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## Oh My Goodness... What An Epic Game! Congratulation To The NCCU Eagles 2022 HBCU Football Champions



### Feds Review Power Grid After Incident



If you missed this year's HBCU Football Championship then shame on you. You missed an epic battle.

Deion "Primetime" Sanders coached his final game with Jackson State on Saturday against our NCCU Eagles. Led by Coach Trei Oliver, the Eagles soared over the Tigers in a hard fought, down to the wire in overtime battle.

In a highly anticipated matchup of two nationally-ranked teams clashing in the Cricket Celebration Bowl, North Carolina Central University amassed 482 yards of total offense, including 276 powerful yards rushing, to defeat Jackson State, 41-34, in overtime, as the Eagles captured their fourth HBCU national championship in NCCU history in front of 49,670 fans inside a sold out Mercedes-Benz Stadium with millions more watching on ABC.

The two conference champions exchanged the lead seven times, and the game was sent to overtime when Jackson State scored a touchdown on the final play of regulation.

Jackson State (12-1) entered the contest ranked fifth in the AFCA Top 25 poll with the nation's top-rated defense, holding opponents to an average of 233.2 yards of total offense and 11.2 points scored. NCCU (10-2), ranked No. 21 in the nation, recorded more than twice as many total yards and scored more than three times the points typically surrendered by the Tigers. In fact, JSU had not allowed more than 24 points in a game all season.

NCCU junior quarterback Davius Richard, the Celebration Bowl Offensive MVP, completed 15-of-20 passes for 175 yards and a touchdown, while adding 97 yards and two touchdowns on the ground, including the game-winning 1-yard run in overtime. He also caught a 31-yard pass from senior receiver E.J. Hicks, who later connected on a pass to Richard for a two-point conversion.

Defensively, the Eagles held JSU to just 68 rushing yards, while Tigers quarterback Shedeur Sanders passed for 349 yards and four touchdowns, and ran for another score.

NCCU junior safety Khalil Baker, the Celebration Bowl Defensive MVP, collected a team-best 10 tackles, while freshman cornerback Jason Chambers tallied nine takedowns and redshirt-freshman linebacker Max U-Ren posted seven stops. The Eagles also recorded sacks by linemen Deontrae Brown, Colby Warrior and Jessie Malit, and created a turnover with a forced fumble by JaJuan Hudson and a recovery by Manny Smith.

NCCU's 2022 HBCU national title will join the company of those won in 1954, 2005 and 2006. This year's 10-2 squad also becomes just the third team in NCCU history to reach double-figure triumphs. NCCU head coach Trei Oliver has been part of all three, as he was an assistant coach on the 2005 (10 wins) and 2006 (11 wins) teams.

By Matthew Daly

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Federal regulators on Thursday ordered a review of security standards at the nation's far-flung electricity transmission network, following shootings at two electric substations in North Carolina that damaged equipment and caused more than 45,000 customers to lose power.

The order by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission directs officials to study the effectiveness of existing reliability standards for the physical security of the nation's power grid and determine whether they need to be improved.

"The security and reliability of the nation's electric grid is one of FERC's top priorities," FERC Chairman Richard Glick said at a

commission meeting Thursday.

"In light of the increasing number of recent reports of physical attacks on our nation's infrastructure, it is important that we fully and clearly review the effectiveness of our existing physical security standard to determine whether additional improvements are necessary to safeguard the bulk power system," Glick said.

The order comes less than two weeks after one or more people drove up to two substations in central North Carolina, breached the gates and opened fire on them. Outages began shortly after the Dec. 3 nighttime attack and lasted several days before power was restored to almost all households in Moore County four days later.

(See **POWER GRID**, P. 2)



### Cooper Has Little Wiggle Room In '23

By Gary D. Robertson

Associated Press

North Carolina Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper described on Wednesday jobs announcements, an emerging clean energy sector and his ability to block "culture-war, business-killing" laws on social issues from the General Assembly among his administra-

tion's accomplishments during 2022.

There could be little room for error in his dealings with the legislature in 2023, however, as Republicans moved to the precipice of regaining veto-proof control following last month's elections.

In a year-end interview with The Associated Press, Cooper said he'll need to rely partly on

self-control by GOP leaders to prevent enactment of what he considered unwise legislation that could undo economic successes following a string of big business announcements.

"I think Republican leadership would tell you that things are going pretty well in our state," he told the AP at the Executive Mansion. "People are still

struggling, clearly. But we've emerged from this pandemic pretty strong. This balance has been important."

House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger and the governor reached a détente of sorts following the 2020 elections, when Cooper won reelection.

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

### Lawmaker Wants Recovery Head Out

By Hannah Schoenbaum

Associated Press/Report for America

North Carolina lawmakers rebuked on Wednesday the state's disaster recovery director—with one calling for her removal—for the agency's slow progress amid years-long delays that have left some low-income homeowners in temporary lodging for up to six years after hurricanes Matthew and Florence displaced them.

Gov. Roy Cooper said that even though the recovery agency, which falls under his control, is "not moving fast enough," he remains confident in its leader-

ship and its most recent plans for improvement.

"I think the plan and the people are in place now to really speed this up," Cooper told The Associated Press in an interview Wednesday. One block away, a bipartisan General Assembly committee grilled Laura Hogshead, who has led the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR) since 2018.

Hogshead was questioned for hours at a September meeting convened by the Hurricane Response and Recovery committee. Three months later, she returned to legislature as instructed, to

present what lawmakers hoped would be a major progress update. But on Wednesday, patience wore thin among top legislators who said they had hoped to see every displaced family housed by Christmas.

"It's not enough," Hogshead said, before sharing recent data. "It is substantial progress for the last three months, for 90 days, but it is something to build from."

NCORR has helped house 100 families in the last three months—76 through completed construction projects and 24 by providing checks to families that

opted for reimbursements for their out-of-pocket home repairs.

"I'm extremely disappointed in that number," said Sen. Jim Perry, a Lenoir County Republican. "I don't have to tell you, that's terrible. I drive around my district and go to those homes that say 'under construction' and nothing's going on."

North Carolina's legislature created NCORR in 2018, in part to distribute what became \$778 million in federal recovery funds awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Hur-

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



#### NC SUPREME COURT DISMISSES SUIT TO RETURN CONFEDERATE STATUE

(AP)—North Carolina's Supreme Court ruled Friday that the local chapter of United Daughters of the Confederacy lacks standing to challenge the city of Winston-Salem's removal of a Confederate monument on private property, but it can refile a future lawsuit making similar arguments.

The high court partially affirmed a non-unanimous 2020 appeals court ruling that had dismissed the chapter's attempt to return a statue of a Confederate soldier to the grounds of the former Forsyth County Courthouse in downtown Winston-Salem. But the justices opted Friday to remand the case to the Forsyth County Superior Court for further proceedings in line with the court's opinion.

"We are not persuaded by any of plaintiff's arguments," Associate Justice Sam Ervin IV wrote in the prevailing opinion. "As an initial matter, plaintiff has completely failed to explain how the City's actions 'denied plaintiff due process of law.'"

While United Daughters of the Confederacy claimed it was involved in erecting the monument, the Supreme Court concurred that it did not have ownership and thus could not claim legal interest in the matter. Without asserting ownership over a piece of property, Ervin wrote, they cannot claim the property was the subject of an unlawful seizure or deprivation.

However, the court determined Friday that because the chapter provided insufficient evidence to establish a stake in the statue's removal, the trial court should not have ruled in such a way that would

(See **STATE BRIEFS**, P. 2)

# Feds Review Power Grid—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Even as power was restored, Duke Energy Corp., which owns the two North Carolina substations, reported gunfire Dec. 7 near another Duke facility in South Carolina. Law enforcement officials say they have found no evidence linking incidents in the two states, although multiple state and federal agencies continue to investigate.

At least four electrical substations have been targeted in separate attacks in Oregon and Washington state since November,

Oregon Public Broadcasting and other outlets reported. Attackers used firearms in at least some of the incidents, and some power customers in Oregon temporarily lost service.

Grid security experts have said the attacks demonstrate anew the vulnerability of the nation's electric grid, which includes more than 50,000 substations and more than 700,000 miles of transmission lines.

Power transformers are highly visible in thousands of sites

across the country and "are really vulnerable—sometimes to a drunk with a gun and an attitude," said FERC commissioner Mark Christie. "We have a lot of incidents of that. That's not unusual. The substations are a different ballgame."

He called the North Carolina attack "sophisticated" and noted that it caused outages for more than 40,000 people.

While officials are likely to recommend changes such as high-definition cameras, 24-hour surveillance or opaque walls, "How are we going to pay for all the upgrades?" asked Christie, a Republican who has served on the panel since 2020.

The bipartisan infrastructure law includes as much as \$15 billion for power grid upgrades and resilience, and Christie said he

hopes some of the money is used for "deferring some of the cost of the hardening that we know is going to take place" as a result of the recent attacks.

"I hope this does not flow through to ratepayers," he said.

Glick, a Democrat, told reporters after the meeting that while he is always concerned about costs: "How concerned are you about the cost when the power goes out? Would you rather pay now or later?"

Thursday's meeting was likely Glick's last as chairman, after his term expired earlier this year. President Joe Biden renominated Glick to another term as chairman, but Sen. Joe Manchin, chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, has refused to schedule a confirmation hearing.

Manchin, a West Virginia Dem-

ocrat, has not given a reason for his refusal, but a spokeswoman said last month that "the chairman was not comfortable holding a hearing."

Manchin, a strong supporter of fossil fuels, sharply criticized Biden's remarks about shutting down coal plants and replacing them with renewable energy. Manchin also blasted a move by FERC's Democratic majority to more closely scrutinize the impact of natural gas projects on climate change. The panel later retreated under opposition from Manchin and Senate Republicans.

Glick said Thursday he will leave the agency at the end of the year when Congress adjourns. "I think it's pretty clear there's not a path forward for me anymore," he said.

His exit will leave the commission with a partisan 2-2 deadlock, leaving in limbo Biden's ambitious agenda to address climate change and environmental justice in decisions on pipelines and other energy projects. Environmental groups have decried Glick's impending departure and have said the panel needs three Democrats to move forward on Biden's priorities.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

FERC approved a physical security reliability standard in 2014 following a still-unsolved attack on a major substation in California. The new order gives the North American Electric Reliability Corporation 120 days to submit a report on the current standard and recommend possible changes.

## STATE BRIEFS

Continued from page 1

prevent the chapter from filing future lawsuits in this matter.

While the court was unanimous in dismissing the lawsuit without prejudice, Chief Justice Paul Newby wrote a separate opinion—joined by the other two Republican justices—that limited the reasons to the "bare allegations" made by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The court, he said, lacks subject matter jurisdiction over the chapter's claims.

The seven-member panel said the chapter lacks standing to challenge the city's discernment that the statue had become a public nuisance. It also said the members' identities as descendants of Confederate veterans do not "transform an abstract ideological interest in preserving the Confederate legacy" into a valid personal injury claim.

The city has kept the statue in storage since removing it in March 2019 after a series of non-violent protests.

### OFFICIALS: NC DEPUTY KILLED IN HIT-AND-RUN CRASH

FAYETTEVILLE (AP)—A North Carolina sheriff's deputy was killed in a hit-and-run crash while investigating a robbery early Friday morning, officials said.

Deputies with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office were investigating a robbery at a Fayetteville business when the crash occurred, the sheriff's office said in a news release. As deputies returned from a canine track, one was hit by a vehicle as he was walking, officials said. The driver of the vehicle left the scene, but was found nearby.

The injured deputy was taken to a hospital, where he died, officials said. Officials identified the deputy who was killed as Deputy Oscar Yovani Bolanos-Anavisca Jr., 24. Bolanos-Anavisca started his career with the sheriff's office in November 2020. He was assigned to the "C" platoon and previously served as a school resource officer at Hope Mills Middle School.

The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and the North Carolina State Highway Patrol are investigating.

Gov. Roy Cooper ordered all U.S. and North Carolina flags at state facilities to half-staff until sunset on Saturday.

### NORTH CAROLINA JOBLESS RATE RISES FOR 4TH STRAIGHT MONTH

(AP)—North Carolina's unemployment rate rose slightly for the fourth consecutive month in November, the state Commerce Department announced on Friday.

The seasonally adjusted rate of 3.9 percent compares to October's rate of 3.8 percent. The rate began increasing after it bottomed out at 3.4 percent for four consecutive months ending in July, according to agency figures. The U.S. rate remained at 3.7 percent in November.

The state Commerce Department said overall employment in the state fell by almost 8,400 since October to over 4.925 million people, while the number of unemployed grew by over 6,400 to about 200,500. The total of the unemployed remains 10,100 below the level in November 2021.

Through another counting format based on monthly worksite surveys, the agency reported seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment actually grew by 5,300 to almost 4.84 million. These surveys found the leisure and hospitality services industry and the financial activities sectors showing the largest numerical increase in employment, with the trade, transportation and utilities sector showing the largest decline.

### VOTING RIGHTS LAWYER TO FILL N. CAROLINA APPEALS COURT SEAT

(AP)—A longtime voting rights attorney will be appointed to the North Carolina Court of Appeals, Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper said Thursday, filling a vacancy when Judge Richard Dietz moves to the state Supreme Court next month.

Allison Riggs, a co-leader of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice in Durham, has been heavily involved for more than a decade in often-successful litigation to block Republican redistricting maps and laws mandating photo identification to vote. Some of the cases currently await decisions from the state Supreme Court and U.S. Supreme Court.

Riggs also argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in a Texas redistricting case in 2018 and a North Carolina redistricting case in 2019.

Riggs "is a brilliant attorney and an experienced litigator who has spent her career fighting for fairness and defending people's constitutional rights," Cooper said in a news release. "I am confident that she will continue to serve our state with distinction and be a great asset to the bench."

Under state law, Riggs's term will run through the end of 2024. She would have to run in a statewide election to seek a full eight-year term, which Riggs said in a separate release she plans to do.

"The judiciary serves a critical role in ensuring that equal justice

# Cooper Has Little Wiggle Room—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tion and Republicans retained their majorities in the House and Senate. Those majorities, however, weren't veto-proof.

Cooper successfully vetoed nearly two dozen bills over the past two years on topics such as abortion restrictions, gun rights and immigration. But the two branches of government also managed to agree on criminal justice reforms, a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electric-generating plants and two state budget laws. Legislation included incentives that contributed to big jobs announcements this year from Boom Supersonic, VinFast and Wolfspeed.

This fall, Cooper campaigned hard to prevent Republicans from earning the additional seats necessary to gain veto-proof majorities that would allow them to make laws without necessary buy-in from Cooper. While Senate Republicans reached the 30 seats needed to override a Cooper veto, the House GOP fell one vote short. That means

Republicans would need just one Democratic member to join them in most scenarios to complete an override.

Moore told reporters on Tuesday that he's "met with several Democrats who have made it very clear to me that they're going to vote with us on a lot of issues."

Cooper hinted that the GOP could use parliamentary maneuvers to complete successful overrides without a Democratic vote. "I do believe we can hold the line on bad laws," but "a lot of that will depend on statesmanship of the Republican leadership."

Cooper suggested that his administration's emphasis next year will be less about money battles with the legislature and more about distributing billions of federal dollars received from Congress for road improvements, water and sewer projects, clean energy initiatives and high-speed internet expansion.

"Yes, there's going to be money

in the budget for the General Assembly, but federal money is already there," he said. "So that is going to be our primary focus."

The most contentious issue at the legislature likely will be abortion, as legislative Republicans say they plan to consider additional restrictions on the procedure in light of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in June overturning Roe v. Wade. Abortions are legal in North Carolina through 20 weeks of pregnancy, with narrow exceptions for medical emergencies for the patient.

Cooper, who made protecting abortion rights a key part of his legislative elections platform, said Wednesday he'd consider anything that bans abortion after less than 20 weeks extreme.

"North Carolina's law is already strict enough when it comes to restricting women's reproductive freedom," he said.

On other topics, Cooper said he remained hopeful that legislators would reach an agreement to

expand Medicaid to hundreds of thousands of low-income adults, after the most promising effort to date at the Legislative Building last summer fizzled by year's end.

He said a proposal getting attention at the State Board of Education to overhaul how public school teachers are paid by basing salary levels on performance and not years of experience "is worth exploring." Board officials could ask the legislature in 2023 to try out the idea in pilot districts.

Cooper, who was first elected governor in 2016 but is term-limited in 2024, also recognized his time as chief executive is dwindling—adding an urgency to meet his goals: "Two years is a long time, but then it's not," said Cooper, 65. "And I know how fast these almost six years have passed."

*Associated Press/Report for America reporter Hannah Schoenbaum contributed to this report.*

# Lawmaker Wants Recovery—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ricane Matthew in 2017 and Hurricane Florence in 2020.

But lawmakers, such as Republican Sen. Danny Britt of Robeson County, raised concerns that the agency may not complete many of its projects before federal funding expires. Under a government mandate, federal funds allocated for the recovery must be spent by June 2026.

"You should resign from your position. But if you were in the private sector you would've been fired a long time ago," Britt told Hogshead as some displaced homeowners in the audience cheered. "Our time's going to be up on this money if we keep waiting as you continue to fail."

Hogshead, who did not address the call for her dismissal, said the agency has awarded nearly 300 projects to general contrac-

tors in the last six months after labor shortages and supply chain issues slowed construction during the pandemic. Now that these issues have largely subsided, she said, there are no more "extraneous excuses."

Prior to program updates in June, the agency was completing an average of five homes per month. At the end of November, the monthly average had jumped to 17.

Co-chair Sen. Brent Jackson, a Sampson County Republican and head budget writer, echoed Britt's concerns and warned that he will look to remove Hogshead if NCORR cannot demonstrate improvements, such as finalizing permanent housing placements and completing construction projects faster.

"There has got to be some

improvement in this program immediately, or I'm going to use what power I have to redirect the funds to someone who can get the job done," Jackson said.

Lesley Wiseman Albritton, managing attorney of natural disaster recovery cases for the nonprofit law firm Legal Aid of North Carolina, said she has noticed some improvements from NCORR since the September hearing, but certain delays persist.

Since 2019, Legal Aid has represented more than 650 low-income North Carolinians in the hurricane recovery program, and 99 of their cases have been resolved. More than a hundred clients are still waiting on award determinations from NCORR that would allow them to proceed with repairs or return to their homes from motels or other tem-

porary accommodations. Some have been waiting for several years.

As delays persist, Albritton said, much of Legal Aid's own grant funding for cases from earlier storms has expired.

"We find it at times to be a frustrating relationship when we can't get the progress that we want for our clients," she said of NCORR. "I think we've greatly improved the communication, but I don't know that the communication always moves the ball forward for our clients."

*Hannah Schoenbaum is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercover issues.*

# What Trump Administration Promised, Biden Seeks To Deliver In His Own Way

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump pledged to fix U.S. infrastructure as president. He vowed to take on China and bulk up American manufacturing. He said he would reduce the budget deficit and make the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes.

Yet after two years as president, it's Joe Biden who is acting on those promises. He jokes that he's created an "infrastructure decade" after Trump merely managed a near parody of "infrastructure weeks." His legislative victories are not winning him votes from Trump loyalists or boosting his overall approval ratings. But they reflect a major pivot in how the government interacts with the economy at a time when many Americans fear a recession and broader national decline.

Gone are blanket tax cuts. No more unfettered faith in free trade with non-democracies. The Biden White House has committed more than \$1.7 trillion to the belief that a mix of government aid, focused policies and bureaucratic expertise can deliver long-term growth that lifts up the middle class. This reverses the past administration's view that cutting regulations and taxes boosted investments by businesses that flowed downward to workers.

With new laws in place, Biden is taking the gamble that the federal bureaucracy can successfully implement and deliver on his promises, including after he leaves office.

That is a tricky spot, as Trump himself learned that global crises such as a pandemic can quickly ruin the foundations of an eco-



nomical agenda, causing businesses and voters to shift priorities. There are few guarantees that the economy behaves over 10 years as government forecasts expect, while Biden's policies will likely be challenged by the new Republican majority in the House.

Biden and his team say Americans are already seeing the upside with announcements for new computer chip plants and some 6,000 infrastructure projects under way.

"There's an industrial strategy that actually uses public investments to drive more private capital and more innovation in the historical tradition of everybody from Alexander Hamilton to Abraham Lincoln to John F. Kennedy," said Brian Deese, director of the White House National Economic Council. "The outcomes speak for themselves."

Trump's supporters see little

overlap with Biden, even though the funding for infrastructure, computer chip production and scientific research was passed along bipartisan lines.

"The Biden administration agenda is 180 degrees different," said James Carter, a policy director at the America First Policy Institute. "More regulation, higher taxes, no border control and a war on fossil fuels. It's two different administrations with two different approaches. One is free market, the other is big government."

The current and former president seem almost bound together in the public arena. On the August eve of Biden signing into law \$280 billion for semiconductors and research, FBI agents raided Trump's home to retrieve classified documents, overshadowing the White House event. Similarly, Biden called out Trump as a threat to democracy ahead of

November midterm elections, while Republicans campaigned by hammering the president for troubling levels of inflation.

Biden aides are quick to say that the president is fulfilling his own campaign promises, rather than honoring pledges made by Trump. But one of Biden's first moves as president in 2021 was to provide \$1,400 in direct payments to Americans as part of his coronavirus relief package. Along with the \$600 in payments in a pre-Biden relief package, the sum matched the \$2,000 that Trump called for in the twilight of his presidency, though he could not get it through Congress.

"I would want to avoid the premise that somehow what Joe Biden has done was take Donald Trump's ideas and enact them into law," Deese said. "What President Biden has done is taken the campaign agenda that he campaigned on and actually delivered on it."

For all of that, Americans are giving Biden low marks on the economy. Inflation has come down from a 40-year peak this summer, but consumer prices are still 7.1% higher from a year ago. The Federal Reserve is raising its benchmark interest rate to lower inflation, something that its own projections show will cause unemployment to rise in the next year.

Three in four Americans describe the economy as poor, with nearly the same percentage saying the U.S. is on the wrong track, according to a new poll by The Associated Press and NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Biden is asking for patience.

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# Business & Finance

## Toyota Collaboration To Accelerate EV Charging Ecosystem

PRNewswire—Toyota Motor North America (Toyota) and Onco Electric Delivery (Onco), a Texas-based electric transmission and distribution company, have agreed to collaborate on a pilot project around vehicle-to-grid (V2G), a technology that allows vehicles to flow energy from their battery back onto the electric grid. The effort will be led by Toyota's Electric Vehicle Charging Solutions (EVCS) team, marking an important first collaboration with a public utility for Toyota in the U.S. around Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs).

The results from the research will allow Toyota and Onco to be better prepared to support the broader EV charging ecosystem in the United States. Further, these efforts will allow Toyota to elevate the customer experience for Toyota BEV customers, accelerate efforts in carbon neutrality and provide advances in business opportunities.

"We envision a future where Toyota BEVs provide a best-in-class mobility experience, but also can be utilized by our customer to power their homes, their communities or even power back the electric grid in times of need," said Christopher Yang, group vice president of Toyota Electric Vehicle Charging Solutions team. "Our collaboration with Onco is an important step for us to understand the needs of utilities, as we plan to work closely with them to ensure every community can embrace Toyota's shift to electrified ve-

hicles."

"Electrification is coming, and it's Onco's job to build a safer, smarter, more reliable electric grid that can enable the needs of our customers, the state of Texas and the ERCOT market. This project marks the first collaboration of its kind between Onco and an OEM manufacturer, and we are excited to work with a world-class technology leader like Toyota to better understand how the electric grid can enable V2G transactions across the Onco service territory," said Jim Greer, Onco Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "We appreciate Toyota's collaboration in pursuing innovative energy solutions through this endeavor, and we look forward to someday implementing the lessons learned from this pilot project in benefit of the many communities we serve."

Initially, the two companies have agreed to a research project that will use Onco's research and testing microgrid at its System Operating Services Facility (SOSF) in south Dallas, located just south of Toyota's nearby national headquarters. The SOSF microgrid is composed of four interconnected microgrids that can be controlled independently, but also operated in parallel, tandem or combined into a single, larger system. The microgrid and its subsystems also include a "V2G" charger, solar panels and battery storage for testing and evaluation. Toyota and Onco plan to use a BEV along with

the system to better understand the interconnectivity between BEVs and utilities.

Beyond this initial phase, a second phase of the project slated for 2023 will include a V2G pilot where testing will be conducted with BEVs connected at homes or businesses within Onco's service territory, pursuant to all standard interconnection processes and agreements.

The collaboration will help provide both Onco and Toyota insight into the current and future needs of its customers. Furthermore, it will provide Onco with additional insight into the infrastructure needed to enable the rapid growth of electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, meet their needs and support electric vehicles and better understand the impact of V2G on the electric grid.

Toyota's first mass-market BEV, the bZ4X, went on sale this past year in the U.S. and Canada. The first Lexus BEV, the RZ 450e, is scheduled to go on sale in early 2023.

Toyota directly employs more than 39,000 people in the U.S. who have contributed to the design, engineering, and assembly of nearly 32 million cars and trucks at our nine manufacturing plants. By 2025, Toyota's 10th plant in North Carolina will begin to manufacture automotive batteries for electrified vehicles. With the more electrified vehicles on the road than any other automaker, a quarter of the company's 2021 U.S. sales were electrified.



## Oregon City Drops Its Bid To Keep Google's Water Use Private

By Andrew Selsky

Associated Press

Residents of The Dalles, Ore., are learning how much of their water Google's data centers have been using to cool the computers inside the cavernous buildings—information that previously was deemed a trade secret.

Google says its data centers in the Oregon town consumed 274.5 million gallons of water last year. Dawn Rasmussen, who lives on the outskirts of The Dalles and has seen the level of her well water drop year after year, said she is shocked.

"I'm flabbergasted and I'm scared for the future," Rasmussen said. "As we continue to be in drought conditions and the natural water table continues to get depleted, then the city itself is going to start to struggle."

Data centers around the world help people stream movies, store trillions of photos and conduct daily business online, but a single facility can churn through hundreds of thousands of gallons of water per day.

The California-based company has plans to potentially build more data centers in The Dalles, and that worried some residents who fear there eventually won't be enough water for everyone—including for area farms and fruit orchards, by far the biggest users.

A lawsuit by the city on behalf of Google—against Oregon's biggest newspaper, *The Oregonian/OregonLive*—that sought to keep the water-use information confidential was dropped, the newspaper reported Thursday.

City officials abandoned the 13-month legal fight and committed to release the company's water consumption in future years.

In an email, Google confirmed Thursday that its water use numbers would no longer be a trade secret.

"It is one example of the importance of transparency,

which we are aiming to increase... which includes site-level water usage numbers for all our U.S. data center sites, including The Dalles," Google spokesperson Devon Smiley said.

In a Nov. 21 blog posting, Google said that all of its global data centers consumed approximately 4.3 billion gallons of water in 2021, which it said is comparable to the water needed to irrigate and maintain 29 golf courses in the southwest U.S. each year.

John DeVoe, executive director of WaterWatch of Oregon, a conservation organization, said there should be no secrecy about these numbers.

He said Google's data centers in The Dalles used enough water in 2021 to cover the city's entire 7 square miles 3 inches deep.

The Dalles Mayor Richard Mays said Google had previously insisted its water usage was a trade secret because the company was concerned about competitors knowing how it cools its servers, but then changed its position and agreed to release the water records.

"That's why we backed off (the lawsuit)," Mays told *The Oregonian/OregonLive*.

*The Oregonian/OregonLive*, which had requested Google's records last year, said the case represents a major test of Oregon public records law.

"This seemed to be a perfect example of a clash of two important storylines, both the expansion of big businesses and the public resource that they need to use," Therese Bottomly, editor of *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, was quoted as saying.

Mays and Public Works Director Dave Anderson did not immediately respond to requests for further comment.

Google has been considering building two new data centers in The Dalles. The town lies along the mighty Columbia River, but the new data centers wouldn't be able to use that

water and instead would have to take water from rivers and groundwater that has gone through the city's water treatment plant.

Communities in the West have been grappling with a more than 20-year megadrought that studies link to human-caused climate change. The snowpack in the nearby Cascade Range that feeds the aquifers varies wildly year-to-year and glaciers are melting.

Town councilors voted unanimously in November 2021 to approve Google's proposal to build two new data centers, even though the 15,000 town residents didn't know how much water the proposed data centers would use. Even the town councilors themselves had to wait until a couple of weeks before the vote to find out the projected usage numbers.

"Water is a public resource," DeVoe said. "The public deserves to know how much water is used—and from what sources—by those who take water from rivers and streams and pump water from aquifers."

The U.S. hosts 30 percent of the world's data centers, more than any other country. Some data centers are trying to become more efficient in water consumption, for example by recycling the same water several times through a center before discharging it.

A study published last year by researchers at Virginia Tech and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory showed one-fifth of data centers rely on water from moderately to highly stressed watersheds.

Under the settlement filed Wednesday with Wasco County Circuit Court, The Dalles will pay \$53,000 to cover the legal costs for Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, a non-profit group that represented the newspaper. The city said Google will cover its own legal costs of \$106,000 and has committed to covering the \$53,000 settlement.

## N. Carolina Voter ID Still Void After Supreme Court Ruling

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — A 2018 law requiring photo identification to vote in North Carolina remains invalidated after a narrow majority on the state Supreme Court agreed Friday with a lower court decision that struck it down.

In a 4-3 decision, the court's Democratic justices said they saw no reason to disturb the 2021 ruling that voided the photo ID law. The lower court said the law violated the equal protection clause of the state constitution because it was tainted by racial bias and designed to help Republicans retain their grip on the General Assembly.

"We hold that the three-judge panel's findings of fact are supported by competent evidence showing that the statute was motivated by a racially discriminatory purpose," Associate Justice Anita Earls wrote in the majority opinion. "The provisions enacted ... were formulated with an impermissible intent to discriminate against African American voters in violation of the North Carolina Constitution."

One Republican legislative leader said later Friday that he would try to pass another voter ID law next year, when the Supreme Court will flip to a 5-2 Republican

majority following judicial elections last month.

The law being challenged was passed weeks after a photo identification amendment to the state constitution was approved by voters. That amendment is also in danger of being thrown out in separate litigation.

"If Democrats on the state Supreme Court can't respect the will of the voters, the General Assembly will," Senate leader Phil Berger said in a news release. "Regardless of the policymaking goals of the activist justices, the people of North Carolina overwhelmingly support voter ID laws."

## Fewer Americans File Jobless Claims

By Matt Ott

AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits fell significantly last week, a sign that the labor market remains strong even as the Federal Reserve continues to raise interest rates in an effort to cool the economy and slow inflation.

Applications for jobless claims fell to 211,000 for the week ending Dec. 10, down by 20,000 from the previous week's 231,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. Jobless claims are seen as a proxy for layoffs, and last week's level was the lowest in more than two months.

The four-week moving average

of claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, fell by 3,000 to 227,250.

About 1.67 million people were receiving jobless aid the week that ended Dec. 3, up 1,000 from the week before.

American workers have extraordinary job security at the moment, despite an economy some see in danger of tipping into a recession due to the aggressive interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve this year. The Fed has raised its benchmark interest rate seven times this year in an effort to slow the economy and bring down prices that are gobbling up Americans' paychecks.

On Wednesday, the Fed raised its short-term lending rate by 0.5 percentage points, a smaller increase

than the previous four increases of 0.75 percentage points. Its key rate now stands in a range of 4.25 percent to 4.5 percent, the highest in 15 years.

In somewhat of a surprise, Fed policymakers forecast that their key short-term rate will reach a range of 5 percent to 5.25 percent by the end of 2023. That suggests that the Fed is poised to raise its rate by an additional three-quarters of a point and leave it there through next year.

Fed officials have signaled that to slow inflation, the unemployment rate needs to be at least 4 percent. Currently, the unemployment rate is 3.7 percent, a couple of ticks above a half-century low. U.S. employers added 263,000 jobs last month.

## Commerce Puts Dozens More Chinese Companies On Trade Blacklist

By Elaine Kurtzbach

AP Business Writer

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—The U.S. Department of Commerce is adding 36 Chinese high-tech companies, including makers of aviation equipment, chemicals and computer chips, to an export controls blacklist, citing concerns over national security,

U.S. interests and human rights.

The inclusion of the companies in the trade "Entity List" means that export licenses will likely be denied for any U.S. company trying to do business with them. In some cases, companies based in other countries are also required to comply with the requirements to prevent technologies from being diverted to uses banned under

the export controls.

The move signals a hardening of U.S. efforts to prevent China, especially its military, from acquiring advanced technologies such as leading edge computer chips and hypersonic weapons. It's the latest in a years-long escalation of U.S. restrictions of Chinese technology that began with President Donald Trump and has

continued under President Joe Biden's administration.

At the same time, the Biden administration has been moving to beef up American manufacturing capabilities for semiconductors and other advanced technologies.

The changes to the Commerce Department's entity list were entered in the *Federal Register*, scheduled for publication Friday.

Yangtze Memory Technology Co., a computer chip maker based in the central city of Wuhan, and its Japan unit were included in the list for "posing a significant risk of becoming involved in activities contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States," according to the document.

It said Yangtze Memory Technologies and Hefei Core Storage Electronic Ltd. were included because they allegedly might act as suppliers to Huawei Technologies, the world's biggest maker of network equipment, and to Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology, another company subject to U.S. sanctions.

Late last month, the U.S.

banned the sale of communications equipment made by Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE and restricting the use of some China-made video surveillance systems, including Hangzhou Hikvision, citing an "unacceptable risk" to national security.

Companies in the Anhui Cambricon Information Technology group, some affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Electronics Technology group, were said to be or have "close ties" to government institutions supporting the Chinese military and defense industry, it said.

Some of the companies were included in the list for being at "risk of diversion" to other companies on the entity list or are accused of illegally exporting U.S. electronics subject to export controls to Iran for military use.

Some major aviation suppliers were included to prevent them acquiring know-how and products that would aid China's development of hypersonic weapons and other military capabilities.

Tianjin Tiandi Weiye Technolo-

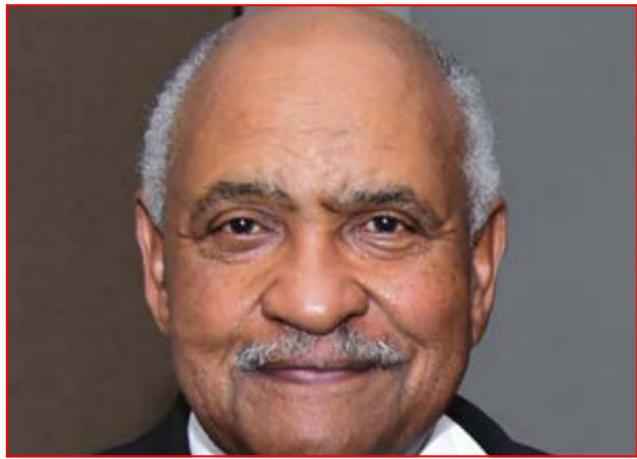
gies Co. was listed, the document said, because it was implicated in high-technology surveillance, detentions and other human rights violations of Muslim ethnic minorities in China's northwestern Xinjiang region.

There was no immediate comment from the Chinese government Friday. However, when asked Wednesday about reports that Washington was planning to change the trade blacklist to include more than 30 companies including Yangtze Memory Technologies, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the U.S. was "stretching the concept of national security, abusing export control measures, engaging in discriminatory and unfair treatment against enterprises of other countries, and politicizing and weaponizing economic and sci-tech issues."

"This is blatant economic coercion and bullying in the field of technology," Wang said, adding that it also undermined regular business activities. "It is not in the interests of China, the U.S. or the whole world."



# Opinion



## We Could and Should Learn From Georgia Voting

By Dr. John E. Warren

Publisher, San Diego Voice & Viewpoint Newspaper

As of the first day of voting in the Georgia runoff election between Senator Warnock and candidate Walker, over 239,000 people stood in long lines, some for hours, waiting to cast their vote. These are the same people who two years ago stood in line and elected a Black man and a Jewish man to the U.S. Senate, giving President Biden and Vice President Harris control of the U.S. Senate.

Although Georgia lawmakers enacted such voter suppression laws as prohibitions against giving people food or water in lines waiting to vote, reduced ballot pickup boxes and efforts to stop churches from assisting voting on Sundays, and the failure to elect a Black woman as Governor for the second time, the people, Black and white, continue to vote. The "Black Votes Matter" campaign has not let up but appears determined to overcome any suppression efforts put in front of them.

In the recent midterm elections, we still had too few people bother to vote. In Uvalde, Texas, where a gunman killed students and teachers and the governor refused to take actions against assault weapons like the one used in that massacre, at least 45 percent of those residents did not vote to remove the Governor when they had a strong anti-gun alternative for governor on the ballot.

What we learn from the state of Georgia is that we must focus more on motivating and activating the strength of our numbers and not focus on what is being done against us. Georgia has implemented what Dr. King said in May of 1957. As a reminder, Dr. King said, "Give us the ballot" and we will elect judges and legislators who will pass laws for us. Isn't it time that the rest of us followed the Georgia example and got about the business of making Dr. King's statement a reality where we live, just as the people of Georgia are doing?

While the elections are over, our issues and challenges are not and some would have us accept the results and not keep working and planning for the next two years. Clearly, the people of Georgia and those areas where we did have wins like Pennsylvania sending its first Black woman to Congress, or Maryland electing its first Black governor, are reminders of what we can do and should be doing. Let's not get away from the business of planning for the next election now. We too can demonstrate that ALL Votes Matter.



## Reaffirming Solidarity Between Blacks and Jews in America

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

National Newspaper Publishers Association

I will not be silent on the issues of racial hatred, violence, and prejudice. I am speaking out publicly in support of the recent call by billionaire African-American business leader and philanthropist, Robert F. Smith, to stand up against the resurgence of racism and antisemitism in America.

Blacks and Jews in the United States have had a long history and tradition of working together and sacrificing together for freedom, justice, equality and equity. Lest we forget that we have marched together for over a century. We have shared blood together. And we have died together for the cause of freedom in the Civil Rights Movement.

Both of our communities today increasingly are the targets of violent hatred, ignorant stereotypes, and a demonic supremacist ideology. Racism and antisemitism are twin evils that cannot be ignored or trivialized.

In a recent full page paid advertisement in *The New York Times*, Robert F. Smith affirmed, "At a time when racism and antisemitism are on the rise, I am determined to partner with leaders from all faiths to recognize 'Fifteen Days of Light.' We are unifying to celebrate Chanukah and Kwanzaa together, and encourage communities nationwide to join us in our support for one another."

"Fifteen Days of Light" is a timely national opportunity to do what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. prophetically defined as the development and establishment of a "Beloved Community." Dr. King envisioned that this would be a nationwide multiracial community where there would be no racism, no antisemitism, and no hatred toward anyone. All people, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or faith would live together with mutual respect and unconditional love for all.

As we prepare to go into 2023, disunity between Blacks and Jews is ahistorical and counterproductive. We cannot afford to be nonchalant or indifferent. Smith's statement to encourage participation in acts of remembrance across the nation celebrating both Chanukah and Kwanzaa together over a 15-day period this month reminded me of the need to reaffirm the solidarity between Blacks and Jews.

I attended the historic 1963 March on Washington where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his eloquent and transcendent "I Have a Dream" speech. I recall the strong advocacy from Jewish leaders like Arnold Aronson of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights that supported Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the NAACP, and other civil rights organizations at the March on Washington.

That day I also remember hearing from a dynamic young freedom

fighter named John Lewis who emphasized the urgency for racial equality. Then there was a young Jewish folk singer named Bob Dylan who performed at the March a haunting song he wrote about the tragic assassination of civil rights leader Medgar Evers in Mississippi.

On that sunny day in August of 1963 in Washington there were other freedom movement speakers that included a number of prominent Jewish voices from across the country, including the outspoken Rabbi Joachim Prinz, who spoke about "the shame and disgrace of inequality and injustice" facing the Black community.

Later that year in November 1963 Dr. King joined with theologian Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel at the United Synagogue of America's Golden Jubilee Convention in New York City. King and Heschel pledged to work together to end racism and antisemitism. In 1965 when Dr. King, John Lewis, Hosea Williams and other civil rights leaders marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Alabama, the historic Selma to Montgomery March, for voting rights, Rabbi Heschel was there marching shoulder to shoulder in solidarity.

The Black community and the Jewish community share a long, shared history of struggle and fighting for civil rights—from August and Henrietta Bondi's home in Kansas being used as a stop on the Underground Railroad to Jewish organizations participating in the protests following the murder of George Floyd and the acceleration of the Black Lives Matter movement.

According to recent national law enforcement data, today there has been an unprecedented increase in hate crimes targeted against Black and Jewish communities. According to the Anti-Defamation League, 2021 was the highest year on record for documented reports of harassment, vandalism and violence directed against Jews since the organization began tracking incidents in 1979. Thus far in 2022 the incidents of antisemitism have not declined but have steadily increased.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) has documented a constant increase in racially motivated attacks on Black people throughout the United States during the past decade. All forms of racism and antisemitism should always be challenged relentlessly. Dr. King said it best, "We must all learn to live together as brothers, or we will all perish together as fools."

Robert F. Smith, Founder, Chairman & CEO of Vista Equity Partners, Chairman, Carnegie Hall, is taking the right stand at the right time. Smith stated in the ad, "Michael Eric Dyson recently wrote that '...African-Americans and Jews are passengers on the same ship facing the ferocious headwinds of bigotry and hatred.' It is time to put aside differences and shift our focus to the shared values that bring all Americans together as God's children."

The call to action is: "Join us this holiday season at public events from Los Angeles to New York, or in your own home, to light the Eight Nights of the Chanukah Menorah followed immediately by the Seven Nights of Kwanzaa and the Kinara. Post your own photos of Black and Jewish friends, neighbors and colleagues coming together to #lightthecandles."

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and is Executive Producer/Host of *The Chavis Chronicles* on PBS TV stations throughout the U.S. and can be reached at [dr.bchavis@nnpa.org](mailto:dr.bchavis@nnpa.org).



## The Iran Protests and US Policy

By Mel Gurtov

PeaceVoice

"Women, Life, Freedom"

Streets in dozens of Iran cities are filled with angry people in popular protests that have already gone on much longer—three months and counting—than those in 2009 and 2019. The unrest erupted when news broke on September 16 that a 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, had died in the custody of the morality police after being accused of violating Iran's mandatory head scarf law.

Large numbers of Iranians are calling for the ouster of the autocratic clerics who rule the country. "Women, Life, Freedom" is their cry, and the overthrow of the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei regime is their aim.

The hard-line president of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi, naturally dismisses the protesters: "We have to separate between rightful protest and riots," he said, adding that the Islamic Republic's "red line is the lives of the people and their properties."

But he surely knows, as one observer writes, that the demonstrations are "the most serious threat to the Islamic Republic since the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s." The regime's harsh response shows that it believes that assessment.

According to human rights groups in Iran, about 18,000 people have been arrested and nearly 500 civilians have been killed. Two executions of protesters have occurred, with many more likely. The government's pattern is the same as in the past: direct assault on the protesters to clear the streets, including random firing into crowds.

The supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has said nary a word in sympathy with those killed, including Ms. Amini. The Kurdish region in Iran's northwest, home to Mahsa Amini and various opposition forces, has been hit particularly hard by security forces, which have also crossed the border with Iraq to attack the semiautonomous Kurdistan Region.

Human Rights or National Security?

The protests have come at the best of times and the worst of times. The best, because the theocracy of Khamenei, who has ruled since 1989, is repugnant when it comes to women and respect for human rights in general. That same observer I quoted earlier cites the "feminist character" of the demonstrations, noting the huge number of women protesters.

The protests have been supported with audacious acts never seen before—such as hacking of state television showing an image of Khamenei being devoured by flames, the Iran's national soccer team's refusal to sing the national anthem at the World Cup games in Qatar, and criticism of the regime by a Kurdish soccer player in Iran, who was arrested.

The protests deserve worldwide support, and to a large extent they have received them from just about all democratic governments. The UN's Human Rights Council authorized creation of a fact-finding mechanism by a wide margin—it passed 25–6, with 16 abstentions.

The Council's head, Volker Turk, said: "we are now in a full-fledged human rights crisis." Turk appealed to Iran's government to "acknowledge the deep-seated social, economic, and political grievances that have been building up, to heed people's demands for their rights to be protected and for their voices to be heard, to acknowledge the legitimacy of those calling for a different vision of society. Women and girls must be able to feel free and secure in public without fear of violence and harassment... Young people need to know that they can peacefully express their opinions without fear of arrest and imprisonment."

Press reports say the regime will disband the morality police, but that is hard to believe. The ayatollah surely is aware of the famous warning of Alexis de Tocqueville: "The most dangerous moment for

a bad government is when it begins to reform itself."

It's also the worst of times, because U.S. support of the protesters—the "remarkable bravery and courage that the Iranian people are exhibiting through their peaceful demonstrations," as a state department spokesperson put it—has national-security consequences. It helps justify Iran's shipments of drones to Russia, and training for their use in the Ukraine war.

Support of the protests also puts the nuclear talks on the back burner, perhaps never to be revived. As Reuters reported October 12: "Asked if the United States was interested in pursuing talks to revive the pact under which Iran curbed its nuclear program in return for economic sanctions relief, the same spokesperson replied "that's not our focus right now."

In fact, the nuclear talks are at an impasse, with one U.S. official calling them "a waste of time," since Tehran hasn't come up with any new proposals. To the contrary, as the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, said, the Iranians "were tripling, not doubling, tripling their capacity to enrich uranium at 60 percent."

That figure gets Iran closer to the 90-percent enrichment needed for a nuclear weapon. And it provides the U.S. with a convenient excuse for walking away from the table.

The current situation marks yet another time in Iran that the US has had to choose between supporting human rights or national security priorities. Barack Obama faced the same choice when deciding to go ahead with the nuclear deal in 2015.

This time around, as the Biden administration watches Russia and China come to Khamenei's aid, the choice should clearly be in favor of human rights. Restoring the nuclear deal will have to await Khamenei's successor.

Mel Gurtov, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Portland State University and blogs at *In the Human Interest*.



## Human And Environmental Rights Come With Mutual Responsibilities

By David Gallup

President, World Service Authority

If we want a world where our human and environmental rights are elevated, we must place as much importance on our responsibilities to humanity and the planet as we put on our rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) sets forth the fundamental rights belonging to every individual in the world. The UDHR celebrated its 74th anniversary on Dec. 10, 2022.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the Declaration on the Human Environment and the 5th anniversary of the Declaration of Ethical Principles of Climate Change. These declarations call for the preservation, enhancement, and equitable use of the environment for present and future generations.

The UN Conference of Parties that occurs every year, the most recent being COP27 in Egypt last month, develops additional accords to enforce environmental rights, such as the Loss and Damage Fund intended to assist people in places most negatively affected by climate disasters.

Distressingly, humanity has yet to fulfill the duties that arise from these global meetings of national governments and from these rights declarations. Celebrating these declarations and international agreements builds an understanding of human and environmental rights. Rights awareness is the first step. The next step is to implement the goals of the declarations, especially for people living in the most vulnerable situations.

Refugees, the stateless, the indigenous, the economically disadvantaged, those facing war, discrimination, and oppression suffer the most from deleterious human impacts on the environment. Close to 100 million internally/externally displaced and stateless persons in the world—one out of every 80 persons—have had to flee their homes to seek safe places to live. As environmental destruction worsens, climate refugees will multiply this number exponentially.

Civil society has been present during the development of human and environmental rights declarations, but individual humans do not yet have a vote in world affairs. As national citizens, individuals in democracies can vote on local issues, but we have limited or no say in how governments and corporations around the world treat the oceans, the forests, the land, the atmosphere, and other species.

In the nation-state system, governments and their leaders can violate human and environmental rights with impunity, because individual accountability for global violations does not yet exist in human and environmental rights law spheres at the world level.

But there are legal and societal measures that we can implement to realize the promise of human and environmental rights declarations.

Global institutions of world law, such as a universal rights court and a people's world parliament, are tools that can help realign humanity's priorities to be in sync with the needs of the Earth.

Attempts to address environmental rights judicially are in process. For example, ecocide—severe, widespread, or long-term damage to the environment—is under consideration as a crime within the jurisdiction of the existing International Criminal Court and a future International Court for the Environment. An environmental rights court would adjudicate ecocide, but not the human rights violations of people living in affected areas. A global judicial system that adjudicates violations of both human and environmental rights, a World Court of Human and Environmental Rights, would provide a holistic solution.

World law institutions are one component to realizing universal rights. The other component is empowering individual action by recognizing our legal status as world citizens. With the right to vote directly in world referenda or through world parliamentarians on issues that affect the entire world, we would increase our individual engagement and our personal responsibility.

Seeing the Earth as one, world citizens understand how our actions affect our fellow humans and the environment. Together, we can develop strategies for sustainable living based not just on human needs, but also on the needs of the Earth.

Human rights and environmental rights are intertwined. Without a safe and sustainable environment, our rights become meaningless. Without just and peaceful interactions among humans, the Earth becomes a victim of human violence, for war is one of the worst destroyers of nature.

As the brain and conscience for the planet, we world citizens have the duty to use our intelligence and empathy to harmonize the needs of humanity with the needs of the Earth.

David Gallup is a human rights attorney, President of the World Service Authority and Convenor of the World Court of Human Rights Coalition.