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Black Friday Approaches With Fewer Bargain-Hunting Options Nationwide

By Stacy M. Brown

NNPA

As Black Friday approaches, shoppers across the United States prepare for the holiday shopping rush against widespread retail closures. More than 2,000 stores are set to shut their doors by the end of 2024, with 13 major retail chains accounting for a total of 2,055 closures. The shakeup reflects a retail landscape grappling with changing consumer habits, financial pressures, and shifting strategies.

Family Dollar tops the list, closing at least 600 locations this year. The chain's decision is part of a broader trend among large retailers reassessing their footprints to focus on profitability. While some, like Walmart and TJX (the parent company of T.J. Maxx and Marshalls), are also closing underperforming locations, they plan to open new stores in more lucrative markets.

Pharmacies have also seen significant reductions. CVS is in the final stages of its three-year plan to close 900 stores, citing demographic



changes and new shopping patterns. Rite Aid has announced another 77 closures, adding to the 150 stores it shuttered last year as part of its bankruptcy restructuring. Walgreens, meanwhile, has announced plans to close 1,200 stores over the next three years, though those closures won't begin until 2025.

The restaurant sector has not been spared. Denny's plans to close 50 locations by the end of this year, targeting lower-volume locations. Another 100 restaurants are set to close in 2025.

Retail Closures Hit Communities Hard
 The closures are being felt deeply

in communities across the country. In the District of Columbia, Aurora Market, a family-owned and veteran-operated store in the Brookland neighborhood, recently announced its indefinite closure after being targeted by thieves in nearly a dozen incidents. The store served as a vital resource for underserved communities, and its closure reflects the difficulties smaller businesses face amid rising crime and economic pressures.

Larger retail chains have also faced challenges. Foot Locker closed 113 stores this year as part of a strategic overhaul, while Macy's began a three-year plan to shut 150 stores, starting with 50 in 2024. Financially struggling brands like Express have closed 95 flagship locations and 12 UpWest-branded stores.

Advance Auto Parts, one of the nation's leading automotive aftermarket retailers, announced it would shutter more than 700 stores as part of a broader plan to improve profitability. Other chains, like LL Flooring, formerly Lumber Liquidators, are going out of business entirely, with the company holding liquidation

sales for its remaining 200 stores before shutting down.

The Future of Retail
 Experts predict the pace of closures will continue. UBS analysts estimate that as many as 45,000 stores could close across the U.S. over the next five years, driven primarily by the collapse of smaller businesses. Even as retail giants like Costco, Target, and Home Depot expand, many retailers are scaling back due to shifting consumer preferences and financial pressures.

7-Eleven's parent company, Seven & I Holdings Co., announced it would close 444 North American locations, citing underperformance. Declining tobacco sales, bans on flavored nicotine products, and reduc-

tions in SNAP benefits affected the company's profitability.

For many communities, the loss of retail options goes beyond inconvenience. In urban neighborhoods like D.C.'s Brookland, closures leave gaps in access to essential goods and services while also impacting the sense of connection and identity that local businesses foster.

As shoppers prepare for Black Friday, the closures serve as a reminder of the ongoing transformations within the retail industry. A veteran store owner reflected on the challenges, saying, "Stores like ours aren't just businesses—they're part of the community fabric. When they close, it leaves a void that's hard to fill."

Recounts: NC's High-Stakes Elections

By Jordan Meadows

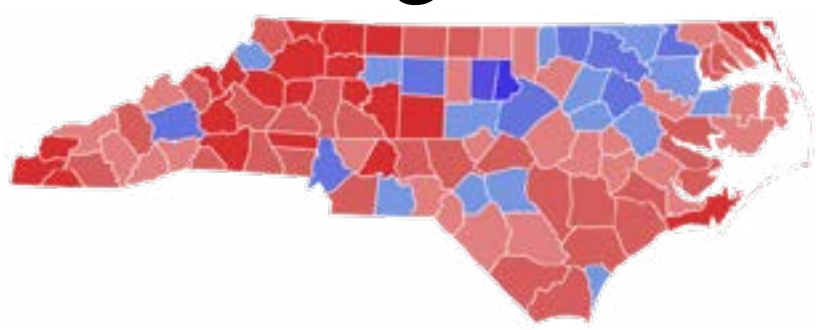
Staff Writer

The race for North Carolina's Supreme Court between Democratic incumbent Justice Allison Riggs and Republican challenger Jefferson Griffin is going to a recount. With 5.5 million ballots cast, Riggs leads by just 625 votes, or 0.01%, after the final votes were tallied from several counties.

As of Tuesday afternoon, all ballots appear to be in—Forsyth and Duplin were the ones left to be fully certified. Despite Riggs' slight advantage, due to the margin being under 1,000 votes, Griffin has called for a recount. This closely watched contest will decide the ideological balance of North Carolina's Supreme Court, which currently has a 5-2 Republican majority.

Recounts are not unusual in North Carolina's high-stakes races. In 2016, the state saw a recount for the position of state auditor, which resulted in a net gain of 49 votes for Democrats. Similarly, in 2020, a recount for a Supreme Court race resulted in a net gain of just five votes for Democrats. This history suggests that while Griffin's deficit is small, it is unlikely to be enough to overturn the result.

Riggs, who is seeking a second term, had pulled ahead of Griffin after provisional ballots were counted, flipping the race in her favor. Initially, Griffin had led by about 10,000 votes on Election Night, but the final tally of absentee and provisional ballots gradually



shifted the balance.

Griffin and the North Carolina Republican Party have been vocal in their criticisms of the election process, filing a lawsuit against the State Board of Elections (NCSBE) on Monday. The lawsuit alleges that the board had failed to promptly fulfill records requests for data that could potentially form the basis of an election protest or challenge. Specifically, Griffin requested information on absentee ballots, voters suspected of voting twice, and lists of individuals with felony convictions or deceased voters.

The lawsuit, however, has been dismissed by NCSBE spokesperson Pat Gannon, who argued that the agency had already informed Griffin's campaign that the requested data would be provided before the lawsuit was filed.

The recount will proceed as part of the normal election process, with a deadline for completion by November 26, when the state certifies its election results. Riggs, in a statement on social

media, acknowledged that recounts are a routine part of the electoral process and emphasized the importance of transparency in maintaining public confidence in the system.

"Recounts are a normal electoral process that allow for transparency and promote public confidence in our electoral systems," Riggs wrote on X. "I'm grateful for your continued support, and for the time and dedication of our election workers across the state. This is what democracy looks like."

If Riggs maintains her lead after the recount, she will secure a second term on the court and prevent Republicans from expanding their majority. The next opportunity for Democrats to flip the court will come in 2028 when three Republican justices are up for reelection.

Democrats have reason for optimism, as the tight race reflects a broader trend of increasing support for their candidates, particularly in

light of recent controversial decisions by the state's high court that have drawn criticism from conservatives.

Despite Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump winning the state with 51% of the vote, Democrats managed to secure key statewide offices, including Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and State Superintendent of Education. North Carolina saw one of the smallest shifts toward the Republican Party in the nation this election cycle.

However, Republicans also have reason to be optimistic: they won several Council of State races, including State Auditor, Commissioner of Agriculture, and Insurance Commissioner, and perhaps most notably, they swept all of the Appellate Court races on the ballot.

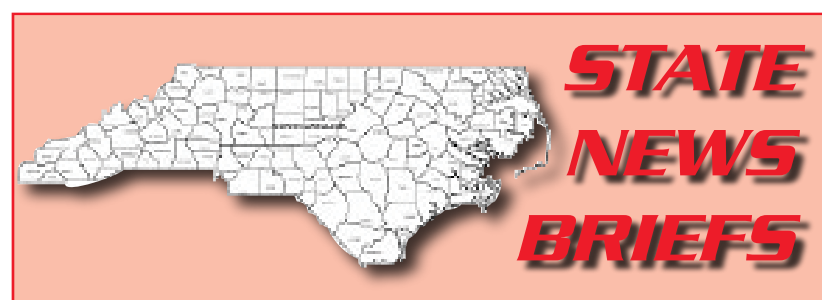
In addition to the Supreme Court race, several other contests are also heading for recounts, including a closely contested race for a state House seat. Republican Rep. Frank Sossamon has requested a recount in his race against Democrat Bryan Cohn in House District 32, which stretches from north of Raleigh to the Virginia state line. With only a 233-vote margin between the two, this race has the potential to shift the balance of power in the state legislature.

There are more than 10 races in North Carolina where recounts have been requested in the 2024 General

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



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP BREAKFAST—The Wake County Community Education Committee was renamed as a movement, "The Flood Group" (TFG). TFG's focus is to ensure that our schools, communities, and families are collectively providing a real chance for children to achieve educational excellence, by making them effective citizens who are globally competitive. TFG's strategy requires that power of the clergy, along with community leadership, and energetic leaders commit to the challenge of ensuring educational attainment and success for our children.



SCAM ALERT: THIS NC MAN WAS SLAPPED WITH ALMOST \$1,000 IN TOLL FEES

Moneywise - Greg Underhill, from Clayton, North Carolina, was shocked to receive over \$1,000 in toll charges—from states he says he's never even visited. Toll agencies in Maryland, New York, and New Jersey claim his trailer passed through tolls, with toll cameras capturing photos of what appeared to be his license plate.

At first, Underhill thought it was a scam, as his trailer hadn't left his property. His wife, Temperance, tried calling the toll agencies to get answers.

"I attempted to reach them, got in the on the hold loop, never got to speak to anybody. One time I was on hold for 27 minutes," she told reporters.

Underhill then visited the DMV, where staff claimed they had never seen an issue like this before. The Underhills filed a fraud report with the Johnston County Sheriff's Department, suspecting someone had duplicated their license plate, and surrendered the tag to the DMV to prevent further charges. Despite these efforts, the tolls went to collections, with late fees pushing the total close to \$1,000.

'Ghost plates' a common tactic
 After failing to resolve the issue on his own, Underhill contacted ABC11 Troubleshooter Diane Wilson for assistance. She noticed a key detail: the license plate in the toll photos showed signs of manipulation. The "8" on the plate in the toll booth photos was actually a "9" that had been altered to look like an "8."

This is a common tactic used to create "ghost plates," especially in states with automatic toll cameras. For the Underhills, this fraud spiraled quickly, with tolls racking up across multiple states. Once the bills went to collections, their credit was at risk, and the added fees made the financial impact even worse. Even worse, in some states, unpaid tolls can result in license suspension.

Luckily for the Underhills, Wilson was able to help resolve their case. With proof of fraud, the toll agencies dismissed the charges and notified law enforcement to look for the altered plate.

License plate fraud can be a big headache
 License plate fraud can create serious financial and legal troubles. Fraudsters may duplicate plates to avoid tolls, evade law enforcement, or commit more serious crimes without detection. If your plate is duplicated, as in Underhill's case, you could be liable for violations, toll fees, or fines, which can damage your credit and cause legal issues.

With just your license plate number, fraudsters can access details like your vehicle's make, model, VIN number, mileage, accident history, and sometimes even criminal history. While some of this information is visible on the road, fraudsters don't need to see your car to access it—they just need the plate number. Using this data, they can create elaborate scams, even tracking down your name and car type on social media or linking it to personal information from public records or data leaks.

For example, they may run your license plate and find your name and the type of car you own. They can then search your name on Facebook and might see your vehicle in the background of your profile picture, plus where you went to school, where you work, and even find family members. Combining this with information from data leaks and public records can lead them to your home address, phone number, and more.

To protect yourself from license plate fraud, regularly check toll statements for unexpected charges and report any discrepancies immediately. Consider monitoring your credit report for any unexpected hits, which could signal unpaid tolls or collections violations.

If you suspect your license plate has been duplicated, report it to both your local DMV and law enforcement and consider requesting a new plate. With proactive steps, you can limit your risk of fraud.

Could Black Project 2025 Be The Next Move Against Political Regression?

By Dominique Heath

Guest Columnist

While Project 2025 has been at the forefront of discussions, another movement has gained traction amongst many Black Americans on social media: Black Project 2025. This transformative movement is aiming to address concerns surrounding the potential implications of Project 2025, as proposed by The Heritage Foundation. With the possibility of Donald Trump's second presidential term, Black Project 2025 addresses significant concerns within the Black community about policies that could potentially reverse progress in racial and economic equity and dismantle crucial support systems. Proposals such as the abolishment of the Department of Education, reduction in Medicaid funding, and the elimination of student loan relief are seen as especially devastating to Black communities with possible further reductions in federal housing support and programs like WIC, SNAP, TANF, and FEMA.

The Genesis of Black Project 2025
 In an election that underscored a significant divide—where the majority of Black Americans supported Democratic Candidate Kamala Harris—concern grew about what a Trump term could entail. Through the many voices, Aniya Holloway, a 22-year-old media buyer and CEO of Kultremedia on TikTok, stood out and the seeds of Black Project 2025 were sown. Holloway called for fostering an ecosystem that



champions economic self-sufficiency within the Black community by promoting Black-owned businesses and black culture. While the concept isn't new, Holloway's proposal was unique in emphasizing grassroots involvement through modern platforms like TikTok.

Holloway explained her idea as turning the community's economic spending inward to increase the Black family's median income and build community wealth. This vision is very reminiscent of the early 20th century African American Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma, often referred to as "Black Wall Street" with the difference of 100 years of progress, civil rights laws, and new age technology/ideas.

In her influential TikTok post, Holloway (@mediabuyingbestie) suggests, "Everything we use and consume on a daily basis, it is no longer purchased

from these large corporations. It is purchased from one another." She adds, "Maybe there is a silver lining in Kamala not being able to get into office because as a community we just become that much more tight-knit."

Community Response

Within just six days of its initial proposal, Holloway's idea went viral, amassing over a million views and generating hundreds of thousands of reposts along with numerous videos discussing the pros and cons of the concept. With 50,000 Black Americans and black business owners already signed up and over \$70,000 raised via crowdfunding, this momentum inspired Holloway to take the next step: hiring app developers/staff, creating an online server to host the community and planning virtual meetings.

Creatives like @equilibrium.esence are fervently spreading the

word. "The way im promoting this group you would think it's my job! BLACK PROJECT 2025 is a go!!! LETS GOOOOOOO," she posted, highlighting the initiative's potential benefits. She emphasized that everyone has a role to play: "They got judges in there, attorneys, we got lawyers, we got doctors, people who like to roller skate, whatever you think your talent is, you can contribute to the group."

The concept of mutual support and reliance within the community is gaining tremendous enthusiasm. Whether by promoting businesses or providing professional services, individuals are finding innovative ways to contribute to the collective economic advancement.

TikToker @clayreels also advocates for collaborative efforts to dismantle systems of oppression and promote community welfare. He stated, "I have my critiques, but no plan is a bad plan within reason. I feel like we can work out the kinks if we work together and actually listen to each other." He further urged the community to appreciate and support Black women who have been at the forefront of the movement.

The movement's collaborative spirit resonates deeply with the community. By leveraging diverse skills and experiences, Black Project 2025 stands to devise comprehensive strategies that address the multifaceted challenges faced by Black Americans. Voices within the community highlight the importance of unity and proactive participation to drive sustainable change.

STATE ELECTIONS

Continued from page 1

Election. As of Tuesday, recounts have also been requested for two NC House seats and two NC Senate seats.

With recounts on the horizon and legal challenges underway, North Carolinians can expect uncertainty before the final results of these high-stakes elections are certified. As the race for North Carolina's Supreme Court drags into the final stretch, it serves as a reminder of the importance of every single vote in determining the future direction of the state's political and legal trajectory.

The political fallout from this race will undoubtedly be felt for years to come, especially as the state looks ahead to future elections that could shift the court's balance once again.

Who Were The Enslaved Laborers Who Built NC's Capitol Building?

By: Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

The North Carolina State Capitol in Raleigh stands as a symbol of the state's history. The construction of this building, completed in 1840, tells a story that is often left out of the history books: the untold labor of enslaved people who played a vital role in its creation.

The original State House of North Carolina, built from 1792 to 1796, was destroyed by fire in 1831, and the state's government quickly moved to commission a new building. The General Assembly ordered the construction of a larger, more grandiose Capitol that would stand as a lasting symbol of the state's government. Architect William Nichols, Jr. was brought in to design the new Capitol, which would feature a cross-shaped layout, a central domed rotunda, and Greek-inspired columns.

The House of Representatives chamber is modeled after the semi-circular layout of a Greek theater, with architectural details in the Corinthian style. The Senate chamber features Ionic columns, echoing the style of the Erechtheion temple. The only departure from classical design can be found on the third floor, where two rooms and their vestibules were finished in the Gothic style.

When the Capitol was completed in 1840, its construction had cost a staggering \$532,682.34—more than three times the state's annual general revenue at the time. The Capitol served as the seat of North Carolina's state government until 1888 when the Supreme Court and State Library moved to separate buildings.

Construction began with a vast array of laborers required for the project. Local newspapers ran advertisements asking for workers, and many wealthier enslavers responded by renting out their enslaved people to work on the Capitol's construction. The work was grueling and varied, requiring skilled artisans such as stone masons and carpenters, as well as general laborers who cleared rubble, transported materials, and worked in the nearby quarries.

Enslaved Black men were cru-



papers. Brickle was one of the few enslaved workers allowed to sign a timebook, an unusual privilege that gave him a small degree of autonomy.

Another worker, Giles, was recorded in the 1834 report as working in the state's quarry. His enslaver kept a diary that helped historians pinpoint his birthdate—October 9, 1815. This small detail provided further insight into Giles' life and allowed researchers to estimate that he was around 18 or 19 years old when he began working at the quarry.

The research team also explored what happened to the enslaved workers after emancipation. Many of the men who had worked on the Capitol continued in similar trades, such as carpentry and stonework, after they were freed.

Some, like Handy Lockhart, were able to build successful businesses. Lockhart went on to become one of the first Black aldermen of Raleigh and a prominent furniture maker. He also worked as a coffin maker and undertaker and was a leader in the Black community, working to improve education for Black children.

Some formerly enslaved workers involved in the construction of the Capitol were able to acquire property in what became known as Cameron Village, a neighborhood in Raleigh established by freed Black people.

The research into the lives of the enslaved workers who built the North Carolina State Capitol is an important step in recognizing the often-overlooked contributions of Black laborers in the construction of the nation's public buildings. The launch of the "From Naming to Knowing" project offers an opportunity for all North Carolinians to learn about the lives of the men who helped shape the Capitol, and to understand the significance of their labor in the state's history.

By unearthing their names and stories, historians have begun to fill in the gaps of history, offering a fuller picture of the Capitol's construction—a picture that acknowledges the difficult, often invisible labor that made such monumental projects possible.

cial to the Capitol's construction, performing tasks that ranged from manual labor to specialized skills. Many worked at a state-run quarry located about a mile and a half southeast of the Capitol site, where they cut and hauled heavy granite blocks that would form the building's foundation and walls. This stone was transported to the Capitol via the state's first experimental railroad, a horse-drawn track that allowed for the movement of large amounts of heavy material.

In addition to their work in the quarries, enslaved men were also employed on-site at the Capitol, where they performed labor-intensive tasks such as clearing rubble, mixing mortar, and transporting building materials.

Many of these men earned approximately 50 cents a day, but the money did not go to them—it was paid directly to their enslavers, who profited from their forced labor. Enslavers often kept meticulous records, and some even requested payment for the labor of their enslaved workers to be delivered directly to them.

In 2019, researchers began to dig into the history of the enslaved la-

borers who built the Capitol. The project began after the discovery of an 1834 report listing the names of workers involved in the Capitol's construction, identifying which were enslaved.

This report, along with payroll records, receipts, and personal correspondence, provided historians with crucial details about these men, whose identities had largely been forgotten. Researchers including Kara Deadmon, Terra Schramm, and Natalie Rodriguez used a variety of sources—such as census data, genealogical websites, and state archives—to reconstruct the lives of these workers.

The project, which culminated in the launch of a new online history project called "From Naming to Knowing," traces the names and stories of 137 enslaved workers who contributed to the Capitol's construction. Among the workers uncovered in the research is Junius Brickle. His enslaver kept meticulous records of his work, and some of these were found in the state's Treasurer's

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Business & Finance

Robo Price-Fixing: Why The Justice Department Is Suing A Software Co. To Stop Landlords Colluding On Rents

Roger Alford
University of Notre Dame

Of all the reasons it could be hard to pay rent each month, did you have an algorithm-powered illegal cartel on your list?

Millions of people across the United States are paying far more rent than they can reasonably afford, with rental housing prices rising far quicker than household income. In 2022, 22.4 million U.S. households were spending more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities, up from 20.4 million in 2019.

Many of these households faced severe cost burdens, with an all-time high of 11.6 million struggling with housing costs that consume more than half of their income. In Chicago, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, Virginia Beach and Washington, year-over-year rental prices are climbing at double-digit rates.

Several factors drive the high cost of rentals, including increasing demand, a dwindling supply of low-rent units, the rising cost of capital to build new rentals, and regulatory barriers restricting the construction of multifamily units.

But there's another surprising factor driving up rental prices: landlords colluding with the help of technology. The U.S. Justice Department is suing the company RealPage, Inc., accusing it of selling software to landlords that allows them to collectively set prices – the illegal practice of price-fixing. As a former official in the Justice Department's Antitrust Division and a law professor, I've been following the case closely.

The Federal Trade Commission defines price-fixing as an agreement, conspiracy or combination among competitors to raise, fix or otherwise maintain the price at which their goods or services are sold.

Any agreement that restricts price competition violates the antitrust laws. Examples of price-fixing agreements include commitments among competitors to hold prices firm, adopt a standard formula for computing prices, or adhere to a minimum fee or price schedule.



So when competitors share proprietary, confidential current price information – directly or indirectly through an intermediary – to stabilize or control industry pricing, they have crossed the line into illegal collusion, according to the FTC. That is the case in major portions of the U.S. rental market, the Justice Department argues.

In August 2024, the Justice Department and eight states filed a lawsuit in a federal court in North Carolina against RealPage. The Justice Department accused the company of selling software to landlords that collects nonpublic information from competing landlords and uses that combined information to make pricing recommendations.

Landlords who use the software input the rental prices they charge, and the software aggregates all the data from the company's customers. The software's algorithm then makes recommendations for what to charge. The recommendations are generally higher than the current market rate, and most customers take the recommendations, which push prices in a market higher.

Even if landlords retain some authority to deviate from the algorithm's recommendations, it is illegal for competing landlords to jointly delegate key aspects of their pricing

to a common algorithm, according to the Justice Department suit. The Justice Department declared that "RealPage replaces competition with coordination. It substitutes unity for rivalry. It subverts competition and the competitive process. It does so openly and directly – and American renters are left paying the price."

The case is unusual in that, unlike a typical price-fixing cartel, the landlords used RealPage's algorithms to dramatically improve their ability to engage in price-fixing. Algorithmic price-fixing is typically easier and more effective than other types of cartel behavior. The software can easily aggregate massive amounts of proprietary data, optimize cartel gains, monitor real-time deviations from cartel pricing and minimize incentives to cheat.

"It's much easier to price-fix when you're outsourcing it to an algorithm versus when you're sharing manila envelopes in a smoke-filled room," Justice Department antitrust chief Jonathan Kanter told The New York Times.

Since 2022, RealPage and various property managers have been named as defendants in more than 30 class action lawsuits alleging the RealPage software is used to unlawfully fix rental prices. Federal courts tend to be sympathetic to such arguments,

as shown in the denial of a motion to dismiss the case in one of the private lawsuits filed against RealPage.

In that case, the court held that a price-fixing agreement could exist as a matter of law. Landlords provided RealPage's algorithmic system with their proprietary commercial data, knowing that RealPage would require the same from their competitors and would use all of that data to recommend rental prices to all of the company's clients.

Some landlords seem to be aware that in sharing confidential price information to RealPage's software, they were facilitating the unlawful monitoring and raising of rental

prices. The Justice Department complaint quoted a landlord commenting on RealPage's software, "I always liked this product because your algorithm uses proprietary data from other subscribers to suggest rents and term. That's classic price-fixing."

Even RealPage's own executives have boasted that when landlords collectively use their software, they can use "every possible opportunity to increase price," according to the complaint.

RealPage argued that its software "simply helps landlords make data-driven decisions" in a competitive market. The company claims its tools are designed to

reflect market conditions and optimize occupancy rates, not to engage in price-fixing.

The company describes the impact of its alleged collusion with landlords as "a rising tide [that] raises all ships." Perhaps a better description for their service is a rising tide that raises all ships for those who have one.

The Justice Department's case and the private cases are in the early stages of litigation. If the department is successful, RealPage will be barred from engaging in the anticompetitive practices related to helping landlords share proprietary pricing information.

Have You Filed Your BOI?

Are you one of the millions of business owners affected by the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA)? If so, you may be required to report Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) to the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). FinCEN has launched a nationwide public service campaign to inform potentially impacted business owners about this requirement. It is imperative that you are aware of the FinCEN reporting requirements and know where to access additional information. Failure to file on time, or at all, may result in hefty penalties.

What is the CTA?
The CTA was enacted in 2021 to create business ownership transparency by identifying individuals with direct or indirect ownership, or "beneficial ownership," in a company. The goal is to alleviate fraudulent and illegal activities. FinCEN began accepting BOI reports through their website in January 2024.

The CTA requires most existing U.S. businesses and foreign businesses registered to do business in the U.S. to disclose the required beneficial ownership information. A reporting company created or registered to do business before January 1, 2024, has until January 1, 2025, to file its initial beneficial ownership information

report. For newer businesses, the timeframe is shorter; companies created or registered in 2024 have 90 days to file, while those created or registered after January 1, 2025, have only 30 days to file. Who is a Beneficial Owner?

A Beneficial Owner is anyone who directly or indirectly exercises substantial control over or owns or controls at least 25 percent interest in a business. An individual exercises substantial control over a reporting company if they:

- Are a senior officer;
- Have authority to appoint or remove certain officers or a majority of directors;
- Are an important decision-maker; or
- Have any other form of substantial control.

FinCEN provides additional details about each of these reporting categories.

Required Reporting Companies
Corporations, LLCs, and entities registered in the U.S., or foreign companies registered in the U.S., must report.
Exempt Entities
Some entities, including banks, credit unions, and tax-exempt organizations, are exempt from filing. FinCEN's Small Entity Compliance Guide includes a full list of reporting company exemptions and checklists to

help companies determine if they are exempt from the reporting requirements.

Required Information
A reporting company must provide basic information for itself and all beneficial owners. This includes:

Legal name, trade names, address, jurisdiction of registration, and taxpayer identification number for the reporting company.

Name, date of birth, residential address, and an identifying number from a government-issued identification document (such as a passport or driver's license) for each beneficial owner.

How to Prepare and File BOI
FinCEN has created the BOI E-Filing system to enable the electronic filing of the Beneficial Ownership Information Report.

What Happens If I Don't File by the Deadline?

Failure to file may become extremely costly, with civil penalties starting at \$500 per day and criminal penalties of up to \$10,000 and/or two years in prison.

FinCEN provides Beneficial Ownership Information reporting relief to victims of Hurricane Milton, Hurricane Helene, Hurricane Debby, Hurricane Beryl, and Hurricane Francine. Filing deadlines in affected areas have been extended by six months.

Reflecting Raleigh
THE NEXT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Raleigh Planning



Dear Readers,

Raleigh is growing and changing, you know that. We want to make sure that growth reflects your voices, experiences, and hopes for the future.

Raleigh's Next Comprehensive Plan is about shaping a future where everyone can thrive. Please join us in the **Reflecting Raleigh** process and share your ideas and perspectives. Help shape priorities on affordable housing, neighborhood growth, stormwater management, and more.

An upcoming opportunity is our "**Weathering the Storm**" event in December, which will be focused on stormwater and flood resilience. Food, childcare, and language support will be available. Over the next two years, we'll be hosting more community conversations, events, and opportunities for input.

We know that too often, some of your voices have been overlooked. Your insight is vital as we work to build a Raleigh that reflects and respects all of us.

With gratitude,
City of Raleigh

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Shape the goals and priorities in Raleigh's Next Comprehensive Plan

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Black Entrepreneurs Are Often Shut Out From Capital, But Some Did Successfully Overcome Those Barriers

The Conversation — It's never easy to create a successful business, but it's a lot harder if you're Black.

Research shows that Black startup founders face significant, racially specific hurdles, including limited access to entrepreneurship training programs and challenges accessing predominantly white networking and mentorship opportunities.

It's harder for Black founders to raise money, too. Recent TechCrunch data shows Black business founders received less than half of 1% of total startup capital in 2023. And, to date in 2024, there's only continued stagnation.

Tope Awotona, founder of Calendly, a free online appointment-scheduling platform, experienced this struggle.

"Everyone said no," he told NPR in 2020. "Meanwhile, I watched other people who fit a different profile get money thrown at them. Those VCs were ignorant and short-sighted ...

the only thing I could attribute it to was that I was Black."

Yet there are high-profile Black entrepreneurship success stories. They include Black Entertainment Television founder Robert Johnson, Daymond John, an investor on the reality TV series Shark Tank, and the thousands of Black startup founders running innovative businesses across the United States right now.

To better understand the intersection of race and entrepreneurship, we studied the experiences of successful Black entrepreneurs in the U.S., as shared on NPR's "How I Built This" podcast. The challenges Black entrepreneurs face are well documented, so we focused our research on a different question: How does someone's identity as an entrepreneur intersect with their racial identity?

Two key insights emerged.

A step toward equality

We found that while race can be a liability in some respects, some suc-

cessful entrepreneurs have found ways to capitalize on race in their startups.

Most Black entrepreneurs, for example, understand their communities much better than outsiders typically do. This understanding lets them better and more quickly see opportunities in their respective communities.

That's the competitive advantage John leveraged in 1992 when he founded the clothing company FUBU, which stands for, "For Us, By Us." As he said on "How I Built This" in 2019, "I wanted to create a brand that loved and respected the people who loved and respect hip-hop."

John knew the market he wanted to serve better than most because he was a part of it. He recognized the opportunity when outsiders could not.

Other business founders echo John's sentiment.

Tristan Walker, founder of Walker

& Company, a personal grooming products company focused on Black men, said his purpose is "to create a health and beauty products company for people who look like me."

And the McBride sisters, in naming their flagship wine Black Girl Magic, told "How I Built This": "If there's like a moment for Black women in which they can celebrate ... whatever it is ... we just wanted to be able to be there to celebrate with her with just like beautiful, high-quality wines."

In this sense, some Black entrepreneurs find themselves uniquely positioned to create products others would never think of. And, our research found, they are better positioned to sell to a community eager to support them.

A recent study from Pew Research Center found the majority of Black adults believe that purchasing from Black businesses is a step toward racial equality.

Meaning as mission
Our study also found that many Black entrepreneurs care about creating a company with meaning. That's especially true when it can help lift up others in their race. For them, giving back to — and inspiring — their communities matters.

In other words, Black startup founders frequently build businesses that reflect their racial identity. It's part of their purpose in becoming an entrepreneur.

"I've always felt that my company's mission had to be of service to my community," Cathy Hughes, founder of Radio One, a station focused on Black culture, told "How I Built This" in 2017. "Being the first African American woman (in charge) of a publicly traded corporation ... my whole purpose for being in business was to be a voice, and an assistant to my community," she said.

Many other people in our study

mirrored this sentiment, identifying role modeling, racial pride and the empowerment of future generations as a deliberate part of their mission as Black business owners.

Role models matter
Communities benefit from home-grown entrepreneurs. These are people who demonstrate the power of entrepreneurship and show that a career as an entrepreneur is possible.

Yet many minority communities lack such success stories. Just 3% of U.S. businesses were Black-owned in 2021, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.

That's one reason we wanted to document Black success stories in the first place. We believe they have the potential to be transformational. Each new success shows others in those communities that it's possible, and that entrepreneurship can provide a pathway to a more prosperous future.

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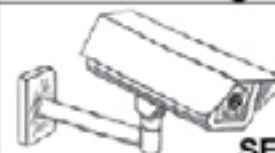


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Health and Wellness

New Guidelines For Preventing Stroke

AP—The majority of strokes could be prevented, according to new guidelines aimed at helping people and their doctors do just that.

Stroke was the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. in 2023, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and more than half a million Americans have a stroke every year. But up to 80% of strokes may be preventable with better nutrition, exercise and identification of risk factors.

The first new guidelines on stroke prevention in 10 years from the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, include recommendations for people and doctors that reflect a better understanding of who gets strokes and why, along with new drugs that can help reduce risk.

The good news is that the best way to reduce your risk for stroke is also the best way to reduce your risk for a whole host of health problems — eat a healthy diet, move your body and don't smoke. The bad news is that it's not always so easy to sustain.

Dr. Sean Duke, a stroke doctor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, blames the forces in society that keep people sedentary and eating poorly, like cell phones and cheap, unhealthy food. "Our world is stacked against us," he said.

Here's what to know about stroke and the new guidelines:

What is a stroke?
A stroke happens when blood flow to part of the brain is blocked or if a blood vessel in the brain bursts. That



deprives the brain of oxygen which can cause brain damage that can lead to difficulty thinking, talking and walking, or even death.

How eating healthy can reduce your risk for stroke

Eating healthy can help control several factors that increase your risk for stroke, including high cholesterol, high blood sugar, and obesity, according to the heart association.

The group recommends foods in the so-called Mediterranean diet such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and olive oil, which can help keep cholesterol levels down. It suggests limiting red meat and other sources of saturated fat. Instead, get your protein from beans, nuts, poultry, fish and seafood.

Limit highly processed foods and foods and drinks with a lot of added sugar. This can also reduce your calorie intake, which helps keep weight in check.

Moving your body can help prevent strokes

Getting up and walking around for at least 10 minutes a day can "drastically" reduce your risk, said Dr. Cheryl Bushnell, a neurologist at Wake Forest University School of Medicine who was part of the group that came up with the new guidelines. Among the many benefits: Regular exercise can help reduce blood pressure, a major risk factor for stroke.

Of course, more is better: The heart association recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate aero-

bic or 75 minutes of vigorous activity — or some combination — per week. How you do it doesn't matter so much, experts said: Go to the gym, take a walk or run in your neighborhood or use treadmills or stepper machines at home.

New tools to reduce obesity, a risk factor for stroke

Diet and exercise can help control weight, another important risk factor for strokes. But a new class of drugs that can drastically reduce weight have been approved by regulators, providing new tools to reduce stroke risk since guidelines were last updated.

The guidelines now recommend that doctors consider prescribing these drugs, including those sold under the brand names Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro and Zepbound, to people with obesity or diabetes.

But while those drugs can help, people still need to eat well and get exercise, cautions Dr. Fadi Nahab, a stroke expert at Emory University Hospital.

How do I know if I'm having a stroke and what do I do?

Three of the most common stroke symptoms include face weakness, arm weakness and difficulty speaking. And time is important, because brain damage can happen quickly and damage can be limited if a stroke is treated quickly. Stroke experts have coined an acronym to help you remember: FAST. F for face, A for arm, S for speech, and T for time. If you think you or a loved one could be having a stroke, call 911 right away.



NEVER TOO LATE FOR LOVE

Under the heading of TMI, lately I have been wondering if I've loved my last love; kissed my last kiss. I'm not sure how I feel about that. I believe love is a timeless and ageless emotion, and while it certainly doesn't fade as we grow older, it does indeed change. I suppose that is to be expected since we are in a constant cycle of change that seems to pick up momentum with every birthday. While it may be more challenging to imagine, fact is, romance can be even more profound and meaningful in our golden years.

How many of you watched the Golden Bachelor? I tried but just couldn't finish the season. I found the first season painfully embarrassing. In fact, it reminded me of everything I find ridiculous in the Euro-centric approach to the dating game. The women contestants, all old enough to know better, reverted to the childish rivalries of teen age. Yes, I realize it is a loosely scripted show where both the contestants and the prize are prompted to up the entertainment value, but it made me uncomfortable and sad that instead of using the wisdom and experience that comes with advanced aging, these women acted like animals in the wild, fighting to attract mates. Meanwhile, the Bachelor picked and chose and judged each contestant in direct opposition to what we hope to have learned by the time the Social Security checks arrive. He was portrayed as charming and happy, a peacock displaying his feathers for the admiration of a flock of competitive female. The women looked desperate, petty, insecure old girls, fighting to remain in the harem. It was not my idea of a good time.

Having said all of that, lately I have been contemplating my willingness and desire to meet a man with whom to share whatever's left of my life. Honestly, it's been a long time since I earnestly thought about it. Although I've lived in the Triangle for more than a decade, I don't get around much. I am not a part of the Senior's scene, don't go to the Senior Center, so I just haven't seen anyone who inspired a second look.

Studies show that an important aspect of senior romance is the companionship it offers. Loneliness can be a significant issue for older adults, especially after the loss of a spouse or partner. Entering into a new romantic relationship can fill that void and provide a sense of belonging and companionship. Sharing daily activities, having someone to talk to, and enjoying mutual interests can greatly enhance one's quality of life. And let's not forget the health benefits of romance. Studies have shown that being in a loving relationship can lead to better physical and mental health. Seniors in romantic relationships often experience lower levels of stress and anxiety, better heart health, and a stronger immune system. The emotional support and affection that come with romance can be a powerful antidote to the challenges that aging may bring.

I think I'm open to meeting someone I can share a laugh with, bake for, fuss over (not at), and do all of the things that are authentically me. Or not. Either way, I am wise enough to know that I am complete just the way I am. I am not signing up for any dating apps. I won't be attending any speed dating events (do they even do that for people our age). I need any possible suitors to arrive with a note from God bearing His notary seal. Truly, any relationship I'm in will require divine intervention to be successful. My ideal partner is a contemporary who vaguely remembers the sixties, laughingly reminisces about the seventies and eighties, spent most of the nineties working like crazy, and see the last 24 years as a blur. I can see us now, looking like Santa and Mrs. Claus with coordinating pill boxes and denture cups. He will have faith in a God bigger than himself, the ability to do more than talk about a problem, and the humility to own up to his mistakes. He needs to like and recognize good food, not be afraid of some spice, and be willing to do his share of cheerleading. And he has to make me laugh. Is that too much to ask? If so, I'll be fine by myself.

What Makes Walking Great For Your Health?

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Janet Rapp strode briskly down a paved path through the city zoo, waving at friends and stopping briefly to greet emus she knows by name.

The 71-year-old retiree starts each morning this way with a walking club.

"I'm obsessed," she said. Not only does it ease her joint pain, "it just gives me energy ... And then it calms me, too."

Medical experts agree that walking is an easy way to improve physical and mental health, bolster fitness and prevent disease. While it's not the only sort of exercise people should do, it's a great first step toward a healthy life.

"You don't need equipment and you don't need a gym membership," said Dr. Sarah Eby, a sports medicine physician with Mass General Brigham. "And the benefits are so vast."

Walking can help meet the U.S.



surgeon general's recommendation that adults get at least 2 1/2 hours of moderate-intensity physical activity every week. This helps lower the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, dementia, depression and many types of cancer.

Walking also improves blood sugar levels, is good for bone health and can help you lose weight and sleep better, added Julie Schmied, a nurse practitioner with Norton Healthcare,

which runs the free Get Healthy Walking Club.

Another advantage? It's a low-impact exercise that puts less pressure on joints as it strengthens your heart and lungs.

James Blankenship, 68, said joining the walking club at the Louisville Zoo last year helped him bounce back after a heart attack and triple bypass in 2022.

"My cardiologist says I'm doing

great," he said.

For all its benefits, however, walking "is not enough for overall health and well-being" because it doesn't provide resistance training that builds muscle strength and endurance, said Anita Gust, who teaches exercise science at the University of Minnesota Crookston.

That's especially important for women's bone health as they age.

Experts recommend adding such activities at least twice weekly — using weights, gym equipment or your own body as resistance — and doing exercises that improve flexibility like yoga or stretching.

Hall Insurance Group Explains Personalized Medicare Solutions

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

Since opening its doors in 2017, Hall Insurance Group has been committed to offering personalized Medicare solutions to over 3,000 individuals. The company's philosophy is built on the understanding that each client's situation is unique and deserves individualized attention.

Founder Melissa Hall emphasizes that her company's core mantra, "Everyone Matters," is not just a slogan, but a principle that guides every aspect of the business.

"No matter your background, income, or situation, you deserve to have your needs met with respect and care," Hall said.

After years of working in call centers in Baltimore, Hall found herself disconnected from the work she was doing, unsure of her passion and future. She was helping people, but the work lacked a personal connection, and she felt frustrated.

Hall Insurance Group is a company built on the idea that seniors deserve not just help with their Medicare benefits, but a personalized, empathetic approach to navigating the complex system. Through her work, Hall has been able to provide the clarity and support that was missing from her previous roles.

Melissa was inspired to start the business by her close relationship with her grandmother, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and passed away in 2021—watching her grandmother navigate the challenges of aging, including the struggles with healthcare and insurance, deeply impacted Hall and fueled her decision to focus on serving the senior community. This personal connection has been a driving force in her mission to provide better support and education for seniors facing similar challenges.

One of the biggest challenges Hall has encountered in her work is the overwhelming amount of misinformation that seniors face when choosing Medicare plans. She often helps clients find the best plan for their circumstances, only to have them inundated

with unsolicited phone calls, emails, and infomercials from other companies promising other plans.

Hall sees this flood of marketing as not only confusing but harmful, as it can lead to seniors making choices that are not in their best interest. She believes this chaos can lead to mistakes that leave vulnerable individuals with inadequate coverage or unnecessary expenses.

This is why she emphasizes a need for clear, one-on-one guidance throughout the entire process, ensuring that each client fully understands their options and can make informed decisions about their healthcare. It is also why she stays connected with her clients over time to make sure their circumstances haven't changed and that the plan is still working for them.

Hall's vision for improving the Medicare system extends beyond providing personalized assistance. She advocates making the process more transparent, accessible, and user-friendly. One key way she believes improvements can be made is by reducing government regulation and oversight, which she argues can create unnecessary hurdles and slow down the process for seniors.

Hall also calls for an increase in the number of insurers and representatives, with a focus on fostering closer relationships between clients and insurance providers. By ensuring that insurers are more aligned and on the same page, Hall believes the system could be more efficient and provide seniors with better, more reliable choices—ultimately protecting them from the pitfalls of bad or confusing policies.

Hall, also known as Medicare Mel, has not gone unnoticed. Under her leadership, Hall Insurance Group has won several accolades, including the prestigious Sharp Leaden Hall Award for exceptional community service and philanthropy, as well as the title of Best Business in the Triangle. Hall's work has also garnered attention from major media outlets such as Fox, CBS, and Radio One Baltimore, where she has shared her expert advice on Medi-

care options and retirement planning. Hall has ambitious plans to expand her company's reach even further. Currently, Hall Insurance Group operates offices in Columbia, Maryland, and Raleigh, North Carolina but works with clients across the United States.

One of the major challenges facing the senior population today is the rising prevalence of Medicare fraud and abuse. The National Council on Aging reports that Medicare loses nearly \$60 billion annually due to fraud, including false diagnoses, unnecessary tests, and charges for services never provided. In fiscal year 2023, the Medicare program cost \$839 billion — about 14 percent of total federal government spending.

Choosing the best Medicare plan can be challenging, but Hall noted that there is some optimism as seniors are becoming more knowledgeable about the process and less mistrustful of the institutions involved. However, many still encounter misleading offers or false information, which could potentially harm those looking for coverage or assistance programs.

"The number one common misconception is that they are eligible for a food card. They see it on TV, on Facebook — they even receive text messages and food cards and that is just not true," Hall said. "They are bait and switch tactics that are designed to get their information and sell it or enroll them in another plan that they have no knowledge of. These marketing tactics are actually illegal."

Hall Insurance Group plays a critical role in protecting seniors from such issues by educating them about the potential risks and helping them avoid fraudulent schemes. This proactive approach empowers clients to protect themselves and ensures they receive the full benefits they're entitled to.

"Medicare fraud is a real issue, and it's devastating to those who are already vulnerable," Hall says. "We make it a priority to inform our clients about common scams and to guide them through the Medicare system so they can avoid being taken advantage of."

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Ag Grow Culture

HBCUs, EPA Collaborate On Environmental Justice Research

By Will Atwater

NC Newswire

Genesis Ibrahim-Balogun, a junior studying agriculture and environmental studies at N.C. A&T State University, and her classmates have specific ways they want to address environmental justice issues like climate change.

"The biggest goal for my peers is we want to see the most change in our own communities [...] and reverse the climate change impact on minorities," she said.

To help prepare Ibrahim-Balogun and her peers for careers in the sciences, the Environmental Protection Agency announced in July a \$2.5 million competitive grant opportunity to build the capacity of historically Black colleges and universities "to address climate and environmental justice and protect the public health of their students and the communities they serve."

And today, EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan joins EPA's Historically Black Colleges and Universities Federal Advisory Councils' first hybrid public meeting, according to an EPA announcement. The event "supports President Biden's Executive Order 14035, which seeks to advance



diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within the federal workforce."

"We're more committed than ever to partnering and empowering HBCU students and leaders across the country," Regan, who also is a N.C. A&T State University graduate, said in a news release announcing the initiative. "HBCUs have a permanent seat at our table, so that these institutions remain at the forefront of the environmental movement."

"Environmental justice for me

means that I have clean air, I have clean water and I am able to sit outside and enjoy the environment," said Ruby Bell, a community organizer and Sampson County resident, at an environmental justice forum in August in Sampson County.

Across North Carolina, low-wealth communities of color in counties such as Mecklenburg, Stanly, Forsyth, Guilford, Durham, Northampton, Warren and Sampson are fighting to combat long-standing environmental

justice and public health issues related to air, soil and water contamination.

In addition to the EPA's competitive grant initiative, agency officials from the agency's Research Triangle Park office participated in an environmental symposium in September hosted by N.C. A&T. Undergraduate and graduate students presented their research in air and water quality, and soil and wastewater management, during poster presentations. The focus of the symposium was to enhance the relationship between the university and the EPA, according to a release.

"N.C. A&T students and faculty researchers and EPA researchers will be showcasing the latest science and the newest technologies and the most cost-effective and sustainable solutions that address pollution where people live, work, play and learn," said Godfrey Uzochukwu, a N.C. A&T College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences professor.

Providing opportunities

The EPA signed memorandums of understanding with N.C. A&T State University and North Carolina Central University, according to Lara Phelps, senior adviser in the EPA Offices of Resource Management and

Research and Development.

"There are a lot of executive orders that have been written in the past few years that have really given us space to work on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility," Phelps said. "Part of that mission for us was finding ways to further and better engage with minority serving institutions."

"We wanted to meaningfully engage students who did not realize, and many still don't, that EPA does, in addition to their oversight, actual research," said Rob Onyenwoke, assistant professor at North Carolina Central University in the Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences.

Onyenwoke noted, "It's still the case that people of color typically are not, for whatever reason, aware of the opportunities, and they're not working in places like EPA."

In October, the EPA invited N.C. A&T and NCCU students to its Research Triangle Office to learn more about internships and job opportunities at the EPA, Phelps said.

Aside from possible job opportunities at the EPA for college graduates, Ibrahim-Balogun said she was pleased to learn that there are also opportunities for undergraduates. "I did not know that they had re-

search opportunities [...] They have specific programs under the Office of Research and Development and they have centers all throughout the United States," she said. "If you want to do something specific, you can go to that location and do research on whatever it is your heart desires, which I really liked."

Warren County, recognized as the birthplace of the environmental justice movement, is still seeking an ecological health assessment for the Afton community to determine whether polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) stored in the toxic waste landfill — more than four decades ago, which was capped and closed — pose a public health risk.

Residents in the Town of West Baden in Stanly County allege that Alcoa Aluminum company, which operated for a century and closed in 2007, exposed employees to toxic materials from the aluminum smelting process for decades, while also contaminating the environment, including Badin Lake and Little River Creek. Locals allege the plant left behind toxic waste that's continued to affect their health.

These are two examples of low-wealth communities that have collided with outsized forces over environmental and public health concerns — in one case, the state and, in the other, a large corporation. When factoring in the legacy of environmental degradation that haunts some communities of color, it's understandable why some residents don't believe the system will ever work in their favor.

However, interacting with environmentalists and scientists with similar backgrounds may help build trust and a better understanding of what's needed to transform anecdotal information about environmental and public health issues into data that informs policy.

Ciara Zachary, assistant professor at UNC Chapel Hill's Gillings School of Public Health, says there are benefits to a partnership between the EPA and historically Black colleges and universities.

"From a public health perspective, we always talk about the workforce," Zachary said. "One thing that comes up [...] is making sure we have a workforce that's representative of the community that they belong to or working with, because there's lots of historical reasons why there's mistrust. I could definitely see that being the case for environmental health issues as well."

British Farmers Protest Against New 'Tractor Tax'

Al Jazeera—British farmers have descended on London to call on the government to scrap inheritance tax rules on land ownership, which they say will destroy family-run farms.

On Tuesday, protesters held placards reading "no farmer, no food, no future" and "[Prime Minister Keir] Starmer the farmer harmer" around Parliament Square.

The measure, referred to by critics as the "tractor tax", was announced last month as part of the new Labour government's budget to raise funds.

However, the tax has caused backlash from farming communities, who say the government does not understand rural communities.

Before the announcement of the new budget, passing down farms through generations was tax-free.

However, from 2026, a 20 percent tax will be paid on the value of a farm above one million British pounds (\$1.27 million).

Farmers, however, say that while their land and machinery are highly valued, their farms have low profit

margins, meaning their children would have to sell their land to cover the tax bill.

One protesting farmer, Olly Harrison, told Al Jazeera, "We're not tax dodgers. If we were making profits, tax our profits. But if we're not making profits, we can't pay inheritance tax."

"We do have these huge land resources that have a value on paper, but in reality when you're farming it doesn't mean anything," he said.

Emma Robinson, 44, a farmer who joined the protests, told the Reuters news agency that her farm in northwest England has been in her family for 500 years and she plans to pass it down to her children.

"[Now] it's being taken out of my hands by someone that's been in Parliament for literally days," she said.

The government has said the tax change would affect about 500 farms a year, based on the number of inherited farms in 2021-22, with the tax rate payable in instalments over 10 years.



Arts & Culture

How The Berlin Conference Shaped Modern Day Africa

By: Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

The Berlin Conference, held between November 1884 and February 1885, was a significant event in Africa's colonial experience. It marked the formalization of the "Scramble for Africa", a period of intense competition among European powers for control over African territories.

Though the conference did not initiate the colonial conquest of Africa, it established the rules and framework for how European nations would divide and rule the continent, setting the stage for decades of exploitation and profound social upheaval in Africa.

In the late 19th century, European powers were driven by both economic and strategic motivations to expand their empires, and Africa, rich in natural resources, seemed to offer an ideal solution to their needs. With industrialization fueling the demand for raw materials and new markets, European countries began to turn their attention to the sparsely controlled interior of Africa.

The Berlin Conference was convened after tensions rose between European powers—especially Great Britain, France, and Germany—as they jockeyed for influence over African territories. They sought new areas of European power expansion in the face of rising American, Russian, and Japanese interests. Germany, which had previously been late to the colonial race, began to make aggressive moves to secure African land, causing concern among the British and French, who already had extensive in-

terests in the continent. Belgium also sought to expand its empire in Central Africa.

In the face of growing rivalries and to prevent conflicts between European powers over African territory, Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, called for an international meeting to establish a framework for the partition of Africa. The conference was not just a diplomatic gathering—it was an attempt to avoid war among European powers by agreeing on rules for the conquest and colonization of Africa.

Held in Berlin, the conference brought together representatives from 14 countries. The conference also included the United States, though it played a limited role, as it had no direct colonial interests in Africa at the time.

One of the key points of contention was the Congo River Basin, which Portugal had long claimed. The conference established that in order to lay claim to a territory, European powers had to demonstrate effective control, which often meant military conquest or treaties signed with local African leaders, often under duress.

The Congo River Basin was declared neutral, ensuring free trade and navigation for all European powers. This would prove important for facilitating the flow of goods from Africa to Europe. The participants sought to end the transatlantic slave trade by prohibiting slavery within the territories of the European powers in Africa. However, the implementation of this principle was often half-hearted, and, in practice, the exploita-

tion of African labor continued in the form of forced labor in colonies.

Often, military victory proved to be the easy part. To govern, they found they had to contend with a confusing milieu of fluid identities, cultures, and languages. The Europeans thus set about reorganizing Africans into units they could understand and control.

Perhaps the most glaring omission was that no African representatives were invited to the conference. The fate of African lands and peoples was decided entirely by European powers, without any consultation with the indigenous populations who had lived on the continent for millennia.

For Africans, the Berlin Conference marked the beginning of a new chapter of domination and exploitation. At the time of the Berlin Conference, 80 percent of Africa remained under traditional and local control. However, by the time the conference concluded, 90% of Africa—except for a few independent nations like Ethiopia and Liberia—was either directly colonized or fell under European influence. The conference participants had fully divided Africa among themselves into 50 countries by 1914.

The arbitrary boundaries drawn during the conference ignored the existing ethnic, linguistic, and cultural divisions among African peoples. The result was a hodgepodge of new states that did not align with the traditional territories or governance systems of African societies.

African-American historian W. E. B. Du Bois wrote in 1948 that alongside the Atlantic slave trade in Africa, a great world movement of

modern times is "the partitioning of Africa after the Franco-Prussian War which, with the Berlin Conference of 1884, brought colonial imperialism to flower" and that "[t]he primary reality of imperialism in Africa today is economic," going on to expound on the extraction of wealth from the continent.

The effects of the Berlin Conference were profound and far-reaching: European powers claimed nearly 90% of the continent by the end of the 19th century. The impact of this partitioning is still felt today.

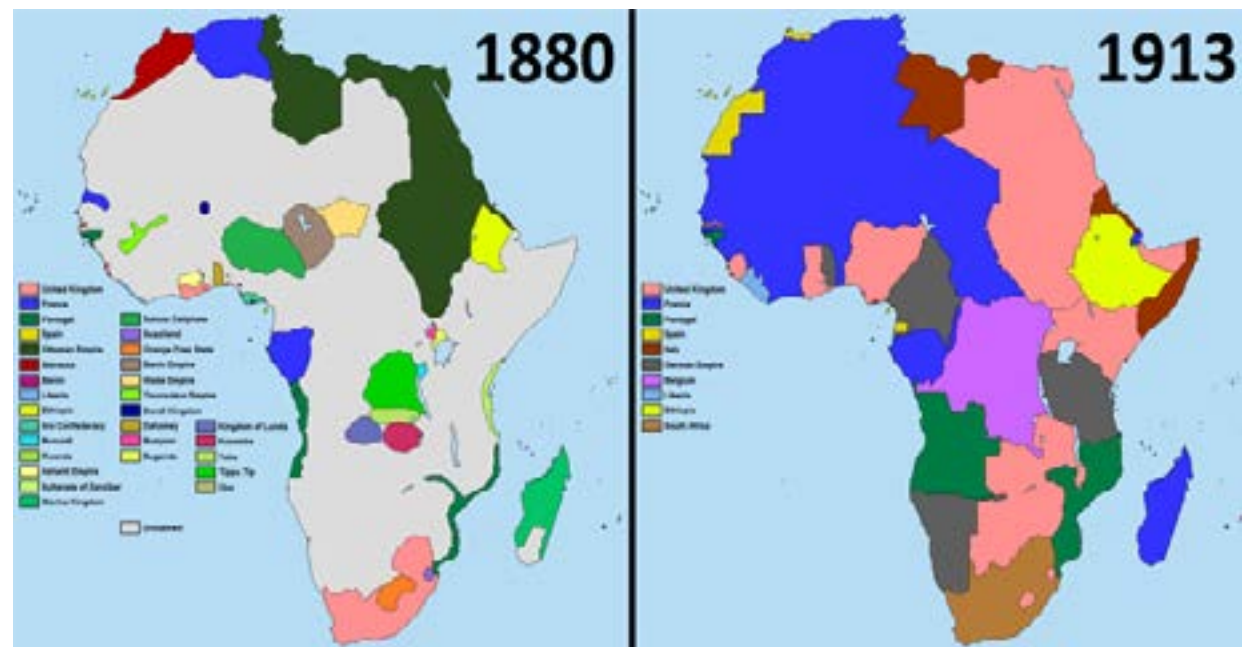
The artificial borders drawn at the Berlin Conference ignored the continent's diverse cultures and histories,

leading to political instability, ethnic conflict, and ongoing struggles for self-determination. World War I and World War II further altered the colonial order, as European powers weakened and African nationalist movements gained momentum. Over time, urban communities, industries, and trade unions grew, improving literacy and education, and leading to the establishment of pro-independence newspapers.

After the devastation of the World Wars, the decolonization of Africa began in earnest, culminating in the 1950s and 1960s, when many African nations gained independence. In 1960 alone, 17 countries achieved indepen-

dence, and the momentum continued into the 1970s and 1980s. By the end of the 20th century, most African countries were independent, though the legacy of colonialism remained. Later, some countries—Eritrea (1993), Namibia (1990), and South Sudan (2011)—achieved independence from other African countries.

Today, Africa's political and economic challenges can often be traced back to the legacies of the Berlin Conference. The arbitrary borders and divisions imposed by colonial powers have contributed to ongoing conflicts, while the continent continues to be a key source of resources for global markets.



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Community

NC AG's Office Probing Allegations In Suit Against St. Aug Trustee Board

By Cash Michaels

Contributing Writer

One day after a judge dismissed the lawsuit against the St. Augustine's University (SAU) Trustee Board which alleged board members were mismanaging school finances, the state Attorney General's Office says it wants to look into those allegations to see if there were any violations of state law.

In a ruling issued on November 14th, Wake Superior Court Judge Becky Holt dismissed the lawsuit brought by the Save SAU Coalition against the small Episcopalian HBCU, seeking to replace the current trustee board because, she said, the group did not have standing.

Save SAU Coalition is comprised of students, alumni, parents and at



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least two former SAU Trustee Board members, but according to Holt, state law prevents the group from taking any legal action against the board because of the school's non-profit status.

The group's lawsuit, filed last May 31st, alleged fiscal mismanagement and sought the board's removal. It specifically targeted Board Chairman Brian Boulware, among others, charging that he pocketed the brokerage fee paid by the school on a \$7 million loan, in addition allowing wire transfers

involving hundreds of thousands of dollars without any paperwork, and through these actions, literally brought SAU to the brink of closure.

The SAU Board of Trustees issued a statement, saying that "...it appreciated the court's decision to dismiss the baseless lawsuit filed by the Save SAU Coalition."

"We respect and value the judicial process, and we are grateful that the court has recognized our commitment to operating within the bounds of the law and prioritizing the best interests of our institu-

tion and its stakeholders," the SAU Trustee Board statement concluded.

Former SAU Trustee board member John Larkin told reporters after the ruling, "This was a situation where it was decided on a technicality on statutes and not necessarily on the merits."

He vowed to keep trying to replace the board, based on the allegation of breach of fiduciary duty.

Apparently the state Attorney General's Office believes the Save SAU Coalition allegations are worthy enough to investigate.

The day after Judge Holt's ruling came down, a spokesperson for Atty. General Josh Stein said his office is "concerned," and "...is looking into those allegations further."

The SAU Trustee Board said it "welcomes" the state attorney general office probe.



Pictured Left to Right: First Vice Sixth District Rep. Bro. Gary Bussey, Vice Basileus Bro. Rodney Griffin, Bro. Eugene Myrick, Mechelle Degree (Sisi), Bro. Taylor Alston, Bro. Dwayne Matthews and Bro. Ferrante Campbell

Omega, Iota Iota Chapter Hosts Achievement Week

The Iota Iota Chapter celebrated their annual Achievement Week in November with a range of activities designed to enrich the community.

Achievement Week is one of Omega's internationally-mandated programs. Originally designed to promote the study of Negro life and history, Achievement Week is observed in November of each year and is designed to seek out and give due recognition to those individuals at the local and international levels who have made a noteworthy contribution toward improving the quality of life for black Americans. With this Achievement Week, the fraternity recognizes the 113th year of its founding on November 17, 1911.

The week festivities started on Sunday, November 10th with members worshipping together at The Fountain of Raleigh in Raleigh, NC. Other activities for the week included Feed the Community at Grace AME Zion Church, Public Forum-Next Steps after Elections, Reading Day at Fox Road & Hodge Road Elementary School and the Achievement Week Banquet on Friday, November 16th.

Among this year's highlights was a message from guest speaker and 44th Sixth District Representative Cedric M. Luckey.

This year Iota Iota Chapter Award winners were as follows:

- High School Essay Contestant Winner- Joshua Monden
- Organization of the Year- Sisters Inspiring Sisters Inc. (Sisi)
- Citizen of the Year- Bro. Eugene Myrick
- Superior Service Award- Bro. Ferrante Campbell
- Founders Lifetime Achievement Award- First Vice Sixth District Rep. Bro. Gary Bussey
- Undergraduate Advisor of the Year- Bro. Dwayne Matthews, Kappa Lambda Chapter NC State Univ.
- Omega Man of the Year Undergraduate- Bro. Taylor Alston, Delta Psi Chapter Shaw Univ.
- Omega Man of the Year Graduate- Bro. Rodney Griffin

Top Ladies Of Distinction Veteran's Day College, Career, And Health Fair

On this year's Veteran's Day, Raleigh Chapter Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. (TLOD) hosted an impactful College, Career, and Health Fair that brought together youth, veterans, community leaders, and industry professionals under one roof. As an organization dedicated to mentoring teens, TLOD continuously seeks ways to prepare young people for a promising future. This year's fair highlighted the intersection of career readiness, education, and wellness, resulting in meaningful, lasting outcomes for all who attended.

The Veteran's Day theme added an especially unique element, with a local veteran sharing his personal journey and insights with teens. These interactions fostered a sense of pride, gratitude, and respect, while also demonstrating the versatility of career paths and life after military service.

Representatives from colleges and universities set up booths, offering



teens firsthand access to information about scholarships, admissions requirements, and campus life. The fair provided a direct link to institutions that supported diverse educational and career paths. Many teens left with new insights into scholarship programs specifically designed

for underrepresented communities, reinforcing Top Teens of America's mission to empower young people from all backgrounds.

Professionals from various industries—technology, healthcare, public service, and business—also held breakout sessions, where they shared

advice on resume building, education requirements, and networking. The healthcare panel discussions provided diverse voices from medical doctors in family- health & pediatrics, nursing, psychiatry, and pharmacy. Inspiring the next generation with stories and advice on making a difference in healthcare. For teens uncertain about their career paths, these sessions offered a broader view of options and critical guidance on how to enter the workforce confidently.

One of the most powerful outcomes of the day was the sense of community that blossomed. Teens walked away not only with information but also with valuable connections—with mentors and professionals who could guide them in their academic and career journeys. This year's fair was not only a success but a reminder of the collective power of mentorship, education, and community—a legacy that will inspire youth for years to come.

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Church

Obituaries



Candlelight Celebration of Remembrance

Sunday, December 08, 2024
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Your friends at Lea Funeral Home invite you to attend a very special Candlelight Celebration of Remembrance to help you and your family face the holidays after the loss of a loved one. It will also help us all cope with the loss and sorrow that we have shared both at home and abroad. This is a beautifully inspiring and uplifting celebration of Hope, Healing, Comfort and Renewal.

The message, music, sharing of memories and fellowship are designed to bring comfort, peace, strength, love and closure in remembering.

Fellowship and refreshments will follow the celebration.

(Open to the public)



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MABLE LEE CARVER

Mable Lee Carver, age 74, was born in Warrenton, NC on Nov. 30, 1949, to the late Charlie "Zeke" Alston and Grace Elizabeth Alston. She transitioned peacefully on Monday, Nov. 4, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. at Duke University Hospital.

Mable grew up in Warrenton and attended Warren Co. Schools, later pursuing some college education. At 18, she left Warrenton, and soon met the love of her life, Edward Willis Carver, with whom she shared many happy years until his passing.

A member of Greenwood Baptist Church, Mable was baptized there and later became a devoted member of the congregation. In her mid-twenties, she began her career in banking, specializing in wire transfers, and retired from Bank of America in her early sixties. In her later years, she worked part-time cleaning for various facilities in Henderson, and served at a group home in Macon, NC.

Mable was an independent and strong-willed woman, known for her adventurous spirit. She loved to drive and often found joy in getting "lost" on her travels, always saying, "You're never lost, all you have to do is go back the way you came!" She had a deep love for her children and grandchildren, always making it a point to remember their birthdays no matter the distance between



them. Mable cherished the time she spent with her grandkids, each of them having a unique and special relationship with her.

Mable was preceded in death by her husband, Edward Willis Carver; her father, Charlie "Zeke" Alston; her sister, Mammie Alston; and her brother, James Alston.

Mable leaves behind a legacy of love, strength, and resilience. She is survived by her children: Jemar W. Carver (LaTarsha), Tarajee Turnage (the late Jonathan Turnage),

Torrance K. Carver (Latoya), and Shamra K. Carver, as well as her bonus son, Edward Carver; her grandchildren; her great-grandchildren; her mother, Grace Elizabeth Alston; her siblings: Doris Alston (Jessie), Vernice Alston, Charles Alston (Phyllis), Ann Alston, Shirley Elam (Robert), Andrew Alston (Sharon), and Brenda Twitty (Sheldon); and a host of nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and an extended family across New Jersey, Maryland, Ohio, and Roxboro, NC.

Practical Biblical Principles

DID YOU GET THE MESSAGE?

Read: Revelation 1:1-3
By John L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral
Jesus told John to send greetings to the seven churches in Asia. Christ is now preparing to enter into the affairs of man for the last time.

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn, because of Him. Even so, Amen. This will be the special television announcement on that day when Christ returns. The entire world will witness Christ return to the earth.

John was having a vision while imprisoned on the rugged, rock laden Isle of Patmos, located some twenty miles of the west coast of Asia Minor (Turkey). The cruel, Roman emperor Domitian in Rome, banished John to this island to die for his failing to worship him as a god. John was living in Ephesus ministering and taking care of Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

It is obvious that Jesus wanted John to be isolated so that there would be no interruption of the spiritual prophetic message that

was about to be unfolded for John to write. John saw Jesus in the middle of seven lampstands clothed in a white garment down to His feet with His chest girded with a golden band. His head of hair was like lamb's wool, white as snow. His eyes were like flames of fire and His feet were like polished brass and His voice sounded like many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars, and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the brightness of the shining sun. John saw Jesus in His full glory just like we will see Him when He returns. Did we get His message?

John was to address the seven churches in Asia Minor which represent all churches which are to come during the Church Age. There was the Loveless Church, The Persecuted Church, The Compromising Church, The Corrupt Church, The Dead Church, The Faithful Church, The Luke-Warm Church. Each of these churches got a specific message directly from Jesus, Himself, giving them warnings and praise where applicable. Did you and your church get a message?

Soon after John finished writ-

ing the messages to the seven churches, he looked and saw a door standing open in heaven. And heard a voice like a trumpet telling him to come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this!

Immediately John was in the Spirit and saw a throne set in heaven. And He Who sat on the throne was none other than God, Himself. God was surrounded by four animal-like creatures looking like a lion, calf, the face of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. The four creatures each had six wings and were full of eyes all around and they do not rest day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come." These creatures are none the less the angels in heaven surrounding God's throne praising Him 24/7. Did you get this message?

All of this was shown to John so he could tell the world that Jesus is on His way back to put a period at the end of the seven messages He had sent to the churches earlier. And the message is, "I Am about to open the great scroll of seven seals, which has been sealed since the day I died on the cross for you, Did you get My message?"

Messiah With Cumberland Choral Arts



FAYETTEVILLE, NC — The Fayetteville Symphony Orchestra (FSO) and Cumberland Choral Arts (CCA) will perform Handel's Messiah on December 7th at Seabrook Auditorium (1200 Murchison Road, Fayetteville NC 28301). The doors will open at 6:00 pm and the concert will begin at 7:30 pm. This concert is free to attend, but reservations are required. Tickets can be reserved online here, by contacting the FSO office at (910) 433-4690, or by registering at the door the night of the concert. We highly encourage attendees to register ahead of time.

The Fayetteville Symphony Orchestra will once again partner with

Cumberland Choral Arts to perform Handel's Messiah, a work recognized around the world for its memorable "Hallelujah" chorus. Students from The Fayetteville Symphony Youth Orchestra and Campbellton Youth Chorus will provide preshow music onstage, starting at 6:30. FSO's Executive Director, Anna Meyer, is excited to continue this holiday collaboration, stating "The Fayetteville Symphony looks forward to Handel's Messiah every year. It has become a beloved holiday tradition in our community, and we love sharing the stage with CCA. All are invited to attend this fabulous concert!" Due to high demand, this year's performance will take place at Seabrook Auditorium. Moving to Seabrook

allows us to welcome more guests than ever before! The concert is free, but we are requiring patrons reserve tickets to ensure everyone has a seat in the auditorium.

"Over the years, the Cumberland Oratorio Singers/Cumberland Choral Arts organization has offered Messiah as a gift to the community," added CCA Director Dr. Michael Martin. "The way our organization connects to the Fayetteville community is vitally important and my effort is always to keep that spirit every time we perform it." This performance is supported in part by Fayetteville State University, The North Carolina Arts Council, and The Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County.

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Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials in this space are the opinion of the newspaper. All other opinion pieces, including those from regular columnists, are the opinion of the writers themselves. The Carolinian strives to provide provocative commentary that is likely to spur thoughtful debate, regardless of whether we agree with it.

Editorials

IS THE ECONOMY PASSING ITS ANNUAL EVALUATION?

Most of us — especially senior citizens like me — have a yearly medical evaluation. In fact, I just had mine, and my doctor was mostly pleased overall. Sure, I have some aches and pains — mainly in my knees — but most of my key metrics are in the normal range, especially for someone in their mid-70s.

In today's column I'll switch roles. Rather than being the patient evaluated by a medical doctor, I'll be the doctor analyzing a much bigger patient — the U.S. economy. What kind of evaluation will our economy receive? Like me, is the economy in fairly good shape, but with some aches and pains? Or are there some big problems that may need surgery? After my evaluation, I'll let you decide.

Just as we check blood pressure, pulse and body temperature in people, we can look at key health measurements for the economy. My list includes four measures: aggregate production, total employment, the unemployment rate and "real" worker earnings. As with human health, economists like to look at both the current economic levels and any recent changes in the measures.

Aggregate production, where the output of all products and services in the economy is combined, is measured by a concept called real gross domestic product, often shortened to just GDP. GDP is currently at a record high of \$23 trillion. However, GDP normally increases with population growth and improvements in worker productivity. Most economists track the annual growth rate of GDP, which is currently 2.8%. Ironically, exactly the same rate was recorded immediately before the pandemic hit in 2020. Still, economists note there has been a modest downward trend in the GDP's growth rate in recent decades, and many attribute this trend to smaller gains in worker productivity over the same time period.

Employment both in the country and North Carolina is also at record levels. Both economies quickly recovered the jobs temporarily lost during the pandemic and then resumed the job growth that was occurring prior to the pandemic.

However, recently there has been a slowdown in job growth, with the monthly increase falling short of the number needed to accommodate new individuals entering the workforce. Consequently, the jobless rate both nationally and in North Carolina has risen to the low 4% range in 2024 from the low 3% range in 2023. However, historically 4% is a low jobless rate.

Household income is also a big part of our everyday economy. With numerous measures of household income, comparisons can be confusing. My favorite measure is the average real weekly earnings of workers. The measure compares over time what the average worker earns weekly. But instead of comparing the actual dollar values, the dollar values are first adjusted for what each dollar can buy. In other words, the comparisons are of the purchasing power of weekly earnings, meaning they account for price inflation.

Comparing today to four years ago, the purchasing power of workers' average weekly earnings is 3% lower. This means workers are still behind in what they can purchase when confronted with higher prices. But this measure has improved. A year ago the average worker's purchasing power was 5.5% lower than in early 2021.

I would rate this diagnosis of the economy as "fairly good, but with room for improvement," which is about what my doctor told me about my personal health. But just like my doctor did for me, there's another evaluation that needs to be done to look at the long run. While my health may be good now, am I potentially headed for something bad in the future, like diabetes or a heart attack? Let's do the same kind of evaluation for the economy.

The first worry is the national debt, which has grown enormously in the last decade. Measured against the size of the economy, today's national debt is the highest ever. Just as concerning is the fact that there appears to be no end in sight for increasing the national debt. Trillion dollar annual deficits — which add to the national debt — have become common in the federal budget. Also, during the recent presidential campaign, neither major candidate offered a plan for containing the national debt.

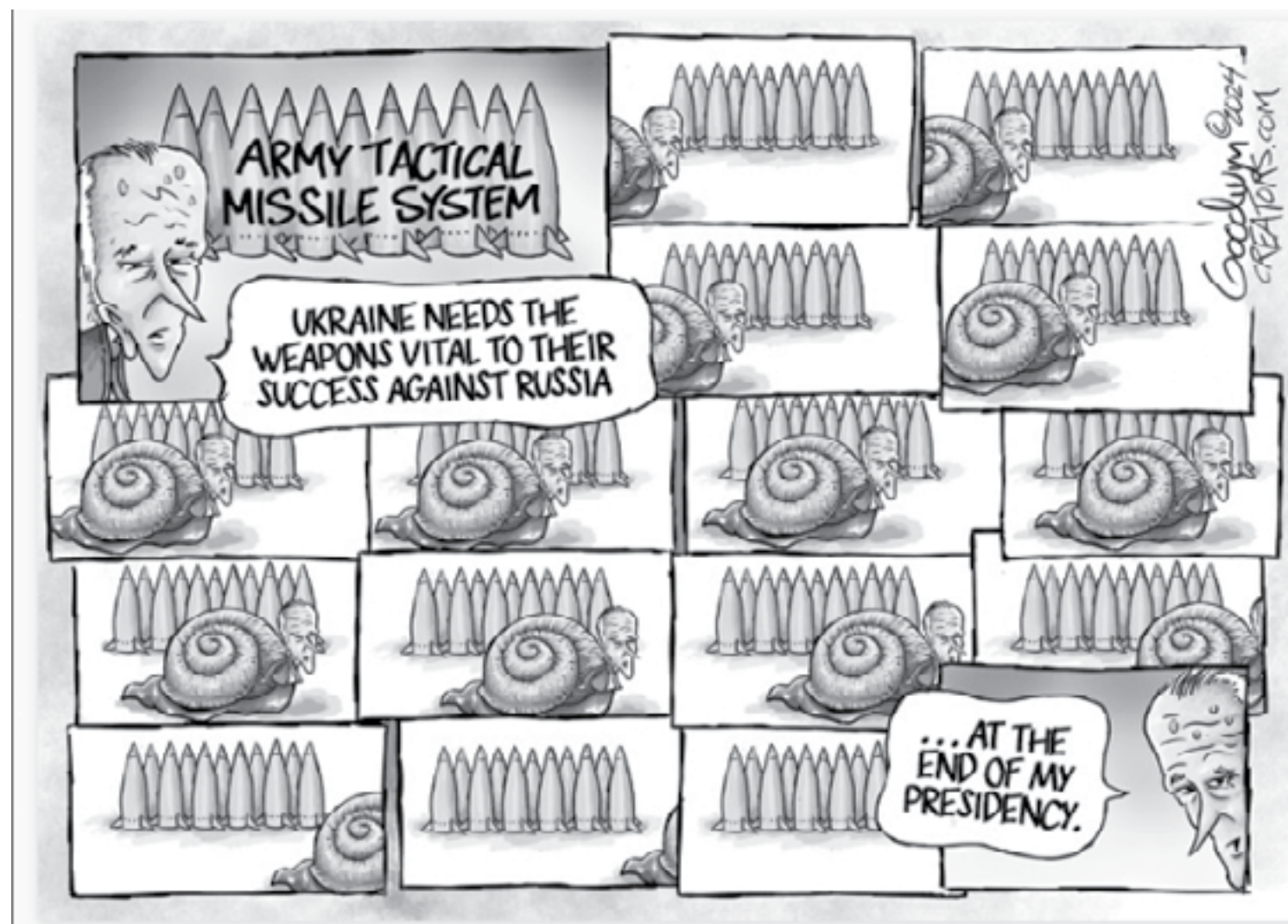
One of the observable impacts of the national debt is its effect on interest rates. Those involved in the financial markets know that an increasing national debt creates more borrowing by the federal government. Increased public borrowing competes with normal private borrowing, with the ultimate result being higher interest rates. Indeed, since the Federal Reserve's recent interest rate cut, some interest rates have actually increased rather than decreased. And higher interest rates translate into reduced ability for businesses and households to borrow.

Another sleeping long-run concern is regulations. In the last five decades federal regulations more than doubled. While many regulations are well-meaning, they do create additional costs for businesses. Economic research has found a link between more regulations and slower growth in worker productivity. Modest improvements in productivity cost businesses revenue and workers money in their paychecks.

The third potential long-run problem I see is education and training for the future economy dominated by artificial intelligence (AI). While there is much discussion about where AI will take us and the capabilities it will provide, I don't hear enough about how formal education and training will need to be revamped so millions of workers are not left without a job. We need to have these discussions now, because AI is rapidly expanding and being applied in vast parts of the economy. Before we know it, AI will be a big part of our lives, especially our work, or non-work (!) lives.

I walked away from my recent medical evaluation with a smile on my face. All of my health systems are operating smoothly now. But my doctor warned me there are a couple of things I should consider changing now to avoid something really bad when I hit my 80s, or even if I'm lucky, my 90s. I listened and agreed. Should we apply the same advice to the economy? You decide.

Mike Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University.



BLESSINGS

A year or so ago, my classmate and friend from Ligon High School class of 1964 stopped by for a visit. He lives in Florida now, so it was a special blessing. Brad had plans that day to attend the opening of Freedom Park downtown here. Though he and Patrick went, I didn't. I'm so glad I didn't because this weekend I received a blessing that if I'd gone with them, I might have missed. I don't know about you, but I have always cherished my friendships. I hold on to the people I grew up with in my neighborhood, school, and church - those that were little with me and the teenagers who walked the path with me. Even the adults, the teachers, pastors, and my friends' parents are still my friends. I can call them by name when I see them and those who have gone on are present in my memory. Yes, even those who didn't get me and tried unsuccessfully to change me have a special place. My college friends are also close in my heart, and this weekend I got a chance to rendezvous with some special people. It all had to do with Freedom Park.

Just so you'll get it, I was finished with college in 1968, 56 years ago. In 1964, as a freshman at what was then North Carolina College (NCC), now North Carolina Central University, I was allowed to expand my friendship role, and some of us went to Freedom Park. The idea was Howard James'. I call him our social planner. As usual, he would pass a compliment on to someone else. This was a special time because I was seeing my best male friend at the time for the first time in 56 years. Reginald Hodges was my fellow art student, and so was Marvette Pratt Aldridge, but Marvette and I never lost touch. Reggie and I did. We wrote back and forth for a year or two, but at some point lost touch. Reggie went to the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, Africa. I still have a mask he sent me then and all the letters he wrote educating me about his journey there. As a member of the Peace Corps, he met and married Celeste, whom I met on Saturday for the first time. Reggie was a part of the design and implementation of this wonderful place right here in Raleigh, on Wilmington Street, across from the Legacy Building.

Please go and experience it. Note that I didn't say "see" it. The park is different and wonderful. It doesn't have swings and statues; it has words and light. The words are the words of people just like me and you — some who experienced slavery, others segregation, and some who lived in our time and fought for equal rights for all people. The words are a testament to what happens when we, as sane human beings, attempt to control the minds and bodies of others for ridiculous reasons, and the souls unfettered fight back. When you look around today at the insanity that has become politics in some quarters, it's good to be reminded that ill-fought does not win and never will. Go and read. Say the words out loud. Let them sink in and refresh you for the days ahead.

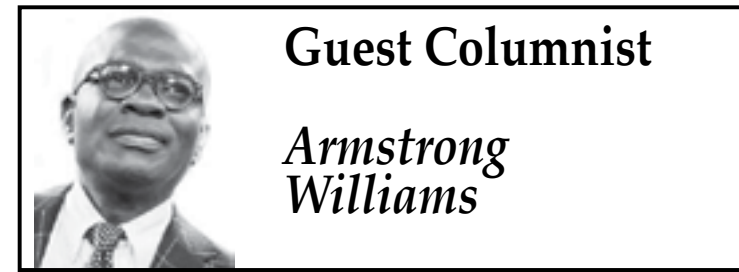
Yes, the park is beautiful. There are giant slabs with engraved words that resonated with me as though I was saying them. The group that day did not know or imagine that 56 years later we would meet at the spot. When we were college students, we moved from the civil rights movement of the 60s to the Black Panther movement of the 60s and 70s. How could we have imagined the year 2024? We couldn't, but we are still here and still, in our own way, on the journey towards freedom.

Just so you know, you can google the park and see it virtually. Those of us who went this weekend were Reggie's sister Leo Kelly* and wife Alice, Dixie Lee Newsum*, my roommate for sophomore and junior years, Reggie Hodges and wife Celeste, Howard James*, wife Ada*, and son Eric, Marvette Pratt*, Aldrich, Brad, and I*. The ones with an asterisk are all 1968 graduates of NCCU. There are others with whom we've kept in touch,

of course, who were not there. A couple of things I'd recommend to those coming behind: Keep your friends close and ignore your enemies. I know that's not how the famous quote goes, but it is mine. Also, do not fear those who fight Project 1619 or those who ban books and deny historical truths. Our stories will be told, for truth cannot be buried. It is passed from generation to generation in homes, schools, communities, churches, museums, and most importantly, souls, and will never be lost.

It took 20 years for the Freedom Park to be completed and millions of dollars that the committee raised. Nothing was free to them, but they persisted. Now, there, carved in stone and our brains, is a testament. In our youth, we could never have conceived it, but it's there now, carved in stones. In the middle of the park is an antique gold sculpture, 40 to 50 feet high. Don't quote me on that, but it's gigantic. It beams a light from the park to the heavens, for me representing to those above that we are and shall be ever shining and working to correct the intolerable. I have yet to see it shine, but soon I will go to see and honor it at night when it's dark, and the point can be made.

Blessings to you and my friends. Blessings to those who conceived and implemented this park. For sure, blessings to those who spoke the words engraved on those connected slabs and whose lives were blessed to speak the truth in darkened times. As long as there are those who are able to recognize their own blessings and share blessings with others, the path forward will be lit, and we shall continue to overcome.



WHY ARE WE IGNORING THE AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN GAZA?

Do you remember a time when Americans cared that their fellow citizens had been kidnapped and held captive by terrorists?

I do. Think back to 1979, when Iranian terrorists stormed the American embassy in Tehran. They held more than 50 Americans hostage for 444 days.

And we cared. The Americans held captive were constantly on our minds. There were strong showings of solidarity. News of the hostage crisis was unrelenting. ABC News created a new nightly program, "America Held Hostage," from which came "Nightline."

Flash forward to today. According to the Israeli government, 101 hostages — a considerable number of whom are believed to be dead — are in Hamas' clutches after the terrorist group's genocidal rampage of Oct. 7, 2023.

Of those, seven are American. Of those seven, three are confirmed dead.

Edan Alexander, Sagui Dekel-Chen, Omer Neutra and Keith Siegel are believed to be alive. Itay Chen and couple Gadi Haggai and Judi Weinstein Haggai were killed on Oct. 7, 2023, but their bodies are being held by Hamas.

And no one outside of the Jewish American community seems to care. That is the difference between 1979-80 and 2023-24.

The names of the American hostages in Gaza are on no one's lips, except for their families and for anguished Jewish Americans. Their names are not emblazoned on the front pages of our newspapers or recited on our broadcast news. President Joe Biden does not name them regularly.

The seeming amnesia is only part of the horrible picture. Recall posters of the hostages being torn down and defaced by haters of Israel and Jews. This was a deliberate dismissal of the hostages' humanity.

Why is there such a profound difference in the reactions of Americans now versus then? Is it because this time the hostages are Jews who were kidnapped in Israel, and that somehow means they deserved what they got?

The silence is deafening and in demand of an explanation. I am not Jewish, but I am a proud American outraged that no one is talking about this.

It is unthinkable that a terrorist group can seize Americans and hold them against their will, and all the while everyone seems to accept it, and the American government applies zero pressure to obtain their release.

The Biden administration should have issued an ultimatum to Hamas immediately after Oct. 7, 2023, to the effect of, "Release our hostages now, or you will face the full wrath of the United States and our ally Israel. Until we get our citizens back, we will be relentless in the pursuit of freeing them. Let our people go."

That never happened. Instead, the call for releasing the hostages became inextricably intertwined with calls on Israel to cease fire.

The United States is the strongest country on earth, with the greatest hard and soft power to bring to bear. But we have not exerted it vis-a-vis Hamas at all. Instead, we have pleaded with Israel to stop defending itself.

It is an abdication of responsibility and a failure of moral clarity.

Classifieds

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002465-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the Estate of JAMES KEITH BOST, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 19th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 21st day of November 2024.

Charles L. Miller, Administrator CTA
2008 Pratt Circle
Franklinton NC 27525
11/21, 11/28, 12/5, and 12/12/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002431-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARY IRENE GILL DUNBAR, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 19th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 21st day of November 2024.

Robt Joseph Dunbar, Executor
1671 Gallup Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
11/21, 11/28, 12/5, and 12/12/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002375-310

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of GRACIE JEAN ROGERS, deceased, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of Gracie Jean Rogers to present them to the undersigned within three months from the date of the first date of publication of this Notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.

This, the 21st day of November, 2024.

CaLisa Rogers Lynk, Administrator
c/o John W. Perry, Attorney for the Estate
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
11/21, 11/28, 12/5, and 12/12/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 24E002320-310

The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of JUDITH L. PARKER, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit the same on or before February 19, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

Dated: November 21, 2024.

Billye Jean Wilkins, Administrator
c/o Attorney Heather Hazelwood
PO Box 61182
Durham NC 27715
11/21, 11/28, 12/5, and 12/12/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002393-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARTHA LILLIAN SMITH, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the

below listed address on or before the 14th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 14th day of November 2024.

Mary Ann Chap, Executor
107 Gresham Avenue
Durham, NC 27704
11/14, 11/21, 11/28, and 12/5/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002224-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of HELEN PATRICIA JONES BOND, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 14th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 14th day of November 2024.

Darian Craig Jones, Executor
4470 Oliver Lane
Douglasville, GA 30135-1965
11/14, 11/21, 11/28, and 12/5/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002419-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PATRICIA LYNN SALDARINI, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 14th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 14th day of November 2024.

Ross J. Saldarini, Executor
5022 Lady Fern Circle
Charlotte, NC 28211
11/14, 11/21, 11/28, and 12/5/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002410-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTRIX of the Estate of THERESA O'REILLY, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 14th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 14th day of November 2024.

Valarie Pasiack-Reeves, Executrix
412 Green Turret Dr.
Rolesville, NC 27571
11/14, 11/21, 11/28, and 12/5/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002383-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of DIANE W. DRAUGHON, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 14th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 14th day of November 2024.

Timothy C. Draughon, Administrator
2221 Bayswater Dr.
Creedmoor, NC 27522
11/14, 11/21, 11/28, and 12/5/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002265-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of WANDA DUKE LIPSCOMB, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 14th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 14th day of November 2024.

Kimberley Clemons, Administrator
9910 Grette Court
Raleigh, NC 27617
11/14, 11/21, 11/28, and 12/5/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF NINA GRIFFITH MITCHELL (A.K.A. NINA JEAN MITCHELL)
File No. 24E001769-310

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against NINA GRIFFITH MITCHELL (A.K.A. NINA JEAN MITCHELL), late of Durham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit them to Warren D. Mitchell as Executor of the decedent's estate on or before February 7, 2025, c/o Brittany N. Porter, Attorney at Law, 1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203, Chapel Hill, NC 27517, or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Executor.

This, the 7th day of November, 2024.

Warren D. Mitchell
c/o Brittany N. Porter, Atty.
TrustCounsel
1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
Durham, North Carolina 27717
11/7, 11/14, 11/21, and 11/28/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 23E001281-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 4th day of October 2023, as Executor of the ESTATE OF JOYCE L. BETTS, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 8th day of February, 2025 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 7th day of November 2024.

Ricky S. Betts, Executor
Estate of Joyce L. Betts
c/o Richard G. Long III, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
11/7, 11/14, 11/21, and 11/28/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 24E002289-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 11th day of October 2024, as Executor of the Estate of MARY ANN MARPLES, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 8th day of February, 2025 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 7th day of November 2024.

Janis Reynolds f/k/a Janis Marples Sommers, Executor
Estate of Mary Ann Marples
c/o Shirley M. Diefenbach, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
11/7, 11/14, 11/21, and 11/28/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 24E000449-310

The undersigned, Jacob Kutchna, having duly qualified as Administrator of the Estate of TRAVIS KUTCHMA, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them

to the undersigned in care of Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney for the Estate, 3400 Croasdaile Dr., Ste 205, Durham, NC 27705, within ninety days of the first publication of this Notice or it will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons and legal entities indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment.

This, the 7th day of November 2024.

Jacob Kutchna, Administrator
C/O Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney
3400 Croasdaile Drive Ste 205
Durham, NC 27705
1-919-246-5775
11/7, 11/14, 11/21, and 11/28/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 24E002207-310

Having qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of JUANITA JONES JORDAN, deceased, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of Juanita Jones Jordan to present them to the undersigned within three months from the date of the first publication of this Notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.

This, the 7th day of November, 2024.

Brailsford Banks Jordan, Co-Executor
Christine Spruill, Co-Executor
Attorney for the Estate of Juanita Jones Jordan
c/o John W. Perry
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
11/7, 11/14, 11/21, and 11/28/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 24E001924-310

Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of CHARLES E. MELLO, late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Davis Humbert Law, Attorneys for the Estate, 200 West Center Street, Mebane, NC 27302, on or before the 7th day February, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This is the 7th day of November, 2024.

Patricia L. Mello
Executrix of the Estate
of Charles E. Mello
200 West Center Street
Mebane, NC 27302
11/7, 11/14, 11/21, and 11/28/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002379-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of EVA CATES PETTIFORD, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 7th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 7th day of November 2024.

Doris P. Bennett, Administrator
3818 Valleydale Dr.
Durham, NC 27703
11/7, 11/14, 11/21, and 11/28/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
File No. 24CV009082-310

To: JOSE DANIEL ESCOBAR RODRIGUEZ, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than December 17, 2024 said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, PAULA ISABEL LEON BENITEZ, will apply to the court located at 510 S Dillard St,

Durham, NC 27701 for the relief sought.

This, the 7th day of November, 2024

Aneta Paval
Paval Law Offices, PLLC
7404 Chapel Hill Rd
Suite M
Raleigh NC 27607
Telephone: (919) 410-6690
11/7, 11/14, and 11/21/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number: 24E002387-310

The undersigned having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of NAOMI THOMPSON JACKSON, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to Exhibit them to the undersigned at the office of IDOL LAW, PLLC, PO Box 51759, Durham, North Carolina 27717, on or before the 4th day of February, 2025, or this Notice will be in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment.

This is the 31st day of October, 2024.

Elva Ann Utley, Administrator
Estate of Naomi Thompson Jackson, Deceased
Robert A. Idol, Esquire
IDOL LAW, PLLC
Attorney at Law
PO Box 51759
Durham, NC 27717
(919)401.5151
10/31, 11/7, 11/14, and 11/21/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002143-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of KIMBERLY JAYE ALLEN, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 1st day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 31st day of October 2024.

Tracey A Bowen, Administrator
3534 Rawdon Drive
Durham NC 27713
10/31, 11/7, 11/14, and 11/21/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002164-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DAVID ALLEN PAGE, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 1st day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 31st day of October 2024.

Zachary David Page, Executor
11712 Kilpatrick Lane
Charlotte, NC 28277
10/31, 11/7, 11/14, and 11/21/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002384-310

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of KAREN STINEHELPER, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit

them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 1st day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 31st day of October 2024.

Dennis Stinehelfer, Executor
484 Beech Drive
Leasburg, NC 27291
10/31, 11/7, 11/14, and 11/21/2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Having qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of CLAYBORNE LEE EVANS, JR. of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 1st day of February, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This is the 31st day of October, 2024.

Andrea Kay Kubachko & Aysha J. Evans Ault, Co-Executors, c/o Milestones Law, 4 Consultant Place, Durham, NC 27707
H-S: 10-31, 11-07, 11-14 & 11-21, 2024
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 23-E-1273

The decedent, RICARDO AGUILAR ALEMAN, who lived at 1101 Fairview St, Durham, North Carolina 27707 died July 18, 2023.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Ofelia Aguilar Baldwin, named personal representative or proposed personal representative, at 1101 Fairview St, Durham, North Carolina 27707, 9192246700 or to both the probate court and the named/proposed personal representative within 01/28/2025 after the date of publication of this notice.

This, the 31st day of October 2024.

Ofelia Aguilar Baldwin, Personal Representative for the Estate
1101 Fairview St.
Durham, North Carolina 27707
9192246700
10/31, 11/7, 11/14, and 11/21/2024

CHATHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
File No. 24CV001772-180

To: BRANDON ADONIAS CHAVEZ PEREZ, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than December 17, 2024 said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, BRELIN SUCELY PUAC OROZCO, will apply to the court located at 40 E Chatham St, Pittsboro, NC 27312 for the relief sought.

This the 7th day of November, 2024.

Aneta Paval
Paval Law Offices, PLLC
7404 Chapel Hill Rd
Suite M
Raleigh NC 27607
Telephone: (919) 410-6690
11/7, 11/14, and 11/21/2024

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Classifieds

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
ORDER TO CONTINUE ORDER TO
APPEAR AND SHOW CAUSE AND
ADVISEMENT HEARING

In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
File Number 20CVD009565-910
SHAQUEZ D. RAY, Plaintiff
v. JENNIFER A. RAY, Defendant
To the Defendant named above:
The Court finds probable cause
to believe that your are in civil
or criminal contempt for failing
to comply with the Court's order
as specified in Plaintiff's Motion
for Order to Show Cause, filed
12/5/2022. You are Ordered to
appear on January 27, 2025 at
9:00AM to the below address to
show cause, if any, why the Court
should not enter an order holding
you in civil or criminal contempt.
Your failure to appear as ordered
may result in the issuance of an
Order for Arrest.

Wake County Courthouse
316 Fayetteville Street
Courtroom 4D

Raleigh, North Carolina 27601
This is the 21st day of November,
2024.
Shaquez Ray, Plaintiff
5404 Emerson Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27609
11/21, 11/28, and 12/5/2024

UNION COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UNION COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF
PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
File No. 2024-CVS-2955
JOSHUA DANIEL OXENDINE,
Plaintiff, v. FIDEL VELASQUEZ
RUIZ and MARCELINO
VELASQUEZ CERVANTES,
Defendants.

TO: Fidel Velasquez Ruiz
Take notice that a pleading
seeking relief against you has
been filed in the above-entitled
action. The nature of the relief
being sought is as follows:
damages for personal injury to the

Plaintiff that were incurred in an
automobile collision involving you
on 11/02/2021 in Union County,
North Carolina.
You are required to make a
defense to such pleading no later
than December 17, 2024 (forty
days after the first publication of
this notice). Upon your failure to
do so, the parties seeking service
against you will apply to the Court

for the relief sought.
This the 7th day of November,
2024.
William K. Goldfarb, Esq.
NC State Bar # 18194
Post Office Box 3200
Monroe, NC 28111
Phone: (704) 296-0055
Fax: (704) 296-0053
Attorney for the Plaintiffs
11/7, 11/14, and 11/21/2024

SR. VIRTUALIZATION CONSULTANT WANTED

Flexxible USA IT, LLC, hdqtr'd in Ft. Lauderdale, FL has a
work-at-home Sr. Virtualization Consultant position (w/ability
to telecommute w/approp. telecommuting sys; remote work-
site must be w/in commuting distance of Durham, NC for
weekly trips to Durham office) to lead design & deployment
of Virtualization infrastructure. Apply at: <https://flexxible.factorialhr.com/>



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the
following contract in Buncombe County out for bid:
C- C11754 Tiantian Ma . The bid opening is scheduled for:
Thursday, 12/19/2024 . To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any
Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit: <https://evp.nc.gov/solicitations/details/?id=59feb147-6585-ef11-ac20-001dd806f97d>

ATTENTION: MBE's & WBE's

BID REQUEST-BARNHILL CONTRACTING COMPANY

Attention MBEs & WBEs-Barnhill Contracting Company is
requesting bids from any interested firms for the following
project: **NCDOT Contract: #DA00613 Chowan, Gates &
Perquimans County - AST Mat Coat, Resurfacing, Thin-
Lift Resurfacing, Shoulder Reconstruction & Pavement
Markings on Various Secondary Routes. Pre-Bid Meeting
is on Wednesday, November 20th, 2024 at 10:00 AM. This
meeting will be held virtually utilizing conference call and
online meeting tools. Please contact Jimmy Spivey at the
number below for meeting details. This project bids on
December 4th, 2024 and includes opportunities on, but
not limited to Hauling, Asphalt Surface Treatment, Traffic
Control, Erosion Control, Pavement Markings, Pavement
Markers, Milling and Meter & Valve Box Adjustments. Bids
are due to James Spivey no later than 12:00 P.M. on Tuesday
December 3rd, 2024.**

Plans can be viewed in our office (please call to schedule) or
on the NCDOT website: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/letting/pages/division1letting.aspx>

Attn: James Spivey at (252)335-9503.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

"In accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil
Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-
4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will
affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant
to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises
will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in
response to this invitation and will not be discriminated
against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in
consideration for an award. In accordance with other related
nondiscrimination authorities, bidders and contractors will
also not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, age,
disability, low-income level, creed/religion, or limited English
proficiency in consideration for an award."

ATTENTION: DBE's

BID REQUEST-BARNHILL CONTRACTING COMPANY

Attention DBEs-Barnhill Contracting Company is requesting
bids from any interested firms for the following project:
**NCDOT Contract: #DA00628 Pasquotank County -
Widening, Grading, Paving, Drainage and Culvert on Main
St. Ext (SR1333) in Pasquotank County. Pre-Bid Meeting
is on Wednesday, November 20th, 2024 at 11:00 AM. This
meeting will be held virtually utilizing conference call
and online meeting tools. Please contact Jimmy Spivey
at the number below for meeting details. This project
bids on December 4th, 2024 and includes opportunities
on, but not limited to Hauling, Traffic Control, Erosion
Control, Pavement Markings, Milling, Misc Concrete, Pipe
Installation, Guardrail, Permanent Signing and Water Line
Installation. Bids are due to James Spivey no later than
12:00 P.M. on Tuesday December 3rd, 2024.**

Plans can be viewed in our office (please call to schedule) or
on the NCDOT website: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/letting/pages/division1letting.aspx>

Attn: James Spivey at (252)335-9503.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

"In accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil
Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-
4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will
affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant
to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises
will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in
response to this invitation and will not be discriminated
against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in
consideration for an award. In accordance with other related
nondiscrimination authorities, bidders and contractors will
also not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, age,
disability, low-income level, creed/religion, or limited English
proficiency in consideration for an award."

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No.
325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors
and suppliers for the **2024 NCDOT GTP Water Line Reloca-
tion - Contract No. 3** project for North Lenoir Water Cor-
poration which bids on **November 26, 2024, at 2:00 PM.** Plans
and specifications for this project are available at the follow-
ing locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road;
Goldsboro, NC 27530 * North Lenoir Water Corporation; 220
Academy Heights Road; Kinston, NC 28504 * McDavid As-
sociates, Inc.; 3714 North Main Street; Farmville, NC 27828-
0049.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not
limited to surveying, clearing and grubbing, hauling, erosion
control, seeding, linework, jack & bore, directional drilling,
bypass pumping, and dewatering. Please contact **Jeff Price**
(jprice@taloving.com) if you are interested in submitting a
proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone
919-734-8400; fax: 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will
be accepted up to the bid closing time of the bid date. T. A.
Loving Company is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action
Employer.

Please advise if assistance is needed with obtaining neces-
sary equipment, supplies, materials, or insurance/bonding
to satisfy the work requirements. We are willing to accept
quotations for all or partial quantities and items of work. We
can offer 2-party check payments and quick payment agree-
ments, but the agreements need to be negotiated prior to the
bid date.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

REBID

Blum Construction has been selected as the Construction
Manager @ Risk by North Carolina State University and will
receive and publicly open sealed proposals from prequalified
bidders for the construction of the University Towers project in
Raleigh, NC. Sealed bids will be delivered to 2601 Wolf Village
Way, Raleigh, NC 27607 and then read aloud.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Phase 2 of the ongoing University
Towers Renovations project on NC State University's campus,
which will consist of completely replacing the low voltage
cabling within the building, using new pathways that were
installed Summer of 2024, up to current university standards.
This phase is planned to begin in May of 2025 and will be
completed by July of 2025.

The re-bid opening process will be as follows:

- Monday, November 25, 2024: Sealed bids will need
to be dropped off in a box at NCSU Administrative Services III
Building - 2601 Wolf Village Way, Raleigh, NC 27607. All sealed
bids will be required to be placed in a sealed envelope labeled
with the required details listed in the bid manual.
- Receipt of bids will officially close at 3:00pm - No
bids or supplemental documents will be accepted after the bid
closing.

- Bid opening will begin immediately at 3:00pm and will
be publicly read out loud. The bid opening will be held both in
person and via video conferencing. We will go systematically
by bid package until all qualified bids are read. We will close
the bid opening and gather all bid information for our client and
design team.

Bid Opening via Zoom:

Meeting Link: <https://fblum.zoom.us/j/85824054239?pwd=bciyAoE0UeaaCRDbGnaWGRswru3Pw.1>

Meeting ID: 858 2405 4239

Passcode: 056009

Join by Phone: +1 646 558 8656

The following packages are up for ReBid:

Bid Package	Bid Package Description	Est. Budget
BP2710A	Telecom Package A Floors 1-4	\$450,000.00
BP2710B	Telecom Package B Floors 5-9	\$450,000.00
BP2710C	Telecom Package C Combination	\$900,000.00

All Bidders are strongly encouraged to include opportunities
for Minority Business participation wherever possible in their
respective Bid submission. Minority Business participation is
a part of this contract and must comply with all requirements
set forth in the Bid Manual. MWBE forms are required as
part of the bid submission. The MWBE goal for this project
is 20%. Blum Construction has a long-standing commitment
to maximize minority and other HUB participation on all of
our projects. If MWBE subcontractors require assistance with
bonding or payment terms, please let us know.

No facsimile or email submissions are permitted. Bids delivered
prior to November 25, 2024, must be dropped off at our Blum
Raleigh office at 4020 Westchase Blvd. Sealed Bids can be
mailed but should arrive before 4:00 pm on the business day
before the bid, 11/22/2024. Blum Construction Company, 4020
Westchase Blvd, Suite 160, Raleigh, NC 27607, Attention:
David Wooden.

Bids will only be accepted from prequalified bidders.

The Construction Manager and Owner reserve the right to
reject any and all bids.

Information can be obtained through our online plan room at
<https://www.fblum.com/subcontractors.php>.

For more information contact **Lauren Ashley** (lauren.ashley@fblum.com) or **336.816.9328**

Western Carolina's Water System Is Finally Back Online After Helene

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — More than 100,000 residents in western North Carolina were allowed to drink and bathe using water from their home faucets on Monday, nearly two months after Hurricane Helene destroyed much of the local water system.

Clay Chandler, a spokesman for the city of Asheville's Water Resources Department, said at a briefing Monday that water tests "were all clear" and a boil-water notice was lifted.

Flooding from Helene tore through the city's water system in late September, destroying so much infrastructure that officials at the time said repairs could take weeks.

Asheville restored running water to most of its users by the end of October. But the city instituted the boil-water notice as workers brought the system back online, cleared sediment from reservoirs and ran tests.

"All told, more than 1,000 samples have been taken throughout the distribution system in the last couple of weeks," Chandler said. "And it literally took an army of people to pull that off."

Hurricane Helene killed more than 200 people in multiple states and hit western North Carolina particularly hard.

As much of the U.S.'s water infrastructure ages and climate change fuels disasters, experts have said water advisories will become more common.

"We are in the midst of an uncertain time, not just in Asheville, but as we think about climate change writ large in some of these major unexpected storms," David Dyjack, executive director of the National Environmental Health Association, told The Associated Press last month.

How Project 2025 Affects NC

By Cash Michaels

Contributing writer

During the presidential election, we heard a lot about Project 2025, a so-called conservative policy blueprint for the administration of Republican former Pres. Donald Trump once he was reelected to the White House.

The over 900-page authoritarian plan became such a major headline during the campaign, that Trump had to distance himself from the negative press it was garnering in order to win the election, despite the fact that at least 140 people connected to Trump had a hand in devising it.

But soon after his victory over Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump embraced Project 2025 as he began shaping the direction his administration would be going.

So what's in Project 2025 specifically, and how does it directly affect North Carolina, and ultimately, African-Americans?

FEDERAL JOBS - Project 2025 calls for the dismantling of a number of federal agencies, in addition to the reclassification of thousands federal workers as political appointees so that they can be terminated by President Trump once he officially takes office. According to the Congressional Research Service, there are over 47,000 federal employees living and working in North Carolina, many of them Black.

EDUCATION - Project 2025 calls for the elimination of the U.S. Dept. of Education. Such a move would severely impact federal funding of public school funding in North Carolina, especially with the elimination Title I, the federal program that aids public school systems with large low-income student populations. In North Carolina, at least half of the state's approximately 2,500 public schools would lose Title I funding, and with it, the supportive programs to help low-wealth students. Over 6400 teaching positions will be eliminated, impacting almost 99,000 students across the state.

HEALTH CARE - When implemented, Project 2025 would impose drastic changes to Medicaid that would severely impact the lives of at least 900,000 North Carolinians, like targeted time limits and lifetime caps on benefits received during a Medicaid enrollee's lifetime. It could also increase the price of prescription drugs for senior citizens on Medicare. Many would be at risk of losing coverage because they are low income, and can't afford comparable coverage.

The federal government would also be barred from negotiating lower drug prices.

CHILD CARE - Project 2025 eliminates access to no-cost child care for almost 20,000 low-income children, otherwise known as Head Start. This will particularly impact thousands of children living in rural and urban communities, where the high cost of daily child care is already out of reach.

STUDENT LOANS - Say goodbye to IDR (income driven repayment) plans. Instead, Project 2025 will mandate a singular program that will increase payments for all student borrowers, including those under the SAVE (Saving on a Valuable Education) Plan, costing student borrowers anywhere from \$2,700 to \$4, 100 annually.

SOCIAL SECURITY - Under Project 2025, Social Security will be cut by raising the retirement age for 73 percent of North Carolinians from 67 to 69 years of age. That would cut benefits by \$4,100, to just \$8,900 after one year. A median-wage retiree would lose \$46,000 to \$100,000 over 10 years, according to two recent Republican Study Committee budget proposals.

TAXES - Look for the overall tax burden to shift from the wealthy to the middle class under Project 2025. A typical family of four in North Carolina would see a federal tax hike of \$2, 713 a year. Meanwhile, wealthy North Carolinians with over \$10 million in annual income would see, on average, an annual tax cut of \$1.5 million

There are many other areas of American life that would drastically change under Project 2025, according to the plan. We also know that based on Trump's proposed picks for Cabinet-level secretaries, he will have a strong group of loyalists to carry out his Project 2025 directives.

Readers are urged to pay close attention to what comes down from the incoming Trump Administration in the coming weeks and months before January 20, 2025, Inauguration Day.

Sports

An Emotional Rafael Nadal Retires At The Davis Cup

MALAGA, Spain (AP) — Rafael Nadal bit his lower lip and his reddened eyes welled with tears as he stood alongside his Davis Cup teammates for Spain's national anthem Tuesday before what he — and everyone — knew might be the last match of his career.

Hours after Nadal's 6-4, 6-4 loss to Botic van de Zandschulp of the Netherlands was over, the evening did turn out to represent the 22-time Grand Slam champion's farewell to professional tennis, because the Dutch eliminated the Spaniards in the quarterfinals just after midnight.

And it was during an on-court, post-match ceremony to honor Nadal that he cried and cried, at the singsong chorus of "Raaa-faaa" from the spectators, at the video showing highlights from his more than two decades on tour and the collection of recorded tributes from current or former players such as his Big Three rivals Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, Serena Williams, Conchita Martinez and Andy Murray, and stars from other sports such as golfer Sergio Garcia or soccer's David Beckham.

"The titles, the numbers, are

there, so people probably know that, but the way I would like to be remembered is as a good person from a small village in Mallorca," the 38-year-old Nadal told the flag-waving, sign-toting crowd at the sold-out Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martin Carpena. "Just a kid that followed their dreams, worked as hard as possible. ... I have been very lucky."



He had said beforehand that his feelings would need to be put on hold, that this week was about attempting to claim one last trophy for his country, not about pondering his impending retirement, which he announced last month would come after this event.

But he acknowledged after playing that "the emotions were difficult to

manage," and that he felt nerves out there amid the roars of an adoring audience that mostly showed up for one player and one player only.

After Nadal, a 14-time French Open champion, was beaten on the indoor hard court in southern Spain, he became a cheerleader for his heir apparent, Carlos Alcaraz, who evened the matchup against the Netherlands at 1-all by getting past Tallon Griekspoor 7-6 (0), 6-3 in the other singles match. But then van de Zandschulp and Wesley Koolhof clinched the victory for the Dutch by defeating Alcaraz and Marcel Granollers 7-6 (4), 7-6 (3) in the deciding doubles match.

Even if Spain had managed to get past the Netherlands, Nadal said that if he were his team's captain, he wouldn't pick himself to play again in the semifinals after that performance against the 80th-ranked van de Zandschulp.

At least he was in a joking mood after the result put a stop to his 29-match winning streak in Davis Cup singles. The only other blemish on his record, which stood at 29-1 entering Tuesday, came in his 2004 debut.

"I lost my first match in the Davis Cup, and I lost my last one," Nadal said with a wide grin. "So we close the circle."

When a forehand found the net to close his last match, Nadal walked to the net for a quick hug with his opponent.

"That was a tough, tough match to play," said van de Zandschulp, noting that he idolized Nadal while growing up.

In certain ways, this was, unmistakably, the Nadal that van de Zandschulp — and so many others — can remember. The white headband, marked with the red bull logo Nadal made famous. The white tape wrapped around all four of his left, racket-holding fingers. The water

bottles by his sideline bench, placed just so.

There was the occasional ace right on a line. The occasional serve-and-volley foray. The occasional over-the-shoulder putaway. And, yes, the occasional uppercut and scream of "Vamos!" There also were — neither to Nadal's or most of the 9,200 spectators' liking — several points where he looked like a once-dominant figure diminished by age and injuries.

Nadal was just not able to bring his best, no matter how many chants of "Ra-fa!" or "España!" or "Si, se puede!" ("Yes, you can!") broke out, no matter how many scarves reading "Gracias, Rafa!" or red-and-yellow Spanish flags of all sizes filled the arena.

Virginia Union Claims 2024 CIAA Football Title

CIAA—#1 Virginia State and #2 Virginia Union faced off in the 2024 CIAA Football championship Saturday evening in their home state. The game was exciting throughout and came down to the final drive, however for the second straight season, Virginia Union came out as champions, winning the game 17-13.

Virginia State received the ball first and would convert on a 2nd and 20 thanks to a 25-yard rush by Jimmyll Williams to keep the drive alive. After managing a 1st and goal at the 1, Virginia Union's defense hunkered down and managed to hold VSU scoreless on the next three plays and force a 4th and goal from the two yard line. The Trojans decided to go for it but were stopped in their tracks, resulting

in a turnover on downs.

The Panthers then used that momentum to put together a strong offensive drive that saw them on the doorstep on the endzone. As he did many times this season, Jada Byers carried the ball in for a two-yard touchdown run to help VUU strike first, leading 7-0.

VSU responded well, driving right down the field once again and were able to connect on a 33-yard field goal to cut the deficit to 7-3.

With time winding down in the second quarter, the Panthers added three more points as the clock hit zero, carrying a 10-3 lead into halftime.

After a slow beginning to the third quarter, Virginia State got some mo-



mentum going as Romelo Williams found Tylique Ray in the front corner of the endzone to knot the game at 10.

The Panthers, however, didn't let that faze them as just six minutes later, Mark Wright connected with Reginald Vick Jr., for a 23-yard touchdown pass to put VUU back ahead, 17-10.

With the game nearing its end, Virginia State had one last shot to drive down the field with 27 seconds left on their own 11 thanks to a botched snap on 4th down by the Panthers. Unfortunately for VSU, their last-second hopes were shut down on the first play, as William Davis picked off Romelo Williams to seal the championship victory for Virginia Union.



The Wakaboomee Robotics for Teens event was held last Saturday at the NC Esports Academy in Cary. The event welcomed teens from all backgrounds and skill levels. Whether they were passionate about art, engineering, public speaking, or innovation, there was a place for them on this team. The team is actually Wakaboomers latest robotics project. The goal is to free robotics from its "techie" persona and invite everyone to come and create something ground breaking. *Mathias Bishop Photo*

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