

Century-Old Racist US Supreme Court Cases Still Rule Over Millions Of Americans

By Eric Bellone

Suffolk Univ.

The 4 million inhabitants of five U.S. territories – Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Northern Marianas Islands, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands – do not have the full protection of the Constitution, because of a series of Supreme

Court cases dating back to 1901 that are based on archaic, often racist language and reasoning.

A call from Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch to overturn more than a century of precedent has been joined by advocates for equal citizenship for everyone born in those U.S. territories. If the court decides to take up the

question, it would review a long-standing status quo.

Now, no U.S. citizen living in any of those places can vote for president. They don't have a voting representative in Congress, either.

But this inferiority is inconsistent. Puerto Ricans are American citizens and can vote in federal

elections if they reside in a U.S. state, but not if they live in Puerto Rico or one of the other territories.

However, American Samoans are not U.S. citizens, so they can't vote for president even if they live in the 50 states. That is being challenged in federal courts.

It's all a result of a political and legal mindset that is more than 100 years old, but is still in force.

Up until the end of the 19th century, everyone assumed that all U.S. territories would, eventually, become full-fledged states, whose residents would become U.S. citizens with rights fully protected by the Constitution. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 outlined the process: As new lands opened to Americans, Congress would initially appoint a governor and judges for the territory and establish a rule of law. When the territorial population exceeded 5,000 adult men, voters would elect a legislature and send a nonvoting delegate to Congress. When the territory reached a population of 60,000, the territory would petition for statehood and be admitted to the union.

That process assumed the territories would be in North America and that most of the territorial

population would be people of European descent. Those assumptions changed when the United States claimed Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam in 1898 as spoils of war at the end of the Spanish-American War. Puerto Rico and Guam are still U.S. territories.

That expansion gave Americans a clear sense of the nation's purpose and power in the world, summarized effectively by U.S. Sen. Albert Beveridge of Indiana in a congressional speech on Jan. 9, 1900: "[God] has made us the master organizers of the world

to establish system where chaos reigns. He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among the savage and servile peoples."

Starting in 1901, a set of court cases, collectively called the "Insular Cases," created new constitutional law regarding the United States' relation with its territories. They began when import companies challenged tariffs imposed on goods transported from the newly acquired territories into the

(See **RACIST RULE**, P. 2)

Hamilton, Michelle Obama Speak About Roe v. Wade



MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Lewis Hamilton dipped into the Roe v. Wade debate shortly after arriving in the United States. He protested a ban on wearing jewelry while racing by sporting three watches, eight rings and multiple necklaces in Miami.

And as the seven-time world champion prepared for Formula One's debut in South Florida, Hamilton hosted former first lady Michelle Obama in his pit for practice and qualifying.

Hamilton remains as much a change agent 16 years into his career as when he became the first Black winner in F1 in 2008. The British racer is now 37 years old, is the winningest driver in series history and is tied with Michael Schumacher with a record seven titles. Hamilton remains the only Black driver at the most elite level of motorsports.

He uses his platform to speak on issues of social justice and race, human rights and protection of the LGBTQ community. Hamilton speaks while racing in countries with questionable human rights records, or when an issue arises in which he feels his voice can lend support.

While in New York earlier this week, Hamilton took to Instagram to speak on the potential Supreme Court decision to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision and end the nationwide right to legal abortion.

"I love being in the States, but I can't ignore what's going on right now and what some in the government are trying to do to the women

(See **HAMILTON OBAMA**, P. 2)



NC STATE EMPLOYEES GETTING EXTRA DAY OFF FOR BOOSTER SHOT

(AP)—North Carolina state employees will get an extra day of vacation for receiving a COVID-19 booster, Gov. Roy Cooper announced Wednesday as state government uses a new incentive to increase vaccination rates.

Cooper signed an executive order that provides the leave to permanent, probationary or time-limited workers whose Cabinet-level agencies report to him. The extra time off will be given to those who have already received the first COVID-19 booster or those who show documentation by Aug. 31 of receiving one.

Starting this week, Cooper is also pausing a policy that began last September in which unvaccinated employees would have to be tested at least once a week. His office cited relatively low infection rates and pointed out that 78 percent of workers were vaccinated as of late April, compared to 65 percent last September.

Weekly testing requirements may continue for unvaccinated Cabinet agency employees in health care facilities or prisons, Cooper's office said.

The extra leave should be available for most workers by early June, and it must be used by next March 31, according to the Office of State Human Resources. Part-time workers will get prorated leave.

WOMAN DIES AFTER GETTING ARM TRAPPED IN BREAD MACHINE

SELMA (AP)—An employee of restaurant in North Carolina has died after she got her arm trapped in an industrial bread machine for almost 90 minutes, officials said.

A spokeswoman for the state Occupational Safety and Health Division confirmed Wednesday that Vicky Lopez, 44, died Tuesday evening after she was taken by helicopter to Duke University Hospital.

It was reported that Lopez was cleaning the machine when she became trapped. Selma Fire Chief Phillip McDaniel said small tools were needed to free the woman from the machine. McDaniel said it appeared the machine remained on while Lopez tried to clean it.

The division spokeswoman says an investigation is underway and



Two people from American Samoa who work for the territory's government made different choices about U.S. citizenship. Filipino Ilaoa, at left, became a citizen; Bonnelley Pa'uulu remains a U.S. national without full citizenship rights and privileges. AP Photo/Jennifer Sinco Kellehe

Court Mulls Ruling On Rep. Cawthorn

By Gary D. Robertson

Associated Press

A federal appeals court on Tuesday questioned whether a lower court got it right when it blocked a challenge of North Carolina Rep. Madison Cawthorn's candidacy by voters who cited a section of the Constitution addressing insurrection as disqualifying him.

Three judges on the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., heard arguments in a lawsuit that the first-term Republican congressman filed to derail the formal challenge sent to the

State Board of Elections from going forward.

U.S. District Judge Richard Myers ruled for Cawthorn in March and prevented the board from formally examining whether he should remain on ballots, and the voters appealed. Cawthorn is one of eight candidates on the May 17 primary ballot for the 11th Congressional District. There's no timetable on when the judicial panel will rule, but the court did accelerate the appeal process.

The challenge focused on Cawthorn's involvement in the rally that preceded the U.S. Capitol riot in January 2021 at which the

presidential election outcome was questioned. The voters cite Section 3 of the 14th Amendment ratified in 1868 that is designed to prevent congressmen who had fought on the Confederate side during the Civil War from returning to Congress.

Similar challenges have been filed against members of Congress in other states who have been strong supporters of former President Donald Trump, including Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene. A Georgia state judge recently heard testimony from Greene but has yet to issue a finding. They will be

passed on to Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, who will ultimately determine whether Greene is qualified.

Some circuit judges Tuesday raised doubts about Myers' logic and those of Cawthorn's attorney, who said an 1872 law that removed office-holding disqualifications from most ex-Confederates also exempt current members of Congress like Cawthorn today.

"Why would Congress do this anyway?" asked U.S. Circuit Judge Jim Wynn, a nominee of

(See **CAWTHORN**, P. 2)

Hospital Sued Over Black Mother's Death

By Brian Melley

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (AP)—The husband of a Black woman who died hours after childbirth in 2016 sued Cedars-Sinai Medical Center last Wednesday, saying she bled to death because of a culture of racism at the renowned Los Angeles hospital.

Charles Johnson IV said he discovered the disparity in care

women of color receive at Cedars compared to White women during depositions in his wrongful death lawsuit that is scheduled to go to trial this week in Los Angeles Superior Court.

"There's no doubt in my mind that my wife would be here today and be here Sunday celebrating Mother's Day with her boys if she was a Caucasian woman," Johnson said at a news conference outside the hospital. "The

reality is that on April 12, 2016, when we walked into Cedars-Sinai hospital for what we expected to be the happiest day of our lives, the greatest risk factor that Kira Dixon Johnson faced was racism."

Johnson died about 12 hours after having a scheduled cesarean section that was performed in 17 minutes to deliver the couple's second son, Langston.

"This is sloppy. It was butch-

ery," attorney Nicholas Rowley said. "It shocked everybody that we deposed, all the health care providers, even the head of (obstetrics) here, the head of labor and delivery, looked at it and said 'No, I've never seen one done that fast.'"

Despite signs she was bleeding internally and over the desperate pleas of her husband, Kira John-

(See **HOSPITAL SUED**, P. 2)

HBCU Med Schools Tackle Transplants

By Kat Stafford

Associated Press

A new initiative aimed at increasing the number of Black Americans registered as organ donors and combating disparities among transplant recipients was announced Thursday by a

coalition that includes the four medical schools at the nation's historically Black colleges and universities.

The collaboration follows a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report, "Realizing the Promise of Equity in the Organ Transplantation

System," that found significant disparities in the nation's organ transplant system. It was released earlier this year and commissioned by Congress, which wanted to examine equity within the donor organ procurement, allocation and distribution system.

The initiative—which was cre-

ated by the Consortium of HBCU Medical Schools, the Organ Donation Advocacy Group and Association of Organ Procurement Organizations—plans to create new opportunities for Black medical and nursing students to shadow organ procurement organizations and transplant centers and collaborate with partner HBCUs that offer programs in nursing, public health, public policy and health care administration. The initiative announcement was shared with The Associated Press first.

The HBCU consortium behind the initiative includes the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Sciences in Los Angeles, Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., and the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta.

The initiative will have health professionals speaking to K-12 students in Black communities about the field and career pathways. It will also focus on community education, including creating accessible materials about transplantation for dialysis patients and hosting health fairs and blood drives.

Concerns about equitable access to organ transplants have existed for decades in America. But

(See **HBCU MED SCHOOLS**, P. 2)



STATE BRIEFS

Continued from page 1

that it could take up to six months to complete.

ATLANTA AGREES TO PAY NEARLY \$1M TO MAN SHOT BY OFFICER

ATLANTA, Ga. (AP)—The city of Atlanta has agreed to pay nearly \$1 million to a North Carolina man who was shot and injured by a police officer as he was leaving an event downtown in February 2017.

The Atlanta City Council on Monday approved a \$999,000 settlement for Noel Hall. Hall and his family had come to Atlanta because his son was participating in a supercross event.

As he and his wife were leaving with their grandchildren around 10:30 p.m., Atlanta police Sgt. Mathieu Cadeau, who was working off duty as security, told Hall he couldn't make a left turn. When Hall made the turn anyway, Cadeau fired into the vehicle. A bullet hit Hall in the arm and exited through his chest, barely missing his heart.

The police department fired Cadeau in May 2017. He was indicted in October 2018 on charges of aggravated assault, violation of his oath and reckless conduct. Cadeau pleaded guilty in early 2020 and was sentenced to 30 years of probation, according to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

ANOTHER NC MINI-SESSION BEGINS, WITH NO ACTION EXPECTED

(AP)—The North Carolina General Assembly will bypass work this week during another reconvened session that had been previously announced to take up any unexpected business.

The House and Senate gavelled in their floor meetings at midday Wednesday, and both adjourned within 15 minutes. The meetings were sparsely attended.

There are no plans for recorded votes before the session ended Friday, according to House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger.

When lawmakers held their last voting session in March, they scheduled two mini-sessions in April and May in which they could act if needed. No action occurred during the three-day session in April, either.

The full load of state lawmakers will return to Raleigh soon. The General Assembly's traditional budget-adjusting session begins May 18. Berger said in an interview that he and Moore are aiming to complete that session by July 1.

NC FOREST FIRE HALFWAY CONTAINED; PARKWAY STRETCH REOPENS

PISGAH FOREST (AP)—A section of the Blue Ridge Parkway in western North Carolina has reopened to traffic as firefighters have made progress controlling a fire in the Pisgah National Forest, authorities said on Saturday.

The Barnett Branch fire covers 370 acres but is now 50 percent contained, the U.S. Forest Service's Pisgah Ranger District said in a news release.

The parkway had been closed earlier in the week from U.S. Highway 276 to the Pisgah Inn. Portions of the Yellow Gap Road and some trails remain closed. Trails were expected to stay closed for a few more days due to the fire and its resulting hazards, the release said.

Thirty U.S. Forest Service firefighters were assigned to work the wildfire on Saturday, the ranger district said. The fire's cause remains under investigation.

The fire's scope grew compared to Friday because firefighters performed activities designed to remove fuels between containment lines and the fire's edge to control the intensity of the blaze better.

The Pisgah Inn was not in imminent danger and no evacuations have been ordered.

HAMILTON OBAMA

Continued from page 1

who live here," Hamilton posted on his Instagram story to his almost 28 million followers.

"Everyone should have the right to choose what they do with their bodies. We can't let that choice be taken away."

The next post included names of organizations and resources that support abortion rights.

Two days later, he arrived in the paddock at Hard Rock Stadium wearing every piece of jewelry he could find. He was protesting a decision by the FIA, the governing body of F1, to clamp down on drivers wearing jewelry while competing. The FIA claims jewelry is a potential safety hazard; Hamilton says he's been wearing his piercings for 16 seasons in F1 and it's his right to express himself as he chooses.

But as the glitz and glamour of F1 invaded Miami Gardens — a suburban family neighborhood that is nearly 70% Black or African American, according to the U.S. Census Bureau — Hamilton was the lone face of diversity. It's not enough, said his boss, Mercedes head Toto Wolff.

"What (F1) needs is role models, not only the top driver, who is the biggest role model the sport has, but we need ... to change that room, there needs to be a more diverse group of people talking about Formula One," Wolff said. "We just need to take one step at a time. We would love to have a very diverse group of fans and audiences and whatever we can do we are prepared to do."

Zak Brown, the California native who now runs McLaren Racing, said exposing F1 to a new audience is key. He cited the growth of the North American fan base through Netflix's docuseries "Drive to Survive" to "a new, more diverse youthful fan base."

"If you look at the fan base that they brought in, they brought in a lot of female fans, a lot of youth," Brown said. "Coming to new markets like Miami and then looking for not just great race broadcasts but side and shoulder programming. It's about making incremental gains in all of these areas."

"We just need to continue to expose our great sport to people that are new to the sport and then let the sport work its magic on everyone like it has us for many years."

Racist Supreme Court Rule—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

U.S. The companies claimed there should not be tariffs, because the goods were moving from one part of the U.S. to another.

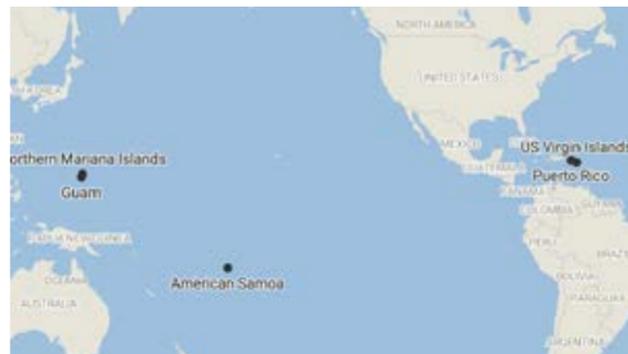
The Supreme Court ultimately ruled that the companies were correct, that transport within the U.S. was not subject to tariffs, but created an exception in which the new lands were neither foreign countries nor part of the U.S.

Those territories, the Supreme Court would rule in the first of the Insular Cases, *Downes v. Bidwell* in 1901, were "foreign in a domestic sense," "inhabited by alien races," and therefore governing them "according to Anglo-Saxon principles may for a time be impossible."

The ruling included other prejudice-revealing statements, too, such as, "It is obvious that in the annexation of outlying and distant possessions grave questions will arise from differences of race, habits, laws, and customs of the people, and from differences of soil, climate, and production, which may require action on the part of Congress that would be quite unnecessary in the annexation of contiguous territory inhabited only by people of the same race, or by scattered bodies of native Indians."

As a result, the court created a new distinction: "Incorporated" territories of the U.S. were expected to one day become states. "Unincorporated" territories, by contrast, were not — and, therefore, their inhabitants were, and still are, denied some of their constitutional rights.

A 2020 referendum vote in Puerto Rico favored statehood; Guam officials have called for statehood; and Stacey Plaskett, who represents the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands in Congress, says her constituents deserve the



full rights of citizenship, including the right to vote.

Both at the time and since, the *Downes* decision has been described as meaning "the Constitution does not follow the flag." The territories might be ruled by Congress, but not necessarily by the Constitution.

What that meant for the people of those territories was unclear. And despite five other cases in 1901, and others in the subsequent 20 years, the Supreme Court has never truly clarified which constitutional protections were available to whom and which weren't. It left open questions about whether key elements of the Constitution, like trial by jury, or even the Bill of Rights, were available in the unincorporated territories.

Hawaii was also acquired in 1898, but was treated differently and ultimately became a state. The differences were probably for reasons to do with partisan politics and a Republican-Democratic balance in Congress.

Since the mid-20th century, the court has made incremental changes to the Insular Cases' effects, tweaking technical definitions concerning taxes, trade and

governmental benefits such as Social Security, Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. But the court has not addressed the overall inferior constitutional status of the territories and the people who live there.

It wasn't until 1957, for instance, in *Reid v. Covert*, that the Supreme Court ruled that defendants in the territories had a right to trial by jury — a right that citizens have because of Article III of the Constitution. Several justices made clear that "neither the cases nor their reasoning should be given any further expansion." That statement was widely viewed as a signal that the influence of the Insular Cases was declining.

In *Torres v. Puerto Rico* (1979), the court further weakened the Insular Cases. Although narrowly applied to the territory at hand, the Supreme Court made clear that the Bill of Rights actually did apply in a U.S. territory.

In its 2008 ruling in *Boumediene v. Bush*, the court held that detainees at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, had the constitutional right of habeas corpus to challenge the validity of their detention. Justice Anthony Ken-

nedy's opinion said, "It may well be that over time the ties between the United States and any of its territories strengthen in ways that are of constitutional significance," and said the federal government did not "have the power to switch the Constitution on or off at will."

But in its 2020 ruling in *Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico v. Aurelius Investment*, the court pulled back from its trend of extending constitutional protections to the unincorporated territories. It ruled that President Barack Obama's appointments to the board, a government body focused on helping Puerto Rico return to financial stability, were local officials, not "officers of the United States," and therefore did not require Senate confirmation.

Many legal scholars view the court's mention of U.S. territorial connections strengthening "over time" as a possible key to overturning the Insular Cases. The original distinctions assumed that the U.S. would "govern temporarily territories with wholly dissimilar traditions and institutions." Most acknowledge those perceived distinctions clearly no longer exist.

These territories have established institutions and principles grounded in American traditions. The internal governments of these territories have established laws, governmental institutions and legal traditions that are indistinguishable from any state in the union. They hold elections, have residents serving in the U.S. military, and play a role in building the nation.

But without equal voting rights and congressional representation, the Americans living in these territories cannot remedy their status at the ballot box.

Court Mulls Ruling On—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

then-President Barack Obama, during oral arguments. "Why would you rather take away a disability of an individual who's going against the United States?"

The amendment says no one can serve in Congress "who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress... to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same." The amendment does allow Congress to pass laws that can remove such restrictions.

But any such law can't for all time prevent prohibitions against future insurrectionists, said Press Millen, a Raleigh attorney representing voters who filed formal challenges of Cawthorn.

"You cannot simply amend the

Constitution through a vote in Congress," Millen said. A federal judge in Georgia last month said she disagreed with Myers and ruled the 1872 Amnesty Act didn't apply to Greene.

James Bopp, Cawthorn's lawyer, said his client "vigorous denies that he ever engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the United States, the country he loves. But this is not about the facts. This is about the law. This is about whether there are valid claims that are being made under Section 3 against him."

Bopp, who also represents Greene in her case, told the judges that the Constitution leaves the decision on whether someone is disqualified to serve in the U.S. House with the elected body it-

self, not the states. That means a candidate's ultimate seating doesn't get settled until when each two-year session begins in January, he said. In the meantime, Bopp suggested, elections will work out potential conflict.

"In a democracy... where we have the right to vote and we have the First Amendment, we leave a lot of things to the voters," Bopp said. But Millen countered by saying the Constitution makes clear that insurrectionists can't be members of Congress, just like teenagers or citizens of other countries.

The tangled case began in January, when candidate challenges were initially brought against Cawthorn by voters in a district that he initially decided to run

in this fall. But North Carolina's congressional map for the 2022 elections was altered twice since then because of redistricting litigation that changed the district that Cawthorn decided to run in this fall. That led to a second challenge by voters in the 11th Congressional District.

Myers refused to let voters from the new 11th District and the other district that Cawthorn had officially filed to run in earlier formally enter the lawsuit. Those denials also form part of the appeal argued Tuesday and also were heard by Circuit Judges Julius Richardson and Toby Heytens. Richardson was a Trump nominee, while Heytens was picked by President Joe Biden.

Hospital Sued Over Black—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

son languished for hours without being readmitted to the operating room until it was too late, the civil rights lawsuit said.

At one point, a nurse told Charles Johnson that his wife wasn't a priority, according to the lawsuit.

She died from internal bleeding—nearly 90 percent of her blood was later found in her stomach, Rowley said. Her bladder had been lacerated and she hadn't been sutured properly.

The hospital, which has fought the malpractice lawsuit, said in a statement that it was founded on principles of diversity and health care for all and it rejected "any mischaracterization of our culture and values."

"We are actively working to eradicate unconscious bias in health care and advance equity in health care more broadly," the statement said. "We commend Mr. Johnson for the attention he has brought to the important issue of racial disparities in maternal outcomes."

Kira Johnson's death led her husband on a crusade to advocate for reducing maternal mortality, which is especially high for Black women.

Before the pandemic, which increased deaths of women of color during childbirth, Black women died at 2.5 times the rate of White women, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

Charles Johnson has testified before Congress and at the state Capitol in Sacramento in support of a variety of bills, including a 2019 state law that requires doctors and nurses to identify implicit bias at work, and a recent bill that would lift the cap on medical malpractice awards.

Johnson would not benefit from a change in the malpractice law that currently caps awards at \$250,000. The case is scheduled to go to trial May 11, though recent court filings indicated the two sides were close to reaching a settlement.

The civil rights case would give Johnson another avenue to collect damages and hold Cedars-Sinai accountable. He's also seeking an injunction that would require the hospital to make changes to protect mothers and women of color.

But proving a civil rights violation in health care is difficult because most laws require showing

discrimination was intentional, said Brietta Clark, a professor at Loyola Law School.

"Compared to when civil rights laws were enacted, a lot of the kind of unequal treatment that we see in health care today does not seem to be explicit," Clark said. "It does not seem to be conscious."

A judge had rejected Johnson's effort to change the malpractice case to add the civil rights action, partly because deposition excerpts did not show the hospital racially discriminated in the treatment it provided.

Dr. Kimberly Gregory, an obstetrician and gynecologist at the hospital, testified that she lives with "structural racism" every day and it prevents Black patients from receiving the same care as Whites, according to court papers. She also said Kira Johnson should have gone back to the operating room sooner.

Dr. Sarah Kilpatrick, chair of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department, testified that she told Charles Johnson: "I'm sorry. We failed your family... This shouldn't have happened."

Angelique Washington, a Black surgical technologist, said "pa-

tient safety was out the door" when Kira Johnson came into the operating room.

Washington, who has more than 30 years of experience, said she routinely witnessed different treatment of Black women but was afraid to speak up.

"When I see my Black... patients come in, I say an extra prayer," Washington said. "I say a silent prayer that all goes well. Because you do have racism very much so in the operating room."

Clark said the evidence identified by the judge as weak were more general statements and not specifically about discrimination by the provider. She said the key thing for Johnson's legal team will be to show a pattern of discrimination.

Rowley said the effort to amend the case was a long shot. He has since gathered other evidence from additional depositions and will be able to seek data—such as the number of Black women that have died at Cedars—to support his claim in the new lawsuit.

"Kira died because she's Black," he said. "Women of color don't get the same treatment as White women. That's a fact."

HBCU Med Schools Tackle—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

attention has increased in recent years after the global COVID-19 pandemic exacted a disparate toll among Black Americans and laid bare the nation's long-standing racial health inequities caused by structural racism, unequal access to care and bias within the nation's medical system.

"At the heart of all this is the profound disparity in transplants that are given and performed on African-Americans versus whites in our country, and it's a long-standing problem and issue," said Dr. James E.K. Hildreth, president and CEO of Meharry Medical College in an interview with *The Associated Press*.

"And some of this messaging has to come from trusted organizations, which is another one of the reasons that we believe that

the four Black medical schools have a very important role to play that quite honestly could not be filled by any other organizations in the country," Hildreth said.

HBCU medical schools have historically served as a necessary pipeline for Black doctors and other medical professionals. Hildreth said the initiative will increase those numbers. The HBCU Medical School Collaborative was formed in 2020 to address health equity amid the pandemic. But Hildreth said the schools have a legacy of working together, often on disparity areas that the medicine and health systems historically have ignored.

But the HBCU collaboration has since grown and they have identified kidney transplants and

donations as an area of concern because Black nephrologists—doctors who diagnose and treat acute and chronic kidney problems—account for less than 7% of the industry and only 5.5% of transplant surgeons are Black.

About 80 percent of Meharry graduates go on to work in underserved communities, Hildreth said, and 85 percent are Black. The vast majority of them come from households with lower incomes than a typical white medical student would have.

"Minorities and people of color have been consistently underrepresented throughout medicine, and the field of organ and tissue donation and transplantation is no exception," said Dr. Clive Calender, a transplant surgeon and medical professor at Howard

University College of Medicine, who is seen as a trailblazer for organ donation equity. "This collaboration will allow us to save thousands of lives across the country by strengthening relationships between health care workers, Black and minority patients, and organ and transplantation professionals."

According to the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health, Black Americans make up the largest group among people of color in the United States who are in need of organ transplants. Black Americans are almost four times as likely as White Americans to develop kidney failure, according to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

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Business & Finance

Small Businesses Still Struggle To Find Enough Willing Workers

By Mae Anderson

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP)—Some small businesses are still struggling to hire qualified workers, even as Americans return to the U.S. job market in droves.

Hiring and retaining employees remains the top challenge for small businesses, according to a survey of 1,100 businesses by Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Voices out last week. Ninety percent of businesses that are hiring are finding it difficult to recruit qualified candidates for open positions.

In general, the U.S. job market is sizzling. An unexpectedly strong recovery from the brief but devastating coronavirus recession left companies scrambling to recall workers they had laid off in the spring of 2020 and to find new ones. Over the past year, U.S. employers have added an average of more than 540,000 jobs a month. The Labor Department is expected to report Friday that employers hired another 396,000 last month, according to FactSet.

But small-business owners believe the job market is a tale of two recoveries. Eighty-eight percent of respondents in the Goldman Sachs survey say small businesses are struggling relative to larger companies in their local communities. Forty-two percent say they have lost employees to larger businesses that are paying more.

"Small businesses are struggling to compete with larger employers on pay and benefits and cite a lack of qualified workers," said Joe Wall, National Director of Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Voices.

Data from payrolls processing firm ADP show a widening gap in hiring between businesses with 500 or more employees and businesses with less than 50 staffers. Those smaller businesses have lost jobs in three of the past four months.

In March, employers adver-

tised a record 11.5 million job openings. The United States now has two job openings for every unemployed person. But a large number of smaller businesses say they're having trouble getting candidates to even apply for openings, particularly in the hard-hit leisure and hospitality industry. Owners are taking on more work themselves and improvising other ways to get by.

"I'm worried about burnout. ... It's frustrating, very frustrating," said Shirley Hughes, owner of Sweet Cheats bakery in Atlanta.

Sweet Cheats had nine staffers at the pre-pandemic peak. Now Hughes has two plus herself. She's curtailed business hours—closing time has gone from 8:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. and now 4 p.m.—giving her and her two bakers more time in the kitchen. Still, Hughes says she now works 80 to 90 hours a week.

Inflation is another challenge. Higher expenses not only hurt businesses' bottom lines, but also affect how well they can retain and attract workers. Before the pandemic, Hughes would get hundreds of applicants for openings. Now, she says she's lucky to get one or two, and they tend to want \$18 or \$20 an hour, when she offers \$14 or \$15 for experienced bakers.

Hughes has had to add benefits for her two long-time staffers to hang onto them.

Teresa Depola is also taking on more work herself because of a lack of available help. She opened Betty Boops Diner in Albany, N.Y., 10 years ago, with her husband and son, and kept running it after she and her husband divorced.

While she ideally would have three staffers to run the place, lately she's been a one-person workforce: cooking, waitressing, and even running deliveries.

"It's small enough so I can do it myself, it's not bad," she said. Still, she would like to add some staff so she could serve dinner

again. She's been serving breakfast and lunch only and closing at 3 p.m. since the pandemic started. And she doesn't see the job picture improving anytime soon.

"I don't think it's going to change for a while," she said. "I'm going to keep it the way it is right now, people are not willing to work just yet. I'm still having a lot of trouble finding staff."

While most major U.S. industries have regained the jobs lost to the pandemic, employment in leisure and hospitality is down by 1.5 million, or 8.7 percent, since February 2020, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Many in the industry faced burnout after being on the front lines during two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, said Rob Wilson, president of human resources provider Employco. Some who stayed in the industry switched to larger restaurants where wages might be higher. Others left and looked into new opportunities.

"There's nobody to hire, there's nobody out there looking for jobs," said Anesh Bodasing, who opened Tiffin Box, a fast-casual Indian restaurant in West Palm Beach, Fla., in 2019 with 20 staffers.

Last year in April 2021, Bodasing temporarily opened a second location in a food hall. But then the staffing shortage began to hit home.

"Your standard of employee went down and pay you're paying people went up. From an employers' standpoint, that's the wrong equation," he said.

Bodasing shuttered the food hall stall and is down to three staffers at the West Palm Beach location. He is considering changing the business to use less staffers.

"Let's assume the employment shortage is not going to change," Bodasing said. "You can sit around and struggle or pivot and change the business in a way that will get us ahead even during the shortage."



EVEN MORE TROUBLES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES—Small to medium-sized businesses have always had a tough row to hoe, but with the looming labor shortage, many are finding it hard to compete. Matt Ensoro, CEO of Wing It On! in Raleigh, has taken to offering scholarships to NCSU students who work for an entire year, or even a semester. It has helped.

One option is to replace the cashier position with an automated kiosk, which lets customers order and pay. Another possibility: introducing meal plans, where customers order a minimum of five meals in advance that they can eat or freeze.

"You just have to think outside the box; literally nothing is off the table," he said.

Matt Ensoro, founder of Wing It On! chicken restaurants, faced the challenge of keeping a full staff of 35 employees at the company's two corporate restaurants in Waterbury, Conn., and Ra-

leigh, N.C. (The chain also has 9 franchise locations with more in development.)

"We thought, this is pervasive across our industry, we have to change our strategy," he said. Ensoro realized he was competing with other restaurants just to get applicants in the door—people would schedule an interview and then not show up 90 percent of the time. So, the chain started offering people a free lunch or dinner if they showed up. The ratio "flip-flopped" he said, and most applicants came for the interview.

Meanwhile, at the Raleigh location, which is near North Carolina State University, the company started offering scholarships to workers: \$1,000 if they worked for a full year, or \$500 if they worked one semester. The program was a success, and the company plans to increase the amount for full-year workers to \$2,000 next year.

"It's not something that's a foregone conclusion anymore that you can put up an ad and people will walk through the door, and you hire them," Ensoro said.

Intuit To Pay \$141M Over Ads

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP)—The company behind the TurboTax tax-filing program will pay \$141 million to customers across the United States who were deceived by misleading promises of free tax-filing services, New York's attorney general announced Wednesday.

Under the terms of a settlement signed by the attorneys general of all 50 states, Mountain View, Calif.-based Intuit Inc. will suspend TurboTax's "free, free, free"

ad campaign and pay restitution to nearly 4.4 million taxpayers, New York Attorney General Letitia James said.

James said her investigation into Intuit was sparked by a 2019 ProPublica report that found the company was using deceptive tactics to steer low-income tax filers away from the federally supported free services for which they qualified—and toward its own commercial products, instead.

"For years, Intuit misled the most vulnerable among us to make a profit. Today, every state in the nation is holding Intuit accountable for scamming millions of taxpayers, and we're putting millions of dollars back into the pockets of impacted Americans," James said in a statement. "This agreement should serve as a reminder to companies large and small that engaging in these deceptive marketing ploys is illegal." "As part of the agreement, Intuit admitted no wrongdoing, agreed to pay \$141 million to put this matter behind it, and made certain commitments regarding its advertising practices," representatives for Intuit said in a blog post Wednesday. "Intuit already adheres to most of these advertising practices and expects minimal impact to its business from implementing the remaining changes going forward."

Until last year, Intuit offered two free versions of TurboTax. One was through its participation

in the Internal Revenue Service's Free File Program, geared toward taxpayers earning roughly \$34,000 and members of the military. Intuit withdrew from the program in July 2021, saying in a blog post that the company could provide more benefits without the program's limitations.

The company also offers a commercial product called "TurboTax Free Edition" that is only for taxpayers with "simple returns," as defined by Intuit.

According to documents obtained by ProPublica, Intuit executives knew they were deceiving customers by advertising free services that were not in fact free to everyone.

"The website lists Free, Free, Free and the customers are assuming their return will be free," an internal company PowerPoint presentation said. "Customers are getting upset."

Under the agreement, Intuit will provide restitution to consumers who started using the commercial TurboTax Free Edition for tax years 2016 through 2018 and were told that they had to pay to file even though they were eligible for the version of TurboTax offered as part of the IRS Free File program.

Consumers are expected to receive a direct payment of approximately \$30 for each year that they were deceived into paying for filing services, James said. They will automatically receive notices and checks by mail.

\$3 Billion Plan To Boost EV Battery Production

By Matthew Daly

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Continuing its push to dramatically boost sales of electric vehicles, the Biden administration on Monday announced \$3.1 billion in funding to U.S. companies that make and recycle lithium-ion batteries.

The investments from last year's \$1 trillion infrastructure law are separate from an executive order President Joe Biden issued this spring, invoking the Defense Production Act to boost production of lithium and other critical minerals used to power electric vehicles.

Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said the new program will offer grants to companies that process or recycle battery com-

ponents to increase domestic supplies of a market now dominated by China and other countries. The grants will help strengthen U.S. energy independence and support Biden's goal to have electric vehicles make up half of all vehicles sales in America by 2030, she said.

Electric vehicles accounted for 4.2 percent of U.S. new vehicle sales in the first quarter of this year, according to Edmunds.com.

"Positioning the United States front and center in meeting the growing demand for advanced batteries is how we boost our competitiveness and electrify our transportation system," Granholm said in a statement.

Granholm, a former Michigan governor, announced the battery initiative during a visit to her home state to highlight clean-en-

ergy provisions in the bipartisan infrastructure law Biden signed in November.

The grant program "will give our domestic supply chain the jolt it needs to become more secure and less reliant on other nations," while creating good-paying jobs and reducing planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions, she said.

"We need a lot of batteries. And we want American workers making those batteries right here in America," added Gina McCarthy, Biden's climate adviser, at a separate briefing Monday at the White House.

The \$3 billion will be allocated as grants to as many as 30 companies, officials said, and represents nearly half of \$7 billion approved under the infrastructure law to

improve the domestic battery supply chain.

Companies will be required to match grants on a 50-50 basis, with a minimum \$50 million investment, the Energy Department said. The money will go to companies that can create new, retrofitted or expanded processing facilities as well as battery recycling programs, the department said.

The focus on battery processing and recycling is part of a broader effort by Biden to shift the country away from gas-powered cars to electric vehicles and combat climate change.

A March 31 executive order intended to increase mining of lithium and other critical minerals does not waive or suspend existing environmental and labor standards, the White House said.

White House Seeks More Power To Deal With Malicious Drones In US

By Aamer Madhani

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—The Biden administration is calling on Congress to expand authority for federal and local

governments to take action to counter the nefarious use in the U.S. of drones, which are becoming a growing security concern and nuisance.

The White House on Monday released an action plan that

calls for expanding the number of agencies that can track and monitor drones flying in their airspace. It calls for establishing a list of U.S. government-authorized detection equipment that federal and local authorities can

purchase, and creating a national training center on countering the malicious use of drones.

The White House in a statement said it was critical that Congress "adopt legislation to close critical gaps in existing law and policy that currently impede government and law enforcement from protecting the American people and our vital security interests."

The federal-government-wide focus comes as the Federal Aviation Administration projects that more than 2 million drones will be in circulation in the U.S. by 2024 and as availability of detection and mitigation technologies—including jamming systems—are limited under current law.

The White House plan calls for expanding existing counter-drone authorities for the departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Defense, Energy, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency and NASA in limited situations. The proposal also seeks to expand drone detection authorities for state, local, territorial and tribal law enforcement agencies and critical infrastructure owners and operators.

The proposal also calls for establishing a six-year pilot program for a small number of

state, local, territorial and tribal law enforcement agencies to take part in a drone detection and mitigation operations under supervision of the Justice Department and Homeland Security.

Currently, no state or local agencies have such authorization.

DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said the administration's legislative recommendations "are vital to enabling DHS and our partners to have the necessary authorities and tools to protect the public, the President and other senior officials, federal facilities, and U.S. critical infrastructure from threats posed by the malicious and illicit use" of drones.

In the U.S., drones have become increasingly ubiquitous and useful tools for law enforcement agencies, agricultural use, commercial photography as well as hobbyists. But there are growing concerns as well.

In January 2019, Newark Liberty International Airport halted all landings and diverted planes for over an hour after a potential drone sighting nearby. Smugglers have used drones to deliver illegal drugs into the country. And Major League Baseball has had several incidents since 2020

where games have been delayed after privately owned drones have been flown onto a playing field. In 2015, there were two separate incidents in which drones crashed on White House grounds.

Federal and local authorities say that drones have also been used to smuggle contraband, including cell phones and drugs, into prisons.

National security officials have also found the use of drones in last November's unsuccessful assassination attempt against Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi and an August 2018 attack on Venezuelan President Nicholas Maduro "quite troubling," according to a senior administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity ahead of Monday's formal announcement.

The counter-drone plan calls for establishing a mechanism to coordinate research, development, testing, and evaluation of detection and mitigation technology across the federal government.

The White House says it also wants to work with Congress to enact a criminal statute that sets standards for legal and illegal uses of drones, and bolster cooperation with other countries on counter-drone technologies.



SOLDIERS PRACTICE WITH EMP DEVICES READY TO TAKE DOWN ROGUE DRONES

Opinion



The Coming Old New Order

By Mel Gurtov

Portland State University

A principal lesson of the war in Ukraine is that the Cold War never ended. German reunification, the Soviet Union's collapse, new entries in NATO, democratic springs in Poland and Hungary, Ukraine's independence, the removal of nuclear weapons from eastern Europe, including Ukraine—all these events once augured a new era in Europe. Russia would embrace perestroika and glasnost, globalization would fully integrate the eastern European economies with the European Union, and demilitarization would free up funds for social well-being and environmental rehabilitation. American triumphalism was at its height, with President George H.W. Bush proclaiming a “new world order” after the Iraq intervention, and Frances Fukuyama prophesying “the end of history.”

Those dreams were shattered by subsequent events in the Middle East, the rise of China, and, in Europe, developments both unforeseen—such as large-scale immigration from the Middle East and north Africa, and the resurfacing of Russian authoritarianism—and unwise, such as the unequal impact of globalization on working classes and NATO's eastward expansion.

These new sources of European division provided fertile ground for the rise of right-wing populism and white supremacist nationalism. The 1990s proved to be a transitional period, not the start of a new era. We're now in Cold War 1.5, not Cold War II.

Regardless of the outcome in Ukraine—a Russian occupation of the eastern regions, an unending insurgency, or a Ukrainian victory—the European security order will continue along an East-West divide. As Stephen Kotkin puts it, geoeconomics has not replaced geopolitics.

Vladimir Putin is trying to create his own new order by force—an order in which a Russian-dominated east faces a US-NATO-dominated west. Neutrality has become a thing of the past as Sweden and Finland seem ready to join NATO, Germany has broken with tradition on military aid in a conflict, and even Switzerland has contributed to Ukraine's defense against Russia's invasion. It's us-versus-them again.

A central principle of post-World War II international politics was that aggression must not pay. That principle has been under fairly consistent assault since, but never so profoundly as it is today. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement that the Russian invasion “is not only a defining moment for our continent, but also for our relationship with the rest of the world.”

She specifically meant to include China. General Mark Milley, the U.S. joint chiefs chairman, tells CNN:

“What's at stake... is the global international security order that was put in place in 1945... And underlining that entire concept is the idea that large nations will not conduct military aggression against smaller nations, and that is exactly what's happened here, by Russia against a smaller nation.”

Therein lies the importance of how the war in Ukraine ends.

One possibility is that Putin will not survive, a return of some semblance of democracy in Russia is possible, and the threat to democratic and semi-democratic states bordering Russia will subside.

Human rights and pro-democracy forces in currently pro-Russian authoritarian regimes such as Belarus, Hungary, and Kazakhstan may bring on a new wave of color revolutions. Europe would essentially be back to 1989–1991 and the post-Soviet upheaval, though with the ever-present danger of Russian revanchism. It would be an uneasy peace, however, with parallels to Europe in 1945 when another great power was defeated, the Americans went home, and Europe quickly faced political and economic upheaval.

In Asia, China's close ties with Putin's Russia would have proven bankrupt, forcing China to reconsider its global strategy and giving the Chinese military good reason to shy away from reliance on a Russian army that has proven grossly incompetent.

U.S. alliances in Asia—with South Korea, Japan, Australia, and with India in AUKUS and the Quad—would all be given a boost. China, would charge all those countries with seeking to contain it, and would likely invest more heavily in its naval and air forces. That could spell trouble in the Taiwan Strait and, with North Korea, on the Korean peninsula. The nuclear issue could then become more salient—with South Korea wanting its own nuclear deterrent against North Korea and Japan not just expanding its military but considering having a nuclear deterrent against China. A new Cold War in Asia, already much discussed these days, might be unavoidable.

If, on the other hand, Putin emerges with new territorial gains in Ukraine, unpunished for his war crimes and determined to refurbish his military's damaged reputation, the battle lines for the next confrontation in Europe will be apparent.

A new Iron Curtain is likely to descend on Europe: Georgia, Moldova, and possibly Poland may face serious security threats from Moscow even though Russia's economy has been seriously weakened, the Russian military had gotten a black eye in Ukraine, and the quality of life for Russians will have been dramatically scaled back. The U.S.-NATO alliance system will have to be fortified for another long haul.

That scenario may not bode well for the alliance. Long-term economic sacrifice could cause some EU populations to drift from generosity with Ukraine to indifference. Central Asia's security picture may become more dire as well. Countries that are dependent on Russia for security and trade, such as Kazakhstan, or host Russian military forces, such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, may worry about where Russian hyper-nationalism will move next.

The immediate future of Europe may feature prolonged fighting in Ukraine without any clear outcome. That eventuality means further increases in military spending and armed forces throughout Europe, deeper political divisions within countries, and the dashing of hopes for combatting climate change and other social problems.

Talk of a nuclear confrontation will grow more ominous, not just in Europe but in East Asia too. Above all, think of what Ukraine, in victory or defeat, will be like. It already is a completely devastated country, with a huge refugee population, splintered families, industry reduced to primitive levels, and severe food, water, and electrical shortages. Ukraine, in short, will be a basket case after the war, dependent on the West for many years and constantly facing threats from the east. Like Western Europe after the Nazi defeat, Ukraine and possibly its neighbors will need a Marshall Plan and security guarantees. Where will the money and the guarantees come from?

Cold War I was enormously costly to all countries and to the planet. With pandemics and the climate crisis now ongoing threats to species survival, the last thing the world needs is a new round of Cold War that not only detracts attention from those existential threats but adds a new one: use of a nuclear weapon.

Ukraine must be rebuilt and European security must be rein-

forced, but there should be less talk about a “new order” and Cold War, and more talk about human and environmental security.



Men's Voices Urgently Needed To Defend Reproductive Rights

By Rob Okun

Voice Male Magazine

“It's on us to listen, to speak out, and to take action. Not because women are our mothers, sisters, wives or friends—but because women are people. And all people deserve to control their own bodies.”

—Sen. Cory Booker

Exacerbated by the news that this summer the Supreme Court is poised to overturn a half a century of precedent by declaring Roe unconstitutional, men must leave the sidelines in this national reproductive rights emergency. The stakes are too high to simply declare that abortion is a “women's issue.” For decades, men in increasing numbers have followed women's lead in challenging gender-based violence and promoting gender equality, so why are we stuck when it comes to abortion?

Men must understand that denying access to safe abortion is a form of gender-based violence. Controlling women's reproductive choices is state-sponsored control over a woman's body. If we speak out against all other forms of violence against women, we should speak out against this form of violence, too.

Nevertheless, for many men who believe in gender equality, myself included, there's been little of a consistent, sustained, male prochoice effort. We heard the maxim, “women's bodies; women's choices” and vigorously nodded. Then, many of us backed off from actively working to protect Roe, believing we could always reengage if circumstances became dire—if Roe was being threatened, right? Well, what the hell are we waiting for?

From Texas's 2021 abortion ban after six-weeks (before many people know they're even pregnant), to a similar law enacted in neighboring Oklahoma this spring, every woman's autonomy is being threatened.

Most Supreme Court observers were convinced that the Court's ultra-right majority would overturn Roe; the leaked draft of the opinion in Mississippi was not a surprise. Still, men have to make our voices heard, unambiguously, that we stand with women—our partners and wives, sisters and daughters, cousins and aunts—in challenging the ruling. As an organized voting bloc, men have a key role to play in ousting antichoice legislators and electing prochoice candidates. Men need to step up and join the struggle.

A decade and a half ago, before the 2006 mid-term elections, I was among volunteers who went door to door across South Dakota canvassing to overturn what was then the most restrictive abortion ban in the nation. For weeks, our prochoice squad crisscrossed the state.

I stood on residents' doorsteps on leafy streets in small Dakota towns explaining why I'd come all the way from Massachusetts. “I have a son, 18, and three daughters all in their twenties,” I'd begin. “Imagine if even one parent in South Dakota had a daughter who'd been raped and became pregnant. Must that family follow a law that forbade the young woman from aborting the rapist's child? One that compelled her to bear his baby?” Often enough my comments struck a nerve.

We won that battle (55 to 45 percent) and South Dakota's law was overturned by the will of the people. Nevertheless, vigorous efforts to restrict a woman's right to choose continue unabated to this day, not just across South Dakota, but in dozens of other states as well. Trigger laws are poised to go into effect the moment Roe is overturned, banning abortion outright in a large swath of the country. “The idea that threats to women's reproductive freedom are also an issue for men is too often, if mentioned at all, seen as an afterthought,” says antisexist educator, author and filmmaker Jackson Katz.

“This has to change. Liberal and progressive men need to hear loud and clear that their support for women's right to comprehensive health care services—which includes access to safe, legal abortion—needs to be an absolute first-order priority, because without it there is no gender equality. And without gender equality, there is no real democracy.”

With the flames of intolerance growing like a western wildfire that's scorching our sisters' homes, men must join the bucket brigade to put out the fire. Now!

What can men do?

- Volunteer at a clinic, including escorting patients inside.
- For Fathers Day: in lieu of a gift ask your family to make a donation to a local clinic, Planned Parenthood, NARAL, or all three.
- Urge your faith community's leader to deliver a sermon supporting a women's right to choose (or be the guest speaker yourself).
- Write a letter to the editor stating your unequivocal support for women's reproductive rights.
- Invite a group of men over to talk about the threat women face and why men need to break their silence.
- Urge researchers to accelerate work on developing male birth control methods.
- If you have a son old enough, talk with him about respecting women's autonomy.
- Let your daughter know you unequivocally support her right to control her body.
- Alert antichoice legislators that you won't just vote to unseat them, you'll work to elect prochoice candidates.

Rob Okun (rob@voicemalemagazine.org), writes about politics and culture. He is editor-publisher of Voice Male magazine.



A Promise To Our Kids: We Won't Kill You

By Robert C. Koehler

PeaceVoice

At a certain point, as I was reading the book I'd recently been sent, a strange transformation began occurring: Gradually, as I moved ever deeper into it, I wasn't so much reading as quietly singing a hymn... participating in a chant.

The book is *A Promise to Our Children: A Field Guide to Peace*, by Charles P. Busch, an online version of which was sent to me by Adam Vogal, president of the Oregon Peace Institute.

The book isn't so much about ending war as it's about, well, loving children. And children are massacred, again and again and again and again, as the military forces of the world fight and kill, not so much one another, but rather various random swaths of humanity—a.k.a., civilians—who simply happen to be present when the bullets are fired and the bombs go off. They're in the way. They're collateral damage.

Early in the book, Busch, who is director of Fields of Peace, points out that:

“In World War I, the ratio of combatant deaths to civilian deaths was nine to one. In World War II that ratio changed dramatically. Every one combatant death was matched by one civilian death. Today, following the Vietnam War, and now Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, the ratio has again changed dramatically: one combatant death to nine civilian deaths.”

And a terrifyingly large percentage of those civilian deaths happen to be children, which is to say: “Far more children are killed in today's wars than combatants. War has become the killing of children.”

As Busch's words hit home—war has become the killing of children—he's not so much making an abstract point as bringing the news to us in whatever random moment of our lives we happen to be, sort of like parents responding to a knock on the door and learning that their son or daughter has just been killed in combat.

This is the promise the book urges us to make, indeed, to say aloud, to repeat on a daily basis:

“I will not be a part of the killing of any child, no matter how lofty the reason. Not my neighbor's child. Not my child. Not the enemy's child. Not by bomb. Not by bullet. Not by looking the other way. I will be the power that is peace.”

What does this mean, for God's sake? These wars aren't my fault! As I read the book, I hurried past those words, but I couldn't let go of them. Finally I read them aloud. I suggest you do the same. I'll wait...

Somehow Busch manages to push readers a little closer to the planet's combat zones, or perhaps what I mean to say is that he clarifies the concept of “combat zone.” If there is one, we are in it, but we can choose to live in such a way that we stand up to its wrong: that we do something, on a daily basis, to change the world. He concedes the simplicity of this idea, but notes that change often emerges from simple, seemingly naive—usually debased and ridiculed—ideas: from Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March in 1930 to Greta Thunberg sitting alone on the steps of the Swedish parliament building, demanding governmental action on climate change.

The only real solutions to conflict are nonviolent ones. I believe most people on Planet Earth know this, yet human civilization is organized in lethal opposition to itself, with a global annual military budget in 2021 of more than \$2 trillion, half of which is American. Think how many children we're prepared to kill!

Indeed, all hail Hermann Goering, who said during the Nuremberg Trials:

“Naturally the common people don't want war: Neither in Russia, nor in England, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along... All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked... It works the same in any country.”

In contrast, let me introduce Mary Gordon, a Canadian educator who has developed a curriculum called Roots of Empathy, which Busch writes about:

“In a 4th grade classroom, a group of students sit in a circle on the floor. It is the first day of the school year. They are excited and a little nervous. They are waiting for the arrival of what the teacher said will be a ‘very special surprise.’ The door opens, and in comes a mother holding her 6-month-old infant, Evelyn.

“The mother and child join them in the circle, spreading a green blanket for the infant to sit and roll and rest on. Every three weeks throughout the school year Baby Evelyn and her mother will return, and the children will come to know Evelyn. They will observe her development, her ability to sit up and express her desires and emotions. They will learn to name her expressions—hunger, tiredness, frustration, joy, anger, contentment. And the students will learn the proper way to hold an infant, and, one by one experience Evelyn's warmth and fragility, and her preciousness.”

This is for real! Gordon's Roots of Empathy curriculum, which she developed in 1996, is now being used in a dozen countries, including Canada and the U.S. This is emotional—or perhaps what I would call spiritual—education, with an infant as the teacher.

“In the classroom where Baby Evelyn became the teacher, the students soon claimed her as their own. They welcomed her arrivals with singing and gifts—drawings, paper necklaces, poems, and flowers. They loved her and wished they could take her home with them.”

This differs a bit from the established school norm, where the emotional education process, which takes place primarily on the playground, is often led by bullies, who teach kids how to be either jerks or victims.

The Roots of Empathy curriculum teaches, my God, empathy: reverence for vulnerability. Who knew that could be taught? But if the development of empathy is not simply left to chance—if children start becoming aware of it, start valuing and understanding it, in their preteens—they will probably be less susceptible, as adults, to the Goering dictum, less likely to be dragged into war, less willing to dehumanize others, less willing to kill their children.

The concluding metaphor in Busch's remarkable book—his hymn—is about the great forests of world, which may seem to consist of thousands of individual trees, but every forest is, in fact, one entity, a single life form connected at the roots.

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