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

(USPS 526-500)

VOLUME 80 - NUMBER 63 • THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2025

Rev. Devon Crawford the New Minister at Third Baptist Church

By Lee Hubbard

hen Devon rawford t o o d behind the pulpit at Third Baptist Church, he had an assertive look on his face. The 32-year-old new pastor looked on as Reverend Amos Brown, the retired pastor whom Crawford succeeded, watched with pride.

Brown, the longtime pastor, stepped down from the church after 49 years of leadership.

"I am repositioning myself, and I will still be engaged and involved in the struggle," said Pastor Brown. "I first came to Third Baptist Church in 1956 with Medgar Evers at a National NAACP conference. I then came back as a preacher and pastor in June of 1976, from St. Andrews Church in Minneapolis."

In the 172-year history of the church—one of the oldest in California—Brown holds the distinction of Divinity School. After being the longest-tenured pastor at Third Baptist. Now,



Minister Devon Crawford

in that tradition.

"I don't look at it like I am replacing him," said Reverend Crawford. "I am standing on the foundation of his legacy. He replaced Frederick Haynes Jr. and took it higher, and I plan on trying to do the same thing."

Born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, Crawford is a graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta and the University of Chicago graduating from Divinity School, he went on to work Reverend Crawford follows at the Harvard Kennedy

School of Government as the staff director for the William Monroe Trotter Collaborative for Social Justice. The Trotter Collaborative is a think tank that helps students address social justice issues.

Crawford led the organization for four years, during which time it supported several Massachusetts and national campaigns that advanced voting rights, transformed criminal legal systems, spearheaded reparations research, and advocated for Black Americans. At

Continued on page 7

SUN-REPORTER SF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL INTERNS 2025



San Francisco, CA — The Sun-Reporter is proud to work with the San Francisco Mayor's Opportunities For All Program again this year. The summer intern program offers a brilliant connection for young people ages 14-20, of all backgrounds who live in San Francisco, to paid employment, job training, and mentorship opportunities. OFA focuses on equitable access to job training through workforce connection, support, and job resources for both job seekers and employers.

San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie praised the initiative, saying, "Opportunities for All, to me, means a chance for everyone to learn and to challenge themselves and each other."

Black Caucus Chair Weber-Pierson's Reparations **Bills Move Forward Amid Criticisms From Advocates**

Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

n July 1, the s s e m b l v Judiciary Committee voted to pass two reparative justice bills authored by Sen. Akilah Weber-Pierson (D-San Diego): Senate Bill (SB) 437 and SB 518.

SB 518 and SB 437 were each approved by a 9-3 vote. The bills now advance to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations for review. The bills are part of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC) Road to Repair 2025 Priority Bill Package.

"This is a critical responsibility and much-needed delayed step towards addressing enduring harms of slavery and systemic racism right here in lineage and descent. California," Weber-Pierson.

SB 437 addresses the process of determining eligibility for reparations for the descendants of enslaved people in the United States and the decades of discrimination that followed



"This bill (SB 518) established the infrastructure needed to move from recommendations to real implementation, ensuring that California leads with both accountability and action," Weber-Pierson said.

it. It also directs the California State University (CSU) to develop a research-backed methodology for validating

Designed to implement recommendations from the California Reparations Task Force establishes the Bureau for Descendants of American Slavery within the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Chris Lodgson, lead organizer for the Coalition for a Just and Equitable California (CJEC) who testified in front of the committee, shared his displeasure with both bills.

CJEC is a California-based grassroots organization focused on achieving lineagebased reparations for African Americans.

Prop 36 Is Triggering an Arrest Surge in California, Hitting Black **Communities Hard**

Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

ix months after California's Prop 36 took effect, early data shows a rise in arrests -- with the law disproportionately affecting Black communities in some parts of the state.

Also known as the "Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act," the measure was overwhelmingly passed by voters in the November 2024 general election. Prop 36 increased penalties for certain drug and theft crimes, reclassifying some as felonies, and lengthened sentences for specific offenses, particularly those involving multiple individuals or the sale of certain drugs.

Assemblymember Isaac Bryan (D-Ladera Heights), the vice chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), raised concerns about the effects of Prop 36.



Asm. Isaac Bryan (D-Ladera Heights), Vice Chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus, called Prop 36 a "war on poor people" after learning that the backlog of cases is disproportionately impacting the Black community.

California's legal system has initiated a war on poor people," Bryan told California Black Media (CBM). "We deserve better. We have to fight for the economic opportunities our community deserves."

According to a report by Voice of San Diego, via San Diego Census and San Diego "Instead of a war on poverty, Police Department, data

shows that 32% of 374 people arrested for Prop 36-related drug or theft charges in the city from the middle of December through May were Black. Out of 1.9 million residents, Black people make up 5.6% of the city's population.

Ricardo D. García, the Chief Continued on page 7

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Sun Reporter



(ISSN 0890-0930) Dedicated to the cause of the people-that no good cause shall lack a champion and evil shall not thrive

unopposed. Published weekly by Sun-Reporter Publishing Co. 1286 Fillmore Street San Francisco, CA. 94115 Periodicals Postage Paid At San Francisco, California

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to -Sun-Reporter Publishing Co. 1286 Fillmore Street San Francisco, CA. 94115 Phone: (415) 671-1000 Fax: (415) 671-1005 E-Mail address: SunReporter@SBCglobal.net

Website: www.TheSunReporter.com **Subscription Rates:**

\$20 per year; 30 cents per copy. Member of National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc., and California Publishers Association. Sun-Reporter has a six-column format, 1.895" per column with .125" between each column. Carlton B. Goodlett, PH.D., MD., Editor/Publisher

> **Amelia Ashley-Ward Editor/Publisher**

1945-1997

California's New Landscaping Rules: You May Soon Be Required to Fire-Proof Your Yard

Edward Henderson | California Black Media

egislation could go into effect by the end of this year, changing the way Californians landscape their homes.

In 2020, California enacted Assembly Bill 3074, mandating property owners to create an "emberresistant zone" -- referred to as "Zone 0" -- within five feet of homes in designated high fire hazard areas. The legislation aims to reduce the risk of homes igniting from wind-driven embers during wildfires, a leading cause of structural fires.

However, many homeowners across the state -- like Oakland Resident Tina Sanders -have not vet heard about the pending rules and have not begun making plans or saving money to be able to comply with it should the new safety rules go into effect soon

"I don't know much about the Zone 0 law, but I think that the state should provide more information about it and help people prepare for this sudden change," Sanders told CBM.

"I understand why it needs to happen, but people who aren't aware or can't afford to make these changes deserve assistance," she added.

Other homeowners are

rules could negatively impact the curb appeal of their homes, affecting their property values.

When Gov. Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-18-25 in February, he directed the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to expedite the adoption of Zone 0 regulations.

"We are living in a new reality of extremes. Believe the science – and your own damn eyes: Mother Nature is changing the way we live, and we must continue adapting to those changes,"

Newsom continued, "California's resilience means we will keep updating our standards in the most fire-prone areas."

Despite the law's passage in 2020, implementation has faced delays. Originally set to take effect in 2023, the regulations have not been finalized, leaving many homeowners uncertain about compliance requirements.

While compliance with the Zone 0 regulations is currently recommended but not mandatory, the fire department has already completed nearly 6,000 inspections, identifying over 1,900 violations of existing fire safety regulations.

In some cities like Berkeley, for example, the local government is already providing guidance to

worried that following Zone 0 homeowners on how they can fireproof their homes.

> "You are responsible for keeping your property safe," Berkeley's website reminds residents.

> "The first 5 feet around your home is the most important area to clear of vegetation and combustible materials since it is closest to buildings, structures, and decks," the messaging on the website goes on. "In the Ember-Resistant Zone, dead vegetation creates the highest risk for ignition, but even living vegetation can pose a threat in Ignition Zone 0, especially for properties in the hills."

CAL FIRE has also provided prevention information on their website regarding "fire smart landscaping."

When the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection met in Sacramento from June 16 to 18, implementation of Zone Zero was high on different agendas for meeting attendees. However, the board has said it is still in the "prerulemaking phase."

In addition to Zone 0 for homes, the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has defined Zone 1 and Zone 2, covering up to 100 feet around structures that would require "varying levels of vegetation management."

The board says its goal is to have these regulations in place



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by the end of 2025.

U.S. Rep Laura Friedman (D-CA-30), who authored the "zone 0" measure while she served in the state Assembly, hailed the governor's action but has also expressed concerns about the delay in enforcing the rules.

commonsense rules written and shared with the public. Not only will they help protect homes from wildfires, but they will help lower costs for homeowners and renters by lowering insurance rates," said Friedman in a release.

The regulations will likely prohibit combustible materials such as wooden fences, mulch, and flammable vegetation within this zone. Exceptions may include certain noncombustible items and wellmaintained mature trees.

Once finalized, the rules will apply immediately to new constructions in State Responsibility Areas and Very High Fire Hazard "It's past time we get these Severity Zones. These include areas in Los Angeles County (Rancho Palos Verdes, Calabasas, Malibu), Ventura County, and portions of Riverside, San Diego, and San Bernardino counties. In addition, El **Dorado County (South Lake** Tahoe, Pollock Pines) and Lake Arrowhead in San Bernardino County are also designated as very high risk.

A "New Direction": West Coast Black News Publisher, Dr. John Warren, **Elected Board Chair of NNPA**

Tanu Henry | California Black Media

r. John Warren of the San Diego Voice & Viewpoint made his mark at the 2025 National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) annual convention in Savannah, Georgia when he became the third person from the West Coast to lead the 85-year-old organization, whose members are mostly from the East Coast, South and Midwest.

Warren says he has been preparing for the job for more than 20 years.

NNPA members elected Warren at the conference held from June 26 to June 28.

In his new leadership role, Warren plans to bring a "new direction" to the Washington, D.C.-based organization that represents more than 230 African American-owned newspapers and media companies across

the United States.

"Now, I won't telegraph all my plans," Warren joked when California Black Media (CBM) asked him to share his vision for the organization founded in 1940 as the National Negro Publishers Association.

"I will say this: I will push to reinvigorate the NNPA, starting with each region." said Warren, who is also an attorney, ordained minister, U.S. Army veteran and college professor. He has also served as a Washington, D.C. Board of Education member and U.S. congressional aide.

"I will bring people back -- people who have pulled away over the years," Warren continued. "There is a whole new board of directors elected with me. We will organize major training sessions before we begin our work, taking a close look at the organization's priorities and operations, everything -- budget, finance, programs, etc."

Warren said there is a

perception that the NNPA has information in a thoughtful been "a closed and selective network" serving the needs of only some members. He promises to change that, taking steps to "open the organization to all members."

At the awards ceremony on June 27, the Sacramento Observer, received the conference's top honor, the highest overall score across all awards categories with a cumulative total of 154 points.

The Observer earned firstplace awards in Education Reporting, Business Reporting, Original Photography, Youth and Children Coverage, and Facebook Campaigns. It also ranked among the top three in several other areas, including Environment; Social and Criminal Justice; and Fashion, Beauty, and Lifestyle.

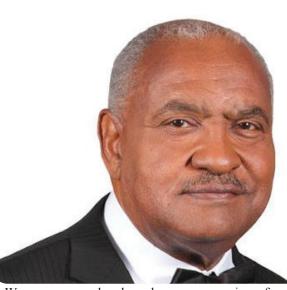
"Simply put: It feels really good to be honored in that way," Larry Lee, publisher of the Sacramento Observer, told CBM. "Our team works really hard to present news and

and compelling way. Everyone in our newsroom strives for excellence. They are the winners -- the people who take the time to create every story, every headline, every photo, every caption, every layout."

Lee added, "I always tell our team that we don't do what we do for awards, but it is always nice to be honored, to be recognized for our hard work."

The Los Angeles Sentinel also received three honors at the NNPA Awards for Religion Section coverage (first place); Community Service Reporting (second place); and Video Campaign (third place).

Both Warren and Lee emphasized the "critical" need for the Black Press to continue covering and centering Black stories and engaging Black audiences in the historic tradition of the Black press. Freedom's Journal, America's first African American newspaper, was published in New York City almost 200



Warren says he has been preparing for the job for more than 20 years.

years ago in 1827.

"We inform and educate our readers. That's what we do. That's what I've always done. We are always teaching when we write stories," said Warren, who first started working for the Black Press at 17. He is now 79.

Lee says he has confidence in Warren's leadership.

"He is forward-thinking, smart, strategic and courageous," said Lee. "He has tremendous knowledge on policy issues -- and hopefully his experience and insights can help position the NNPA

in a way that continues to empower the Black Press."

For Warren, focusing on helping to steer NNPA members as they continue to transition from print to digital is paramount. Although, he reminds them, "print is not dead."

"We have to figure out ways to bring more resources and dollars to our sector -- by innovation, with public policy. How can we help ourselves to be more sustainable as we continue to do the important

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The Number of National Black **Conventions That Are 'NOT' Inviting President Trump Continues to Grow**

By April Ryan BlackPressUSA Washington Bureau Chief and White House Correspondent

he National Association of **Black Journalists** (NABJ) says it is "not" extending an invitation to President **Donald Trump for its annual** convention in Cleveland. just weeks away in August.

The association's president, Ken Lemon, says, "The focus of this year's convention is the organization's 50th anniversary" as a Black journalists' advocacy group.

Lemon spoke by phone to Black Press USA, expressing, "at this point, there is not a reason to invite President Trump this year." Last year was a hard-fought presidential

campaign year, she added, inviting the sitting president the Black Journalists at last where "journalists had to speak to its membership. the opportunity to vet the Past invitees include thencandidate. I don't see the need to do that this time around," emphasized Lemon.

The irony for NABJ convention goers and other Black journalists is that they have witnessed a significant percentage of the organization's membership lose hard won jobs in the media industry as a direct result of the Trump administration's anti-DEI stance. In addition to job losses, hiring freezes, decreased opportunity for workplace promotion, and increased restraints on editorial content and subject matter have become the new normal for many Black journalists and journalists at large.

NABJ has a long history of

President Bill Clinton, who accepted their invitation and attended a convention.

The NAACP already announced it will not invite Trump to its Charlotte, North Carolina, Convention this week.

The National Urban League for the non-invite is that they convention five times during his previous administration,

year's NABJ convention.

That NABJ convention is where Trump infamously failed to fully comprehend the complexities of race in America and how they apply to then-Vice President Kamala Harris. Trump controversially stated that Harris had "all of a sudden turned Black."

Errin Haines, who is one of is also not interested in several candidates challenging having Trump appear at its Lemon for the top seat at the convention in Cleveland NABJ, was asked if President next week. Marc Morial, Trump did any damage as a President of the civil rights result of last year's NABJ organization, says one reason appearance. She replied, "He did damage to Black have invited Trump to their journalists and to Black America. And the way that interview was executed was and he did not respond. Morial not the opportunity for our says the other reason is what membership that it was for happened with Trump and him as a candidate. "

NABJ President Ken Lemon spoke by phone to Black Press USA, expressing, "at this point, there is not a reason to invite President Trump this year." Last year was a hard-fought presidential campaign year, she added, where "journalists had the opportunity to vet the candidate. I don't see the need to do that this time around," emphasized Lemon.

decision not to invite the president, Dion Rabouin, who is also seeking the NABJ's top post, said, "It makes sense, the way this administration has operated and the way it has dealt with Black journalists and Black people overall."

"And also," said Haines, "I lament that Vice President

When asked about the Harris, as the Democratic nominee, was not allowed to address our membership in the same week during our convention, even though she would have had to participate virtually, I think it still would have been a member benefit and something that should have been allowed in such a hugely consequential election."

TRUMP SIGNS "BIG BEAUTII INTO LAW; GOV. NEWSOM NEWSOM

Bo Tefu and Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

peaking at the White House, Donald Trump signed his "Big Beautiful" spending plan into law on the Fourth of July.

"Our country has had so much to celebrate this

Independence Day as we enter our 249th year, America is winning, winning, winning like never before," said Trump before putting his signature on the legislation.

"It is the most popular bill ever signed in the history of our country," according to Trump, predicting that the American economy will be a "rocket ship."

"It includes the largest tax cut in American history. The largest spending cut -- \$1.7 trillion - and yet you won't even notice it. It's just waste, fraud and abuse."

Gov. Gavin Newsom sharply criticized the Republicanled tax and spending law, calling it a "tragedy for the American people."

"This bill is a tragedy for health coverage at risk for

the American people, and a complete moral failure" said Newsom in a statement on July 3. "With this measure, Donald J. Trump's legacy is now forever cemented: he has created a more unequal, more indebted, and more dangerous America. Shame on him."

The bill would cut \$28.4 billion from federal Medicaid support to California, putting

millions and threatening the financial stability of hospitals and health clinics statewide. Newsom's office estimates that 686,000 California jobs could be lost due to the rollback of clean energy tax credits.

The Governor also warned the bill would hit middle-class families by raising childcare costs, limiting access to financial aid for college, and cutting food assistance for 3

million Americans. More than 17 million people nationwide could lose health coverage by 2034 as a result of Medicaid and premium subsidy cuts.

"This measure cements Trump's legacy," said Newsom. "He has created a more unequal, more indebted, and more dangerous America."

"Wrong Decision": Former Sen. Bradford **Questions Court Ruling Allowing** Colleges to Pay Athletes Directly

Bo Tefu and Antonio Ray Harvey | California Black Media

ormer California State Sen. Steven against a recent federal court ruling that permits colleges to pay student-athletes directly, calling it a "wrong decision" that could have long-term consequences for college sports and education.

Last month, U.S. District approximately \$20.5 million

Judge Claudia Wilken approved a landmark settlement in House v. NCAA, authorizing colleges nationwide to begin sharing revenue from their athletic programs with student athletes starting July 1. The ruling includes nearly \$2.8 billion in retroactive payments to Division I athletes who competed between 2016 and the present. Going forward, schools will be able to distribute direct payments to athletes, with annual caps reaching

by the 2025–26 academic year.

Although hailed by some as a major step forward for athlete compensation, Bradford -- who co-authored California's historic Senate Bill (SB) 206, the first law in the nation to allow college athletes to profit from their name, image, and likeness (NIL) -- voiced strong reservations.

"When Sen. Nancy Skinner and I introduced SB 206, our goal was to empower student athletes to negotiate directly with sponsors, endorsers, and companies – not to shift to receive compensation without financial control to the colleges themselves," Bradford told California Black Media (CBM).

"This ruling hands colleges too much power," he continued. "It allows them to dangle carrots - to manipulate these athletes' decisions about their education, future, and finances."

Before the ruling, college athletes could only earn income through third-party NIL deals. These arrangements, often facilitated by donor-funded collectives, enabled top players

direct school involvement.

Under the new settlement, those payments must now be routed through official school channels, and endorsement deals involving boosters will be subject to review for legitimacy.

NCAA President Charlie Baker said the agreement brings clarity to athlete compensation and allows schools to regain control over the process. However, major questions remain unresolved -- chief among them whether student

athletes should be considered employees and given the right to unionize.

Bradford argued that positioning schools as the gatekeepers of athlete pay not only alters the educational environment but also deepens inequalities between institutions.

"This makes student athletes more beholden to their universities than ever before," he said.

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The Sun-Reporter

EDITORIAL

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

Preedom's Journal. March 16, 1827.

REIGN OF TERROR

BY JULIANNE MALVEAUX

They came MacArthur Park on horseback and in riot gear, their faces covered and their weapons out. They were part of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) and the California National Guard. They came with more than a dozen military vehicles, as helicopters swarmed overhead. They came heavily armed with rifles and other weapons. They came, clearly, ready to rumble, armed to excess. Why?

Local Angelenos, who might ordinarily be hanging out, selling food and toys, or simply enjoying the day, were warned that immigration might be out. Many are too fearful to go out, but a summer day camp for children was

operational. Many of the more than intimidation. It is young people attending the camp had parents who were working – camp was summer childcare. Camp counselors took the children inside to shield them from the chaos. Still, many of the children were frightened. A little girl, interviewed on CNN, wept as she spoke of her fear and the fact that she hoped her mother would come home from work. LA Mayor Karen Bass described the military action as "outrageous an un-American".

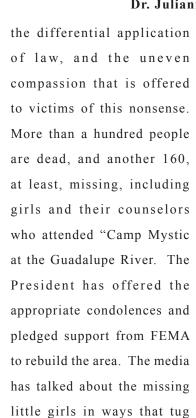
Why did more than 90 heavily armed ICE officers, carrying rifles and riding Humvees descend on urban MacArthur Park in an area that is heavily immigrant? This is nothing

manifestation of the reign of terroir that the President has ushered in. With no respect for the law and order than he so frequently touts, this impersonation of a human being has authorized a group of out of control zealots to inflict fear on an entire neighborhood.

It doesn't matter whether residents are legal (which most are) or not. These Gestapo-like "law enforcement" officers can stop anyone who they suspect of being illegal. If the person is not carrying the appropriate identification, they may be taken to a temporary holding facility. You might be fingerprinted, interviewed,

(including your telephone) may be confiscated. You will be forced to prove that you are legal, guilty until proven innocent. This is fearful for both legal and illegal migrants, but it ought to be an occasion of fear for all of us. Lots of Black folks could be mistaken as Latino and held. Who really carries their passport with them? (I just put a picture of mine on my phone. One can never be too careful).

We are living in a maniacal oligarchy where the whims of one man are dictating the ways that we live, especially in blue states like California. The stunt of raiding MacArthur Park, terrorizing children, and flexing terrorist muscles circumvents the law. But then almost everything this administration has done, from firing federal workers and Biden appointees to playing with tariffs, to criticizing the head of the Federal Reserve and pressuring him to quit, circumvents the law. In the mind of this deranged Commander in Chief, there is no law except his law, and while he makes it up as he moves along, many of these moves are outlined in Project 2025.



at the heartstrings. All the

condolences and support are

appropriate. But what about

the little boys and girls who

went to MacArthur Park for

about those affected by floods in Kentucky and Virginia, who have not curried favor with this President. Compassion should not be partisan. Traumatized children, regardless of race or immigrant status, must be managed compassionately.

In a reign of terror, though, some children are to be cherished and other to be terrorized. The armed raid of MacArther Park, which yielded not a single arrest, was a nothing more than intimidation. Kudos to Mayor Bass and Governor Gavin Newsome for resisting this nonsense. Caution to all of us. We are living in a reign of terror and the their summer camp? Is there mentally impaired are now support for them? And what in charge of our country.



Dr. Julianne Malveaux

Rising Waters Will Not Drown the American Spirit

By Bem Jealous

n the Fourth of Trump signed his "megabill."

The law boosts the dying fossil fuel industry with tens of billions of taxpayer dollars.

It invites an additional 470 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year by 2035 – that's the equivalent annual emissions of more than 100 million gas-powered cars. And it aims to stop dead in its tracks the clean energy transition and the green manufacturing jobs boom the Inflation Reduction Act was already starting to create.

Just hours later, a climatefueled storm settled over and dumped four months worth of rain on Texas Hill Country. The Guadalupe River rose 26 feet within 45 minutes. The resulting flash floods killed at least 104 people – at the time of this writing, although that number will go up - expected it" and it was a

death toll includes dozens July, Donald of young girls attending the Camp Mystic youth camp.

> This disaster was not a random event. It was a crisis written by the climate crisis and made far worse by the types of policies being pushed by this administration everyday.

Before the absurdly named One Big Beautiful Bill Act landed on Trump's desk, his administration had already begun gutting America's frontline defenses against climate disasters - like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's climate labs, the National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. As questions abound about why parts of the flood-impacted region did not receive adequate warning about the floods, Trump insisted that "nobody

mostly in Kerr County. That "once in 100 years" event.

or detained. Your belongings

But storms like this, as well as increased flooding from the Guadalupe River, were expected - and predicted. The US Geological Survey another vital body Trump is trying to eviscerate issued a report to that effect in 2019. The science is clear: warmer air holds more moisture, intensifying storms and accelerating flood risk. We're now witnessing the violent proof of these predictions.

According to UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain, "this kind of recordshattering rain (caused by slow-moving torrential thunderstorms) event is *precisely* that which is increasing the fastest in [a] warming climate."

As for the "one in 100 years" claim, those once-ina-century extreme weather events are now happening far more often thanks to the climate crisis! Between would be a "deal" for the

just 2015-2019, one St. Louis suburb had three major floods and at least two of them were considered "1-in-100-year events."

What is most outrageous is

It is not hard to see how the climate crisis became a political debate. Decades of anti-science propaganda from the coal, oil, and gas industries. Politicians bought and paid for by fossil fuel oligarchs. A current administration with a cabinet full of industry shills.

Big Oil alone spent a whopping \$445 million through the 2024 election cycle to influence Trump and Congress. A staggering figure to be sure, that does not include donations funneled through dark money groups (likely tens of millions of dollars more - at least). And it still falls short of the \$1 billion Donald Trump asked the country's oil executives to kick in to his campaign -- an amount Trump insisted



Ben Jealous

was willing to give them.

But it is high time that our leaders, at every level and of every party, stop kowtowing to a toxic and unnecessary industry built on death, illness, and poisoning our communities. It is time they treat this crisis as a struggle for survival – a fight for the future our children deserve.

As the people of Texas grieve and the country grieves with them, their pain is our warning.

We are at a crossroads: We can double down on denial and let superstorms, heatwaves, droughts, floods,

industry because of what he and fires determine our fate. Or we can lead – with science, resilience, courage, and a recommitment to our values.

> If we harness our outrage and come together to fight like hell for our collective future, we will win. Because when people stand up and demand a safe planet, nothing - not even rising water - can drown the American spirit.

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Affection For Things Above

Lesson Text: Colossians 3:1-17 Related Scriptures: Psalms 31:19-24; Romans 6:1-14l 8L18-25; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 1:3-14 Place: from Rome

Golden Text: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Colossians 3:17).

Dr. Tony Evans author and scholar in God's Word states in his commentary, "Unfortunately, many modern Christians are out of their minds. What do I mean?

Well, if you have bad habits that you can't control, you have a mind problem. Actions originate in thinking. You may assume you can just break your bad habit, but you must begin to pry it loose in your mind. If there is no change to how you think, there will be no substantive change in how you live. This is why Scripture calls for "the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). What a powerful and truthful statement. The Apostle Paul wants us to understand that our minds will determine our wellbeing. The only source for a victorious new mind is where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God (see Romans 3:1). Therefore, we

above, not on earthly things (see also Romans 3:2). Dr. Evans reports, "The problem is that too many of us frequently change the channel to faulty programming. Some embrace unbiblical data from the world and then wonder why their lives are a wreck. We'll never become spiritual by using the world's methodology (2:20)" Amen again, Dr. Tony Evans. Victorious living requires a shift of focus. We must have a heavenly mindset for earthly action. Paul is not saying, "Think about heaven all day, so you will know how to live when you get there." Rather, he says in essence, "Take a good look at heaven's perspective on every issue, so you will know how to live on earth." We need a kingdom mentality if we expect to receive heavenly benefits. Amen to that! Set your mind in this mindset means "to seek or strive for earnestly" (Colossians 3:1-2, The Tony Evans Commentary). Also, Paul reminds believers of faith, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. That is, concentrate your concern on the eternal, not the temporal. "Fix [your] eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). Amen. To aid the Colossians develop a new mentality, Paul reminds them of their new identity. First, he says, you died. Your old life

are to set [our] minds on things

has no more power over you. Second, your life is hidden with Christ in God. In fact, Christ is not merely to be in your life; He is to be the total sum of your life (read in Colossians 3:4). We have been "raised with Christ" and "seated" with him (2:13; 3:1). If Christ is your new identity (that is, if you're a Christian) and heaven is your new location (Heavenly home) (you're physically on earth but participating in the spiritual realm), then you're called to live from that new perspective. Decisions are to be informed by an eternal, heavenly perspective rather than an imperfect, earthly one. We need a Christian view of the world—a kingdom worldview. Amen. Glory to God. Thank you, Dr. Evans. (Colossians 3:3-4). Paul's words in 3:1-4 are crucial and essential. But we can't stop there. Though you have heavenly blessings available to you through faith in Christ, you must access them by taking heed to God's Word. Paul calls Christians to put to death what belongs to [the] earthly nature to and to kick that earthly perspective out! Don't give it a chance to breathe or rear its ugly head. Paul makes mention of a list of common sins that so easily beset us. Keep in mind because of these sins done in and out of the body, God's wrath is coming (see Romans 3:6). You once walked in them (see Romans 3:7), Paul says, but you've been saved and cleansed by

Christ. You've been "raised" and "seated" with him (read Romans 3:1). As Paul argues in Romans, chapter 6, why offer yourself as a slave to those things from which you've been freed? Why continue to participate in things that you're ashamed of? My God. So true! (Colossians 3:5-7). In Colossians 3:8-11, we find Paul discussing "put to death" the sins of "your earthly nature." Here he says put away even anger and filthy language (Romans 3:8). They don't belong in your life. When you have taken a shower, you naturally put on clean clothes. They complement what the shower was designed to do. Jesus Christ cleansed you by his blood. Therefore, you must ask yourself concerning your actions, "Will those clothes match what Jesus did in my life? Or will they dirty up what Jesus made clean?" Instead of wearing the dirty grave clothes of the old self-by doing things like telling lies to one another-put on the clean clothes of the new self (see Romans 3:9-10). Paul lists a variety of ways people sin with the mouth (Romans 3:8-9). But because Christ has set you free, your mouth no longer rules you. You're no longer a slave. You have a new, domesticated mouth as part of your "new self." So, use it rightly. This is what it looks like to be renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator (Romans 3:10). And God does not have favorites, because

Christ has first place in everything (see Romans 3:11). What are some of the clothes of "the new self" that we need to wear (3:9-10)? Paul tells the Colossians what to put on: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (3:12). These are the counterparts to the dirty clothes of "the old self" (Romans 3:8-9). And over all of this, we are to put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity (Romans 3:14). If the qualities in Romans 3:12 comprise the Christian's new wardrobe, love is the overcoat. One way we manifest the characteristics of the new self is by forgiving one another (Romans 3:13). Have you learned to forgive others for the wrong they offend you? Some believers harbor unforgiveness, and it results in perpetual anger and bitterness. Why? Because, as far as they are concerned, offenses committed against them linger like unpaid bills, and they demand payment. fnot asked for forgiveness. Or it may come in the form of transactional forgiveness, which involves the confession of the offender, his repentance, and reconciliation. What makes forgiveness possible is recognizing that the Lord has forgiven you (Romans 3:13). making sure he approves of your actions. (Colossians 3:16-17). Be Blessed Saints!!!

A News Journal Dedicated To The Cause Of The People

Little Zion **Baptist Church**

1245 Divisadero Street San Francisco, CA

Sunday School Morning Worship Evening Worship

9:00am

El Bethel Missionary **Baptist Church**

Rev. Keva L. McNeill, Pastor

1320 Golden Gate San Francisco, CA 921-4850, 921-0878

9: am Church School Children's Church 10:am Bible Study 1-2pm & 6:30-

7:30pm Prayer meeting

Wednesday 12:00 Noon

St. Peter's Missionary **Baptist Church**

THE

1601 Newcomb Avenue San Francisco, CA. 94124

Rev. Dr. J.P. Alexander

Church School 9:30 am Morning Worship 11: am Tuesday Usher meeting 7:pi Wednesday Bible Study 7: pm uesday Choir Rehearsal Prayer and Teacher meeting

Wednesday 7:30PM

Neighborhood **Baptist Church**

SUN-REPORTER

608 Haves Street San Francisco, CA

Rev. Lane Hawkins

Sunday School 9:30 Morning Worship

vening Worship

Bible Class Monday

Missionary **Baptist Church**

Cornerstone

6190 3rd Street San Francisco, CA 94124 Phone: (415) 822-4071 Fax: (415) 822-0156

Rev. Kenneth R. Reece Pastor

9:00 am undav School Norning Worship 10:25: qm Communion Every 1st Sunday Baptism Every 2nd Sunday Prayer Meeting/Bible Study 6:30-8:30 pm Wednesday Abundant Life Recovery Ministry 6:30 pm Mondays

Evergreen **Baptist Church**

6270 3rd Street San Francisco, CA.

Rev. Jackey Wilson Pastor

9:15 Sunday School Morning Worship 10:40: Teacher's Meeting 6: pm

Sr. Mission Children's Bible Study 5: pm Childrens L Bible Study Saturday 5: pm 6:45 pm Food Pantry 10-11 am

Ascension **Baptist Church**

1311 Quesada ave. San Francisco, CA. 94124 (415) 822-9488

> Rev. Anthony Anderson

10:15: Morning Worship

Bible Study Tuesday 6:30 PM Church School Wednesday 7: pm Communion every 1st Sunday

Shekinah Christian **Fellowship**

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Ella Henderson, Bishop & Founder of SCF

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Ebenezer **Baptist Church**

275 Divisadero Street San Francisco, CA.

unday School Morning Worship 10:45: gm Evening Worship 7:30 pn

Mount Calvary Baptist Church

4000 Middlefield Rd. (Cubberly Community CTR) Palo Alto, CA. 94306 (650) 569-6944

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The Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII) invites qualified applicants to submit proposals to design and implement a comprehensive, culturally competent survey directed to the entire currently identified community of 2,189 COP holders. The results of the survey may result in adjustments to marketing and outreach practices for affordable housing opportunities.

WHO WE ARE SEEKING

Applicants must have experience with data analysis, and experience in working with communities impacted by Redevelopment. The ideal applicant will have experience in developing and delivering survey instruments, as well as data analysis of all survey responses.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The successful consultant will be obligated to fulfill OCII's Equal Opportunity Program. This project has a 50% SBE participation goal. First consideration will be given to local San Francisco-based SBEs.

HOW TO APPLY

REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY FOR RFP SUBMISSIONS

To register please email Omar Abdulla: omar.abdulla@sfgov.org

A pre-submission meeting will be held on Wednesday July 16, 2025 at 9:30 AM via Webex. Although not mandatory, attendance is highly recommended

> Submission Deadline: 4:00 PM, Thursday, July 31, 2025 Contact for Questions: Pamela Sims Pam.Sims@sfgov.org

Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure



View Full RFP at: http://sfocii.org/rfps-rfqs-bids

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Devon Crawford Continued from page 1

the same time, he served as associate minister at Myrtle Baptist Church in Newton, Massachusetts.

Crawford has long been involved in social justice work. In addition to his longtime work with the NAACP, after leaving the Trotter Institute he went on to work for Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia the spiritual home of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the current church led by U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock. At Ebenezer, strong faith voice lending its Brown added. "The Crawford served as the National Executive Director of the Multifaith Initiative to End Mass Incarceration.

"This is a multi-faith coalition dealing with mass incarceration," said Crawford. "The country we live in leads the world in mass incarceration, with 2.3 million people in jail—one million of whom are Black. This does not include people on probation and parole. We are working with churches, synagogues, and mosques-people of faith—to help change public policy. There needs to be a

voice to the issue."

It was Crawford's activism that intrigued Rev. Brown during the search for a successor. He said the church has "a certain criteria and standard for leadership."

"Anyone who will be the pastor of this church, Third Baptist, has to have a prophetic social justice view of the church," Brown continued. "Reverend Crawford comes out of the same soil."

"He is a man of God that was sent, and we accepted him after he was embedded,"

congregation was—and has been—excited about him. He

can sing and preach. He is a thinker, an administrator, and an educator. He has all the letters and the spirit."

While he officially assumed the role of Senior Pastor at Third Baptist this month, Rev. Crawford has been at the church since February, learning about San Francisco, the Black community, and the church itself. It has been a healthy transition from Reverend Brown to Reverend Crawford, and since

attendance has increased.

"Third Baptist has always been a prophetic ministry," said Crawford. "We are a Black church, and we don't shy away from the issues affecting people. We are going outside of the walls and to the people."

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There are many issues affecting Black people in the Western Addition and the greater San Francisco area—from increasing the Black population in the city by building more affordable housing, to job creation, to supporting new and existing

Black-owned businesses. People come to Third Baptist from all over San Francisco, as well as from Oakland, Vallejo, Antioch, and throughout the Peninsula.

"As a pastor, I have a moral voice in the city and the Bay Area to speak to the needs of the community," said Crawford. "Our people are deeply suspicious of political and civic leaders. Pastors have a moral voice, as we witness the lack of normalcy in this country. We need more public services for the least of these. We need a revolution of values."

Prop 36 Continued from page 1

Public Defender for Los Angeles County, shared with CBM that Prop 36 cases have risen since the law went into effect on Dec. 18, 2024.

"Poverty, homelessness, drug addiction, and mental illness are driving factors," he says.

"Prop 36 disproportionately hurts Black, Brown, and immigrant communities," García said. "We are already under-resourced. Prop 36 and its treatment mandates are meaningless if there's no bed, no place for someone to go to."

Before Prop 36 became law, the L.A. County jails had a population of just over 11,000 inmates, but it quickly rose above 12,000, and reached over 13,000 in May, before falling to the "12,900 range" before the 4th of July holiday.

"We saw 12 arrests before Prop 36 on these types of offenses and since May of 2025, we are looking at 594 arrests," García said.

According to the L.A. County's Public Defender's Office's website, 700 attorneys are employed within 32 office locations. Garcia said each public defender has a case load, and Prop 36 is increasingly becoming a burden for the largest county in the state.

Garcia continued, "As the public defender of Los Angeles County, the largest and the first public defender office in the country, I'm committed to standing with every group that understands Prop 36 is doing more harm than good."

Prop 36 emerged as a policy response to rising concerns across the state about crimes like shoplifting, smash-andgrabs and other forms of property theft. The bill's language and provisions, in many ways, respond to Prop 47, legislation passed in 2014

that significantly lowered

penalties for a range of non-

serious, nonviolent drug and

property crimes. Prop 47 reclassified certain felonies as misdemeanors, downgrading punishments for specific nonviolent crimes like drug possession for personal use; petty theft, shoplifting,

and receipt of stolen property

under \$950; and forgery and

According to a report Public Policy Institute of California

check fraud under \$950.

(PPIC) report, early data from Prop 36 implementation shows that prosecutors have filed thousands of new felony drug and theft charges.

his arrival, he said church

For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, Gov. Gavin Newsom has allocated about \$110 million in funding for Prop. 36 implementation. About \$65 million of it has been specifically earmarked for counties. Another \$50 million will go to behavioral health departments and \$15 million to support courts and public defenders across the state.

Newsom, who did not support Prop. 36 before it was added as a ballot measure, explained to CBM during a Zoom call on June 26 how his administration computed the Prop 36 funding.

"We are estimating that it would increase at a cost of over \$130,000 per year (for each prison inmate)," Newsom said. "That would put pressure on some of the other criminal justice reforms that have been proven very successful, and (Prop 36) would slow down the reduction of the total number of prison closures at a cost to the taxpayers," Newsom shared.

Legislative Republicans, however, were advocating for \$400 million to support Prop 36 implementation.

The lawmakers also pushed ongoing funding.

"This initiative was passed by the people, and I think they wanted ongoing funding," Sen. Tony Strickland (R-Huntington Beach)

told CBM in his Capitol

Swing Space Annex office. "I can't recall the last initiative that passed all 58 counties -- even those liberal counties like Marin and San Francisco voted for this."

Strickland said \$110 million doesn't scratch the surface.

"I don't think \$400 million scratches the surface either, but it will at least get it going," Strickland said. "What the governor did fund is a (highspeed rail) train to nowhere, and everyone knows it's never going to be built," he added.

Yoel Haile, the Director of the Criminal Justice Program at the ACLU of Northern California (NorCal ACLU), penned a commentary about the number of Prop 36 cases that are popping up in the Bay Area.

Michael Jackson Estate Files Court Petition Alleging \$213 Million **Extortion Plot by Frank Cascio**

By Stacy Brown

he Estate of Michael Jackson has filed an explosive petition in Los Angeles Superior Court accusing Frank Cascio, a man once described as Jackson's "second family," of masterminding a \$213 million extortion plot to force payouts by threatening to flip decades of public support into salacious allegations about the King of Pop.

The court action, exclusively obtained by Black Press USA, reveals in unprecedented detail how the estate contends that Cascio and unnamed associates used their proximity to Jackson—once proudly touted in books and interviewsto demand a fortune from the most successful celebrity estate in history. "For over 30 years, these individuals held themselves out as Michael Jackson's most passionate defenders," the petition states, quoting Cascio's repeated assertions under oath and on national television—that Jackson never harmed him or any child. "It was a shakedown," the estate's lawyers charged.

Decades-Long Public Defense

As recently as 2011, Cascio with the Michael Jackson

promoted his memoir My Friend Michael, describing a warm, fatherly relationship with Jackson. "I want to be precise and clear, on the record, so that everyone can read and understand," he wrote. "Michael's love for children was innocent, and it was profoundly misunderstood." He doubled down in dozens of interviews. During a 2005 ABC Primetime Live broadcast, Cascio—then using the name Frank Tyson declared: "If Michael ever laid a finger on me, I would not be in this chair right now." In a 2011 sit-down with Wendy Williams, he said with conviction, "Nothing at all. And that's what makes me so upset," when asked whether Jackson had ever acted inappropriately. Even years later, one of the respondents continued to insist Jackson was a target of "liars," telling Oprah Winfrey during a televised interview: "Michael couldn't harm a fly. He's such a kind and gentle soul. Michael was a target." In 2019, when HBO's controversial Leaving Neverland documentary ignited a fresh wave of criticism and threatened multiple Jacksonrelated projects—including Cirque du Soleil's "Michael Jackson ONE"—estate co-executors John Branca

and John McClain, along

Company, sought Cascio's support. Instead, they say, Cascio turned on them.

A Secret Settlement Facing mounting public pressure and what they describe as repeated threats to invent new claims, the estate entered into a confidential settlement on January 10, 2020. Under the agreement, Cascio and his associates would receive millions over five years—\$3 million each, according to sources familiar with the negotiations—in exchange for comprehensive waivers, a sweeping nondisclosure clause, and an ironclad promise to arbitrate any disputes. The estate said it acted reluctantly to protect Jackson's children and preserve projects that would cement the late artist's legacy. "We have a fiduciary responsibility to maximize the income of the estate," Branca said in an earlier interview. "Our counsel insisted we sign the agreement. They didn't want it disclosed either because Michael's fans would have gone after these people." The settlement contained an unusually strict provision barring even the disclosure of the agreement's existence.

The \$213 Million Demand

Despite having collected payments under that deal, Cascio, through lawyers, allegedly re-emerged in

July 2024 with a stunning ultimatum: Pay \$213 million more, or face a media spectacle. According to the court filing, Cascio's legal team—then led by attorney Howard Kingthreatened to "expand the circle of knowledge" and leak allegations to the buyer of Jackson's \$600 million music catalog if their demands were not met. In one email sent August 29, 2024, King wrote, "We expect a substantive response by the end of day tomorrow. Otherwise, we will be forced to expand the 'circle of knowledge.'" The estate called this an extortionate threat designed to pressure them into paying for silence. The estate responded by initiating a confidential arbitration proceeding on September 17, 2024, accusing Cascio of civil extortion and anticipatory breach of contract. Days later, Cascio's lawyers delivered draft lawsuits "riddled with outlandish scurrilous allegations" that directly contradicted his years of public statements.

The Geragos Factor

By January 2025, Cascio had replaced his counsel with Mark Geragos—ironically, Jackson's former defense lawyer who had proclaimed to Good Morning America that "there's nothing sexual going on" and that Jackson



The court action, exclusively obtained by Black Press USA, reveals in unprecedented detail how the estate contends that Cascio and unnamed associates used their proximity to Jackson—once proudly touted in books and interviews to demand a fortune from the most successful celebrity estate in history.

was "100 percent innocent." In his 2013 book Mistrial, Geragos wrote of Jackson's 2005 acquittal: "The evidence was overwhelming that he never touched this kid, and the entire thing was a huge shakedown." He also appeared on The Megyn Kelly Show in December 2021 to blast Leaving Neverland, calling it "a complete rewrite of history" and an "absolute travesty." However, now Geragos has taken the opposite stance, representing Cascio in a renewed effort to file public litigation. According to the estate's filing, Geragos lowered the demand to \$44

million but warned that if the estate refused, they would sue for defamation, emotional distress, and an alleged "cover-up."

The estate insists these claims are "bogus" and barred by the original settlement's releases and arbitration clauses. The petition points out that the agreement explicitly requires arbitration for any disputes, even the question of whether a claim is arbitrable. "The question of arbitrability is itself a question to be resolved finally by the arbitrator," the contract states.

Sun Reporter 7-10-25.indd 7



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