby classic *Let's Do It Again* (1975), *The Beastmaster* (1982), *Die Hard 2* (1990), *Ricochet* (1991), *Mac* (1992), *For Better or Worse* (1995), *The Players Club* (1998), *Night Trap* (1993), and *Because of Charley* (2021).



Amos' acting career spanned over five decades, with his most iconic role being that of James Evans Sr., the no-nonsense, hard-working father on the groundbreaking CBS sitcom *Good Times* (1974-1979).

Amos was also a familiar face on television throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, with recurring roles in shows like *The West Wing* as Admiral Percy Fitzwallace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* as Will Smith's stepfather. He appeared in *The District*, *Men in Trees*, *All About the Andersons* (as Anthony Anderson's father), and the Netflix series *The Ranch*.

Beyond acting, Amos had a passion for writing and performing in theater. In the 1990s, when he found it challenging to secure roles in Hollywood, he wrote and starred in the one-person play *Halley's Comet*, about an 87-year-old man waiting in the woods for the comet's arrival. He toured with the production for over 20 years, performing in cities across the United States and abroad.

In addition to his onscreen and stage accomplishments, Amos co-produced the documentary *America's Dad*, which explored his life and career. He was also involved in Broadway, appearing in Carl Reiner's *Tough to Get Help* production in 1972.

John Amos' life and career were not without personal challenges. In recent years, he was embroiled in a public legal battle between his children, K.C. and Shannon, over accusations of elder abuse. This unfortunate chapter cast a shadow over his later years. However, his legacy as a beloved television father and one of Hollywood's pioneering Black actors remains untarnished.

Both K.C. and Shannon, children from his first marriage to artist Noel "Noni" Mickelson and his ex-wife, actress Lillian Lehman, survive Amos.

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Prescription Drug Price Hikes Hit Black Americans Hardest as Biden Pushes for Reform

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
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The fight to lower prescription drug prices is hitting African Americans especially hard. A recent report by Patients for Affordable Drugs reveals that pharmaceutical companies have increased prices on more than 1,000 prescription drugs this year, nearly half of those price hikes exceeding the inflation rate. For many Black and Latino patients, especially those aged 65 and over, the rising costs are becoming unbearable.

Black Americans are more likely to suffer from conditions like diabetes, chronic pain, and high blood pressure, which means that these skyrocketing prices have a disproportionately negative impact on them. Enhertu, a drug used to treat HER2-positive breast cancer, has seen its price rise eight times since 2019. This is especially alarming for Black women, who are more likely to die from HER2-positive tumors than white women. Meanwhile,

the price of Revlimid, used to treat multiple myeloma, has jumped to over \$89,000 per month. Black Americans are more likely to suffer from multiple myeloma and experience worse outcomes.

Price hikes force patients to make life-threatening decisions, officials said. Carrol Olinger, a 54-year-old from North Carolina with Type 1 diabetes, described to NBC News a harrowing period when she couldn't afford her medications. Without insurance for five months, she resorted to rationing her insulin and taking blood pressure pills every other day to cut costs. "I had a headache every day," she said. "I just felt drained and tired—and then on top of all of that, I was just, like, emotional for no reason."

The business practices of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), who negotiate drug prices with manufacturers and insurance companies, exacerbate this financial strain on patients. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) filed a lawsuit against Express Scripts, OptumRx, and Caremark, accusing these PBMs of inflating the cost of insulin and

other drugs by prioritizing higher-priced options on insurance formularies while pocketing rebates from drug manufacturers. The FTC's complaint suggests these practices unfairly raise patient costs and violate antitrust laws.

Pharmacy benefit managers argue they are not the sole cause of high drug prices, but the FTC is increasingly focused on their role. Express Scripts has denied the allegations, calling the lawsuit "unsubstantiated." However, the FTC's action signals a growing push to reform the industry's practices. A Salt Lake City pharmacist, Benjamin Jolley told NPR that he views the lawsuit as a potential turning point. "Is this overall system of rebates broadly legal or illegal?" he asked. "The FTC is alleging that, no, it is not."

While lawsuits and regulatory actions move forward, advocates like Margarida Jorge, executive director of Health Care for America Now, point to the long-standing racial inequities in healthcare that contribute to the crisis. She cites the lack of affordable treatment for conditions like sickle cell anemia, which affects 1

in 13 Black babies born in the U.S., as a clear example of systemic racism. "There hasn't been much attention to really getting down to the business of trying to cure sickle cell anemia with a drug that is affordable to regular people," Jorge said in an NBC News interview.

The Biden administration has taken steps to address the issue through the Inflation Reduction Act, which aims to cap out-of-pocket drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries at \$2,000 annually by 2025. President Biden also announced that Medicare will begin negotiating lower prices for some of the most expensive and widely used drugs. In his statement, Biden emphasized the stark contrast between his administration's actions and the opposition from Republicans in Congress, who he said have consistently tried to repeal these reforms.

"For too long, millions of Americans have faced the impossible choice of paying for their prescription drugs or being able to afford other basic needs," Biden said. "While Big Pharma made record profits, Americans footed the bill for the industry's price hikes. Not anymore."



Pharmacy benefit managers argue they are not the sole cause of high drug prices, but the FTC is increasingly focused on their role.

Starting in October, seniors and people with disabilities enrolled in Medicare will pay less for 54 Part B prescription drugs, Biden announced. "That means more money will go back into the pockets of people with Medicare—including some of the 822,000 seniors and people with disabilities who use these drugs annually to treat conditions like cancer, osteoporosis, and pneumonia, and some seniors will save more than \$3,800 per day," he stated.

"These lower costs are only possible because of the Inflation Reduction

Act, which passed with the leadership of Democrats in Congress, and with Vice President Harris casting the tie-breaking vote in the Senate—without a single Republican voting for it," Biden added. "While Republicans in Congress try to repeal the Inflation Reduction Act which would mean high drug costs for seniors, Vice President Harris and I will keep fighting to ensure all Americans can pay less for prescription drugs."

Groundbreaking Study Links Whole-Genome Duplications in Black Cancer Patients to Worse Outcomes and Environmental Carcinogen Exposure

By Stacy M. Brown
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A comprehensive new study published in *Nature Communications* has revealed a significant link between whole-genome duplications (WGDs) in cancer and the higher mortality rates observed among Black patients in the United States.

The research, which analyzed cancer samples from over 1,800 self-reported Black patients, found that tumors from these individuals were significantly more likely to exhibit WGDs—an aggressive genomic alteration—than those from white patients.

The study's findings highlight the critical role of both genetic and environmental factors in driving racial disparities in cancer outcomes.

"We observed that cancers from self-reported Black patients had a significantly higher incidence of WGDs across multiple cancer types," the study authors stated. The increased prevalence of WGDs in Black patients, ranging from 11% to 35% higher depending on the dataset, was most prominent in breast, endometrial, and lung cancers. That genetic alteration, which

leads to increased metastasis and disease progression, was also associated with shorter survival times, suggesting a potential mechanism for the well-documented racial disparities in cancer mortality.

WGDs are large-scale chromosomal events in which a cell duplicates its entire set of chromosomes. The process creates genomic instability, promoting more aggressive cancer behavior, metastasis, and drug resistance. Tumors with WGDs tend to be harder to treat due to their adaptability. "These duplications allow cancers to 'sample a wider range of karyotypes,' making them more capable of resisting treatment and spreading throughout the body," the study noted.

The findings are particularly concerning given the existing disparities in cancer outcomes between Black and white Americans. Black women, for instance, have a 41% higher mortality rate from breast cancer and a 21% higher mortality rate from endometrial cancer than their white counterparts, even when diagnosed at similar stages of the disease. The study's authors suggested that the higher frequency of WGDs in Black patients' tumors may contribute to these disparities. "The increased incidence of WGDs in Black patients may be contributing to racial

disparities in cancer outcomes," the study concluded.

Environmental Exposure and Its Role in WGD Frequency

In addition to genetic factors, the study pointed to environmental exposures as a significant contributor to the higher WGD rates observed in Black cancer patients. The researchers discovered that combustion byproducts, such as those resulting from the burning of fossil fuels, can cause WGD events in cell cultures. "We further demonstrate that combustion byproducts are capable of inducing WGDs in cell culture, and cancers from self-reported Black patients exhibit mutational signatures consistent with exposure to these carcinogens," the authors said. The study tied the increased frequency of WGDs to carcinogens like polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), pollutants that are prevalent in urban environments where many Black Americans live.

Due to historical redlining practices and continued economic inequality, Black communities are disproportionately located near industrial areas and high-traffic zones, exposing residents to higher levels of environmental pollutants. "Black individuals are more likely to live in areas with elevated levels of air pollution,

including diesel exhaust and other combustion-related pollutants," the researchers explained, suggesting that these environmental factors may be driving the increased frequency of WGDs in Black patients.

The Genetic Component: TP53 Mutations

The study also explored the genetic factors that might contribute to the higher frequency of WGDs in Black patients, focusing on the tumor suppressor gene TP53. Mutations in this gene, which is inactivated more often in Black patients, were strongly associated with the presence of WGDs. "TP53 mutations have consistently been linked with poor prognosis and aggressive cancer behavior," the study noted. This gene plays a crucial role in regulating cell division, and its inactivation can lead to uncontrolled cell growth and the spread of cancer.

The presence of TP53 mutations in combination with WGDs creates a hazardous situation for patients, as these tumors are more likely to metastasize and resist treatment. However, the study pointed out that while TP53 mutations were more common in Black patients, they were not the only factor driving the increased frequency of WGDs. Environmental factors, particularly exposure

to carcinogens, were likely contributing as well.

Whole-Genome Duplications and Survival Rates

While WGDs were associated with worse outcomes across the board, the study found that Black and white patients with WGD-positive tumors had similar survival rates. "Among patients with WGD-positive tumors, there was no significant difference in survival time between self-reported Black and white patients," the study reported. However, among patients without WGD-positive tumors, Black patients had significantly shorter survival times than their white counterparts. This suggests that while WGDs play a critical role in cancer progression, other factors—such as socioeconomic status, access to healthcare, and broader environmental exposures—are likely influencing overall survival.

"What this paper hints at is that we're seeing something which looks like a genetic difference, but the source of that might actually not be genetic—it's more environmental," Kanika Arora, a computational biologist at Memorial Sloan Kettering, who was not involved with the study, told STAT, a health, medicine, and life sciences journal. Arora's observation underscored the

complex interplay between genetic predispositions and environmental exposures in determining cancer outcomes.

Underrepresentation of Black Patients in Genomic Studies

The underrepresentation of Black people in genomic research is one significant limitation that the study highlights. Black people made up just 7% of the patients in the datasets analyzed despite comprising 13% of the U.S. population. The underrepresentation limits researchers' ability to fully understand how genetic and environmental factors influence cancer in Black patients. "The genomic data that we have from people of African ancestry is small, and so we're not as well powered as we could be to detect these sorts of molecular associations," said Rameen Beroukhi, a neuro-oncologist at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School.

The lack of data makes it more challenging to draw definitive conclusions about the impact of environmental exposures, such as specific pollutants, on cancer subtypes in Black patients. Nevertheless, the study's findings highlight the need for more inclusive research and targeted public health interventions.

The Sun-Reporter

EDITORIAL

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

Freedom's Journal, March 16, 1827.

Our Protected Public Lands Remind Us: Nature is for Everyone

By Ben Jealous

“There are so many people in Detroit, there's so many people in Chicago, there's so many people in Atlanta and Washington, D.C. and Cleveland and L.A. that don't realize that whatever is ailing them potentially could be cured by a visit to a place like this.”

Those are the words of Yosemite National Park Ranger Shelton Johnson. Johnson is a renowned advocate for diversity in our national parks. As a community engagement specialist for the Park, he sees it as his duty to connect people with nature and our national parks – especially people who, in their communities,

maybe do not historically feel a connection to them.

Recently, Johnson welcomed a group of high school students from his hometown of Detroit – and from the same high school he attended, Cass Tech – on their first visit to Yosemite. They were with a trip organized by Detroit Outdoors and the Sierra Club. He told them:

“You own this. This is your property. Yosemite is your property. Yellowstone is your property. The Grand Canyon is your property and your family's property. Any time you visit a national park, any ranger that you see, your taxes paid for that ranger.

They work for you. Now, I never thought, growing up in Detroit, if I saw any guy with a badge that he worked for me.”

Ranger Johnson is right. America's public lands belong to all of us. That goes for the more than 640 million acres of land that make up our more than 400 national parks, 560 national wildlife refuges, 154 national forests, more than 130 national monuments, and millions more publicly managed acres.

Diversity in our national parks is a tradition as old as the parks themselves. Decades before the National Park Service was created, the famed African American Buffalo Soldiers served as the first rangers for the

country's early national parks like Yosemite and Sequoia. (Ranger Shelton happens to be an expert on that topic.)

Making our national parks accessible to more people and communities is an act of patriotism and love. Kids like the group from Detroit and millions of others like them in cities across the country deserve the transformative experience had by those Cass Tech students in Yosemite: hiking among the majestic rock formations and expansive meadows of Yosemite Valley; finding peaceful sanctuary among the placid lakes and serene landscapes Tuolumne Meadows.

Our national parks are part of America's identity, gifts to us to enjoy and use to connect with nature in a profound way. But our parks and other public lands are more. They are a means of fighting both the extinction and climate crises. Protecting wildlife and critical ecosystems. Cleaning our air with their trees and removing carbon dioxide from our atmosphere.

The Biden-Harris administration has advanced initiatives that recognize this. A new public lands rule from April recalibrated the Bureau of Land Management's mandate from having a nearly exclusive focus on resource extraction to giving equal weight to conservation. And the U.S. Forest Service just concluded a public comment period on a proposed plan that could protect the country's remaining old growth forests.



Ben Jealous

Mature and old-growth trees have a unique ability to absorb and store carbon pollution, making them one of nature's most powerful climate solutions. This is near and dear to my heart. The first protest I ever organized as a highschooler was an anti-clearcutting rally in Sacramento, California.

There are boundless examples of why protecting public lands is so important. I recently visited the Western Arctic in Alaska where an effort to add so-called Special Areas would preserve millions of acres of public lands in one of the last untouched ecosystems in the United States. It would safeguard a vital habitat for imperiled species and help protect the Arctic from the devastation of fossil fuel extraction. I am convinced that witnessing the migratory paths of caribou and the ancient stone fences of the Inupiaq people would drive home for anyone the urgency of protecting our planet and conserving wildlife and wild places.

And our national monuments recognize sites of not only natural but historical and cultural importance. Our newest national monument – designated by President Biden in August – commemorates the 1908 Springfield Race Riot that sparked the creation of the NAACP, a national reckoning with racial violence, and birth of the modern civil rights movement.

This week we celebrated National Public Lands Day. Let us use the opportunity to break down lines of race, income, and geography when it comes to enjoying America's public lands.

As Ranger Johnson told those kids from Detroit, one of the reasons he was so excited to see them was because by simply being there, they were “changing the whole sociological dynamic right now, just being present.” He told them, “That's why it's powerful that you're here. Because this is a sign of change and this is what the future looks like. You are the future.”

Vance and Walz Begin Cordially but End in Heated Clashes Over Trump, Jan. 6, and National Policy Issues

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA
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Republican Senator JD Vance of Ohio and Democratic Governor Tim Walz of Minnesota, faced off in the only vice presidential debate of the 2024 election on Tuesday night, which began with a measured tone but eventually escalated into a combative exchange. The debate, which CBS News hosted at their Broadcast Center in New York and Norah O'Donnell and Margaret Brennan moderated, covered a range of important national issues, with Vance's connections to former President Donald Trump and the January 6 uprising emerging as key flashpoints.

The debate's early moments were largely civil, as both candidates laid out their platforms and shared their visions on topics such as foreign policy and the economy. However, tensions flared when Vance was asked about Trump's recent comment that childcare was “not very expensive” compared to the

money the country would gain from his policies. Vance explained that Trump was referring to the nation's ability to raise funds by “penalizing companies shipping jobs overseas” and those using “slave laborers.” But Vance sidestepped when pressed on whether Trump was committed to the child tax credit, redirecting the discussion to economic penalties for outsourcing, prompting frustration from Walz.

The debate took a sharper turn when Vance was questioned about the 2020 election and Trump's role in the January 6 insurrection. Rather than directly answering whether Trump lost the 2020 election, Vance defended the former president's actions that day, stating, “Remember, [Trump] said that on January the 6th, the protesters ought to protest peacefully, and on January the 20th, what happened? Joe Biden became the president. Donald Trump left the White House.”

Walz responded forcefully, calling Vance's failure to answer directly “a damning non-answer.” He continued, “To deny what happened on January 6, the first time an American president or

anyone tried to overturn an election, is unacceptable. This has got to stop. It's tearing our country apart.”

Walz also drew attention to the broader implications of Vance's remarks, reminding voters of the violence on January 6, including a march on the governor's mansion in Minnesota. “What I'm concerned about is, where is the firewall with Donald Trump? Where is the firewall if he knows he could do anything, including taking an election, and his vice president's not going to stand up to it? That's what we're asking you, America,” Walz said, clarifying that accountability for democracy was at stake in the 2024 election.

Vance avoided direct answers on election integrity and instead pivoted to discussions of censorship, blaming tech companies for “censoring their fellow citizens” and touting Trump's endorsements by former Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. He continued to defend Trump's policies, including tax cuts and immigration, while steering clear of addressing the core issue of Trump's role in questioning the

election results.

The debate further escalated as the two candidates clashed over climate change, healthcare, and gun violence. On climate change, Walz highlighted the Biden-Harris administration's investments in clean energy and infrastructure, citing the Inflation Reduction Act as a crucial step in addressing the crisis. “We've made massive investments in electric vehicles, solar technology, and job creation because we know climate change is real,” Walz said.

Vance countered by downplaying the urgency, arguing that Democrats were not serious about the issue. “If they really believed climate change was serious, they'd be doing more manufacturing and energy production here in America. That's not what they're doing,” he said, accusing Democrats of using climate change as a political slogan rather than implementing real solutions.

Gun violence also sparked a heated back-and-forth. Vance proposed increased school security measures, suggesting, “We need to make sure the doors lock better,



The debate took a sharper turn when Vance was questioned about the 2020 election and Trump's role in the January 6 insurrection. Rather than directly answering whether Trump lost the 2020 election, Vance defended the former president's actions that day, stating, “Remember, [Trump] said that on January the 6th, the protesters ought to protest peacefully, and on January the 20th, what happened? Joe Biden became the president. Donald Trump left the White House.”

strengthen windows, and add school resource officers.” Walz quickly criticized the proposal, asking, “Do you want your schools hardened to look like a fort?” He pressed for more comprehensive gun control measures, emphasizing the need to address the root causes of violence.

Ultimately, Walz positioned himself as a champion of middle-class families, touting healthcare and affordable housing policies. At the same time, Vance remained firmly aligned with Trump,

repeatedly defending the former president's record and platform.

Walz appealed to voters to choose leaders who will protect democratic institutions, saying, “When Mike Pence made that decision to certify the election, that's why Mike Pence isn't on this stage.” Vance, meanwhile, reflected on his loyalty to Trump, asserting that “Donald Trump delivered for the American people.”

THE SUN-REPORTER

RELIGIOUS SECTION

THE BAY AREA'S CHURCH NEWS & ACTIVITIES



Sunday School Lesson

By Shunda Criswell

Daniel Intercedes for Israel

Daniel 9:4-14

Related Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Ezra 9:5-15; Nehemiah 9:1-37;

Jeremiah 44:2-6; and Daniel 9:21-27

Place: Babylon

Time: 539 B.C.

In our lesson this week, Daniel teaches us to repent of our sins and turn back to God. Amen

Golden Text: "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity,

and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments" (Daniel 9:5)

Daniel prayed to God here in the Old Testament of Daniel, chapter 9:4, I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: "Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and keep His commandments." In other words, Dan-

iel stated, "Lord, you deserve respect as the One and Holy God. You keep your promise and show mercy to those who love you and obey your commandments. We have sinned, done wrong, acted wickedly, rebelled, and turned away from your commandments and laws. (God's Word Bible). This is a prayer of repentance for Israel's past sinfulness, but it is also a prayer of confidence because God was about to overthrow the Babylonians and allow the Jews to return to their homeland to rebuild it. The seventy years of captivity were almost up, and glorious things lay ahead. Daniel confessed that Israel had departed from the Word of God, had disregarded the prophets of God, and had despised the Lord Himself. (Daniel 9:9-14). Daniel's study of the Scriptures led him to turn to God and to pray a prayer of confession (vv. 3-14) and petition (vv. 15-19), with fasting. Wearing sackcloth and/or ashes was evidence of mourn-

ing in grief or repentance (see Genesis 37:34; Joel 1:8 and Matthew 11:21). Moses revealed the principle on which God would deal with His covenant people: obedience would bring blessing, and disobedience would bring discipline. One form of discipline was that Israel would be brought under control to Gentile powers (see Deuteronomy 28:8-57. Then Moses revealed the basis on which the discipline would be lifted, and the nation would be restored to blessing. She would have to return to God and obey His voice; then God would turn back her Captivity and restore the people to the land from which they had been dispersed and shower blessings on them. Daniel evidently was fully aware that the years in Babylon were a divine discipline in Israel. Knowing that confession was one requisite to restoration, he confessed the sin of his people, identifying himself with their sin as though he were personally responsible for it. Daniel noted

that blessing depends on obedience, for God ... keeps His covenant of love with all who love Him and obey Him. Even a covenant people cannot be blessed if they disobey. Four times Daniel acknowledged that his people had sinned in Daniel 9:5, 8, 11, 15). Their sin was a sin of rebellion as noted in Daniel 9:9 against God and in turning from the Word of God (His law, which they knew. God in grace had sent prophets (see Daniel 9:10) to exhort the people to return to Him but they had refused to heed their messages (we have not listened). Kings and people alike stood guilty before God. (Daniel 9:3-6). Daniel then acknowledged that God is righteous and just in disciplining Israel for her unfaithfulness, for which she was covered with shame and dispersed (scattered) into foreign countries. God's discipline did not mean that He had withheld mercy and forgiveness from His people, but it meant that He, being righteous, must

punish people's rebellion and disobedience (v. 10). They refused to keep God's laws for they transgressed His Law and turned from God, being obstinate in their disobedience (refusing to obey). (Daniel 9:7-11a). Because of her rebellion and disobedience Israel was experiencing the curses and ... judgments written by Moses (v. 13) in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. In spite of the severity of the discipline, including great national disaster (see Daniel 9:12), the nation was not turning from her sins and submitting to the authority of the Law, God's truth. This disaster, the fall of Jerusalem, was because God is righteous, and Israel had not obeyed Him. The greatest example to model for all generations and generations to come is Daniel. Daniel modeled repentance, even as his nation was about to be released from slavery (captivity). Be Blessed! God is still on the throne!!!!

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qm
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Wednesday 12:00 Noon

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NEW CALIFORNIA LAW WILL PROTECT STUDENTS DURING EXTREME WEATHER

Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

On Sept. 22, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill that will protect students from extreme weather conditions by requiring the California Department of Education to develop guidelines for school districts to implement during weather patterns harmful to student health.

Authored by Sen. Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger), “Yahushua’s Law” or Senate

Bill 1248 addresses an extreme heat-related fatality in Lake Elsinore. During the summer of 2023, a student died after participating in physical education suffered extreme heat-related illness.

“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,” Sen. Hurtado stated last Spring. “I commend the family of Yahushua

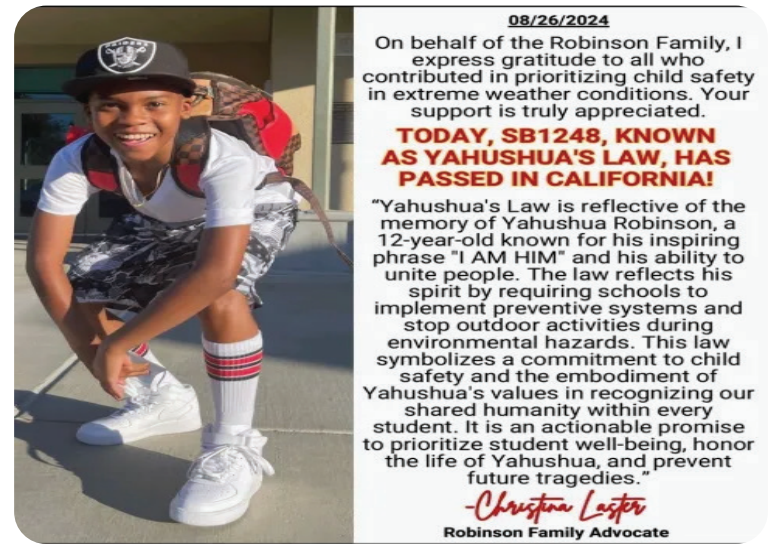
Robinson, the twelve-year student who lost his life due to heat related illness during on-campus physical education, for lending their emotional strength and compassion for others in order to help ensure that no other student loses their life this way.”

Yahushua Robinson PHOTO: California Black Media

Supporters of the legislation say the lack of uniform guidelines and protocols across schools and school districts in California intensifies the issue, creating

an urgent need for safeguards to ensure student safety during extreme weather conditions.

“This law symbolizes a commitment to child safety and the embodiment of Yahushua’s values in recognizing our shared humanity within every student,” stated Christina Laster, a Robinson Family Representative and Advocate. “It is an actionable promise to prioritize student well-being, honor the life of Yahushua, and prevent future tragedies.



Authored by Sen. Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger), “Yahushua’s Law” or Senate Bill 1248 addresses an extreme heat-related fatality in Lake Elsinore. During the summer of 2023, a student died after participating in physical education suffered extreme heat-related illness.

California Sues ExxonMobil for Dishonest Recycling Claims

Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

Last month, California filed a lawsuit against Exxon Mobil.

On Sept. 23, Attorney General Rob Bonta accused the company of deceiving the public for decades, claiming that the plastic it produced was being recycled to reduce its impact on the environment.

ExxonMobil is the world’s largest producer of chemical compounds that make plastic.

In the complaint filed in the San Francisco County Superior Court, the Department of Justice (DOJ) alleged that ExxonMobil caused and worsened the global plastic pollution crisis. For decades ExxonMobil created marketing campaigns and public statements promising that recycling would address the large amount of plastic

waste the company produced.

Bonta aims to stop the company’s deceptive practices that threaten the environment and the public. He also seeks to secure an abatement fund, disgorgement, and civil penalties for the harmful impact of plastic pollution on the environment and communities statewide.

“Plastics are everywhere, from the deepest parts of our oceans, the highest peaks on earth, and even in our

bodies, causing irreversible damage — in ways known and unknown — to our environment and potentially our health,” said Bonta.

Bonta argued that ExxonMobil lied to the public to further its record-breaking profits at the expense of the planet and jeopardize people’s health. The state claims that only 5% of plastic waste was recycled nationwide, and the company’s recycling rate has never exceeded

9%. In the lawsuit, the state urges the court to hold ExxonMobil accountable for its role in actively harming the environment.

Lauren Kight, a spokesperson for ExxonMobil, argued that the state is responsible for harming the environment and is looking to pass on the blame.

“For decades, California officials have known their recycling system isn’t effective,” said in a statement.

“They failed to act, and now they seek to blame others. Instead of suing us, they could have worked with us to fix the problem and keep plastic out of landfills,” she said.

In addition to the DOJ’s lawsuit, non-profit organizations such as Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation, Heal the Bay, and Baykeeper filed a separate lawsuit regarding ExxonMobil’s role in causing the global plastics pollution crisis.

Racial Pay Gaps Continued from page 1

discrimination in employment, housing, businesses, and state-funded programs, and from racial-motivated violence and human trafficking.

According to the CRD’s data, Black (45%), multiracial (45%), Latino (44%), and Native American (43%) workers were among those in the lowest pay range. In contrast, about a quarter of White workers (25%) and close to one-fifth of Asian workers (19%) were in the lowest pay range.

In addition, the report explains that less than 1 in 20 Latinos, and 1 in 10 Black and Native American workers were in the top-earning positions, whereas nearly 1 in 4 White workers and 1 in 3 Asian workers were employed in the highest pay range.

White workers were almost twice as likely to be senior executives (62%) as compared to workers of color. California ranks third in the country for difference between men’s and women pay (13.3%), according to the report.

CRD Director Kevin Kish stated that gender pay gaps can have an ongoing effect “over the course of a single person’s lifetime,” and that difference in income can add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost wages

“The data underscores the need for action. “We all need to do our part to build on our hard-won progress,” Kish stated. “From corporate boardrooms to small, family-owned businesses, I urge employers to look at their own practices and work with us in the fight to ensure equal opportunity on the job.”

Data about workers hired

through labor contractors is not included, the CRD points out. The findings in the report do not reflect California’s entire employed workforce, which the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated to be 18.4 million at the end of 2022.

Under state law, private job creators of 100 or more employees or workers hired through labor contractors are required to report pay, demographic, and other workforce data annually.

“We all share the responsibility to address the persistent inequality that affects communities up and down our state,” Moss emphasized.

Kellie Todd Griffin, President and CEO of the California Black Women’s Collective Institute Empowerment Institute (CBWCEI), said Black women’s pay in

California has not only stagnated – it is decreasing.

A CBWCEI report released earlier this year reveals that Black women’s labor force participation rate (LFPR) fell three percentage points between October and December of 2023. Although, Black women’s LFPR remains higher than the LFPR of women of other races, the decrease points to job insecurity and instability in the labor market. It is also a sign that conditions could get worse for the Black women overall.

“Several economic factors contribute to the fluctuations and potential decline in Black women’s labor force participation rates,” CBWCEI report stated. “Structural issues such as persistent wage gaps, limited access to quality education and job training programs, along with systemic barriers to career advancement

disproportionately affect Black women.”

As a result of the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 973 in 2020, the state collects pay data to encourage employers to conduct self-assessments of pay disparities in their organizations, promote self-policing around equal pay compliance and support meaningful state and private enforcement of civil rights and anti-discrimination laws in the workplace.

On June 19, the CRD announced that it reached a \$15 million settlement with Snapchat to resolve a more than three-year investigation over claims of employment discrimination, equal pay violations, and sexual harassment and retaliation.

CRD alleged that despite its growth from 50 employees in 2015 to over 5,000 in 2022, Snap Inc., Snapchat’s

parent company, failed to set up measures to create an environment to ensure that women were paid or promoted equally. Instead, women were held under a glass ceiling and were told to wait in line.

“The gender wage gap is not just a statistic, it’s a lifetime of missed opportunities for women — especially women of color — who face the compounded impacts of racial and gender inequities,” stated California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom. “The wage and wealth gaps rob women and their families of financial security, career advancement, and the ability to build wealth for future generations. In California, we’re working through our Equal Pay Pledge to close the gap and normalize pay equity.”

More Than 1.2 Million Youth Pre-Registered to Vote, Secretary of State Weber Announced

By Stacy M. Brown

Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber announced on Sept. 26 that more than 1.2 million young people between the ages of 16 and 17-years-old have pre-registered to vote since the state launched the

initiative in September 2016. The state program automatically activates voter registration for pre-registered youth when they turn 18 years of age.

Weber, who has visited dozens of high schools across the state to promote voting initiatives, said that

students are eager to vote and look forward to casting their first ballot, and “the numbers back them up.”

“Young Californians want to be engaged, active participants in our democracy and they can position themselves to do so by preregistering to vote,” said Weber.

Weber said that she is committed to encouraging young people to pre-register to vote, adding that she looks forward to partnering with the California Department of Education, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, school officials, and leaders of community-

based organizations to expand this effort.

According to Weber’s office, approximately 42% of young voters are registered Democrats, while over 13% are registered Republicans. Another 35% of young voters registered as having “no party preference.”



Shirley N. Weber

NBA Hall of Famer Dikembe Mutombo Dies of Brain Cancer at 57

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

Dikembe Mutombo, the towering 7-foot-2 center who starred at Georgetown University before becoming one of the NBA's greatest shot blockers, died of brain cancer, the league announced on Monday. He was 57.

Mutombo first made his mark at Georgetown, where his shot-blocking abilities and imposing presence on the court quickly earned him national recognition. Legendary coach John Thompson, who also helped the Hoyas' defense become one of the best in the game, recruited Mutombo and fellow star Alonzo Mourning. During his time with the Hoyas, he was named the Big East Defensive Player of

the Year twice and famously blocked 12 shots in a single game, prompting Georgetown fans to create the "Rejection Row" cheering section.

After graduating with degrees in linguistics and diplomacy in 1991, Mutombo entered the NBA, where his defensive dominance became the hallmark of his nearly two-decade career. Over stints with six teams—including Denver, Atlanta, Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York, and Houston—Mutombo swatted 3,289 shots, the second most in NBA history. His signature finger wag warned opponents not to challenge him at the rim after each block.

He was named NBA Defensive Player of the Year four times, cementing his reputation as one of the league's most feared defenders. Yet, for younger fans, Mutombo's legacy

extended beyond his playing days through his appearance in Geico commercials, where his signature blocks and finger wags were humorously showcased.

But Mutombo's impact reached far beyond basketball. After retiring from the game, he dedicated himself to humanitarian work, particularly in his home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2007, he founded the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital in Kinshasa, providing much-needed medical care to thousands of people. The hospital, named in honor of his mother, includes an emergency room, an intensive care unit, and 150 beds.

"My thing is about fighting the mortality rate so we can allow the people to live longer," Mutombo said in a 2016 interview with NBC

News. "That has been my cause, my drive."

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver described Mutombo as "simply larger than life" and "a humanitarian at his core."

"On the court, he was one of the greatest shot blockers and defensive players in the history of the NBA. Off the floor, he poured his heart and soul into helping others," Silver said in a statement.

Mutombo's international interests were evident from his early days at Georgetown, where he initially intended to pursue a medical career. His academic achievements—earning degrees in linguistics and diplomacy—reflected his passion for global issues. He even interned with the U.S. Congress and the World Bank during his summers, showing a commitment to improving lives long before his NBA stardom.



Mutombo's international interests were evident from his early days at Georgetown, where he initially intended to pursue a medical career. His academic achievements—earning degrees in linguistics and diplomacy—reflected his passion for global issues. He even interned with the U.S. Congress and the World Bank during his summers, showing a commitment to improving lives long before his NBA stardom.

Dikembe Mutombo leaves behind a towering legacy as a basketball icon and a champion for healthcare and humanitarian efforts in developing countries. His determination to lift others off the court rivaled his

shot-blocking prowess. Reflecting on his life's mission, Mutombo once said: "My thing is about fighting the mortality rate so we can allow the people to live longer. That has been my cause, my drive."

SFPD Academy Continued from page 1

through investments in new contracts and implementing targeted reforms that have shaved months off the hiring process.

Last year, Mayor Breed negotiated a new contract with the San Francisco Police Officers Association that made SFPD one of the highest

starting salaries in the nation at \$112,398 per year. This has helped applications to SFPD reach 2018 levels and attracted transfers of trained officers from other jurisdictions.

Mayor Breed has directed improvements to the police hiring process that have expedited filling academies, including:

Directing Department of Human Resources (DHR)

and the Controller to provide assistance and guidance to expedite the hiring process

Bringing back retired police officers to conduct background checks

Executing a contract with a private firm to expedite background checks

Reorganized structure within SFPD to make the hiring process more efficient

In addition to this class of recruits, SFPD continues to bring in lateral transfers from law enforcement departments in other jurisdictions. Between three and six more laterals will join the Academy this month, bringing the total laterals year to date to at least twenty. These are experienced officers who undergo a shorter training that are quickly absorbed into the police department. Academy Class 284 joins Class

283, which started last month with 40 recruits.

"Our work to fully staff our Police Department is on track thanks to the significant investments we are making and the reforms to our hiring process," said Mayor London Breed. "Having more officers in the community and responding quickly when crime does occur is essential to making

everyone in our city feel safe. And while fully staffed police force is key to our public safety strategy, but it's not the only piece. We're also deploying new technology, using alternatives to policing to free up resources, and investing in violence prevention and community building. I'm grateful for these newest additions to our police force, and to all those who are serving today."

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