

# The Weekly Press

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THURSDAY, MARCH 30-APRIL 5, 2023

A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

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## Louisiana's Medicaid Expansion Benefits State and Residents

Louisiana's decision to expand Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2016 has had a profound impact on the state's health care system and economy. Since the expansion's implementation, over 540,000 Louisianans have gained health insurance coverage, leading to improved health outcomes and reduced financial burdens on individuals and families.

A recent report by the Louisiana Department of Health highlights the expansion's benefits, which include improvements in access to preventive care, reductions in hospitalizations for chronic conditions, and increased use of primary care services. The report also notes that the expansion has reduced the amount of uncompensated care provided by hospitals and other health care providers, which has improved the financial stability of the health care system.

Data sources including the Kaiser Family Foundation and LSU's Public Administration Institute support the positive outcomes of the expansion. The Kaiser Family Foundation reported that the uninsured rate among non-elderly adults in Louisiana decreased from 24% in 2015 to 11% in 2019 following the Medicaid expansion. LSU's Public Administration Institute estimated that the expansion generated more than \$3.5 billion in economic activity and created over 19,000 new jobs in Louisiana.

See **MEDICAID**, on page 2

## Baton Rouge unveils plan to provide housing for vulnerable communities

BATON ROUGE, La. — The City-Parish of Baton Rouge has announced a draft action plan for the HOME ARP funding granted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The \$5 million plan aims to provide much-needed housing for vulnerable communities, including the homeless, very low-income families, domestic violence survivors, and veterans.

Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome unveiled the plan during a news conference on March 14. The draft action plan can be accessed at [http://www.brla.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16752/HOME-ARP\\_Allocation\\_Plan](http://www.brla.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16752/HOME-ARP_Allocation_Plan).

See **PLAN**, on page 2

# Former President Donald Trump indicted



Trump is the first former U.S. president to be charged with a crime. He has denied any wrongdoing.

NEW YORK -- Former US President Donald Trump has been indicted by a New York grand jury in connection with a \$130,000 payment made to porn star Stormy Daniels in 2016, according to his lawyer Joe Tacopina. The former president is expected to surrender to the Manhattan District Attorney's office early next week and be arraigned on Tuesday. He is tentatively expected to appear before Judge Juan Merchan after 2:15 p.m. that day in Manhattan, two officials told NBC News.

This marks the first time a former US president has been charged with a crime, which is expected to have far-reaching implications given Trump is the leading contender seeking the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

The Manhattan District Attorney's office confirmed the indictment, but the number of charges that Trump faces in the indictment was not disclosed. It is also not known whether the indictment is limited to conduct



Police, media and protesters gather outside a Manhattan courthouse after news broke that former President Donald Trump has been indicted. Photograph: Spencer Platt/Getty Images

related to the payment to Daniels, or if it includes conduct surrounding a separate hush money payment to former Playboy model Karen McDougal by the publisher

of The National Enquirer. Trump's lawyers stated that they did not know the charges.

The charge stems from the district attorney's investigation

into how the Trump Organization recorded a reimbursement to Trump's then-lawyer Michael

See **TRUMP**, on page 2

## Gov. Edwards Urges Medicaid Members to Take Action to Avoid Losing Coverage



Gov. John Bel Edwards

BATON ROUGE, La. — Gov. John Bel Edwards released a new public service announcement (PSA) urging Medicaid members to take action so they do not risk losing their coverage.

In April 2023, Medicaid will re-start eligibility reviews for each member. These eligibility reviews typically happen annually but were paused due to COVID-19.

Medicaid will begin sending letters and renewal packets to determine if a recipient is still eligible and will continue reviewing over a 12-month time frame. It will take 14 months to complete the Medicaid eligibility reviews, so not all members will receive letters from Medicaid at the same time. When members do receive their letters, it is critical they reply right away.

Medicaid members should update all of their contact information, including their mailing address, phone number, cell phone number and email address, to be sure they do not miss important information from Medicaid about their health coverage.

"We want all Louisianans who are eligible for Medicaid to stay covered," said Gov. Edwards. "Make no mistake, reaching out to more than 2 million Medicaid members over the next 14 months will be a massive undertaking. This is a top priority for the Louisiana Department of Health and my entire administration and we will do everything we can to remove practical barriers and meet members where they are, but it is going to take all of us to be successful. We need everyone's help in raising awareness of the return of Medicaid renewals."

"Louisiana Medicaid is going to determine eligibility for as many members as it can using electronic data sources, but we do expect we will be asking nearly one million members to take action to renew their coverage," said Louisiana Medicaid Executive Director Tara LeBlanc. "It is vital that Medicaid members ensure Medicaid

See **COVERAGE**, on page 3

### WEATHER



MON. 04/03  
Mostly Cloudy  
High 45°.



WED. 04/04  
Partly Cloudy  
High 74°.



TUE. 04/05  
Mostly Cloudy  
High 55°.



THUR. 03/06  
Mostly Cloudy  
High 62°.

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The Weekly Press

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# LOCAL & STATE

## Secretary Ardoin Declares Friday, March 31 "LSU Women's Basketball Day"

BATON ROUGE, La. — In honor of the LSU Women's Basketball team's return to the NCAA Final Four for the first time since 2008, Louisiana Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin proclaimed Friday, March 31 as "LSU Women's Basketball Day" in Louisiana.

"The LSU women's basketball team has had an incredible run, led by Coach Kim Mulkey and an amazing roster of players," Ardoin said. "I encourage all Louisianans to wear purple and gold this Friday, March 31 to show their support for the Lady Tigers as they look to make it to the national championship game

on Sunday."

LSU's Women's Basketball team will be making its sixth appearance in the Final Four, and its first appearance since 2008.

The Lady Tigers have a record of 32-2 so far, with players like forward Angel Reese setting the SEC single season double-double record.



Kyle Ardoin

### PLAN from page 1

Public-Hearing-DRAFT. The public can submit comments on the plan via email at ocd@brla.gov through March 28.

The plan was drafted after significant engagement with stakeholders and residents to co-develop housing solutions that meet the needs of all residents in East Baton Rouge Parish. In addition to public comments, there will be two opportunities to learn more about the action plan, including a virtual community meeting at noon on March 16, which requires registration at <http://www.brla.gov/HomeAR-Pregration>, and a public meeting at 6 p.m. on March 20 at the River Center Branch Library downtown.

According to the Mayor's Office of Community Develop-

ment, the draft action plan is part of a larger initiative to address the housing crisis in Baton Rouge. Recently announced projects include a \$1 million investment in the YWCA's new housing development for domestic violence survivors and a \$900,000 investment in URECs Foster Oaks project, which was approved by the Metropolitan Council this month.

The Mayor-President's draft action plan for HOMEARP funding will help provide safe and affordable housing for those who need it most, said Broome.

"This is just the beginning of our efforts to create a more equitable Baton Rouge where all residents have access to safe, affordable housing," she said.

The City-Parish will finalize the action plan after considering public comments.

### MEDICAID from page 1

The expansion has been critical in providing access to health care services for Louisianans, particularly those with low incomes. Governor John Bel Edwards has been a vocal supporter of Medicaid expansion in the state and played a key role in its implementation in 2016. In 2019, he signed a bill into law that made the expansion permanent in

Louisiana, ensuring that hundreds of thousands of Louisianans will continue to have access to health care coverage.

Overall, Louisiana's decision to expand Medicaid coverage has been a resounding success, providing access to health care services, reducing financial burdens, and stimulating economic growth. Its positive impact on the state's health care system and economy demonstrates the benefits of expanding access to health care

### TRUMP from page 1

Cohen after Cohen paid Daniels, also known as Stephanie Clifford, to keep her quiet about an alleged sexual encounter she says she had with Trump in 2006.

Falsifying business records is normally a misdemeanor under New York law, but can be elevated to a felony if the misstatement was done to cover up another crime. Trump denies having sex with Daniels or committing wrongdoing of any kind.

The indictment, which will be prosecuted by the Manhattan District Attorney's office, is the first in what could end up being several criminal cases against Trump. He is also under investigation by the US Department of Justice in two separate criminal cases, one related to his efforts to overturn the Electoral College victory of President Joe Biden

in the 2020 election and another related to his annual Statements of Financial Condition, which prosecutors claim were false.

The charges against Trump raise questions about the future of the Republican Party, which has been struggling to chart a course amid Trump's continued influence. Some GOP leaders have sought to distance themselves from Trump and his baseless claims of election fraud, while others have continued to embrace him as a leader and potential presidential candidate in 2024.

The indictment marks a stunning development in the legal troubles facing Trump, who had long claimed immunity as a former president and insisted that his dealings in business and politics were above reproach. His lawyers have stated that they will "vigorously fight this political prosecution in Court".

## Rep. Carter, Regional Leadership Council Hold Meeting at White House to Discuss Implementation

WASHINGTON, D.C. — This week, Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. (D-La.) and members of the Regional Leadership Council (RLC) attended a meeting at the White House with key officials in the Biden-Harris Administration to discuss their effort to implement the historic laws that Democrats enacted in the 117th Congress. The meeting coincides with the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America tour, where President Biden, members of his Cabinet, and Congressional Democrats are traveling across the country over the course of three weeks to highlight the impact these laws are having on hardworking Americans.

"Over the past two years, House Democrats have delivered results. Period," said Rep. Carter. "The historic legislation we passed in the 117th Congress gives us an opportunity to create long-overdue equity for Black and Brown Americans who have historically been left out when we make investments. I am using my position as the representative for Region 7 to change that! Democrats are committed to making sure that these opportunities are accessible to everyone."

Ever since Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries established the RLC in January 2023, the Members have worked tirelessly to deliver on the promise of the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the Honoring Our PACT Act, and other laws that Congressional Democrats secured in recent years. The RLC will continue to play a leading role in ensuring that these landmark policies resonate in the lives of the American people for generations to come in every corner



Rep. Carter Attends White House RLC Meeting

of the country.

Participants in the meeting included Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Legislative Affairs Louisa Terrell, Deputy Chief of Staff Natalie Quillian, and Senior Advisors to the President Mitch Landrieu and John Podesta. Members laid out the RLC's three-part plan to ensure that Americans

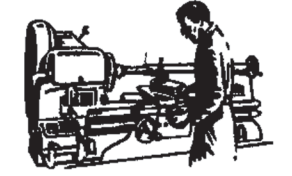
in every corner of the country know and feel the impact of these transformative laws: identify, implement, and inform. Whether delivering information to local stakeholders, making new programs and grants more accessible, or communicating the positive effects of these laws to the American people, the RLC and the Biden-Harris Administration will coordinate to ensure the American people can feel the impact of these historic measures.

"From lowering health-care costs to rebuilding America's crumbling infrastructure, creating millions of quality jobs, and promoting community safety, Democrats delivered results in the 117th Congress," said Chairman Hoyer after the meeting. "I was pleased to meet with our partners in the Biden-Harris Administration today to talk about what the RLC can do to help ensure that we continue to deliver For The People. Regardless of who they are and where they live, Americans deserve to see how their tax dollars are being invested to improve their lives, their communities, and their economy. The RLC stands at the forefront of that effort, and we are glad to have enthused partners in the White House ready to help deliver these federal funds to create economic opportunity in every region. We remain hard at work to make sure that new bridges and factories go up, costs go down, and workers and families across the country have the tools they need to Make It In America."

"The historic legislation Democrats helped shepherd through

See CARTER, on page 5

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The office is open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday and located at 4910 Montecello Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70814

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# New Orleans mayor says 'weight lifted' after recall effort fails

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell told WDSU on Wednesday that a weight has been lifted after learning the recall effort against her has failed.

"Clearly, a weight lifted," Cantrell said. "But what is evident is that there has been intentional orchestration to discredit me and my role as mayor of New Orleans. I do not expect that to stop."

Tuesday morning, Gov. John Bel Edwards' office confirmed that the recall petition was only able to secure 27,000 certified signatures. A total of 44,900 were needed to trigger a special election to oust the mayor potentially.

Speaking at a weekly news conference, Cantrell said she plans to put the recall campaign in the rearview mirror and move forward, working for the city's betterment.

"My call to action now is for everyone to stay focused, and let's do the business of the city of New Orleans," said Cantrell. "I am eager and willing and happy to work with anyone who wants to move the city of New Orleans forward. We are not in a position not to."

Cantrell said that includes the organizers of the recall effort.

During Wednesday's news conference, she also spoke about two lawsuits filed against recall organizers and the Louisiana Secretary of State's office. The two parties agreed earlier this year to decrease the signature threshold from about 50,000 to 45,000 after questions were raised about the number of people on the Orleans Parish voter rolls who either died or moved away.

The mayor called those legal challenges a matter of voter protec-



Mayor LaToya Cantrell

tion and fighting for democracy.

"Those lawsuits will move forward in that spirit," said Cantrell.

Cantrell also issued a written statement regarding the failed recall effort:

"My administration has always remained focused on addressing the real pressing issues that face our City. Now, with the divisiveness of the failed recall campaign officially behind us, we must heal and recommit ourselves to working collaboratively to continue the progress we've made towards reducing crime, increasing public safety, building a more sustainable and resilient city and creating economic and job opportunities that

benefit all of our people," Cantrell said.

"As a former member of the New Orleans City Council and a twice-elected mayor, I have always respected and believed deeply in the democratic process. The right of the people to use their voice to express concerns are hallmarks of a strong, functioning democracy. New Orleans is a strong community that continues to make meaningful progress each day. I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to the residents of New Orleans for trusting in my leadership and believing that, for New Orleans, the best is truly yet to come."

## Mrs. Dorothy Anderson Recognized as First African American Lab Technician at LSU School of Veterinary Medicine

In 2021 the City of Baker Communications Department reported on Dorothy Anderson's recognition for over 10 years of service at Louisiana State University's School of Veterinary Medicine.

Following that recognition, the dedicated personnel at the School of Veterinary Medicine determined that not only had Mrs. Anderson served their facility for more than a decade, in addition she was the first African American Veterinary Lab Technician at LSU!

This past week the Baker Heritage Museum was pleased to honor Mrs. Anderson for breaking the color barrier in science, technology, engineering, and math, also known as STEM, careers beginning in 1977 along with her years of service.

Mrs. Anderson was excited and pleased to be recognized as a leader for African Americans during Women's Month.

We congratulate her on her achievements and celebrate her as a role model for all seeking to work in STEM-related fields!



Pictured below: Dorothy Anderson and Baker Heritage Museum Director Cynthia Grimes (photos by R. Bond) and copy of certificate.

### COVERAGE from page 1

has all of their current contact information on file so that they do not miss important information from us and risk losing their coverage."

Members can visit [www.healthy.la.gov](http://www.healthy.la.gov) to learn how to update their contact information. There are several, convenient ways to make changes to your contact information, including:

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- Calling your health plan on the number on your ID card

Calling Medicaid's Customer Service Center at 1-888-342-6207. Assistance is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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## Faith In Difficult Times

by Creflo Dollar

As believers, we know how important faith is. We've been taught the basics of trusting in God when trouble shows up. However, having head knowledge of this is different than completely relying on Him when adversity lasts longer than we anticipated. This is the time when our mindset toward what we're going through is tested.

Some bad situations seem to go on and on. The longer we're in it, the harder it becomes to endure. Our faith can waiver and get shaky after a while because we can eventually become mentally and emotionally exhausted from standing in it. When we don't know how much longer we can go on, having faith in Jesus' faith instead of our own faith gives us the courage we need. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe..." (Romans 3:22).

The enemy uses anything he can to move us away from trusting in God. The devil suggests that maybe God won't deliver us like He delivered others, and tries to introduce uncertainty and questioning into our minds. Despite his tactics, he's a beaten foe; he can't stand up to a believer who knows their God and is willing to stand in faith. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John



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5:4). Using God's strength instead of our own gives us the ability to outlast the situation.

The key to overcoming tribulation is our response to it. When we know without any doubt that God will keep His hand on us and deliver us in due time, it's easier to maintain right-thinking about it. Constantly, consistently remaining the same in the midst of the situation reminds the devil that he's not strong enough to move us out of trusting God. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3, 4). Looking back and remembering all the times in the past God has already delivered us gives us hope and encouragement that He'll do it again.

God's promise of deliverance is solid and irrevocable. It's something we can confidently stand on and

know that He will bring us through it. God never gives us a test that we can't pass. Although trouble will show up, it won't overcome us. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8, 9).

While we're waiting for the situation to change, we do whatever is necessary to keep our forward momentum going. These are our works of faith. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?... Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:14, 17, 18). The difference between empty works

See **FAITH** on page 5

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Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. - Hebrews 10:25

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# BUSINESS

## Consumer Rage Reaches All-Time High, Businesses Feeling it in Bottom Line

According to a new study, second-rate customer service efforts have led to more consumer rage than ever, and patrons have become more belligerent when complaining.

Customer Care Measurement & Consulting (CCMC) and the Center for Services Leadership, a research center at the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University, conducted the National Consumer Rage Survey.

It found that "the alarmingly high rate of rudeness by customers was linked to things that have become normal in business settings."

The survey found that businesses risk losing \$887 billion in future sales because they handle customer complaints poorly.

That figure is up from \$494 billion in 2020.

In addition to charting the trend of customer satisfaction with complaint handling over the past two decades, the study authors said the latest release of the rage survey breaks new ground by exploring the alarming incidence of customer incivility tied to what has become commonplace in everyday business settings.

"Customer rage explores the experience of complaining about a product or service problem," the authors wrote in a news release.

They said that customer incivility looks at the growing problem of rude, disrespectful, and violent behavior in the marketplace that comes from social and political conflicts between customers and businesses, such as disagreements about politics, sexuality, culture, and faith.

"This first foray into customer incivility reveals that unseemly customer behavior tied to clashes in values between businesses and their customers may be the new normal, as nearly one of every two Americans encountered two or more acts of customer incivility in the past year," the authors found.

According to the survey, the top customer rage highlighted in the study included:

- Seventy-four percent of customers reported experiencing a product or service problem in the past year, more than doubling since 1976.
- Product and service problems can be disappointing, costly, and distressing.
- Fifty-six percent of customers felt that the problem wasted their time (an average of one to two days of lost time).



The survey found that businesses risk losing \$887 billion in future sales because they handle customer complaints poorly.

43% cited a loss of money (an average loss of \$1,261), and 31% suffered emotional distress.

- The level of "customer rage" is holding steady — 63% of customers experiencing a problem feel rage about the experience.

- Customers are becoming increasingly aggressive in their efforts to solve their problems with businesses.

- Forty-three percent raised their voice to show displeasure about their most serious problem, up from 35% in 2015.

Additionally, the percentage of customers seeking revenge for their hassles has tripled since 2020.

The authors found that complaining is increasingly becoming a digital phenomenon.

Digital channels such as e-mail, chat, and social media have unseated the telephone as the primary complaint channel at 50%, increasing from a mere 5% in 2013.

Complainants are also doubling down on social media shaming about their problems.

In addition to complaining directly to the company, 32% of complainants posted information about their most serious problem on social media sites — more than double those who posted in 2020.

Top customer incivility highlights of the study include nearly one in five Americans (17%) who have personally behaved uncivilly during the past year.

The authors concluded that Americans see this kind of value-based aggression toward businesses as a sign of bigger

societal problems.

Twenty-two percent cited the moral decay of society as the primary reason customer incivility is on the rise.

The social contract about the norms for individually protesting businesses' belief systems and values appears to be in flux.

Americans disagree with "civil" and "uncivil" behaviors for expressing their value differences with a business, the authors found.

While 50% of Americans view less aggressive forms of behavior (such as yelling, ranting, arguing, giving ultimatums, and social media character assassination) as uncivil, the remaining 50% see these behaviors as either "civil" or as "depends on the circumstances."

Similarly, 25% view more hostile behaviors — like threats, humiliation, foul language, and lying — as civil or circumstantially acceptable.

"Even after 20 years of intensively researching customer rage, I remain astonished that — when sorting out ordinary product and service problems — acts of simple kindness and a sense of kinship are, all too often, in short supply," said CCMC President and CEO Scott Broetzmann.

"The incidence and public displays of customers and companies misbehaving are commonplace, on the increase, and can be downright scary," he noted.

Broetzmann continued: "Perhaps of growing concern now is that customer hostility appears to be mutating like a virus. The expressions of malice and aggression triggered by differences in the value systems of companies and customers — so-called customer incivility — only fuel the fire."

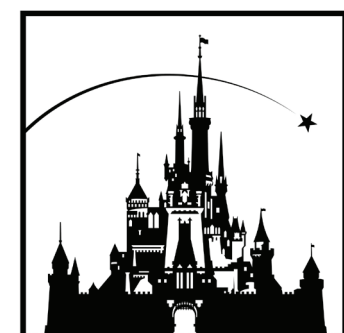
Broetzmann said defusing customer rage is not rocket science.

Thomas Hollmann, executive director of the Center for Services Leadership at ASU's W.P. Carey School of Business, said many customers are looking for repairs or refunds. Still, they also hope for a sincere apology and acknowledgment of their complaints.

"These no-cost actions show that the company cares, is listening to the customer, and values them," Hollman stated.

"It's up to brands to communicate as humans with their customers. A sincere 'I'm sorry this happened,' can turn a potential blowup into a lifelong customer."

## Disney begins laying off 7,000 employees, CEO Bob Iger announces



Disney CEO Bob Iger on Monday said his company will begin laying off staff starting this week, the first of three rounds of expected cuts following his announcement in February that the company would axe 7,000 jobs.

The cuts to Disney's global workforce are part of a multibillion-dollar cost-cutting initiative aimed at streamlining the company's operations in a period of media industry turmoil.

In a memo to staff obtained by CNN, Iger said the layoffs would come in three waves. The first round will begin this week, and managers will soon start to notify affected employees. A second, larger round of layoffs will take place in April, Iger said, with several thousand staffers let go. A third round of layoffs will then occur "before the beginning of the summer" to reach the company's planned goal of eliminating 7,000 jobs.

Iger said in a memo, "In tough moments, we must always do what is required to ensure Disney can continue delivering exceptional entertainment to audiences and guests around the world — now, and long into the future."

Disney (DIS) had about 220,000 workers as of October 1, of which approximately 166,000 were employed in the United States. A cut of 7,000 jobs represents about 3% of its global workforce.

The layoffs follow Iger's return to Disney in November after the company's board fired Bob Chapek as its leader.

### CARTER from page 2

Congress and that President Biden signed into law are benefiting families and strengthening communities across America," said Deputy Chief of Staff Natalie Quillian. "We look forward to continuing to work with the Regional Leadership Council to ensure as many Americans as possible feel the impacts of these historic bills — from accessing good-paying jobs they can raise a family on, to lower health care, internet, and energy costs, to expanded benefits for veterans and mental health services for students and families."

### FAITH from page 4

and works of faith is the prompting of the Holy Spirit. God will never leave us alone in our situation; the Helper is always present and waiting to give us practical direction and guidance when we ask Him.

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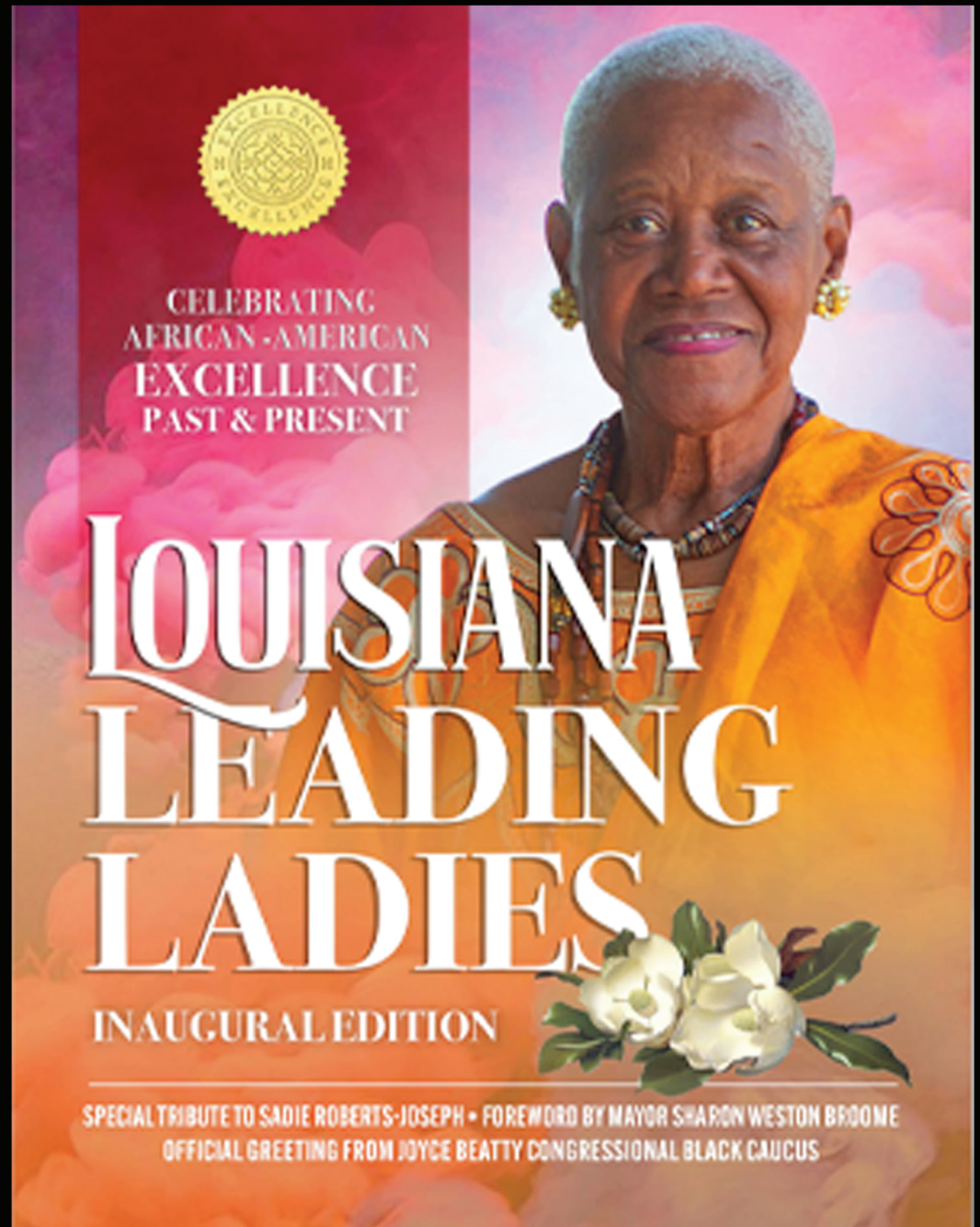
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**SEN. REGINA ASHFORD BARROW**  
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District 15



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