



Dedicated to the Spirit and Service of God

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Black-Led, Progressive Homeschool Networks Rise Amid More Book Bans

By Ella Fassler

TRUTHOUT

Earlier this year in San Antonio, Texas, an eight-year-old delivered a fiery, impassioned speech to the office of Republican Sen. Ted Cruz.

Introducing herself as Cari, a third-grader from South Texas, she made a demand: "Stop supporting immigration bills that are hateful. It would harm my friends and people in our community." She even offered him reading material: "In the Kelly Yang book, *Front Desk* — a banned book — she says... 'No human is illegal!' You should read this book!"

The office hung up on her. Cari called again, advocating for a ceasefire in Gaza. Again, the office hung up. She persisted until — about an hour later — someone finally listened.

In the South, where public schools are increasingly characterized by censorship, book bans, and chronic underfunding, how did this young activist learn to think critically and find the confidence to act? The answer lies not in a traditional classroom setting, but in a current events class at For the Culture Homeschool, an inclusive, secular, inexpensive,



Students present their science fair projects to an audience at For the Culture in San Antonio, Texas.

and culturally affirming homeschooling cooperative that meets every Wednesday in San Antonio.

In homeschool cooperatives, students learn side by side from one another's parents — an embodiment of the saying "It takes a village to raise a child." At For the Culture, parent-teachers introduced Cari and her classmates to the genocide in Gaza and other current events during their weekly sessions, then supported those who wanted to turn the

knowledge into action.

For co-founder Ashley Peek, this approach has become essential for families navigating Texas's increasingly hostile political climate. She cited the silencing of marginalized voices, cuts to special education, and anti-LGBTQ legislation as among the forces pushing families to homeschool. "Now, in Texas, we're seeing laws that require the Ten Commandments to be posted in classrooms," she added. "That's not about educa-

tion ... it's about control."

Peek's decision to homeschool was driven by the repeated failures of the public education system to meet her visually impaired daughter's basic needs despite countless meetings with administration. Neither charter schools nor private schools offered adequate support either. Meanwhile, her husband's effort to launch a charter school with a student-centered, anti-racist curriculum was blocked by the state for being "too liberal" — a clear sign, she says, that the system is fundamentally broken.

At that point, she chose to homeschool all three of her children, but new challenges arose. Local groups — even secular ones — often lacked diversity. "When you're the only Black or Brown family or one of the very few, it's hard to feel safe or seen," she said. "We felt uncomfortable, out of place, and often tokenized." Finding progressive curricula that centered marginalized voices and told the truth about U.S. history proved to be another major obstacle. In the end, Peek ended up creating a lot of it herself.

Everything changed after she

(See **HOMESCHOOL** P. 2)



Farmer and historian, Earl Ijames, receives an award from Rep. Don Davis' office for his research on the Tuscarora and the socioeconomic demographic of the Triracial community.

More Than 1 In 4 People Released From NC Prisons Faced Homelessness

By Rachel Crumpler

NC Health News

More than one in four people leaving North Carolina prisons in 2024 were released to homelessness, according to a reentry housing assessment presented at the July meeting of the Joint Reentry Council.

The assessment identified someone as homeless if they had no verified home plan, self-reported as homeless, provided an intersection address or went to a shelter or temporary housing placement. Of the nearly 20,000 people who exited one of the state's prisons last year, 5,610 people — or 28 percent — were identified as homeless.

It's a number that state leaders aim to reduce by 10 percent every year as part of North Carolina's Reentry 2030 goals. Since January 2024, state leaders have been taking action to lessen obstacles that could derail successful transition into the community for the 95 percent of incarcerated people in North Carolina who will be released after they serve their sentences.

Expanding housing opportunities for this population is one of the four overarching goals outlined in North

Carolina's strategic plan to boost support for people leaving prison over the coming years. Unstable housing increases the risk of recidivism, which can be costly to the legal system, the carceral system and to taxpayers. Lack of housing can also impair engagement with supervision, treatment and employment, making it difficult for people to reestablish a life in the community.

The N.C. Department of Adult Correction collaborated with The Council of State Governments Justice Center, a nonpartisan organization spearheading the national Reentry 2030 campaign, to assess the scope of homelessness and housing resources in North Carolina. The center's staff presented findings — based on interviews and listening sessions with hundreds of people, including state agency heads, housing providers, community supervision officers, public housing authorities and people with lived experience in North Carolina — to the Joint Reentry Council on July 24.

Of the people identified as homeless after leaving prison, 83 percent — or 4,647 people — were released on community supervision, which requires regular check-ins with pro-

bation/parole officers. Ninety-five percent of these individuals — 4,424 people — were released to the street, not to a shelter, temporary housing or a treatment program.

Some demographics experienced particularly high rates of homelessness after being released from prison in 2024, according to the report:

Nearly one in four releases identified as homeless — 23 percent — were age 55 or older, even though only 10 percent of people exiting prison in 2024 were in that age group.

More than one in five releases identified as homeless had a current or previous sex offense. People with sex crimes face additional barriers finding housing because they cannot live within 1,000 feet of any school or child care center. In addition, many housing options do not accept residents with these types of offenses.

Most releases to homelessness were to metropolitan areas across the state. The top five counties were Wake (523 people), Guilford (275 people), Buncombe (223 people), Mecklenburg (217 people) and New Hanover (206 people).

Hispanic people released from prison were 22 percent more likely to be identified as homeless than those who were white. Black people were slightly less likely than white people to be released to homelessness.

"Now that this data is in the universe, it is telling us what we have to do, and so we have got to take this as a personal charge for this council and this state to move this forward," Department of Adult Correction Secretary Leslie Cooley Dismukes said. "We have to increase our transitional housing. We have to increase our permanent affordable housing."

"Number one challenge" Kristen Powers, executive director of Benevolence Farm — a reentry housing program in Alamance County that supports women leaving prison — said she's not surprised by the high number of people leaving prison with no place to go. In her work, she frequently encounters people who are desperate for a stable place to land after their release.

Benevolence Farm can house nine people at a time, but Powers said it often has a wait list of more than 30

(See **PRISON TO HOMELESS** P. 7)



NC ELECTIONS BOARD SETTLES LAWSUIT OVER DIGITAL PHOTO ID

NC Newsline—Digital IDs cannot be used to vote in North Carolina until the legislature explicitly allows it, under a settlement between the state Board of Elections and the Republican National Committee.

The RNC and the state GOP sued the state Board last year after it voted along party lines to allow UNC-Chapel Hill students to use their mobile UNC One cards as photo ID.

University student and facility IDs, if the state Board approves them, are among the acceptable forms of photo identification voters can use at the polls. Many campuses have replaced physical cards with multipurpose digital IDs. UNC's was the first digital university ID the state Board approved.

A trial court last year sided with the state Board, but the state Appeals Court blocked use of the mobile IDs. Students weren't allowed to use them for the 2024 election.

As part of the agreement dismissing the lawsuit, the state Board agreed to not approve any more digital IDs unless the legislature passes a law allowing them.

Democrats held a 3-2 majority on the elections board last year. Republicans now have a majority.

Two Democrats who voted with the majority last year to allow the mobile IDs are still on the elections board.

On Friday, they defended their 2024 votes.

"I think that the previous Board made the correct decision to allow that ID, but the Court of Appeals order disagrees and we are bound to obey that," said Board member Siobhan Millen. "I think with the way technology is changing with digital IDs that this will not be the last word on this subject."

Democrat Jeff Carmon agreed with Millen. "I know this is something we will see again as we move toward digital driver's licenses and things of that nature," he said.

The legislature last year passed a law telling the DMV to study and implement a plan for digital driver's licenses.

ATTORNEY GENERAL JEFF JACKSON LAUNCHES OPERATION ROBOCALL ROUNDUP TO CRACK DOWN ON ROBOCALLS

RALEIGH — On Thursday Attorney General Jeff Jackson launched Operation Robocall Roundup, a multistate effort by the Anti-Robocall Litigation Task Force to crack down on robocalls across the country and in North Carolina. As part of the operation, Attorney General Jackson is taking three separate enforcement actions, including sending warning letters to 37 voice providers demanding that they act now to stop illegal robocalls being routed through their networks.

"North Carolinians are getting bombarded with millions of invasive robocalls every day, and these communication companies are not following the rules to protect us," said Attorney General Jeff Jackson. "We are giving these companies three weeks to start following the rules so we can shield people from these annoying and illegal robocalls."

Notice Letters Attorney General Jackson is leading the Anti-Robocall Litigation Task Force, made up of 51 bipartisan attorneys general, in sending warning letters to 37 voice service providers. These providers haven't complied with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules about responding to government traceback requests, haven't registered in the FCC's Robocall Mitigation Databases, or haven't filed a plan that describes how they will reduce illegal robocalls on their network. By disregarding these simple rules, these companies

(See **ROBOCALL CRACKDOWN LAUNCHES IN NC** P. 2)

BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVES 5-YEAR PLAN TO MAKE NC PUBLIC SCHOOLS 'BEST IN THE NATION'

NC Newsline — The North Carolina State Board of Education has approved a five-year strategic plan to make the state's public schools the best in the nation by 2030. The ambitious plan sets targets across eight key areas for the state's 1.5 million public school students.

The "Achieving Educational Excellence" initiative establishes what officials are calling "best in nation" benchmarks. These include matching the highest-performing state's four-year high school graduation rate and composite ACT scores. Specifically, the plan seeks a 92% graduation rate and an average ACT composite score of 20 by 2030. As of 2023-24 school year, North Carolina's adjusted four-year graduation rate is 86.9%, and the average ACT composite score is 18.5, placing the state 10th among 17 states and Washington, D.C. where 75% or more of high school students take the ACT.

(See **5 YEAR PLAN FOR NC PUBLIC SCHOOLS** P. 2)

Raleigh's Economic Boom: Global Giants Are Now Our New Neighbors

By Ms Jheri Worldwide

Staff Writer

The Greater Raleigh area is experiencing an unprecedented economic boom, as a wave of global giants in technology, finance, and life sciences invest billions of dollars into new campuses and innovation hubs. This massive influx of corporate investment is set to bring thousands of high-paying, skilled jobs to the region, cementing the Triangle's status as a premier destination for top-tier talent and corporate operations.

The primary drivers behind this surge are the region's steady pipeline of skilled graduates from its renowned universities, including Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, and NC State, our HBCUs, and a quality of life that remains affordable compared to other major corporate centers.

The technology sector is leading the charge. Apple is investing \$1 billion in a new campus that will employ over 3,000 workers in high-skilled roles like machine learning, artificial intelligence, and software architecture. Similarly, Google is establishing a \$1 billion engineering hub, and Microsoft is expanding its software development center with a projected workforce of over 2,500.

Home improvement leader Lowe's has opened a global tech hub in South End, housing over 2,000 technology workers focused on e-commerce and supply chain innovation. Adding to the growth, software company BuildOps recently announced



it will build a new operations hub in Raleigh, creating nearly 300 new jobs.

Beyond tech, major corporations are choosing the Triangle for their strategic operations. British banking giant Barclays is relocating its entire Americas operations to a new 30-acre North Hills campus, bringing 1,500 high-paying corporate and technology jobs. In a similar move, battery manufacturer Energizer Holdings has selected the Raleigh suburb of Apex for its new corporate headquarters, relocating approximately 75 top executives from its current St. Louis base, citing the

region's strong talent networks and cultural fit.

Research Triangle Park's traditional strength in life sciences continues to attract major investment. Global pharmaceutical company Proprietary has relocated its headquarters to Durham, tapping into the Triangle's thriving biopharma ecosystem with a new facility that will house over 700 workers. German life sciences leader Bayer Crop Science is also expanding its presence in Research Triangle Park with a new \$14 million innovation center focused on seed technology. Bayer chose RTP due to its proximity to one of the world's largest

agriscience and plant science PhD concentrations. The logistics sector is also expanding dramatically, with Amazon building a new \$400 million distribution center, which is expected to create thousands of jobs in the area.

This wave of investment underscores a powerful trend: companies are confident they can attract and retain the highly qualified candidates they need to compete globally, right here in North Carolina. With our relatively affordable cost of living, art, entertainment, and access to higher education, goodness grows in North Carolina.

Yep, It's Trump's Economy Now. The Latest Numbers Offer Warning Signs

WASHINGTON (AP) — For all of President Donald Trump's promises of an economic "golden age," a spate of weak indicators this week told a potentially worrisome story as the impacts of his policies are coming into focus.

Job gains are dwindling. Inflation is ticking upward. Growth has slowed compared with last year.

More than six months into his term, Trump's blitz of tariff hikes and his new tax and spending bill have remodeled America's trading, manufacturing, energy and tax systems to his own liking. He's eager to take credit for any wins that might occur and is hunting for someone else to blame if the financial situation starts to totter.

But as of now, this is not the boom the Republican president promised, and his ability to blame his Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden, for any economic challenges has faded as the world economy hangs on his every word and social media post.

When Friday's jobs report turned out to be decidedly bleak, Trump ignored the warnings in the data and fired the head of the agency that produces the monthly jobs figures.

"Important numbers like this must be fair and accurate, they can't be manipulated for political purposes," Trump said on Truth Social, without offering evidence for his claim. "The Economy is BOOMING."

It's possible that the disappointing numbers are growing pains from the rapid transformation caused by Trump and that stronger growth will return — or they may be a preview of even more disruption to come.

Trump's economic plans are a political gamble.

Trump's aggressive use of tariffs, executive actions, spending cuts and tax code changes carries significant



political risk if he is unable to deliver middle-class prosperity. The effects of his new tariffs are still several months away from rippling through the economy, right as many Trump allies in Congress will be campaigning in the midterm elections.

"Considering how early we are in his term, Trump's had an unusually big impact on the economy already," said Alex Conant, a Republican strategist at Firehouse Strategies. "The full inflationary impact of the tariffs won't be felt until 2026. Unfortunately for Republicans, that's also an election year."

The White House portrayed the blitz of trade frameworks leading up to Thursday's tariff announcement as proof of his negotiating prowess. The European Union, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia and other nations that the White House declined to name agreed that the U.S. could increase its tariffs on their goods without doing the same to American products. Trump simply set rates on other countries that lacked settlements.

The costs of those tariffs — taxes paid on imports to the U.S. — will be most felt by many Americans in the form of higher prices, but to what extent remains uncertain.

"For the White House and their allies, a key part of managing the expectations and politics of the Trump economy is maintaining vigilance when it comes to public perceptions," said Kevin Madden, a Republican strategist.

Just 38% of adults approve of Trump's handling of the economy, according to a July poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs. That's down from the end of Trump's first term when half of adults approved of his economic leadership.

The White House paints a rosier image, seeing the economy emerging from a period of uncertainty after Trump's restructuring and repeating the economic gains seen in his first term before the pandemic struck.

"President Trump is implementing the very same policy mix of deregulation, fairer trade, and pro-growth tax cuts at an even bigger scale — as these

policies take effect, the best is yet to come," White House spokesman Kush Desai said.

Recent economic reports suggest trouble ahead.

The economic numbers over the past week show the difficulties that Trump might face if the numbers continue on their current path:

— Friday's jobs report showed that U.S. employers have shed 37,000 manufacturing jobs since Trump's tariff launch in April, undermining prior White House claims of a factory revival.

— Net hiring has plummeted over the past three months with job gains of just 73,000 in July, 14,000 in June and 19,000 in May — a combined 258,000 jobs lower than previously indicated. On average last year, the economy added 168,000 jobs a month.

— A Thursday inflation report showed that prices have risen 2.6% over the year that ended in June, an increase in the personal consumption expenditures price index from 2.2% in April. Prices of heavily imported items, such as appliances, furniture, and toys and games, jumped from May to June.

— On Wednesday, a report on gross domestic product — the broadest measure of the U.S. economy — showed that it grew at an annual rate of less than 1.3% during the first half of the year, down sharply from 2.8% growth last year.

"The economy's just kind of slogging forward," said Guy Berger, senior fellow at the Burning Glass Institute, which studies employment trends. "Yes, the unemployment rate's not going up, but we're adding very few jobs. The economy's been growing very slowly. It just looks like a 'meh' economy is continuing."



THE GOLDEN YEARS

By Judykay Jefferson

WHO GETS WHAT

I was talking with an old friend (emphasis on O.L.D.) who is considering a property investment in the Caribbean upon receipt of a significant amount of money. This investment would remain hidden from his spouse and be inherited by his "friend." He is considering willing ownership of the property to the "friend" upon his death. Can you imagine? The wife and his son are seated for the reading of the will. The wife learns that her deceased husband invested significantly in a property that he has now gifted to the other woman. Now that's ugly! It started me thinking about how that sort of thing is handled in the real world.

Inheritance law may not be the most thrilling topic at the dinner table, but it's one that touches every family eventually. Whether you're planning your estate or wondering what happens when a loved one passes without a will, understanding the basics of inheritance law can save you from confusion—and sometimes conflict.

Inheritance law governs how a person's assets—money, property, and possessions—are distributed after their death. These laws vary by state, but they generally fall into two categories: testate (with a valid will) and intestate (without a will).

If someone dies testate, their estate is distributed according to the instructions in their will with certain conditions, depending upon where they are. If they die intestate, state laws determine who inherits what. This process is called intestate succession, and it follows a legal hierarchy of heirs.

In most states, the order of inheritance starts with the spouse and children. If there's no surviving spouse or children, the estate may go to parents, siblings, or more distant relatives. If no heirs can be found, the estate may eventually be claimed by the state through a process called escheatment.

Here's a simplified version of the typical order of inheritance when there's no will:

Relationship to Deceased Inheritance Priority
Spouse Highest
Children Next in line
Parents If no spouse/children
Siblings If no parents
Extended Family If no siblings
The State if no relatives

Keep in mind, this order can shift depending on the state and specific circumstances. For example, some states recognize common law spouses, while others may include stepchildren or adopted children in the line of succession.

Whether there's a will or not, most estates go through probate—a legal process where a court oversees the distribution of assets. Probate ensures debts are paid, taxes are settled, and the rightful heirs receive their inheritance.

If there's a will, the court verifies its validity and appoints an executor to carry out the deceased's wishes. If there's no will, the court appoints an administrator, and state laws guide the distribution.

In some states, certain heirs are protected by forced share laws, which guarantee a portion of the estate to a spouse or children, even if the will says otherwise. These laws are designed to prevent disinheritance and ensure dependents aren't left destitute.

However, not all states have forced share laws. In states without them, a person can legally leave their entire estate to a friend, charity, or even a pet—assuming the will is valid.

While the exact list can vary slightly depending on how laws are interpreted, most states outside of the community property system (like California, Texas, and Arizona) have elective share statutes. Examples include:

- New York: Spouse can claim up to one-third of the estate.
- North Carolina: Spouse can claim a share based on the length of the marriage.

North Carolina's forced share law, officially known as the elective share statute, protects surviving spouses from being disinherited — even if the low-down deceased spouse's will leaves them little or nothing. The percentage depends on the length of the marriage:

Less than 5 years — 15%
5-10 years — 25%
10-15 years — 33%
More than 15 years — 50%

And then there is the questions of what makes a legal will. To be legally binding, a will must meet certain criteria:

- The person must be of sound mind. There is a great potential for a court challenge here.
- The will must be written and signed.
- It must be witnessed by at least two people (in most states).

Some states allow holographic wills—handwritten and unwitnessed—but these are often challenged in court.

Inheritance law is deeply personal. It's about legacy, responsibility, and ensuring your loved ones are cared for when you're no longer here. Whether you're drafting your first will or navigating a loved one's estate, understanding the basics can make a difficult time a little easier. Or you or your loved ones can end up on a bad TV court show.

ROBOCALL CRACKDOWN LAUNCHES IN NC

Continued from page 1

are allowing robocallers onto their phone networks and then passing their calls on to other downstream providers until they reach North Carolinians' phones.

The task force is also sending the letters to 99 downstream providers that accept call traffic from the 37 companies, so that they know they're doing business with bad actors that are not willing to follow the rules that apply to everyone equally. In 2022, 51 attorneys general joined forces to create the Anti-Robocall Litigation Task Force, which is led by Attorney General Jackson, Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita, and Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost. The Task Force investigates and takes legal action against companies responsible for significant volumes of illegal and fraudulent robocall traffic routed into and across the United States.

FCC Coordination
The task force is also working with the FCC to combat these robocalls. In a separate enforcement, the FCC announced that it will be removing seven of these 37 providers from the Robocall Mitigation Database, which means that other providers will no longer be allowed to accept and route any calls from their networks. Voice providers must refuse to route calls from voice providers not registered in the Robocall Mitigation Database.

Article 8 Judgment
Attorney General Jackson has also won a court order against voice provider Articlu8 and its owner Paul Talbot for providing substantial assistance to fraudsters that operated robocall and telemarketing scams in North Carolina and across the country by accepting and routing millions of illegal and fraudulent calls. The order bars Talbot from operating any companies in the telecommunications industry and requires him to pay over \$5 million in civil penalties. The FCC has also removed Article 8 and Talbot from the Robocall Mitigation Database.

5 YEAR PLAN FOR NC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Continued from page 1

The plan also seeks to increase participation in Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment, and career and technical education. It aims for a 30% AP participation rate in the advanced courses and a 75% AP exam pass rate with a score of 3 or higher by 2030. In 2024, 21.5% of North Carolina's students in grades 10-12 took at least one AP exam, and 65.4% earned a qualifying score of 3 or higher, according to the report.

Last school year, students in the state earned a record-high 358,069 Career and Technical Education credentials; the plan calls for increasing the number earned yearly to 500,000 by 2030.

"This plan is bold, ambitious and deeply intentional," said Geoff Coltrane, senior director of government affairs and strategy at the Department of Public Instruction. "It sets out a commitment to our students, our educators and the entire state of how we're going to make sure that our public school system is the best in the nation."

The plan was developed after a statewide listening tour by state Superintendent "Mo" Green that included eight regional meetings, 16 school visits and input from more than 5,000 residents, including 1,000 educators. The plan was further refined with feedback from universities, community colleges, local school boards and education associations over a two-month revision period.

Homeschool — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

met two like-minded parents, Kiah Mitchell Scott and Jennifer Verme. They found common ground at park meetups organized through Facebook homeschool groups. "They were also looking for an inclusive, justice-centered space that affirmed our kids' identities and gave them room to thrive," Peek explained. "We dreamed of a space where banned books are read on purpose, where we don't shy away from hard history, and where our families don't have to code-switch or constantly explain their existence. A decolonized, secular, inclusive homeschool community where all of our identities are honored."

Fortunately, their kids liked each other too, and they formed what's known as a "cottage co-op," a cooperative run out of their homes.

At the end of the year, parents surveyed their children and found that while they enjoyed the co-op, many wanted to make more friends. The cooperative responded quickly, growing from just 5 to 27 families in a matter of months. Interest was so great that they even had to add families to a waitlist.

The Rise of Homeschooling
Their growth reflects a wider trend. The homeschooling move-



ment is rising in popularity beyond Texas, and beyond its stereotypically white and Christian base. The COVID-19 pandemic paved the way for a new wave of homeschoolers, with rates rising from 2 percent or 3 percent of students in 2019 to 11 percent of families in 2020, before stabilizing to 5 percent or 6 percent of students presently. (Rates vary

and are likely underestimated since many states do not require reporting.) Growth has been especially sharp in Black communities, where families are leaving public schools in response to racism, underfunding, and a whitewashed curriculum. The latest wave of homeschoolers is also more likely to identify as progressive, according to one survey.

Many of these progressive families may not disavow public schooling, and vote to keep public schools funded. Co-founder of For the Culture Jennifer Verme stressed that most of their group doesn't oppose public schooling. "By and large, our group is not anti-public school at all. We all vote to fund it," she told Truthout. "Our kids' needs were not being met." A survey their cooperative sent out to families found that bullying, racism, and inadequate support for neurodivergence were among the top reasons for parents' decisions to homeschool.

Some members' other children go to public school. Kiah Mitchell Scott, formerly a social studies teacher and a co-founder of For the Culture, sends three of her four children to public school. But public schooling wasn't a good fit for her 13-year-old daughter, she said, who is dyslexic and wasn't getting the support she needed in that setting. Since joining For the Culture, her daughter has flourished and become more outgoing in its warm and inclusive environment. "Homeschooling is not the perfect environment for everyone, but it is the perfect environment for some," she told Truthout. "That's why you need these opportunities out here — for all types of kids to make sure everybody gets what they need."

More broadly, not all progressive homeschoolers embrace the ideology underpinning public schooling. In the 1960s and '70s, educator John Holt popularized "unschooling," a model in which children direct their own educational process while adults act as facilitators or partners. He argued that conventional schooling often quashes children's natural desire to learn.

Critical unschooling builds on this foundation. In "Toward a Critical Unschooling Pedagogy," Noah Romero, assistant professor of Native American and Indigenous Studies at Hampshire College, describes it as an educational philosophy that

dissolves the teacher-student binary while empowering learners to question and challenge power structures. He argues that traditional schooling systems in capitalist states reinforce colonialist legacies, serving to convince citizens of the state's authority and necessity while preparing students to become either obedient workers or authoritarian bosses. Romero also cites research from Julius Nyerere, a decolonial political theorist who became president of Tanzania in 1962, which describes how children in Tanzania learned naturally through their interactions with communities, elders, and peers until colonizers imposed formal schooling as a tool of control.

What does unschooling look like in practice? According to The Christian Science Monitor, it often means children waking up naturally, having unstructured days, and diving into topics they choose themselves.

Some unschooling families connect through cooperatives. One such group in the Midwest, which asked not to be named due to today's retaliatory political climate, meets twice a week in a local forest. There, they emphasize unstructured play fostering a deep connection with the natural world through activities like habitat restoration, gardening, art, and foraging.

The cooperative's president told Truthout that she has chosen this route partly because she didn't want her son to associate learning with coercion. "When we first started homeschooling, I asked my son, 'How did your teachers get you to learn in school?' and his answer was 'They just made me or I got in trouble,' she said. "Mistakes are bad, learn this or else' is not how I want my child to see learning, especially at such an early age. I'm not against public school, I am a product of it myself. But, it's not the right fit for everyone." When he's not at the cooperative, her son follows a homeschooling curriculum at his own pace.

Choosing a setting in the forest or public parks — surrounded by grubs, bugs, mushrooms and other earthly delights — may be ideal for a self-directed learning approach. Educator Cara Kuhl used to volunteer at an indoor self-directed learning program in Fort Worth, Texas, where many students were disengaged and isolated. "What we saw was frustrating," she told Truthout. "There were islands of individuals with head-phones on."

That experience led her and Elis Maxwell to found Westside Learning Collective, a drop-off program in Fort Worth, Texas, that combines structured classroom learning with time for self-directed exploration. "We need some structure so that we can build lessons, so that we can help a kid get over that hump if they're not interested or if it's hard," Kuhl said. "So I would say there's some conventional influences there. And then after that, it's very open-ended. Self-directed [time] starts right after that, with lunch. They can go anywhere they want, be with anybody they want to be with, and do whatever they want." During these self-directed sessions, students host impromptu dance classes, create talent shows, write poems, play music, and paint.

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Business & Finance

States Scramble To Complete Renewable Energy Projects

By Alex Brown

NC Newswire

The abrupt termination of tax credits for clean energy projects is perhaps the most drastic blow that President Donald Trump has struck in his campaign against wind and solar electricity.

As states brace for the uncertainty ahead, they are scrambling to get pending projects off the ground before the tax credits expire.

"The real opportunities are making sure that the projects in the queue make their deadline," said Washington Democratic state Sen. Sharon Shevmake, who chairs the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee. "Can we speed that up? Can we make that easier for them?"

Shewmake, and leaders in other states, say they're focused on fast-tracking permitting decisions and working with regulators to ensure projects can connect to the grid.

"Ironically, one of the impacts of the phaseout is that there's a rush to speed up the development of some projects in the short run," said Warren Leon, executive director of the Clean Energy States Alliance, a non-profit coalition of state energy agencies.

The tax credits were the linchpin for countless wind and solar projects in states aiming to get a large portion of their power from renewable en-

ergy. Leaders and advocates in those states say that renewable sources remain the best way to meet their electricity needs. But the loss of the tax credits could mean that residents pay more on their utility bills.

"This will likely kill some projects," said Matt Abele, executive director of the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association, an industry-supported nonprofit that backs clean energy policy. "The financial scenario for these projects is built around tax credits that were intended to be in place until the 2030s."

But once the dust settles, many officials expect state laws and market forces to continue driving the build-out of wind and solar.

"We still need to add electricity in this state, and wind and solar are still the cheapest way to do it," said Pete Wyckoff, deputy commissioner of energy resources with the Minnesota Department of Commerce. "It's a blow, but it doesn't change our energy policy, it doesn't change what is economically the right thing to do. But it's a big hit to our ratepayers."

Tax credits axed
Under the Inflation Reduction Act, which President Joe Biden signed in 2022, developers received a 30% tax credit for investments in zero-emission energy projects, along with a production credit of up to 2.75 cents for every kilowatt-hour of clean electricity generated by the projects.



Those tax credits were slated to extend into the 2030s.

State officials and renewable energy industry leaders say the credits have been a major driver in the nation's rapid buildout of wind and solar, along with corresponding growth in manufacturing jobs.

But the giant domestic policy measure Trump signed on July 4 abruptly ended those tax credits. Under the new law, projects must be up and running by the end of 2027 to qualify for the credits, or start construction by July 4, 2026. Projects that begin construction after that date must be operational by the end of 2027.

Trump has falsely claimed that

wind and solar are "expensive and unreliable," and has at the same time worked to boost fossil fuel production. He has also taken aim at the fact that some renewable energy components are manufactured overseas, calling it a national security threat.

"Projects in early to mid-stage development are deeply in danger if not completely cut off," said Harry Godfrey, managing director with Advanced Energy United, an industry group focused on energy and transportation. "This administration is finding a variety of ways to pull the rug on wind and solar."

While there may be a short-term burst of projects before the credits

expire, the landscape becomes much more uncertain after that.

"Certainly there will be some projects that are canceled, but the bigger issue is going to be new projects that don't get started because of the unfavorable environment for them," said Leon, of the Clean Energy States Alliance.

A slower, costlier transition
Industry leaders say it's too early to tell just how drastically the loss of the tax credits will slow their deployment of wind and solar. But they say states remain committed to laws that mandate a transition to clean energy. And building fossil fuel power, such as natural gas plants, is still slower and more costly.

"You don't build a natural gas plant overnight, and there are real supply chain constraints — you can't even get the parts," said Amisha Rai, senior vice president of advocacy with Advanced Energy United.

Rai and others noted that the country is seeing a surge in demand for new electricity, driven by the electrification of vehicles and buildings, as well as growth in data centers to support technologies like artificial intelligence.

"Market forces are going to continue to drive development of clean energy, the primary market force being significant demand for new electricity," said Abele, with the North Carolina group. "It's not going

to come from natural gas, given that turbines are on back order through 2029. Solar, wind and battery storage are the quickest ways to add electrons to the grid."

Clean energy backers said Trump's efforts to block solar and wind undermine his "energy dominance" agenda at a time when more power is needed. Ultimately, they believe the loss of the tax credits will cause higher electricity bills.

"Just by the law of supply and demand, if you have growing demand and you don't have growing supply to keep up with it, that's going to lead to higher prices," Leon said.

According to a report from Energy Innovation Policy & Technology, a nonpartisan think tank, the loss of the tax credits could increase electricity rates 9-18% by 2035, raising household energy costs by \$170 annually.

Godfrey, the industry advocate, said that wind and solar projects may be canceled once the tax credits expire. But many of those same projects may be revived as rising electricity prices make their costs more viable.

Analysts have noted that the clean energy boom brought on by the Inflation Reduction Act has largely benefited Republican-led states. But some lawmakers fear that developers will now focus their investments on Democratic states, where laws mandating a transition to renewable sources provide more market certainty.

AI-Powered Private School Arrives In Charlotte & Raleigh

CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS - Alpha School, an "AI-powered" private school, is preparing to make its mark on Charlotte and Raleigh this year.

North Carolina is part of an expansion into five additional states this fall for the private school company, which currently operates Texas and Florida. It plans to expand into Puerto Rico in 2026.

How does the school operate, and what do education experts have to say about it?

Co-founder MacKenzie Price told Carolina Public Press a typical day at Alpha begins with a 15 minute exercise to get students excited for the day and encourage a growth mindset. These exercises are led by Al-

pha's classroom guides — at Alpha, there are no teachers. Then students transition to a two-hour learning block where they split that time between core subjects like math, reading, science and language. This is conducted entirely via AI software and apps.

By lunchtime, students are done with their academic work for the day. The rest of the day is spent learning life skills like leadership, public speaking, financial literacy and entrepreneurship through workshops led by the guides.

Alpha utilizes a mastery-based approach to learning, so children in the same classroom could all be on different levels of the same lesson depending on how each child moves

through the material. The AI "tutor" is designed to recognize what each student is grasping well and what they need more work on.

"Let's say you only need five repetitions of a concept to understand that concept," Price said. "I teach you a basic lesson on fractions, and then I give you five problems, and you show 'yeah, I understand this well,' then you move forward to the next concept."

"But if I need 15 repetitions to understand that, then I shouldn't only get five or 10. I should be able to get 15. That's the beauty of personalized learning — each child does have a tutor that is going at their pace."

Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of Independent

Schools Stephanie Keaney said this is a strategy known as differentiation, which teachers have done for decades. But instead of teachers or Alpha's guides, it's artificial intelligence.

While students are taught a standard common core curriculum, they aren't being given traditional grades. K-8 students' progress is measured three times a year through the Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP assessment test. High school students' success is tracked by SAT scores and Advance Placement exams.

The North Carolina campuses each come with a \$45,000 price tag

(See AI PRIVATE SCHOOL P. 4)



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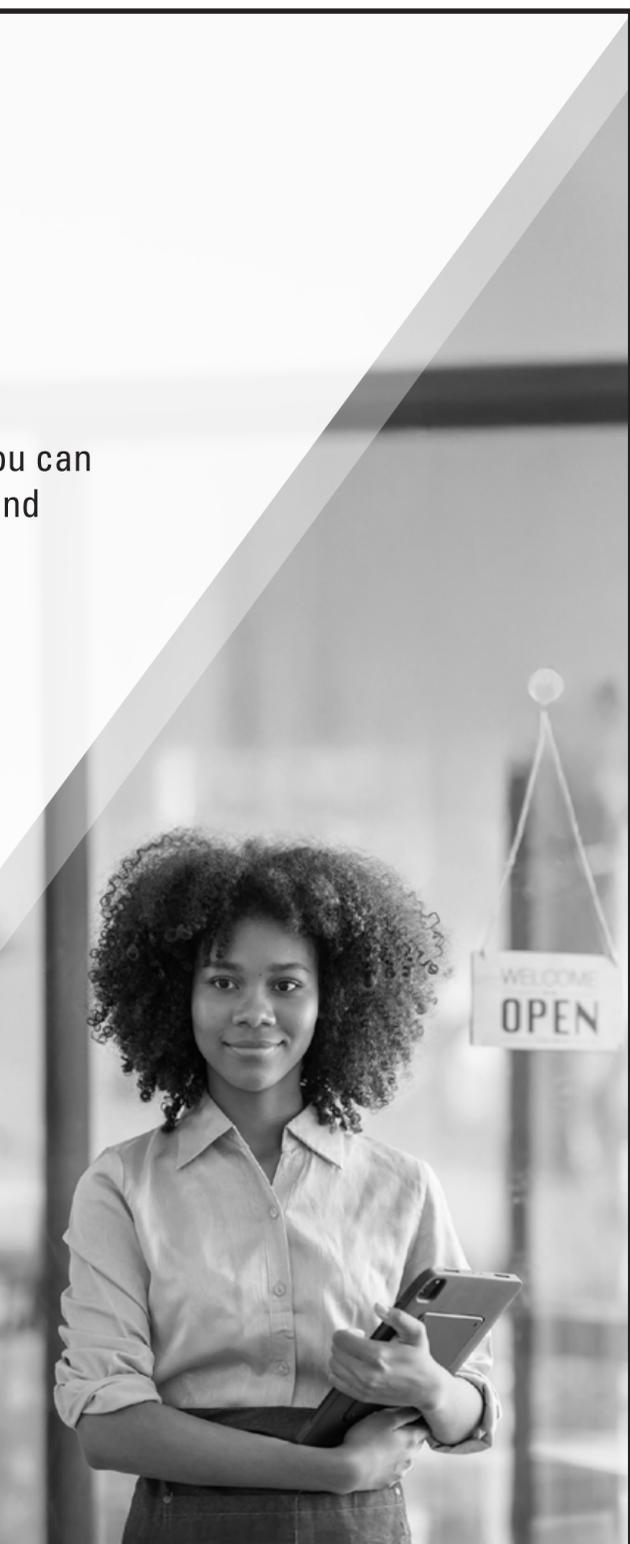
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Duke Energy Reports \$1B Profit, Plans Utility Merger

By Zachary Turner

WFAE

Duke Energy made \$985 million in profits last quarter, up 7.6% from last year. Rate hikes and economic development drove profits for the utility. That includes new commercial customers and new power-hungry data centers, such as the \$10 billion Amazon data center investment in North Carolina that the utility actively courted.

The quarterly results come on the heels of new legislation that increases the ability to recover costs and removes a key North Carolina climate target.

When it comes to building new energy generation, the utility focused on its plans to build new natural gas generation, primarily in North Carolina, with two new turbines coming to the Marshall Steam Station on Lake Norman. Only two projects have received the green

light:

- A combined-cycle generator providing 1,360 megawatts of power in Person County, North Carolina. In-service date: 2028.
- Two combustion turbines providing a cumulative 850 MW of power at the Marshall Steam Station in Catawba County, North Carolina. In-service date: 2028.

Duke attributes the buildout of energy generation resources, primarily natural gas, to the "unprecedented" growth in demand the utility expects. In the United States, natural gas combustion accounts for a higher share of carbon pollution than coal overall, but, in the electricity sector, coal still dominates.

To finance these and other projects, the company is working on two large cash transactions. Brookfield acquired a non-controlling share of the utility's Florida company for \$6 billion. Duke also plans to sell off

its Piedmont Tennessee Natural Gas business for \$2.4 billion.

The company is planning to file for a merger of Duke Energy Progress and Duke Energy Carolinas,

creating one unified utility with the same rates across its territory. The company predicts that this will save customers \$1 billion through 2038. The merger, if approved, is expected

to take effect in January 2027.

North Carolina's recently passed Power Bill Reduction Act removes the utility's 2030 carbon pollution reduction target, which would have

required it to cut carbon pollution in the next five years. It also allows Duke to recover annual costs on ongoing capital projects, such as new nuclear reactors.

AI Private School — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and will offer K-3 for the first year of operation with plans to expand to K-8 during its second year. Price said students are already enrolled in Charlotte and Raleigh, and families are eagerly awaiting their first day at Alpha.

Krista Glazewski, the executive director of NC State's Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, said there is a long history of AI in the classroom. It's important to acknowledge the historical use of intelligent tutoring software to not cause confusion and to be clear about some of its limitations, she said. "Some of the limitations are that

they have a narrow area of scope," Glazewski said. "Intelligent tutoring isn't always going to be sensitive to the kind of learning that might be happening, so it certainly would not be the only thing that you would want to use in a learning environment."

"Alpha's not saying that's their only instructional model. In fact, if I'm bringing my lens to what they're doing, I think they would argue that they are able to select from some impactful instructional models. ... I would say they're probably choosing the best from different instructional pedagogical models and applying

them in some thoughtful and seemingly creative ways."

Glazewski has been researching AI in education for more than a decade, but she is also a parent herself, so she understands hesitancy and skepticism about using AI for learning.

When implementing more technology into education, she said it's important to ensure schools are using it thoughtfully to meet specific goals and for the purpose it was intended. Schools should also take steps to ensure student privacy is protected.

"We are now going to have a

generation of learners that are going to have metrics and instrumentation about their learning that could follow them throughout their whole schooling career, so we want to make sure that the right day data privacy agreements are in place, that those agreements are held if companies either fold or are reserved into other companies," Glazewski said.

"We want to make sure that over a child's life in schooling, that they are not being monitored in a way that parents haven't consented to and that their information is not being used in ways that, again, parents haven't consented to."



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Health and Wellness

Ripple Effects Feared From Potential EPA Downsizing

By Will Atwater

NC Newswire

As the Trump administration keeps pushing to change the focus of scientific research and roll back environmental regulations — moves that critics say favor industry over public health — members of North Carolina's scientific and environmental communities are speaking out. They're raising alarms about the effect of the EPA's stated goal of dismantling its environmental research arm, including the possible closure of its Office of Research and Development in Research Triangle Park.

"Gutting EPA's research capabilities directly harms states' ability to ensure we have clean air and clean water, because we rely on the EPA for scientific expertise and capacity that is rarely available at the state level," Elizabeth Biser, former secretary of the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality, told NC Health News in a text.

"Eliminating the scientific backbone of the EPA would severely compromise the agency's ability to make evidence-based decisions, putting communities across North Carolina — and the nation — at risk," Biser wrote. "When you add funding cuts to scientific research at academic institutions, the nation as a whole is losing critical resources to protect the public from toxic chemicals."

Critics warn that closing ORD's Research Triangle facility could jeopardize public health, hinder critical climate research, undermine environmental safeguards and harm the economy of the Research Triangle and North Carolina as a whole.

ORD's contributions to NC

The Office of Research and Development opened its Research Triangle Park facility in 2001. For more than two decades, it has played a pivotal role in advancing science that protects public health and the environment.

The office's contributions include developing tools to monitor air pollution, helping detect and manage PFAS contamination in North Carolina's drinking water, informing public health guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic and engaging more than 385,000 students and community members through education and outreach programs. These contributions have shaped federal and state environmental policies while directly

benefiting local communities, according to the agency.

"ORD has also done a lot of the fundamental research to understand the health effects of exposure to air pollution," said Chris Frey, a North Carolina State University engineering professor and former assistant administrator at ORD. "That includes work at a laboratory facility located on the campus of the University of North Carolina, where clinical studies of human exposure were conducted."

"Not long ago, the agency announced it was not going to continue funding that facility, and it's vacating the site," Frey added. "That is a significant loss of research capability that is very unique in the United States — actually, very unique globally."

In addition to RTP, the Office of Research and Development maintains facilities across the country, including in Washington, D.C., New Jersey, Rhode Island and Oregon. In recent years, its total staff has hovered around 1,500, with approximately 700 employees based at the RTP location, according to Frey, who returned to his NCSU post in 2024. Of those 700, about 400 have departed recently through resignations, early retirements or firings, he said.

Economic and educational impact
According to the most recent data published by the EPA, the agency's RTP campus contributed "an annual output of \$245.4 million within the region and \$262.2 million statewide."

"The loss of so much expertise hurts everyone," said Linda Birnbaum, who was director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, also in Research Triangle Park, from 2009 to 2019. "In addition, the loss of hundreds of federal jobs is only the tip of the iceberg — because all of those positions are accompanied by the loss of contractors, trainees and visiting scientists. Huge economic as well as personal losses."

In addition to the scientific research that has shed light on public health issues such as COVID and PFAS, ORD has provided research opportunities for thousands of students from local universities, Frey said.

"The local universities in the triangle — N.C. State, UNC, Duke, N.C. Central and also others like North Carolina A&T — have had strong partnerships and collaborations with ORD



and Research Triangle Park," Frey noted. "There's a kind of research ecosystem that revolves around what goes on at that EPA lab, and that's all apparently coming to an end."

Earlier this year, N.C. State University economist emeritus Mike Walden told NC Health News that a rule of thumb is to double the amount of a federal grant to get a handle on the ripple economic effect

of that money on a region.

Project dollars generate jobs for research assistants, needs for equipment and other capital investments. The people who fill those posts or supply that apparatus then spend money from the grant generating local economic activity, in grocery stores, restaurants and retail.

Impacts beyond NC
The Environmental Protection

Network, a nonpartisan group that includes many former EPA employees, works to strengthen and protect environmental safeguards. Organization members warn that the Trump administration's efforts to reduce scientific research and roll back environmental regulations will harm the U.S. population.

EPN projects that these rollbacks could lead to "nearly 200,000

premature U.S. deaths through 2050 and trigger more than 10,000 asthma attacks each day nationwide, resulting in missed school and work days and increased emergency care." The group also estimates that public health costs will outweigh corporate savings by six to one, with \$254 billion in annual benefits lost compared to \$39 billion in reduced costs for polluters — undermining protections under the Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and other laws," according to data published by the group.

Although environmentalists are concerned about the potential loss of the Office of Research and Development and the rollback of key regulations, Frey believes the need for continued scientific research will not go away.

"In a sense, this is an exercise. By taking away this capability, it's going to cause people to realize what they're missing and how badly it's needed," he said. "So I would think it's going to motivate a really strong conversation about how we fulfill this need for new science to deal with increasingly complex challenges."

Can Homeownership Improve Health Outcomes?

CDC—The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes "adequate housing" as a basic human right.

Housing is among the most important social determinants of health. Homeownership is an essential pathway to economic security, social mobility, stability, generational wealth, and healthy life. Financial assets such as owning a house or land passed down from one generation to the next within families is referred to as generational wealth. Recent research conducted by the National Realtor Association reported that, on average, a homeowner gained \$139,134 in equity in the last 5 years, and \$218,505 in the last 10 years. Homeownership is also key to narrowing racial inequity gaps in income and wealth. Wealth and income are strongly associated with increased illness and death rates and reduced life expectancy. Poor health also leads to reduced and inadequate income, creating a health-poverty trap.

The relationship between adequate

housing and health has been well established. Housing can affect health through multiple mechanisms. For example, homeowners have a stable place to live, and residential stability leads to improved health. In the US, most services — such as access to health care, schools, and financial, social, and municipal services — are linked to residential status and residential history. These SDOH also affect health and health outcomes. Owning a residence also contributes to better internal house conditions and affordability, which can impact health status.

Extensive research in recent decades has solidified the association between housing and health outcomes, prompting a paradigm shift that considers housing as an integral component of overall health. Advancing beyond age-old hypotheses to explore a new domain, the relationship between homeownership and health outcomes is necessary for contemporary public health. Homeownership,

symbolizing stable and sustainable housing, offers a unique lens to enhance our understanding of community health.

Understanding the connection between homeownership and chronic health conditions is imperative in the field of public health. Recent decades have underscored the critical role of housing in overall health outcomes, yet a substantial knowledge gap exists concerning how homeownership, as a distinct housing aspect, influences chronic health conditions. This understanding holds vital implications for several reasons. Chronic health conditions are the leading cause of illness and death, responsible for 90% of the \$4.1 trillion in annual health care expenditures in the US, necessitating their prioritization in public health efforts.

Furthermore, homeownership extends beyond a mere housing arrangement, encompassing stability, community ties, social networks, and financial security — factors that can

affect the risk and management of chronic health conditions. By exploring this under-researched area, we can identify interventions and policies to leverage homeownership to mitigate chronic health issues and enhance overall well-being. This study aims to establish homeownership as a critical determinant of health and social well-being, particularly in predicting the prevalence of major chronic health conditions in the US.

The observed associations between homeownership and chronic health conditions highlight the importance of housing as a social determinant of health. These findings are consistent with the existing literature that emphasizes the multifaceted impact of housing and housing type on health outcomes. Our study findings align with prior research indicating that housing and homeownership contribute to improved economic security, generational wealth, and social stability.



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Arts & Culture

Gullah Geechee Elders Work To Preserve Sacred Songs

ST. HELENA ISLAND, S.C. (AP) — Minnie “Gracie” Gadson claps her hands and stomps her feet against the floorboards, lifting her voice in a song passed down from her enslaved ancestors who were forced to work the cotton and rice plantations of the South Carolina Sea Islands.

It’s a Gullah spiritual, and the 78-year-old singer is one of a growing group of artists and scholars trying to preserve these sacred songs and their Gullah Geechee culture for future generations.

“I have a passion to sing these songs,” Gadson said.

On a recent summer day, her voice rang out inside Coffin Point Praise House. It’s one of three remaining wooden structures on St. Helena Island that once served as a place of worship for the enslaved, and later, for generations of free Black Americans.

Gadson grew up singing in these praise houses. Today, as a Voices of Gullah member, she travels the U.S. with others in their 70s and 80s singing in the Gullah Creole language that has West African roots.

“This Gullah Geechee thing is what connects us all across the African diaspora because Gullah Geechee is the blending of all of these cultures that came together during that terrible time in our history called the trans-Atlantic slave trade,” said Anita Singleton-Prather, who recently performed and directed a play about Gullah history.

The show highlighted Gullah contributions during the American Revolution, including rice farming and indigo dyeing expertise. At the theater entrance, vendors offered Gullah

rice dishes and demonstrated how to weave sweetgrass into baskets.

More than 5,000 descendants of enslaved plantation workers are estimated to live on St. Helena Island, the largest Gullah community on the South Carolina coast where respect for tradition and deep cultural roots persists.

“A lot of our songs were coded, and this language is a language of survival, a language of resilience, a language of tenacity,” Singleton-Prather said, adding that despite slavery’s brutality, the Gullah people were able to thrive, “giving our children a legacy — not a legacy of shame and victimization, but a legacy of strength and resilience.”

Discovering Gullah culture and the roots of Kumbaya

Gullah culture includes art forms, language and food by the descendants of West Africans who have lived on the coasts of the Carolinas, Florida and Georgia since slavery.

“It’s important to preserve the Gullah culture, mainly because it informs us all, African Americans, where they come from and that it’s still here,” said Eric Crawford, author of “Gullah Spirituals: The Sound of Freedom and Protest in the South Carolina Sea Islands.”

For most of his life, he hadn’t heard the word Gullah. That changed in 2007 with a student’s master’s thesis about Gullah culture in public schools.

“As I began to investigate it, I began to understand that ‘Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen,’ ‘Roll Jordan Roll,’ ‘Kumbaya!’ — all these iconic songs came from this area,” he said.

Versions of these songs, he said, can be traced back to the 19th century when “Slave Songs of the United States,” the first book of African American spirituals, was recorded on St. Helena Island.

“And so my question was: ‘These songs that trace back to the 1800s — were they still being done over 150 years later?’”

He was so curious that he traveled to St. Helena, where he met the singers and began recording their music.

“These songs became pivotal,” Crawford said, sitting on the original wooden pews of the island’s Mary Jenkins Praise House. “They were forced to go to their owners’ church and stay in the balcony. But then in the evening, typically on Sunday evenings, Tuesday and Thursday, they had this space by themselves, away from the watchful eye of the owners, and they could engage in their own songs.”

At the praise houses, he said, they connected with their ancestors following West and Central African practices. Prayers and song would end with a counterclockwise dance and a “ring shout” — a rare outlet of joy for the enslaved.

These days the singers no longer rise to do the ring shout due to their age. But at a recent concert they clapped their hands in one rhythm, stomped the floor in another and swayed, singing at the island’s Brick Baptist Church.

“These singers are as close as we would ever come to how the enslaved sang these songs,” Crawford said. “That authenticity — you just cannot duplicate that.”

The Voices of Gullah goes global



“Voices of Gullah” members perform spirituals at Brick Baptist Church, St. Helena Island, July 19 (AP Photo)

He began to take the singers on tour in 2014. Since then, they’ve performed across the U.S. as well as in Belize and Mexico.

The touring band’s members include Gadson; 89-year-old Rosa Murray; 87-year-old Joe Murray; and their son, Charles “Jojo” Brown.

“I’m gonna continue doing it until I can’t do it no more, and hope that younger people will come in, others younger than me, to keep it going,” said Brown who, at 71, is affectionally called the “baby.”

His mother agrees. Sitting in her living room, surrounded by framed photos of dozens of grandchildren, she said she’ll continue singing for them.

“I hope and pray one or two of them will fall in my footsteps,” she

said. “I’m leaving a legacy for them to do what I’m doing for the Lord.”

Other community members share that mission to teach future generations.

The Gullah Heritage Trails Tours take visitors through historic neighborhoods surrounded by beaches, wealthy vacation homes and golf resorts on Hilton Head Island. The tours were started by a family of 12 brothers and sisters in 1996.

“We thought it was important for people to know that Gullah people live on this island,” said Emory Campbell, 82, who helped translate the New Testament into Gullah and for decades led the respected Penn Center, one of the country’s first schools for freed slaves.

“If we don’t know who we are,

we’re lost,” said Marlena Smalls, a singer and actor who for decades has been performing adaptations of Gullah spirituals for new audiences and founded the popular Gullah Festival. Her work even appeared on an SAT question about Gullah culture.

“I want to know who I am. And I want my children to know who they are and their children to know who they are. That’s why it’s important,” said Smalls, who is also known for playing Bubba’s mother in the film “Forrest Gump.”

Her adaptations of Gullah music, she said, are a way of preserving it by appealing to a mass audience. But she treasures the old spirituals, calling the group of singers, “true keepers of the culture.”

Given their age, Crawford sometimes asks himself “who will carry the torch.” He has been working to get grants so students can also start projects to preserve the songs, language and culture.

On a recent day, a group of students from Atlanta’s Morehouse College arrived at the Mary Jenkins Praise House to admire a site built in the early 1900s.

“It is a portal into the past and a window into the future,” said Tendaji Bailey, 35, founder of “Gullah Geechee Futures,” a project that focuses on the preservation of Gullah communities and cultural sites. For the past three years, he has been bringing Morehouse students to visit praise houses.

“They hear some of the prayers, some of the songs, and they always come out of that experience transformed. So, I know that there’s power in this place, still.”

Matthew Henson Was The First Man At The North Pole

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Just outside the nation’s capital, in the suburban sprawl of Montgomery County, Maryland, lies a serene 116-acre stretch of forested land named in honor of a man whose legacy was nearly lost to history—Matthew Henson.

Matthew Henson State Park Stream Valley Park is threaded with a 4.2-mile paved trail that winds through woodlands and wetlands, with deer, wild turkeys, and birds making frequent appearances.

Most visitors may walk the trail without realizing the extraordinary life story of the park’s namesake—unless they stop to read a modest trailside sign tracing the life of one of the greatest, yet least celebrated, explorers in American history.

Matthew Alexander Henson was born on August 8, 1866, in Maryland to free Black sharecroppers. Following his father’s death and amidst rising racial violence—including threats from the Ku Klux Klan—his family relocated to Georgetown in Washington, D.C. By the age of 12, Henson had left school and set off for a life at sea aboard the merchant ship Katie Hines, traveling to Africa, Asia,

and the Arctic. His mentor, Captain Childs, taught him to read, write, and navigate.

After returning to D.C., Henson took a job at a department store where, in 1887, he met Robert E. Peary, a U.S. Navy engineer preparing for a surveying expedition in Nicaragua. Impressed by Henson’s maritime experience, Peary invited him along, and the two would remain professional partners for more than two decades.

In 1891, Henson began Arctic exploration. Over the next 18 years, he joined Peary on seven grueling expeditions to the Arctic, enduring brutal conditions, limited supplies, and constant peril. The dream was to be the first to reach the geographic North Pole.

Henson proved indispensable. Fluent in Inuktitut and well-versed in Inuit survival techniques, he built sledges, constructed igloos, hunted for food, and was the only non-Inuit team member to master dog-sled mushing. The Inughuit called him “Mahri-Pahluk,” and he was respected not just as a skilled craftsman but as a cultural bridge and leader in the Arctic field.

In 1909, Peary and Henson made their final push for the Pole. As their



50-person team dwindled in the face of harsh weather and dwindling supplies, only Henson and four Inuit companions remained with Peary in the final leg. On April 6, 1909, Henson reportedly turned to Peary and said he had a “feeling” they had reached their destination. Peary planted a flag sewn by his wife, buried a note in the ice, and began the long trek back.

Years later, in his 1912 memoir A Negro Explorer at the North Pole, Henson recalled:

has said, “We understand and respect the deep historic relevance the J.W. Ligon Building holds for many in our community. As we consider next steps, we are committed to ensuring that those decisions are informed by a full understanding of both the building’s legacy and the community’s voices. One avenue that we will be looking into as this process moves forward is to explore opportunities for the site to receive official recognition and designation as a historical site. As we continue gathering feedback from the community, plans for historical preservation and acknowledgement will evolve.”

“Another world’s accomplishment was done and finished. And as in the past, from the beginning of history, wherever a white man did the world’s work, he had been accompanied by a colored man.”

Despite the monumental feat, it was Peary who received most of the acclaim. Henson, returning to a racially segregated United States during the Jim Crow era, was largely ignored by mainstream institutions. He did receive honors within the Black community and later found work at the U.S. Customs House in New York—ironically, a job recommended by Theodore Roosevelt, whose own exploration legacy was far more widely celebrated.

While Peary’s name became synonymous with Arctic exploration, Henson’s was nearly erased from public memory. It wasn’t until decades later that his contributions began receiving formal acknowledgment.

In 1937, he became the first African American accepted into the Explorers Club; in 1948, he was elevated to honorary member status. Congress awarded him the Peary Polar Expedition Medal in 1944, and Presidents Truman and Eisenhower both honored him before his death

in 1955.

Even so, it wasn’t until 1988—33 years after his passing—that Henson and his wife Lucy were reintroduced with full honors at Arlington National Cemetery. That same year, British polar explorer Wally Herbert reignited debate over whether Peary’s expedition had actually reached the North Pole, citing inconsistencies in Peary’s notes. Still, most historians agree: without Henson’s expertise and resilience, Peary’s journey would likely have failed.

In recent decades, Henson’s name has finally begun to gain the recognition it deserves. The USNS Henson,

a research vessel, was named in his honor. The International Astronomical Union named a crater on the Moon after him in 2021. Schools, state parks, and museums now include his name and likeness. At Bowdoin College’s Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, Henson’s portrait—long missing—was added beside Peary’s in 2023, finally giving him his rightful place in the visual history of polar exploration.

Henson is also believed to be a great-great-granduncle of actress Taraji P. Henson.

Ligon Bldg Advisory Council To Meet

By Karl Cameron

In the wake of concerns about the future of the J.W. Ligon Magnet Middle School Building, located at 706 E. Lenoir Street in Raleigh, NC, a Ligon Advisory Council has been selected consisting of four J.W. Ligon High School Alumni, two Ligon Middle School faculty members, 1-2 Middle School parents, and 1-2 Middle School current students. The council’s first scheduled meeting

is on August 18th.

During the Advisory Council meetings, the Ligon Building’s current state will be reviewed, compared to the new guidelines, and construction costs for all possible scenarios will be evaluated. The Advisory Council is expected to give the full picture, which reportedly would allow for a collective consensus where every voice is represented.

Wake County Public Schools

has said, “We understand and respect the deep historic relevance the J.W. Ligon Building holds for many in our community. As we consider next steps, we are committed to ensuring that those decisions are informed by a full understanding of both the building’s legacy and the community’s voices. One avenue that we will be looking into as this process moves forward is to explore opportunities for the site to receive official recognition and designation as a historical site. As we continue gathering feedback from the community, plans for historical preservation and acknowledgement will evolve.”

It has been suggested that a member of the Advisory Council provide updates after each meeting to keep everyone informed. LS3P, the selected architects for the project, will also be creating a project-specific website where updates will be posted for public access.

Fourth Ward Gospel Extravaganza

Sunday August 24, 2025
4:00-7:00 PM
A.J. Fletcher Opera Theater
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Raleigh, NC
Free to the public

We will celebrate and commemorate the three churches, businesses and neighborhood of the Fourth Ward that were lost to “urban renewal” in the 1960s and 70s.

Featuring local singers and church choirs.

Guest speaker Senator Dan Blue.

4TH WARD
WEST SOUTH STREET, RALEIGH, NC

With the burgeoning of Hayti, Cannon Lands, and adjoining tracts, southwest Raleigh—the Fourth Ward—became a dominant district. In 1896, 66% of its 3,200 residents were black, signifying the greatest percentage of blacks among any of Raleigh’s four wards. Politically, the southwest sector as a local force for a quarter of a century. Between 1875 (during were five gerrymandered wards) and 1900, the Fourth Ward consistently elected black aldermen. No other ward could claim such black political influence.”

AMERICAN ASCENDANT

From Prison To Homelessness — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

people. Demand for housing significantly outpaces available resources across the state, she said, leaving her scrounging for “Hail Mary” housing solutions when space isn’t available at the farm.

Powers said she will call other reentry housing partners to check if they have space, but they often struggle with the same capacity issues. She will also turn to other service providers, community organizations and church partners to see what resources they can offer, such as rental assistance or funds for a hotel room.

“It’s a lot of just Band-Aid solutions,” Powers said, noting that even with their best efforts, they don’t always find a housing arrangement.

Anita Lynch, coordinator of the NEW Reentry Council serving Nash, Edgecombe and Wilson counties, also fields numerous requests for housing support, calling it the “number one challenge” faced by people reentering society after incarceration.

“A lot of individuals, when they are returning back to the community, they have nowhere to go,” Lynch said. “With family members, they’ve either already burned their bridges,



or maybe it could be their family members are elderly, or they live in a certain housing population where they can’t house felons.”

Benjamin Gear, coordinator of the Orange County Local Reentry Council, estimated that, at best, about 20 percent of the formerly incarcerated people the council serves have housing arrangements. That leaves 80 percent unsheltered.

When people recently released

from prison come to his reentry council, Gear said he offers them a welcome home bag that includes items like a phone and toiletries. But one of the first questions he often hears is: “Where am I gonna use these toiletries?”

It’s not an easy question to answer. Gear said housing options in Orange County are particularly limited. He said the county has one transitional house with five beds and

one bridge housing option — both short-term housing solutions designed to give people some time and space to secure a long-term housing arrangement. While substance use recovery housing like Oxford House is more widely available throughout the county, Gear said it doesn’t meet the needs of everyone.

In 2024, 43 percent of people who exited prison and returned to Orange County were released into homelessness — the fourth highest rate in the state behind Dare, Pasquotank and Cabarrus counties.

Without a housing option, Gear said some people will get a tent and set up in an encampment.

Housing affects reentry success. Megan Pfeiffer, Reentry 2030 project manager at the Council of State Governments Justice Center, said housing is a basic need that affects health outcomes and reentry success.

“We know that people experiencing homelessness are at an increased risk of reincarceration due to more frequent interactions with law enforcement, violations of supervision and rearrest for low level offenses that are often related to their experiences of homelessness,” Pfeiffer said.

A 2023 report on removing housing barriers for formerly incarcerated people published by the Wilson Center for Science and Justice at Duke Law states that there is a “cyclical relationship between housing instability and the criminal legal system.”

Powers said formerly incarcerated people need a place to live before they can focus on other tasks, such as addressing health problems, finding work and family reunification.

“[Housing] is the literal and metaphorical foundation to achieving one’s goals,” Powers said. “If you know where you’re sleeping at night, you know you’re safe. You know you can lock your door. You can keep your food there. You can keep your belongings there. That peace of mind is important.”

Having an address is also a key detail needed to complete other tasks, such as applying for jobs and health benefits, receiving one’s state identification in the mail and coordinating transportation to appointments.

The stakes of not having a stable place to land after prison is especially high for people with a sex offense, who are required to register their address on the sex offender registry as

a condition of their release. Failure to do so can result in getting sent back to prison.

“We’ve had some people go back [to prison] because we just couldn’t figure it out,” Powers said.

When this happens, it’s an expensive problem. Housing one person in a North Carolina prison costs more than \$54,000 per year.

“It really didn’t have anything to do with public safety in that moment, it was that they didn’t have an address,” Powers said. “They know the consequences of not having housing, and sometimes it’s just beyond their ability to find an option in the time that’s set for them.”

Statewide housing crisis. The high number of people found to be released from prison into homelessness comes amid a statewide rise in homelessness. In 2024, 11,626 North Carolinians experienced homelessness on a single night in January, according to the annual point-in-time count — up by 19.2 percent from 2023. Of these individuals, 4,523 people experienced unsheltered homelessness, meaning they weren’t couch surfing or doubling up with friends, but they were living on the street or in a tent.



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Community

Could Four Black Democrats Be Primaried For GOP Vote?

By Cash Michaels

Contributing Writer

Ever since the North Carolina General Assembly gavelled back into session a few weeks ago, Democratic lawmakers have not been too pleased with one of their own - Rep. Carla Cunningham (D-106-Mecklenburg).

Especially after she gave an impassioned floor speech recently in support of overriding Gov. Josh Stein's veto of Republican-sponsored House Bill 318 that expanded NC sheriffs' role complying with Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in detaining illegal immigrants.

In a nutshell, Rep. Cunningham said she was an American who did not want to help other people in their plight coming to this country because, in her opinion, they refuse to assimilate.

"All cultures are not equal," Cunningham opined. "Some immigrants come and believe they can function in isolation, refusing to adapt. They have come to our country for many



reasons, but I suggest they must assimilate, adapt to the culture of the country they wish to live in," Cunningham added. "If you ask me to line up behind another group of people to raise awareness about their plight, I unapologetically say no."

"We have been naive," Cunningham continued to say on the House floor. "We have been exploited and abused by the different tactics to gain citizenship in America. It's time to wake up... it's time to turn the conveyor belt off and adopt a global migration suitable

for the times that we're in." Commentator Rob Scholfield lambasted Cunningham, saying "...she accused immigrants of exploiting and abusing native born Americans and implied that immigrant cultures are inferior."

Gov. Stein originally vetoed HB 318 because, he said, it required "sheriffs to unconstitutionally detain people for up to 48 hours after they would otherwise be released."

Rep. Cunningham's vote was the one Democratic vote needed to over-

ride Gov. Stein's veto, and she's been roundly criticized for it by her Democratic colleagues. But she also voted to override four other vetoes.

But she isn't the only one.

At least three other black Democratic state lawmakers - Rep. Cecil Brockman (Guilford), Rep. Shelly Willingham (Bertie, Edgecombe, Martin), and Rep. Nasif Majeed (Mecklenburg) - also cast override votes with the Republican House majority, successfully overriding eight of Stein's vetoes, drawing the ire of fellow Democrats as well.

House Bill 193: Firearm Law Revisions

House Bill 318: The Criminal Illegal Alien Enforcement Act

House Bill 402: Limit Rules with Substantial Financial Costs

House Bill 549: Clarify Powers of State Auditor

House Bill 805: Prevent Sexual Exploitation/ Women and Minors

Senate Bill 266: The Power Bill Reduction Act

Senate Bill 416: Personal Privacy Protection Act

Senate Bill 254: Charter School Changes

"The bills that they overrode made us less safe, and that is on them," said Senate Minority Leader Sydney Batch,"... and if they want to put their head on the pillow tonight and say that that's what they decided to do for whatever reason they voted for that, that is literally a consequence they'll have to deal with if they get a primary."

North Carolina Democratic Party Chair Anderson Clayton was also not pleased with the four Democratic House members voting contrary to what the party is supposed to stand for.

"I don't think it's representative of the future of the Democratic Party, quite frankly, in North Carolina," Clayton said.

While the state party chair would not come right out and publicly advocate for Cunningham, Willingham, meed and Brockman to be challenged for their seats when the 2026 primaries come around next March, probably because the last she'd want is for any of them to threaten to join the Republican Party as former Democratic Rep. Tricia Gotham did several years ago, there's little question that the state Democratic Party isn't going to just sit back and swallow what it sees as disloyalty.

"Representatives are elected by their districts, and we have to make sure we're educating their districts on how they're voting, whether that be Republicans or Democrats, because we want people that are going to stand up for the values that this party stands for," NCDP Chair Clayton says.

Republicans say they see nothing wrong with some Democrats siding with them and voting their consciences. Republicans add that there will be more attempts to override Gov. Stein's vetoes.

FREE CLASSROOM SUPPLIES FOR WAKE COUNTY TEACHERS

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

North Carolina teachers often spend over \$900 of their own money on classroom supplies. To help lighten that burden, WakeEd Partnership, an independent nonprofit working to improve public education, created Tools4Schools, a free classroom supply store serving Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) teachers.

Since opening in 2022, Tools4Schools has given away more than \$1.6 million worth of new school supplies to WCPSS teachers. In the 2024-2025 school year, the store served over 5,000 teachers from 100% of Wake County's public schools.

All WCPSS educators and certified staff are eligible to shop for free at Tools4Schools once per quarter. Each semester, they receive 100 points to spend on supplies ranging from pencils and notebooks to sticky notes and other classroom essentials.

To shop, teachers must sign up for a time slot online—walk-ins are not accepted. Title I schools and higher-need areas receive priority access during each shopping period.

The store, currently housed in a former car dealership on Piney Plains Drive in Cary, operates three days a week. The building is temporarily donated by the Wake County Public School System.

The ongoing "Back to School with Tools4Schools" supply drive runs through August 22, with public drop-off sites throughout Wake County. Community members and organizations are encouraged to donate new or gently used school supplies or volunteer their time to help stock shelves, unpack donations, and assist teachers in the store.

Tools4Schools is powered by community donations, corporate sponsors, and volunteers. For more information, visit www.wakeed.org/tools4schools

Carolinian Citizen Spotlight: Chris And The Doggy Barbers of Apex

By Ms Jheri Worldwide

Staff Writer

For the past decade, Chris of The Doggy Barbers has been a beloved fixture in the Apex community, building a thriving business one haircut and one trusting relationship at a time. His journey into the world of dog grooming began with an interesting parallel. "I worked with children and started working with dogs at PetSmart and noticed how similar it is," he says, a realization that sparked a lifelong passion.

After going through grooming school at PetSmart, Chris says he "hasn't stopped learning ever since," a dedication that is clear in his thoughtful approach to his craft. For him, the most rewarding part of the job is simple but profound: "having

dogs wanting to love you after the process." That affection is earned, especially when dealing with anxious pets. His method? "Working really slow and treats help," he explains. "Positive reinforcement and showing them the process isn't so bad helps." While he has a soft spot for all his furry clients, he admits with a laugh that he has one particular specialty: "Doodles, doodles, doodles." A doodle dog, also known as a designer dog or hybrid dog, is a mixed-breed dog that has a Poodle as one of its parent breeds. Doodles are popular because of their often-low-shedding coats, which are considered more allergy-friendly, and their varied appearances and personalities, which can be a mix of the poodle and the other parent breed.

Beyond the technical skills of

grooming, Chris has learned the tough lessons of entrepreneurship. "It's two complete jobs with two completely different responsibilities," he notes. "Learning how to manage people was and still is difficult." But at the heart of his success is the deep connection he has built with the community. Having been in the same location for ten years, Chris has had the unique joy of watching local pets grow up. "I have the greatest customers," he says. "Being able to see the dogs grow up is something special." This connection is built on a foundation of trust that he considers the most critical part of his business. "Having trust with families is one of if not the most important aspect," Chris states. "If the parents don't trust you with their fur babies, you won't get far." It's this philosophy

that has made The Doggy Barbers more than just a business, but a trusted part of the Apex community.



How NC's School Voucher Program Is Impacting Black Education Access

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

North Carolina has found itself at the center of a fierce national debate over the future use of private school vouchers.

A program launched in 2014 to help low-income families access private schooling has now grown into a nearly billion-dollar initiative, driven by aggressive legislative expansion, rising private school tuition, and new opportunities introduced by federal policy.

The state's Opportunity Scholarship Program was initially underutilized, partly because it required families to meet income thresholds and have children previously enrolled in public schools. To boost participation, the General Assembly in 2021 earmarked \$500,000 per year for voucher marketing, then doubled that to \$1 million per year in the 2023-25 budget.

More significantly, the 2023 Appropriations Act eliminated income and public school attendance requirements starting in the 2024-25 school year, allowing any family—regardless of wealth—to qualify.

Then, in November 2024, legislators passed House Bill 10, which injected hundreds of millions more tax dollars into the program. North Carolina is now on track to spend nearly \$1 billion per year on private school tuition using public funds.

This rapid growth has reshaped the private school landscape: in the 2024-25 school year, the maximum state voucher reached \$7,468, and the number of private schools charging tuition between \$7,000 and \$7,999 rose from 31 to 48 in a single year—strongly suggesting schools are aligning their fees with the voucher ceiling to maximize profit.

In late July 2025, North Carolina was set to become the first to join



a new federal voucher program established under President Donald Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill." The program, set to launch in 2027, allows for a nonrefundable, dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit of up to \$1,700 for donations to "scholarship-granting organizations."

These nonprofits will then distribute funds to families for private education expenses, including tuition, tutoring, or homeschool materials. Eligibility is technically income-based, but with a cap of three times the local median income to qualify.

There's no prohibition against combining these federal vouchers with state vouchers, potentially offering families thousands of dollars in public subsidies for private education. Importantly, the federal law places the power to opt in with governors, not state legislatures.

That legal distinction became a flashpoint in August when Governor Josh Stein vetoed House Bill 87, which would have made North Carolina the first state to officially opt into the federal program. Stein said he supports school choice in prin-

cept, but condemned cutting billions in funding from public schools.

Voucher advocates like Mike Long of Parents for Educational Freedom NC say the combination of state and federal aid "empowers families" to choose the best schools for their children. House Speaker Destin Hall called the federal credit a "no-brainer" since it wouldn't cost the state anything directly. Sen. Leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, criticized Gov. Stein's veto, saying state lawmakers, not the governor, have the power to set the state's tax policy.

But the programs awaken debate surrounding education and minority groups. When the program began in 2014-15, 51% of recipients were Black and only 27% were white. But as eligibility expanded, that balance reversed. In 2024-25, white students made up 73% of recipients, while Black students fell to just 11%. Income barriers may no longer exist on paper, but other costs—like transportation, uniforms, and tuition not covered by the voucher—still limit access for many families, particularly Black and low-income households.

A ProPublica investigation identified 39 private schools in North Carolina that were likely founded as "segregation academies" during the desegregation era. Twenty of these schools reported student bodies that were at least 85% white, despite being located in racially diverse counties.

For instance, Northeast Academy, located in Northampton County (which is only 40% white), reported 99% white enrollment. Lawrence Academy reported less than 3% Black students in a county that is 60% Black. These schools have collectively received more than \$20 million in state voucher funding in the past three years alone.

In addition to racial disparities, many voucher-funded schools have policies that would be illegal in public schools. A 2025 report by Public Schools First NC found that 38% of voucher schools discriminate based on religion, requiring families to adhere to specific faith statements; 18% discriminate based on lifestyle, such as requiring church attendance or abstinence from "immoral behaviors"; 17% discriminate against students with disabilities; 15% openly discriminate against LGBTQ+ students and families; 70% enforce "right fit" policies that allow them to exclude students for subjective reasons.

73% of private schools accepting vouchers are religious, but they receive 86% of total voucher funding, according to data from the NC State Education Assistance Authority. That's \$371 million in 2024-25 alone, compared to just \$60 million for non-religious schools. Despite this massive public investment, private schools are not required to provide transportation, free meals, or accept all applicants—requirements that public schools must meet under law.



LOCAL NON-PROFIT'S THRIFT STORE FACES CLOSURE, ISSUES URGENT APPEAL FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT

By Ms. Jheri Worldwide

Staff Writer

Hope Connection International, a local faith-based non-profit dedicated to empowering survivors of abuse and addiction, has issued an urgent appeal to the community after being forced to close the Déjà Vu Thrift and Hope Connection thrift store. The store has been closed until further notice due to significant structural issues with its building, putting the organization in a state of crisis. The non-profit is seeking to raise approximately \$27,000 within the next week to cover the costs of the necessary repairs and reopen its doors. The thrift store is a critical component of Hope Connection's mission, which provides free support groups, education, long-term housing, and tailored recovery solutions for individuals, particularly young people, healing from trauma.

"Hurting people hurt people," the organization's philosophy states. "Our philosophy is to help young people through the healing process from whatever issues have hindered them in life so that they become healthy, well-adjusted, contributing members of society."

The sudden closure of the thrift store jeopardizes the organization's ability to fund these vital community programs. In a direct appeal for support, the organization highlighted the power of collective, small-scale giving, noting that if everyone they've reached out to "donates five dollars, we'll actually meet our goal." Community members wishing to contribute to the emergency repair fund can make a donation of any amount through the organization's website at www.hope-connection.org. For further questions or to offer support, Hope Connection International's founder, Deborah Barkett, can be contacted via email at president@hope-connection.org. Hope Connection International (HCI) is a multi-faceted recovery and prevention center that connects with organizations worldwide to empower survivors of abuse and addiction by offering free support groups, education, and sponsorships with tailored solutions, along with supportive, long-term housing.

Church

Gov't Support Doesn't Necessarily Make People More Religious

By **Brendan Szendro**

The Conversation

The IRS will offer religious congregations more freedom to endorse political candidates without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status, the agency said in a July 2025 court filing. President Donald Trump has previously vowed to abolish the Johnson Amendment, which bars charitable nonprofits from taking part in political campaigns – although the latest move simply reinterprets the rule.

Celebrating the change, House Speaker Mike Johnson highlighted an argument that's popular among some conservatives: that the Constitution does not actually require the separation of church and state.

Thomas Jefferson, who coined the phrase, did not intend "to keep religion from influencing issues of civil government," Johnson wrote in a July 12 op-ed published on the social platform X. "The Founders wanted to protect the church from

an encroaching state, not the other way around."

Officials in several red states have challenged long-standing norms surrounding religion and state, ranging from introducing prayer and Bibles in public classrooms to attempts to secure government funding for religious schools.

Conservative thinkers have long pushed for closer ties between religion and the government, arguing that religious institutions can create strong communities. In my own research, I've found that mass shootings are less likely in a more religious environment.

For critics, of course, attempts to lower the wall of separation between church and state raise constitutional concerns. The First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." What's more, critics fear that recent attempts to lower barriers

between church and state favor conservative Christian groups over other faiths.

But as a scholar of religion and politics, I believe another reason for caution is being overlooked. Research indicates that strong relationships between religion and state can be a factor that actually decreases religious participation, rather than encouraging it.

All or nothing
Some scholars suggest that religious institutions operate like businesses in a marketplace, competing for believers. Government policies toward religion can change the balance of power between competing firms the same way that economic policies can affect markets for consumer goods.

At a glance, it might seem like government support would strengthen religious institutions. In reality, it can backfire, whether or not the government promotes one particular faith above others. In some cases, adherents who cannot practice reli-

gion on their own terms opt out of practicing it entirely.

In Israel, for example, Orthodox Jewish institutions receive government recognition that more liberal Jewish denominations do not. Orthodox authorities are allowed to manage religious sites, run public religious schools and perform marriages. Many couples who do not want to get married under Orthodox law, or cannot, hold a ceremony abroad or register as a common-law marriage.

In fact, many scholars refer to Israel as an example of a religious "monopoly." Because the government sponsors a particular branch, Orthodox Judaism, Jewish citizens sometimes face an "all or nothing" choice. The country's Jewish population is sharply divided between people who are religiously observant and people who identify as secular.

Government involvement can also hurt religious institutions by making them seem less indepen-

dent, decreasing people's trust. In a 2023 study of 54 Christian-majority countries, political scientists Jonathan Fox and Jori Breslawski found that some adherents felt that religious institutions become less legitimate when backed by the government. In addition, support from the state decreased people's confidence in government.

Their findings built on previous research showing that the public is less likely to contribute to faith-based charities and attend religious services when the government offers funding for religious institutions.

In fact, many of the world's lowest rates of religiosity are found in wealthy countries that have official churches, or had one until relatively recently, such as Sweden. Others have a history of separating people of different faiths into their own schools and other institutions, such as Belgium and the Netherlands.

History lessons

Perhaps the strongest example of how government support for religion can decrease religious participation is found in the former Soviet Union and its allies.

During the Cold War, Soviet officials sought to stamp out religious activity among their citizens. However, policies to repress independent religious institutions worked hand in hand with policies to co-opt religious institutions that would work with the government. Access to religious spaces made it easier for officials to spy on members and punish clergy who protested their rule.

In Hungary, the Communist Party sponsored government-run Catholic churches that were cut off from the Vatican. In Romania, the regime integrated formerly Catholic Churches into a state Orthodox Church. In the former Czechoslovakia, meanwhile, the Communist Party paid clergy's salaries to keep them subservient.

To this day, many countries in the former Eastern Bloc have low rates of religious participation. In Russia, for example, a majority of citizens call themselves Orthodox Christians, and the church wields influence in politics. Yet only 16%

of adults say religion is "very important" in their lives.

While scholars can point to the legacy of overt repression as a source of low religiosity, government support of religious institutions is also a lingering factor. Most post-Soviet states inherited systems that require religious groups to register, and they only provide funding to faiths that the government considers legitimate. Similar policies remain common in southeastern and central Eastern Europe.

In recent years, some countries in the region, including Russia and Hungary, have experienced democratic backsliding at the hands of populist leaders who also politicize religion for their own gain. Because of low rates of religious practice in such countries, religious leaders may welcome government support.

Free market for faith

Most wealthy countries have witnessed steep declines in religiosity in the modern era. The United States is an outlier.

Overall, the percentage of Americans belonging to a religious congregation is declining, as is the share of Americans who regularly attend worship services. However, the percentage of Americans who are intensely religious has remained unchanged over the past several decades. Around 29% of Americans report praying several times a day, for example, and just under 7% say they attend religious services more than once a week.

Some religion scholars argue that the "free-market approach" – where all faiths are free to compete for worshippers, without government interference or preference – is what makes America relatively religious. In other words, they believe that this so-called "American exception" is because of the separation between church and state, not in spite of it.

Time will tell if conservatives' push for collaboration between religion and the government will continue, or have its intended effects. History suggests, however, that governments' attempts to strengthen particular religious communities may backfire.

Madonna Urges The Pope To Visit Gaza 'Before It's Too Late'

LONDON (AP) — Madonna has urged the pope to travel to Gaza and "bring your light to the children before it's too late."

The superstar posted her appeal to the pontiff on social media Monday, saying her son Rocco's birthday prompted her to make the post. Rocco turned 25 Monday.

Addressing Pope Leo XIV, she wrote: "Most Holy Father. Please go to Gaza and bring your light to the children before it's too late. As a mother, I cannot bear to watch their suffering."

"The children of the world belong to everyone. You are the only one of us who cannot be denied entry," she added. "We need the humanitarian gates to be fully opened to save these innocent children. There is no more time. Please say you will go. Love, Madonna."

The singer added that she wasn't taking sides in the war.

"I am not pointing fingers, placing blame or taking sides. Everyone



is suffering. Including the mothers of the hostages," she wrote. "I pray that they are released as well. I am merely trying to do what I can to keep these children from dying of starvation."

The pope recently renewed his call for an immediate ceasefire in

Gaza, asking the international community to respect humanitarian laws and the obligation to protect civilians.

"I once again call for an immediate end to the barbarity of this war and for a peaceful resolution to the conflict," the pontiff said last month.

Aid workers and doctors have said that after months of Israeli blockade and turmoil in the distribution of supplies, children in Gaza with no previous conditions are starting to die from malnutrition.

Israel's air and ground offensive, sparked by Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack into Israel, has displaced most of the some 2 million Palestinians in Gaza and pushed the territory toward famine.

The United Nations said that across Gaza, more than 5,000 children were diagnosed with malnutrition in May, though that is likely an undercount. Malnutrition was virtually nonexistent before the war. Doctors struggle to treat the children because many supplies have run out, the U.N. says.

Israel denies a famine is taking place or that children are starving. It says it has supplied enough food throughout the war and accuses Hamas of causing shortages by stealing aid and trying to control food distribution.

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Practical Biblical Principles

NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN GOD

Read: John 1:14-23

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

One of the most challenging spiritual efforts we as Christians have had to deal with is to convince ourselves that God is a real being or person. The Bible is not science fiction. And unless we can see for ourselves personally that God is real the bible will not make any sense to us and the whole bible stories will be seen as a hoax. As humans, our earthly experiences have taught us, we only believe what we can see. If God is real and the bible is true, there must be another reality of which we are not fully aware. Apparently, the bible is that other reality. A Book which is designed to help us see the unseen. In other words, a Book which is spiritual in nature, explaining the unseen. The bible tells us "No one has ever seen God at any-time (John 1:18). How do we or can we make the bible work for us if we have never ever seen God? Inclusively we speak here about having and making our faith work. We speak here about a place called heaven. We speak here about the possibility of eternal living. We speak here about a man named Christ who was told to come and die for our sins so that we can have a positive relationship with the God we cannot see. This sounds somewhat confusing. Even more so, when we speak of the work of the Holy Spirit, a person or power we also cannot see.

The Bible states that Moses saw God when he was called up to the mountain eight times for consultation and instruction on how to lead the ex-slaves out of Egypt? Moses, himself asked God if he could see Him or his face. God said, "No" (Exodus 33:20)! What about Isaiah when he said, "I saw the Lord seated on a throne" (Isaiah 16:1). What about Ezekiel when he said, "I saw visions of God" (Ezekiel 1:1). The disciples saw Jesus only but asked Jesus to show them the Father. The Lord's reply to them was, "Anyone, who has seen me, has seen the Father (John 14:9).

Even King David wondered about the reality of God when he stated, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the earth declares His handy work. David was saying," I can only see God, in His creation of (Mother) Nature."

Today we are more than two thousand years removed from the days when Christ reportedly walked upon the earth. We don't have a clue what Christ looks like. Scriptures tells us not to make any graven images of God, or in a sense, not to figure out what God looks like. It may sound strange to us and challenge our faith, when the scriptures tell us God is a Spirit (unseen). There is a gospel song in the Black church which says, "I want to see Him, just to look upon His face. There to sing forever about His amazing grace."

What does the bible say about all of this? Yet, the Bible reportedly never contradicts itself. At best, all of the above reported sightings of God were simply visions. When we read the text, we see that Ezekiel states clearly that he "saw visions of God" but didn't see God personally or face to face (Ezekiel 1:1). It was the bible commentators which said Isaiah saw God "high and lifted up" while worshipping in the temple.

Isaiah only saw God spiritually in the form of visions.

When John was called by Jesus to come up and see what will happen in the future, John said he was in the spirit and saw God, No! John said he saw One on the throne and then He who sat there was like a "Jasper and a Sardis stone in appearance; John didn't see God face to face. He could only describe God's person in forms of beautiful precious jewels (Revelation 4:2-3).

Now Moses's experience was different in that His experience in seeing God was in some sense, truly physical. On one occasion when Moses came down from the mountain having talked with God, his face was shining so bright that the people couldn't look upon Moses face. Moses never reported that he ever saw God face to face. All of God's prophets have heard God's voice one time or another but have never seen Him face to face. Their visions of God permanently affected the prophets and their ministry, physically, mentally as well as spiritually.

The bottom line in this issue is that it is because of our sin and sinful nature that the Holy God of the bible cannot be seen in our physical presence or allow us to be in His, lest His holy character be violated. The best we can do is try to see Christ in the Spirit. By this it is meant that we must believe that He is here with us unseen but always present. This is what our faith must be all about - Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).



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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

FREEZE!

Dr. Kimberly Muktarian

saveoursus@yahoo.com, 919.349.7622

Save Our Sons Agency Calls for the FREEZE of Wake County Public School System To "Pay to Play" RICO Scheme

Raleigh, NC, Save Our Sons Agency - confronts Wake County Public Schools System's "Pay to Play" or "Pay to Stay" RICO Scheme after discovering students are required to pay a fee in order to remain in general population. School systems across the state are challenged with E-Vape devices and despite the state's ban, many of the products will remain accessible to youth. However, punishments may vary per county. In Wake County's case, when students are found in possession or use, and/or being under the influence of a substance prohibited by Policy 4309, first time offenders are offered the ACE1 program at no cost.

However, students are offered the ACE 2 program for their second or subsequent offenses, or for first infractions that involve sale, possession with intent to sell/distribute, distribution, and/or conspiracy to sell or distribute. The cost associated with the ACE2 program could start at \$350.00, a fee most often passed to single mothers and grandparents who cannot afford to pay Wake County's exploitive fees. All students unable to pay the fees or fail to challenge the suspension are bonded over to one of Wake County's Alternative Schools where five of the facilities are located in Raleigh's poorest zip code 27610 and its Southeast District. The population is overwhelmingly represented by Black Bodies with both learning and behavioral challenges: Mary E. Philips, Affinity, Longview, Central Wake, and River Oaks Middle.

This differs strongly from students that attend Preparatory Schools in North Raleigh's affluent area where the Pipeline often delivers students into to RTP's Pharmaceutical Industry versus one of North Carolina's State Prison.

But have not the Backs of Blacks already paid for tobacco? Is this not how Black Bodies arrived on these shores and enslaved for well over 400 years? Is Wake County Public Schools System similar to that of North Carolina's bail system whereby if one cannot pay they cannot stay in the general population of society therefore like modern day chattel, many are funneled into detention systems in the same manner as Alternative Schools. Is the State of NC and Margaret Wake running RICO on the next generation of Blacks?

MASTER FORGOT TO PAY SO THAT WE COULD STAY

In 1994, Federal Judge Gladys Kessler, found the Tobacco Industry guilty of targeting youth, lying about the addictiveness of their product and operating under RICO. Under the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA), four major tobacco companies were made to pay over 206 Billion dollars in damages but allowed to keep their product on the shelves. They were required to warn consumers of its dangers by placing a warning label on their product, yet while killing over 480K citizens a year. Yes. The tobacco Cartels would be exempt from Roy Cooper's Death By Distribution Charges.

Not only are they free from punishment but they were not required to pay one dime to the descendants of 12 million Africans whose origins in America came from Sir Walter Raleigh's introduction of this very plant to England. Due to the state's failure to pay what it owed, the economic demise of Blacks has birthed Mass Incarceration, Gentrification and the highest Murders of any Race in the nation. Private landowners were once the owners of Black Bodies. Today the State of North Carolina and its Counties are public owners of Black Bodies and have auctioned our children off to plantations called prison and alternative schools based it's Pay to Play System or their inability to lobby for themselves due to financial constraints. Let Us Stop the Steal and Stop the Exploitation of the Next Generation.

IGNORANT, COMPLICIT OR UNDER DURESS.

Wake County Public Schools has one of the highest paid Black Superintendent's in the state, a Black Chief of Staff, a Black Sheriff, Black Chief of Police, Black, Black, Black and a Partridge In A Pear Tree....(you get it). Yet Wake County will host on average 21 graduations at Raleigh's Convention Center where the 11ft statue of the man responsible for the TransAtlantic Slave Trade is on public display to be revered and none of these appointed, hired or elected officials will make mention of its psychological or economic detriments of the population it so often serve and arrest versus serve and protect.

We all know that statues alone are harmless but what they stand are not.

Are Blacks forced to uphold something they know is incorrect? Sir Walter Raleigh's statue is a reminder that you can transport young people from one place to the other and place them in servitude indefinitely. Their bodies can be exploited for labor, breeding and for pure pleasure. Yes, this statue says that I can come into your country, your dressing room and quarter houses and grab them by the private parts on a private island or a public venue. Yes, we can also sell drugs containing 7000 toxins, 69 having cancer related effects and not only escape punishment but the nation can create its own law enforcement agency to protect its profit, product and profiteer under its own agency paid for by taxpayers: Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm (ATF)

IN CONCLUSION

As we reopen the doors of education from K-12 across the nation, Save Our Sons Agency along with partnering organizations will challenge NCDPI's Code of Ethics that require teachers to: Protect students from conditions within the educator's control that circumvent learning or are detrimental to the health and safety of students. NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Save Our Sons Agency calls for the official removal of icons that represent oppression, rape, human trafficking, enslavement and wealth theft. No state, nor human has rights to own another human or their offspring. Therefore, we call for the release of North Carolina's officials, representatives, educators and employees who are forced to teach, uphold and honor icons, that have historically committed Crimes Against Humanity under state sponsored DEI: Duress and Enforced Indoctrination.

This violates N.C. General Statute 115C-81.57 the NC Holocaust Education Act that would forbid humans from upholding acts of violence by the state against citizens. Therefore we are set to address the NC Historic Commission in September regarding statues of offense by campaigning



freedom for Educators, Officials, Colleges and Universities responsible for serving and protecting students.

"No one should receive a life sized trophy for rape or human trafficking." - KDM

TIMELINE OF TOBACCO TARGETING BLACK BODIES

1. 1619: Pirate and Thief, Sir Walter Raleigh Introduces the Tobacco Plant to the Queen of England, expediting the import of over 12 million Africans across the Atlantic Slave Trade whereby Black Boys as young as eight were purchased and sold for the sake of tilling Tobacco.

2. 1831: President James K. Polk opens Somerville Plantation in Tennessee. Polk was known for purchasing younger slaves because they worked harder for longer periods of time. During his presidency of the 19 slaves purchased, 13 were children. (Cotton was his main crop)

3. 1865 Post Civil War Former Slave Owners partnered with the state to retrieve labor to either work their deserted plantations and or farms. Therefore Blacks were accused of minor offenses and given long sentences that returned them to indentured servitude or Peonage Practices

4. 1920 Camp Polk Prison Farm named after William Polk, a slave owner, was created to house Black Males essentially to carry out free labor under the prison industry such as that of the Plantation. It was later named Polk Youth Center.

5. In 1994, Federal Judge Gladys Kessler found the Tobacco Industry guilty of Civil Racketeering, targeting youth, and lying about the addictive substances in tobacco.

6. From the early 60s to 90s the Black Community was targeted with Methol Cigarettes which proved more addictive, causing more health disparities. The children were also targeted through advertisement and sponsorship of cultural events.

7. As early as 2014 the growth of E-Vapes becomes popular. Companies such as Juule once apart of Altria began targeting children with its fruity flavored substance

Sunday morning, or studied in Sunday school or Bible study, are not enough because they are often separated from their wholeness, chosen to serve one subject for someone else's purpose. God desires our wholeness, our right thoughts, and our right living.

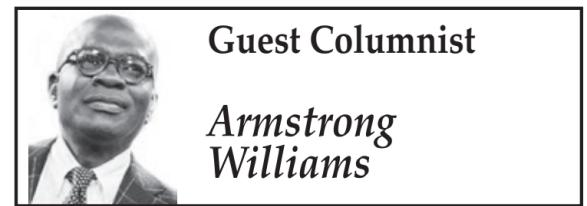
If the eight billion of us want to make a difference in this time, we must realize we are not alone. All of us working toward the good in our lives dispels the darkness. When we understand that, we will see that when Jesus gave us the answer to the greatest commandment, He gave us the formula and the directions for changing our minds and ridding the atmosphere of the evil times upon us.

We read the news, we scroll through the foolishness on Facebook, YouTube, Fox, and all other sources. The clue is simple: if it makes us feel bad, it is because it is bad. If we want to feel joy, we must discipline our minds to receive the message of faith and trust in it. I love that truth.

I heard today that the blood spilled at Mother Emanuel Church has been cleaned up but continues to return. There is a message in that. What I understand from it is this: the things done here will not go away. Because they were done unto Me, in My church, against My people, you will see them and they will not go away until you do what is right. This is not just a message to one church or one conversation; it is a message to all of us.

If we want to rid the world of evil, we must resist it, nonviolently but persistently. Not just in our neighborhoods or our churches, but most importantly, in our own minds. Resist. Resist.

This is the way of my brothers and my ancestors. The only way. Now, run and tell that.



Guest Columnist

Armstrong Williams

WHERE ARE THE HEROES?

Following the tragic mass shooting in Midtown Manhattan, New York City, that resulted in the deaths of four individuals, including a New York City Police Department officer, we must confront a vital question: Where were the heroes?

Reports indicate that the shooter walked from the curb to the entrance of 345 Park Avenue, a distance estimated at between 50 feet to 100 feet, with his assault rifle held out to his side. He approached the entrance during peak hours at 6:28 p.m., attracting the attention of numerous bystanders before entering the building and discharging his weapon. In the minute or so that bystanders saw the man, no one made an effort to notify anyone about the man's potential danger, nor to contact the police, nor to subdue him personally.

In Nevada, nearly 50% of residents possess legal firearms. In New York, the figure is merely 20%, and although exact statistics for NYC are unavailable, given its stringent gun regulations, it is likely that this percentage is lower than 20%.

The shooter's motive seemingly centered on the NFL — the headquarters of which is in the building where the shooting took place — and the role of football in his development of chronic traumatic encephalopathy.

The immediate killing of an armed NYPD officer, the sole individual present who could thwart the perpetrator, was clearly not coincidental. Officer Didarul Islam heroically confronted the gunman to protect others. Yet the gunman was fully aware that, in a practically gun-free city like NYC, once the officer was down, no individual could stop him. We cannot overlook, too, that an NFL employee, Craig Clementi, courageously alerted NFL staff to the presence of a shooter despite having been struck in the back by a bullet. He is currently hospitalized.

At that point, it was merely a question of how many individuals the perpetrator could kill before the police intervened. Fortunately, he did not escalate the situation to its full potential and, for reasons unknown, he subsequently ended his own life after claiming four innocent lives.

The frequently cited adage is, "Do not be a hero." But the Bible repeatedly calls individuals to courageous, self-sacrificial action for the good of others. Jesus says plainly, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). The Apostle Paul urges believers, "Do not merely look out for your own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).

The existence of America today is attributable to the courageous men and women who have fought for our nation, sacrificing everything for the cause of liberty.

In other words, heroes are real. They may be equipped with a firearm, a telephone or a fist. In 2019, University of North Carolina at Charlotte student Riley Howell made the ultimate sacrifice by courageously tackling a school shooter, buying other students time to escape until law enforcement could apprehend the assailant. In 2018, a man commenced shooting in a Waffle House, resulting in four fatalities; as the man reloaded, James Shaw Jr. tackled and subdued him. In 2022, Army veteran Richard Fierro subdued the perpetrator of the Club Q nightclub shooting, using the assailant's own weapon to incapacitate him. In 2013, Antoinette Tuff, a school bookkeeper, successfully intervened and dissuaded a heavily armed student from killing, averting a shooting. In 2007, during the Virginia Tech shooting, Holocaust survivor and professor Liviu Librescu blocked the door to his classroom with his body to facilitate the escape of his students. He was murdered, and all but one of his students survived.

Heroes exist in our world. But they were not present on July 28 at 345 Park Avenue, New York City.



RESIST, RESIST, THEN RESIST SOME MORE

I saw a picture on Facebook that has not left my mind. It said, "But what can I do, I'm just one person—said Eight billion people." We are living in a time when people are conscious and aware enough to ask the question, "What can I do?" Some ask it helplessly, but they are sincere. I believe this is a necessary time, and that it is a necessary question.

I believe that getting clear on what this is about and what has brought us to this time is important to the answer. I believe that we are still here because our souls are in concert with our Creator, here to make a positive difference. All of us are important to the task. If Jesus has taught us anything, it is that our thoughts and our energy permeate the air, creating either good or permission for evil. What we think, how we behave, and what we value determines whether we contribute to the good or to the false.

If enough of us love, if love is truly the answer, then fear must be resisted. If we give in to fear, we lose faith and become contributors to the problem. Fear disables us, making us among the eight billion who do not understand how powerful we are, or that fellowship with all people is the point. We are here to connect with everyone. If we begin to consider that God places others in our lives to serve and to be served by, to understand their journey and to share ours, then we find the way, the truth, and the light.

We have lost our way when we believe that speaking to the same-sex couple next door is wrong simply because we want them to know we disapprove of their lifestyle. We have lost our way when we think skin color matters, or when we believe that someone who is different from us, or who was not born here, threatens our success. This thinking assumes that God's creation is insufficient, that the world He made does not have enough for everyone, and that He is unable to provide for all.

If you believe that a woman who chose an abortion did so simply because she wanted to keep having sex without responsibility, you are looking in your own mirror, because that is the reasoning you would be using if you had made that choice. It is not an empty thought to understand that we judge others as we judge ourselves. It is also true that we are reaping what we have sown, and if we want something to change, we must begin planting different seeds.

Our new pastor told us, "You cannot follow a Bible you have not read." I know from personal experience that the scriptures read on

Classifieds

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 Number 25CV000554-180
To: DARWIN JOSE YEPEZ
TORREALBA, 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 September 23, 2025 said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, FRANCIS FABIOLA VERDU OCHOA, will apply to the court located at 40 E Chatham St, Pittsboro, NC 27312 for the relief sought.

This, the 14th day of August, 2025.

Aneta Paval
Paval Law Offices, PLLC
7404 Chapel Hill Rd, Suite M
Raleigh NC 27607
Telephone: (919) 410-6690
8/14, 8/21, and 8/28/2025

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CUMBERLAND COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001051-250
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 7th day of July 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LOUIS ENRIQUE RIVERA, Deceased, of Cumberland 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Miriam Rivera, Administrator
5305 Trampas Court
Fayetteville, NC 28303
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025

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 25E000834-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 29th day of July 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of TYSON KEITH CHRISTENSEN, 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 14th day of November, 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 14th day of August 2025.

Darlene M. Christensen,
Administrator
c/o Graham B. Schmidt, Attorney
4141 Parklake Ave. Suite 310
Raleigh, NC 27612
8/14, 8/21, 8/28, and 9/4/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001035-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of August 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of HILDA JOSEPHINE WALKER EPSTEN, 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 14th day of November, 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 14th day of August 2025.

Teri Epsten, Executor
1010 Monmouth Ave.
Durham, NC 27701
8/14, 8/21, 8/28, and 9/4/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS File Number 25E002030-310

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against RONALD HARRIS, SR., DECEASED, are noticed to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before November 5, 2025, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 7th day of August, 2025. All correspondence should be to the Estate of Ronald Harris Sr., c/o Florence A. Bowens, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.

8/7, 8/14, 8/21, and 8/28/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000684-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 20th day of May 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MICHAEL WAYNE GILLMER, 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 7th day of November, 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 August 2025.
Michael Wayne Gillmer II, Executor
910 Glen Eden Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27612
8/7, 8/14, 8/21, and 8/28/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS File No. 25 E 000852-310

The Administrator of the Estate of ATRAYUS OMAR GOODE, deceased, of DURHAM County NC, notifies all persons or entities having claims against said estate to present them to the Administrator on or before the 7th day of November 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. All indebted to the estate shall make immediate payment to the estate.

This, the 7th day of August 2025.
Rosa Latimer, Administrator, c/o Law Office of Robert Pochapsky PLLC, 3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205, Durham, NC 27705.
8/7, 8/14, 8/21, and 8/28/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS File Number 25E000929-310

The undersigned having qualified as Executor of the Estate of FAYE THOMAS LIVENGOOD, 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 10th day of November, 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 7th day of August, 2025.

Nicholas McLeod Livengood,
Executor, Estate of Faye Thomas Livengood, Deceased
Robert A. Idol, Esquire
IDOL LAW, PLLC
Attorney at Law
PO Box 51759
Durham, NC 27717
(919)401.5151
8/7, 8/14, 8/21, and 8/28/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000937-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 31st day of July 2025, as CO-EXECUTRIX of the Estate of JAMES KENNETH BELL, SR., 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 7th day of November, 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 August 2025.

Iris Bell, Co-Executrix
Karen Moore, Co-Executrix
c/o Ethan C. Timmins
Patrick Law, PLLC
3805 University Drive, Suite A
Durham, NC 27707
8/7, 8/14, 8/21, and 8/28/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000995-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ENDELL G. STEWART, 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 7th day of November, 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 August 2025.

Rhonda Endell Stewart Best
Executor
3761 Raleigh Pkwy W., Unit 1015
Wilson, NC 27896
8/7, 8/14, 8/21, and 8/28/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000886-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 23rd day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ELIZABETH L. LACY, 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Gail K. Lacy, Executor
c/o Law Office of Anne Page
Watson PLLC
3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205
Durham, NC 27705
7/31, 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000914-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 24th day of July 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JASON CABOT CALDWELL, 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Susan D. Caldwell, Administrator
c/o Law Office of Anne Page
Watson PLLC
3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205
Durham, NC 27705
7/31, 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000961-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 24th day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ALFRED COREY O'BRIEN, 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Jennifer Anne Zinn O'Brien
3212 Sherbon Drive
Durham, NC 27707
7/31, 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 23E000800-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of June 2023, as ADMINISTRATOR of the

Estate of AINZARGUL TOTAKHIL, 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Taj Bibi Ahmadzai, Administrator
1101 Rose Garden Lane
Durham, NC 27707
7/31, 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000910-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DIANE COOPER COVINGTON, 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Deilah Cooper Moore, Executor
629 Yorkshire Drive
Cameron, NC 28326
7/31, 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000899-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 12th day of June 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of WALTER JERRY LEWIS ROYAL, 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Robert Stephan Monks
Attorney For Walter Lacey,
Administrator
6613 Speight Circle
Raleigh, NC 27616
7/31, 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000792-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 12th day of June 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of WILLIS EDWINA PAGE, 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Sharon D. Beard, Executor
1903 Pear Tree Lane
Durham, NC 27703
7/31, 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000792-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 12th day of June 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ANNIE LOUISE ATKINS, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Michelle Jeanette Liles
Administrator
810 Duke St., Apt 2
Durham, NC 27701
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000377-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 3rd day of April 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ANNIS F. WILLIAMSON, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Lisa Williamson, Administrator
407 Weatherly Drive
Durham, NC 27703
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000932-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 17th day of July 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of KENNETH DAVIS, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Ronald Davis, Administrator
428 Walton St.
Durham, NC 27703
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000916-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 14th day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ELSA AMANDA SCHERER, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Gabriela J. Matthews, Executor
4 Sawmill Lane
Durham, NC 27712
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000934-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 17th day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARCENE BIVINS BYRD A/K/A LOLA MARCENE BYRD A/K/A LOLA BIVINS BYRD, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
John E. Byrd, Jr., Executor
1200 Byrds Views Lane
Hillsborough, NC 27278
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E000867-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of June 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of EDITH MOORE OTTAWAY, 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

HOKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
HOKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE BY PUBLICATION FILE No. 25 JA 33

IN RE: D. DOCTOR, a minor child
TO: The Respondent Father Shamond Reid of D. Doctor, born May 15, 2025. Take notice that a Petition has been filed by the Hoke County Department of Social Services for the purpose of alleging dependency concerning the above-named child. You must prepare and file with the Clerk of Court of Hoke County a written answer to the Petition within forty (40) days of the first date of publication of this notice. You must also serve a copy of the answer on the Petitioner's attorney (address below). If you fail to file an answer; may result in the court making a finding of dependency and entering orders affecting your parental rights. The Petitioner will apply to the court for the relief demanded in the Petition. You are entitled to attend any hearing affecting your parental rights, including those related to allegations of dependency. If you are indigent, and not already represented by counsel, you are entitled to appointed counsel in this matter, and may contact the Clerk of Court of Hoke County in order to request that counsel be appointed to you. You are advised to IMMEDIATELY contact the Clerk of Court of Hoke County, at (910) 878-4109, to obtain further information about this case, including a copy of the pleading filed herein, the date(s) and times) of scheduled hearings.

First published this the 31st day of July, 2025.

Aaliyah J. Russell, Esq.
The Charleston Group Lawyers
Attorney for the Petitioner
Hoke County Department of Social Services
Post Office Box 1762
Fayetteville, N.C. 28302
Telephone: (910) 485-2500
State Bar No. 57350
7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division

File No: 25CV002722-910
[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING]
HELEN SANCHEZ MONTOYA,
Plaintiff v. ISIDORO CARDENAS MORALES, Defendant. To Defendant, father of minor children born to Plaintiff on 1/23/20 and 11/30/22. TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. A hearing date of 10/7/2025 has been scheduled. The relief sought against you is an award of legal custody to Plaintiff. You are required to make defense with the Wake County Clerk of Court no later than 9/23/2025. Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking relief against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This, the 14th day of August 2025. Katherine Moye, Attorney for Plaintiff, P.O. Box 58058, Raleigh, NC, 27658, 919-794-7511, The Carolinian, 8/14, 8/21, 8/28/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division

File No: 25CV009855-910
[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING]
SARAH KONATE & IBRAHIM KHOUROMA, Plaintiffs v. MOHAMED DOUMBIA & FATOUMATA KONE, Defendants. To Defendant KONE, mother of M.D. born on 12/12/2012. TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. A hearing date of 10/7/2025 has been scheduled. The relief sought against you is an award of legal custody of the child to Plaintiffs. You are required to make defense with the Wake County Clerk of Court no later than 9/23/2025.

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Classifieds

WAKE COUNTY

Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking relief against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This, the 14th day of August 2025. Katherine Moye, Attorney for Plaintiff, P.O. Box 58058, Raleigh, NC, 27658, 919/794-7511, The Carolinian, 8/14, 8/21, 8/28

NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 25CV014788-910 RITA MITCHELL, Plaintiff VS. TIMOTHY WELIME WANJALA, Defendant

To The 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 as follows: The Plaintiff has filed a COMPLAINT FOR JUDGMENT FOR ABSOLUTE DIVORCE. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than September 16, 2025, forty (40) days from the first date of the publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 7th day of August 2025.

Rita Mitchell, Plaintiff
2120 Breezeway Dr. #107
Raleigh, NC 27614
8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 22CV014645 JOSEPHINE EMMANUEL OPARAOCHA, Plaintiff VS. BENSON CHUKWUDI AGU, Defendant

To The 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 as follows: The Plaintiff has filed a COMPLAINT FOR JUDGMENT FOR ABSOLUTE DIVORCE. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than September 16, 2025, forty (40) days from the first date of the publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 7th day of August 2025.

Josephine Oparaocha, Plaintiff
5016 Babbling Brook Drive
Raleigh, NC 27610
8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E002451-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 22nd day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ARTHUR MARVIN BLUM A/K/A ARTHUR M. BLUM A/K/A ART BLUM, Deceased, of Wake 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Laurie Glodowski, Executor
1708 Burnley Dr.
Cary, NC 27511
7/31, 8/7, 8/14, and 8/21/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E002859-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 21st day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of KAY FRANCES LUCAS A/K/A KAY FRANCES, Deceased, of Wake 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 31st day of October, 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 31st day of July 2025.
Chrystal Lucas, Executor
918 Fir Ridge Rd.
Garner, NC 27529
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk

File Number 25E002382-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 7th day of July 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of HOWARD DOUGLASS MARTIN, Deceased, of Wake 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Dolores Simpson Martin, Executor
616 Oakbrook Pass Way
Fuquay Varina, NC 27526
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025

FORECLOSURE

NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE Special Proceedings No. 25 SP 477

Trustee: Philip A. Glass
Date of Sale: August 27, 2025
Time of Sale: 3:00 p.m.
Place of Sale: Durham County Courthouse
Description of Property: See Attached Description
Record Owners: Massiel Murga and Bryan Henry, JTWROS
Address of Property: 7709 Grand Lillie Drive Durham, NC 27712
Deed of Trust:
Book : 9853 Page: 925
Dated: January 27, 2023
Grantors: Massiel Murga a single person, Bryan Henry a single person
Original Beneficiary: State Employees' Credit Union

CONDITIONS OF SALE:
This sale is made subject to all unpaid taxes and superior liens or encumbrances of record and assessments, if any, against the said property, and any recorded leases. This sale is also subject to any applicable county land transfer tax, and the successful third party bidder shall be required to make payment for any such county land transfer tax.

The property to be offered pursuant to this Notice of Sale is being offered for sale "AS IS, WHERE IS." THERE ARE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES relating to the title or to any physical, environmental, health or safety conditions existing in, on, at or relating to the property being offered for sale, and any and all responsibilities or liabilities arising out of or in any way relating to any such condition are expressly disclaimed.

A cash deposit of 5% of the purchase price will be required at the time of the sale. Remote bidding will not be accepted pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes Section 45-21.25 (a). Credit bids on behalf of the Noteholder will be accepted. Any successful bidder shall be required to tender

the full balance of the purchase price so bid in cash or certified check at the time the Substitute Trustee tenders to him a deed for the property or attempts to tender such deed, and should said successful bidder fail to pay the full balance purchase price so bid at that time, he shall remain liable on his bid as provided for in North Carolina General Statutes Section 45-21.30 (d) and (e). This sale will be held open ten (10) days for upset bids as required by law.

Residential real property with less than 15 rental units, including single-family residential real property: an order for possession of the property may be issued pursuant to G.S. 45-21.29 in favor of the purchaser and against the party or parties in possession by the clerk of superior court of the county in which the property is sold. Any person who occupies the property pursuant to a rental agreement entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2007, may, after receiving notice of sale, terminate the rental agreement by providing written notice of termination to the landlord, to be effective on a date stated in the notice that is at least 10 days, but not more than 90 days, after the sale date contained in the notice of sale, provided that the mortgagor has not cured the default at the time the tenant provides the notice of termination. Upon termination of a rental agreement, the tenant is liable for rent due under the rental agreement prorated to the effective date of the termination.

Dated: July 23, 2025
Philip A. Glass, Trustee
Nodell, Glass & Haskell, L.L.P.
Posted on July 23, 2025
Exhibit A

Being all of Lot 3, Block A, Carmel Heights, as shown on a plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 80, Page 9, Durham County Registry. TOGETHER with the rights under that Deed of Easement of Access to Well recorded in Book 1056, Page 310, Durham County Registry.

Subject to easements, restrictions and rights of way of record, and utility lines and rights of way in existence over, under or upon the above-described property.

PIN: 0816-71-5502
Property Address: 7709 Grand Lillie Dr. Durham, NC 27712
August 14 & August 21, 2025

Black Unemployment Highest Since 2021



By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

As of the most recent Labor Department report, Black unemployment stands at 7.2%, marking its highest level since late 2021.

While this figure may appear modest in isolation, it represents a significant jump from 6.8% the month prior and 6.3% a year ago. Even more striking is the contrast to December 2023, when Black unemployment hit an all-time low of 5%, the lowest in U.S. history.

This dramatic reversal—driven by a 13% increase in unemployment between May and June 2025 alone—has raised concerns among economists, who often view rising Black unemployment as an early indicator of broader economic trouble. Historically, Black workers are among the first to be affected during downturns and the last to recover.

The disparities between racial groups remain stark. While Black workers face a 7.2% unemployment rate, white workers have a jobless rate of just 3.7%. Hispanic workers have an unemployment rate of 5.0%, while Asian workers stand at 3.9%.

Geographic trends further highlight the unevenness of the recovery. In Michigan, Black unemployment is nearing 10%, while South Carolina experienced a 3% increase in Black unemployment over the past year, rising to 6.9%.

In North Carolina, the overall unemployment rate sits at 3.7%, mirroring the national average for white workers, but it does not reflect racial disparities within the state.

Black women, in particular, have been disproportionately affected by the recent rise in joblessness. Their unemployment rate rose from 5.5% to 6.3% over the past year, despite Black women earning more college degrees than any other race-gender group in the United States.

Weak job growth across the broader economy compounds the issue. In July, the economy added just 73,000 jobs, falling short of economists' already modest expectations. June saw only 14,000 new jobs. The May and June figures were revised down by a combined 258,000 positions. And May's gains were nearly wiped out, reduced to a mere 19,000 jobs.

Many of the federal agencies experiencing the steepest job cuts have disproportionately high Black representation. For example, 36% of the workforce at the Department of Education, 21% at the U.S. Agency for International Development, and 20.5% at the Department of Health and Human Services are Black.

In just the past 90 days, nearly 300,000 Black women have left the labor force overall.

Adding to these pressures is a broader shift in corporate hiring strategies. A recent survey by the National Association for Business Economics found that 1 in 4 companies plan to delay hiring or investments over the next six months. Meanwhile, since 2023, more than 2,600 jobs with "diversity" or "DEI" in the title or description have been

Capital One \$425 Million Class Action Settlement



NEW YORK (WPIX) — Capital One has agreed to a \$425 million settlement to resolve claims that it failed to raise interest rates for 360 Savings accounts.

The settlement includes customers who maintained a Capital One 360 Savings account between Sept. 18, 2019, and June 16, 2025.

What is the class action settlement about?

Earlier this year, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau sued Capital One over its savings accounts, accusing the company of freezing its rate at a low level for several years, despite rising rates nationally, "cheating" customers out of more than \$2 billion in lost interest payments as a result.

Multiple lawsuits have been brought against Capital One over the 360 Savings accounts, which are now being overseen by a federal judge in Virginia.

Capital One, which has not admitted to wrongdoing, has agreed to pay a \$425 million class action settlement.

Who qualifies?

If you had a 360 Savings account with Capital One between September 18, 2019, and June 16, 2025, you may qualify for a portion of the \$425 million settlement. Capital One will provide a list of those customers for the settlement but qualifying members have also received a notice.

You do not need to file a claim to receive a payout. However, you'll need to use the ID and four-digit PIN found on the settlement notice to select your payment option online. The deadline to make your selection is October 2, 2025.

Settlement administrators note that, if you opt for a paper check, you will not receive one if your payout amount is less than \$5. If you opt for an electronic payment, you'll receive your payout regardless of how much it is.

How much will I receive?

Part of the \$425 million settlement will be dispersed to qualifying account holders, totalling what they "would have earned if their 360 Savings account(s) had paid the interest rate then applicable to the 360 Performance Savings account." The latter are accounts that did see rising rates, but that were allegedly hidden from those with 360 Savings accounts.

A portion of the settlement, \$125 million, is earmarked for paying qualifying account holders "additional interest payments." According to the settlement website, Capital One will "maintain an interest rate on the 360 Savings account of at least two times the national average rate for savings deposit accounts as calculated by the FDIC" to those who still have 360 Savings accounts. Those payments will continue until all of the \$125 million has been dispersed.

Payouts will be determined based on the life of the account and how much interest you would have received if you had a 360 Performance Savings account, "multiplied by a to-be-determined value." Payouts for those who still have an active 360 Savings account will be calculated nearly the same, except without a multiplier.

You will also receive the aforementioned "additional interest payments" if you keep your Capital One 360 Savings account open after October 2, 2025. You do not need to file a claim for these payments.

If your account has already closed or been converted to a 360 Performance Savings account — or you do either before October 2 — "you will receive a Class Cash Payment that is currently estimated to be approximately 15% larger," the settlement site explains.

The final approval hearing for the settlement is scheduled for Nov. 6, 2025. Individual payment amounts will vary and have not yet been specified.

BUYING CASSETTE TAPES

Paying cash and buying old Rap music cassette tapes and used blank cassette tapes. Call Marvin 919-268-7476.

COASTAL ASSOCIATE IV WANTED

Moffatt & Nichol has an opening for a Coastal Associate IV in Raleigh, NC. 40 hrs/week. Job duties include: Designs construction projects by studying project concept, architectural drawings, and models. Prepares engineering design by collecting and studying reports, maps, drawings, aerial photographs, and tests on soil composition, terrain, hydrological characteristics, and related topographical and geologic data. Supports the analysis of project costs by calculating labor, material, and related costs. Requires a Master's degree, or its foreign equivalent, in Civil Engineering, Coastal Engineering, Ocean Engineering, or a closely related engineering field, and 6 years of experience as a Coastal Engineer or a related role/capacity; 6 years of hydrodynamic modeling experience utilizing Advanced CIRCulation (ADCIRC), Finite-Volume Coastal Ocean Model (FVCOM), or Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH); 6 years of programming experience (writing new scripts and modifying already written scripts) with at least one of the following programs: python, MATLAB, or Fortran; 6 years of experience using a geospatial platform (ESRI ArcGIS or QGIS); 6 years of experience building or modifying numerical meshes either with software (SMS or OceanMesh2D) or without software; 6 years of experience with technical writing including project plans or reports; 6 years of experience developing and presenting technical presentations; 6 years of experience working on a team with peers. Employer will also accept a Doctorate degree (Ph.D.), or its foreign equivalent, in Civil Engineering, Coastal Engineering, Ocean Engineering, or a closely related engineering field, and 3 years of experience as a Coastal Engineer or a related role/capacity; 3 years of hydrodynamic modeling experience utilizing Advanced CIRCulation (ADCIRC), Finite-Volume Coastal Ocean Model (FVCOM), or Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH); 3 years of programming experience (writing new scripts and modifying already written scripts) with at least one of the following programs: python, MATLAB, or Fortran; 3 years of experience using a geospatial platform (ESRI ArcGIS or QGIS); 3 years of experience building or modifying numerical meshes either with software (SMS or OceanMesh2D) or without software; 3 years of experience with technical writing including project plans or reports; 3 years of experience developing and presenting technical presentations; 3 years of experience working on a team with peers. Must have completed coursework in coastal engineering/modeling and fluid mechanics. Must successfully complete and pass pre-employment background check in compliance with NIST 800-171. Must be eligible to obtain a Professional Engineer license. Domestic travel 10% of time. Hybrid work benefit available. Must reside within the MSA of the worksite located in Raleigh, NC 27609. Apply at <https://www.moffattnichol.com/careers>.

WANTED WBE, MBE & DBE BIDS

for the following job:

Town of Garner

SM-6105E Wake Co. Bid Date: August 20th

These projects may involve some or all of the following aspects of construction: construction survey, clear and grub, trucking, drainage, milling, paving, incidental concrete, fence and guardrail, signs, structures, traffic control, utilities, signals, pavement marking, erosion control and seeding.

Bids can be emailed to stw.quotes@stwcorp.com

Please contact S. T. Wooten at 252-291-5165,

Fax 252-243-0900 no later than 5:00 p.m. the day before the bid date.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42, U.S.C. 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to the 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.

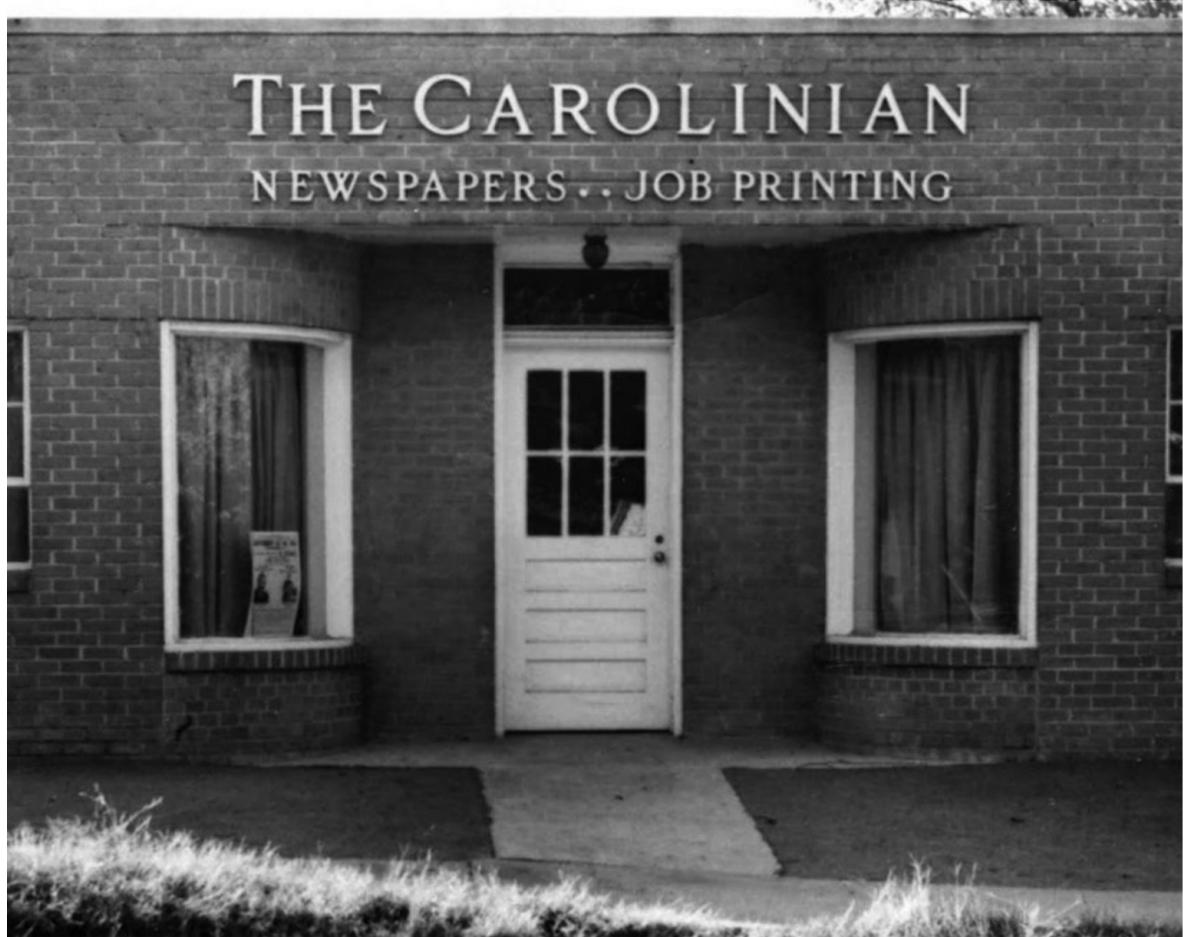
Submit your Classified BID Advertising to ads@caro.news

What is the Carolinian Legacy Project?

From the 1950s through the 1980s, The Carolinian newspaper was the hub of the community in Raleigh. It was where all of the spokes met to form a well oiled, spinning wheel of progress for the Black community. It was the library, the business center and the community cork board. Rich and poor, faithful and fractured, everyone knew where they could go in a time of need.

The strength of The Carolinian was its independence. The fearless, unbiased reporting of a generation that saw their enslaved grandparents as well as their college educated children. The Carolinian never had to ask permission to tell the truth. That is the legacy that we are striving to preserve for the next generation. That is the purpose of the Carolinian Legacy Project.

Today we spend our time online, on platforms that we don't own. We give our attention, and data to companies that know us only as another nickel in their pocket. The digital cow herding of social media has robbed our community of common sense and free thinking. That is why the Carolinian Legacy Project is so important. We must save the art of discovery. It is paramount that we know what is going on in our community without having to ask an algorithm for permission.



The original Carolinian building was located at 518 E Martin St, Raleigh. It was positioned on a 2 acre parcel of land just two blocks from what is now Moore Square. Ownership of this property was taken over by the city through urban renewal.

The Carolinian wants to return to a time when the community was a community. We want to give you communal security, freedom and familiarity again. The Carolinian was never just a newspaper, it was always a gathering place. People may have gone to different churches, shopped at different grocery stores and worked in different industries, but they all came to The Carolinian to share their accomplishments, voice their injustices and find resources to improve their lives. We must keep this avenue open, and the Carolinian Legacy Project is how we do it.

The first piece of the puzzle is the Legacy Wall, which is currently in process. This wall will stand as symbol of strength, unity and resilience. Please join us in persevering Black history and supporting progress. Your purchase of a brick in our Legacy Wall will help build our library, buy supplies, educate generations and solidify you as a recorded piece of Raleigh's history.

Please visit <https://caro.news/legacy-project/> to make a difference. Join us in being a part of the solution.

