

The Weekly Press

SERVING BAKER, CENTRAL, AND ZACHARY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8-14, 2022

A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

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BAKER

Baker mayor Waites vetoes ordinance that would ban food trucks

BAKER, La.— The mayor of Baker vetoed an ordinance that would keep food trucks from operating in the area.

Mayor Darnell Waites cited several reasons for the veto. He said he and Baker citizens believe that regulated and licensed food trucks should be welcomed as it would promote small businesses in the area.



Darnell Waites

He also notes the increasing popularity of food trucks in the U.S. and how the ordinance would hinder Baker's economic growth.

A national report on food trucks operating in the U.S. said the industry reached \$2.7 billion in revenue in 2017, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Food Truck Index.

"That trend of food trucks morphing into and being a part of brick-and-mortar restaurants is accelerating," the Food Truck Index said.

Community members shared their thoughts on the potential ban on food trucks at a Nov. 8 meeting.

"If you want to set a standard of operations but please don't say 'no' to food trucks," said one person.

One local food truck business owner who identified herself as Nancy said she felt that the ordinance was directed toward her.

"I would like to first apologize because I did not mean for this to go this far. This has gone beyond what it needs to be," she said.

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WEATHER

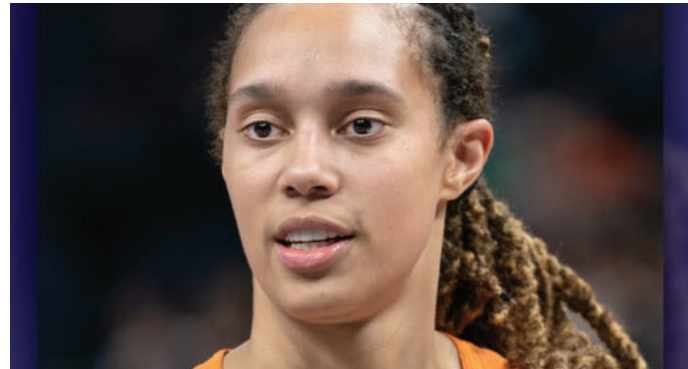
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Brittney Griner Freed

The deal to release Griner was consummated a week ago in the United Arab Emirates. Biden said Griner's expected home within 24 hours.



Joe Biden and Cherrille Griner speak on the phone with Brittney Griner after her release by Russia, as Vice-President Kamala Harris and the secretary of state, Antony Blinken, look on.

"She's safe. She's on a plane. She is on her way home," Biden declared.

BY STACY M. BROWN, NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

After 294 days in Russian custody, including the past several weeks in a dreaded and dangerous penal colony, WNBA star Brittney Griner is free.

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris met with Griner's wife at the White House, where they spoke with the basketball player on the telephone.

"She's safe. She's on a plane. She is on her way home," Biden declared.

The Biden administration secured Griner's release after agreeing to a one-for-one prisoner swap that saw the president commute the 25-year sentence of notorious Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout.

The White House said it would continue efforts to bring home retired U.S. military officer Paul Whelan, who remains in Russian custody.

Whelan has been imprisoned in Russia for nearly four years, and, recently, his family said they hadn't heard from him.

They were told he was transferred to a hospital, but the family doubted that explanation.

The deal to release Griner was consummated a week ago in the United Arab Emirates.

Biden said Griner's expected home within 24 hours.

"It's a good morning," the president exclaimed at a news

conference where Vice President Kamala Harris and Griner's wife, Cherrille, stood close.

"After months of being unjustly detained and held under intolerable circumstances, she's coming home," Biden asserted.

The president said his administration "never stopped pushing for her release."

"It took painstaking and intense negotiations for her release,"

See GRINER, on page 2

SCOTLANDVILLE

Santa Claus coming to town



Cocoa Santa

"The goal is to create a magical Santa Claus experience, said Councilwoman Banks. Families will get a visit with Santa in a Christmas setting, complete with wrapped gifts."



Chauna Banks

BATON ROUGE, LA— Santa Claus will be coming to town, Sunday, December 11, 11am-5pm. The one day "Pictures with Cocoa Santa" event will be set up at 8478 Scotland Avenue, Baton Rouge, La.

"The goal is to create a magical Santa Claus experience, said Councilwoman Banks. Families will get a visit with Santa in a Christmas setting, complete with wrapped gifts."

A professional photographer will provide two disc with purchase, one with "Merry Christmas" graphic and the other without the graphic.

The use of the disc avoids the need for copyright release. Therefore, you may use your pictures for any number of printing: pictures, mugs, calendars, greeting cards, invitations, calendars, etc.

Spend the entire afternoon at the Southern Cofe' soft opening, 8418 Scotland Avenue. Across the street in the Scotlandville Plaza, will be vendors, free toys, snacks, and beverages and a 6:00 p.m. tree lighting ceremony in Scotlandville Plaza.

See SANTA, on page 2

SPORTS

Jaguars Season Comes To An End In The SWAC Championship Game



Photo Courtesy of SWAC

JACKSON, MS -- Despite starting off slow on the offensive side of the ball, the Jaguars fell to a 26-0 deficit in the first quarter and was never able to recover.

Jackson State 43-24 in the 2022 Cricket Wireless Football Cham-

pionship Game inside Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium in front of 53,754 fans.

Southerns' quarterback Glendon McDaniel went 15-of-34 for 220 yards along with a 34-yard TD toss to Chandler Whitfield. McDan-

iel led the Jags in rushing as well with 172 yards off 20 carries and two scores to close out his stellar career at Southern University accounting for 392 yards of total offense. Ed

See GAME, on page 3

Warnock defeats Walker in Georgia runoff race

BY: ROSS WILLIAMS Courtesy Of Louisiana Illuminator

ATLANTA – Democratic U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock will return to Washington to represent Georgia for the next six years after winning his Senate runoff Tuesday, handing Senate Democrats a coveted 51st seat.

The Associated Press called the race at 10:26 p.m. Tuesday. By early Wednesday morning, Warnock had 51.3% of the vote, edging out Republican Herschel Walker by about 90,000 votes, according to unofficial results.

More than 1.8 million people voted in the shortened early voting period, and another 1.6 million voters cast a ballot Tuesday when steady turnout was reported across the state.

Warnock's win will boost the spirits of Georgia Democrats, who failed to win any other statewide office last month. Warnock led Walker by nearly 38,000 votes last month, but did not achieve 50% of the vote, forcing the runoff.

His victory will also give Senate Democrats 51 seats, cementing their slim majority and giving them more power in com-



U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Georgia, speaks during an election night watch party at the Marriott Marquis on Dec. 6, 2022, in Atlanta, Georgia. Warnock defeated his Republican challenger Herschel Walker in a runoff election. (Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)

mittees and in approving federal and judicial appointments. Democrats narrowly lost the House in November's midterm election.

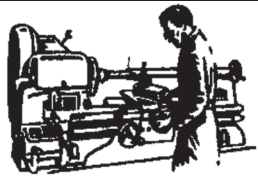
Warnock greeted hundreds of jubilant supporters at a ballroom in the downtown Atlanta Marri-

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LOCAL & STATE

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Lawmakers need more info before choosing Capitol police chief



(Photo by Greg LaRose/Louisiana Illuminator)

BY: GREG LAROSE
 Louisiana Illuminator

A panel of Louisiana lawmakers interviewed three finalists Tuesday for the new Capitol police chief, but they are not ready to make a choice yet.

The Capitol Security Council, which consists of House and Senate members, met almost exclusively in executive session to conduct the interviews. Senate President Page Cortez said afterward lawmakers need more information before making a decision.

He did not indicate a timeline

for when the council would meet again or choose a chief. Cortez has said the department would ideally be operating before the next legislative session.

The contenders for the job are Terry Alario Jr., a special agent/operations officer with the Louisiana Attorney General's Office; Lt. Rodney Hyatt, who works in evidence control for State Police; and Frederick Thomas, a district commander for the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office.

The state legislature approved the creation of a new Capitol police department earlier this year. It will

consist of some two dozen officers. Its jurisdiction covers the grounds of the Capitol and the Pentagon Apartments where lawmakers have housing.

The first-year budget for the new agency is \$2 million, including \$135,000 in salary and benefits for its chief.

GRINER from page 1

Biden stated.

He thanked the UAE for helping to facilitate Griner's release and noted that's where her plane landed after finally leaving Russia.

Biden noted that the past few months had been "hell" for Griner and her family.

He said she's in good spirits and relieved.

"She lost months of her life," Biden stated.

He said she deserves space, privacy, and time to heal in a not-so-subtle appeal to media members.

Biden added that Griner wrote him in July, not asking for special treatment.

"She said, please don't forget about me and the other American detainees," Biden said.

"We have not forgotten about Britney and Paul Whelan."

Biden emphasized that the one-for-one swap wasn't America's choice.

He said he wished to bring Whelan and any other wrongly detained American home.

"We have not yet secured Paul's release. But we have not given up, and we will never give up," Biden insisted.

"We'll keep negotiating for Paul's release in good faith. I urge Russia to do the same. My administration has brought home dozens of wrongly detained Americans and many who were detained before I took office," Biden continued.

Wilmington 10, also political prisoners.

Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus Mourns the Loss of Three Students Killed in Crash

Baton Rouge, Louisiana. On behalf of the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus Chairman Vincent J. Pierre and Members - we are saddened by the sudden and tragic loss of three Southern University students and Marching Band members, Broderick Moore, Dylan Young, and Tyran Williams, killed by an 18-wheeler crash.

"Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers go out to the families, students, friends, and loved ones as we mourn the loss of these exceptional students," said Chairman Pierre. The Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus asks that you keep these families and their loved ones lifted in prayer during this difficult time.

Mayor Broome Submits \$5 Million Budget Amendment for Additional Stormwater Funding

BATON ROUGE, La - December 8, 2022 - Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome today submitted a \$5 million amendment to the proposed 2023 operating budget to augment needed funding for MS4 permit compliance program of the City-Parish's stormwater drainage system. This amendment comes after Mayor Broome engaged in conversations with council members and constituents.

The \$5 million proposal will use a portion of funding originally

intended for the Budget Stabilization Fund from 2022 sales tax collections. This is in addition to the \$56 million of ARPA funds previously obligated for stormwater needs.

Mayor Broome will continue having conversations with council members concerning long-term funding for stormwater compliance and drainage beyond 2023.

The Metropolitan Council will vote on the proposed budget December 13, 2022.

Louisiana MBDA Business Center to Host the Equity & Infrastructure Opportunities Symposium with MBDA Under Secretary Don Cravins, Jr.

Baton Rouge, LA - On Friday, December 16, 2022, the Louisiana Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) Business Center is hosting the Equity and Infrastructure Opportunities Symposium to share upcoming federal contracting and capital opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses. The Louisiana Business Center is partnering with the National MBDA to host this event.

Mr. Donald Cravins, Jr., Under Secretary of Minority Business Development at the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), will be participating in the event.

Representatives from the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Transportation (DOT) and the DOC National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) will share upcoming procurement and capital opportunities for minority-owned businesses being made possible by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's \$1.2 trillion in infrastructure investments. Participants will have an opportunity to network and engage in one-on-one sessions with Federal Department representatives.

Prime and subcontractors

and trades are invited to attend: General construction, highway construction, electricians, janitorial, information technology, cybersecurity, broadband, battery recycling, HVAC, home energy efficient contractors, energy, and advanced manufacturing research firms.

"We are excited to partner with the National MBDA to host this type of symposium," said Charletta Fortson, director of the Louisiana MBDA. "Many business owners are still uncertain how the federal funding linked to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will be accessible to the small and minority-business community. This event affords our businesses a unique opportunity to hear directly from these various agencies about upcoming contract opportunities - both nationally and regionally."

The event is free and open to the public. Registration is required and can be completed at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/equity-infrastructure-opportunities-symposium-tickets-472871741107>.

For more information, please contact Lisa Green at lgreen@louisianambdacenter.com.

MAYOR from page 1

and forth talking about this, about that, a lot of hatred in people's hearts for a decision that someone made because they did not check with you about a decision

SANTA from page 1

We look forward to seeing the entire family dressed in

they made."

Nancy briefly described her business model at the meeting, saying she started the food truck to expand her brick-and-mortar. She said she had contested the ordinance after Baker police told her to shut down the food truck.

their holiday attire! For more information, contact Kirsten at ktwright@brla.gov, or the Jewel J. Newman Community Center at (225) 775-3935.



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OPINION

No More Magic Acts in the Jury Box

JULIETA SMITH



Julieta Smith

Abra Cadabra! Just like that, with a simple hand gesture, a skilled magician uses cognitive illusion to misdirect the attention of the audience. The audience is bewildered because they only see the beginning and end of a maneuver. The results defy explanation. They are left spellbound. This may sound like an evening in a Las Vegas showroom, but it isn't. It's a typical day in many Louisiana courtrooms where prosecutors perform the magic trick of "make jurors of color disappear." Louisiana criminal defense attorneys, Vanessa Williams and LaToia Williams-Simon, whose resumes include combined 30-years of legal experience, with 20-years dedicated to criminal prosecution, criminal defense, and focus on major felony and life without parole cases, have witnessed many of these legal magic shows. Williams and Simon encourage prospectus jurors of color to bring a few tricks of their own.

Because it is illegal to prevent jury service solely because of race, some of these legal magicians "challenge on cause instead of color," says Williams. She continues, "They [prosecutors] may ask a juror of color, 'Can you stay off work 4-5 days?.' 'Do you have family members convicted of a crime?.' 'How do you feel about the police?.' or 'Can you sit in judgement of another?.'" These and other such questions are commonly used because they mask discriminatory questions and use the unsuspecting juror's responses to justify their removal. Jurors of color should be prepared to answer honestly, yet creatively, and with full knowledge that a good magician can make things disappear. Let's consider the final question: "Can you sit in judgement of another?" The magician wants the juror of color to answer based on their religious beliefs. Instead, when the juror responds, "I do not believe in judgement but I will follow the law," delivering an honest, well-packaged response, the juror of color is harder to strike.

Georgia civil litigation attorney, and former prosecutor, Jessica Tehlirian, warns that social media is the latest trick in the magician's hat. "If your answer is that you do not hate the police, ensure your social media site is private or reflects your answer. Some prosecutors will view public records of jurors and use that to have them removed," Tehlirian says. Jurors of color must post with this in mind because jury diversity matters. Social media posts can aid prosecutors who seek to strategically remove jurors of color. Credible research establishes that most Louisiana parishes do not call people of color to serve on juries in their proper numbers. After this initial problem, for the people of color that arrive for jury duty, they face prosecutors performing magic tricks on them, creating jury panels that lack diversity, thereby stripping the defendant of a "jury of their peers." "If you need proof, look no further than Terren Johnson, a Louisiana defendant and victim of a white-washed jury orchestrated by magic, who now answers to inmate No. 432043." Will you remove the 'N' so it reads, "Louisiana?" Let's keep the Slight-of-Hand, Trick of the Eye, out of the jury box unless we are using it to make legal magicians disappear.

JULIETA SMITH is a third-year law student in Angela Allen-Bell's Civil Rights Litigation course at Southern University Law Center.

Role, Colonial Mentality, Played in Deaths of Smith & Brown Slaying of the Student Movement of 1972

BY HANDY BECKHAM



Handy Beckham

We just commemorated the 50th anniversary of the murders of Denver Smith and Leonard Brown. Following student organizing, boycotts, and protests over campus conditions, these students were killed on the campus of Southern University (SU) in Baton Rouge on November 16, 1972. Around this time, student leaders were arrested and legally enjoined from returning to campus. Each November 16th, a spotlight shines on these tragic events. The spotlight never illuminates how colonial mentality played in all of this. To understand what unfolded that day, it must be considered.

George Leon Netterville was the President of SU at the time. He was a Black male like Smith and Brown and most student leaders. It appears Netterville misled the students on that dreadful day. As students followed Netterville's instructions and awaited his return to campus, calls were placed to law enforcement officials by SU officials representing that President Netterville was being held hostage, justifying a militarized law enforcement response. Social Psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró stated that Colonial mentality is one of the most damaging outcomes of colonization, where colonizers are perceived as superior to the culture, society, and heritage of colonized people. This means that the colonial mentality is a direct product of years of degradation and oppression by the power structure in various countries. The colonial mentality is as culpable as those officers who threw the tear gas and fired the shots that day. The colonial mentality loaded the gun for the one who pulled the trigger on November 16, 1972.

A 3rd-year student at Southern University Law Center enrolled in Professor Angela A. Allen-Bell's Law & Racism class.

While colonial mentality has affected the victims of November 16, 1972, negatively, it has had a twisted positive effect for the abusers. This is because colonial mentality causes those victimized to suppress their stories due to feelings of inferiority giving the abuser the impression that even when they engage in criminal behavior, they are immune to the consequences because they are superior, and the stories will go untold. The only way to combat the colonial mentality is by gaining true knowledge of self and a knowledge of history. Psychology tells us that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. So, it is imperative that we teach this history, and how it correlates with the colonial mentality so that it will never happen again. Colonial mentality forces victims to embody and protect the values and practices of the oppressors which causes self-destruction. It is important that we teach the next generation to break this destructive cycle.

The only way to combat the colonial mentality is by gaining proper knowledge of self and history. Psychology tells us that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. So, it is imperative that we teach this history and how it correlates with the colonial mentality so that it will never happen again. The colonial mentality forces the abused to embody and protect the values and practices of the oppressors, and those practices cause self-destruction. So, we must teach the next generation so that they can break this destructive cycle.

Even though the tragic slaying of Denver Smith and Leonard Brown occurred 50 years ago, Black men are still being murdered like animals by police. The colonial mentality has made it permissible for police to brutalize Blacks in this country without fear of consequences subconsciously. The police are still firing bullets that are filled with oppression, swinging fists that are filled with superiority, and plowing knees that are filled with immunity that crush the necks of the abused due to the same twisted effects of the colonial mentality that took the lives of Denver Smith and Leonard Brown in 1972.

HANDY BECKHAM is a third-year law student at the Southern University Law Center. Handy Beckham majored in psychology, and that is where his metamorphosis began. Guided by great professors in the department of psychology Handy was able to study Black Psychology, African Self-Consciousness, and the importance of African Americans knowing and learning themselves from their own cultural perspective. Studying black psychology also assisted Handy in realizing that his purpose in life was to impact black life in a positive manner. Which ultimately led him to the Southern University Law Center. Under the tutelage of legal scholar Professor Angela Allen-Bell, Handy was able to continue working in his purpose of impacting black life through research, advocacy, and journalism.

The views and opinions expressed in this articles are those of the writwes and do not necessarily reflect the views or position of the Baton Rouge Weekly Press Newspaper or its Staff.

Follow Dreams Productions and Child Development Institute Announce A Holiday Celebration of Women

BATON ROUGE, LA — Follow Dreams Productions and Child Development Institute are teaming up for A Holiday Celebration of Women. The event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel located at 4728 Constitution Avenue in Baton Rouge, LA 70808, December 10, 2022 from 11am to 2pm.

Normally held in the month of March during National Women's Month, it is a gathering of minds in regards to life, equality and career. It builds on successes and accomplishment of women all over the world; it is our desire to draw attention to the many roles that women play in our society and the tremendous impact they have on families, businesses, communities and the overall well-being of mankind.

A Celebration of Women will address the strong resilience of women of all race and background. We will debate and discuss the core issues that we face and bring



GISELE HARALSON

together women who have thrived in their respective businesses, careers, and everyday life.

A Celebration of Women was founded by educator, author, radio personality and film producer Gisele Haralson to uplift, inspire and motivate women from all walks of life.

She is also the Executive Director of Child Development Institute whose mission and goal is to provide a place where students and families can witness the spirit of caring, nurturing and encouraging others in their rise to greatness, regardless of their race, gender, disability or social economic status. The desire to help others is what she wants instill in today's youth as well as an appreciation for the Arts.

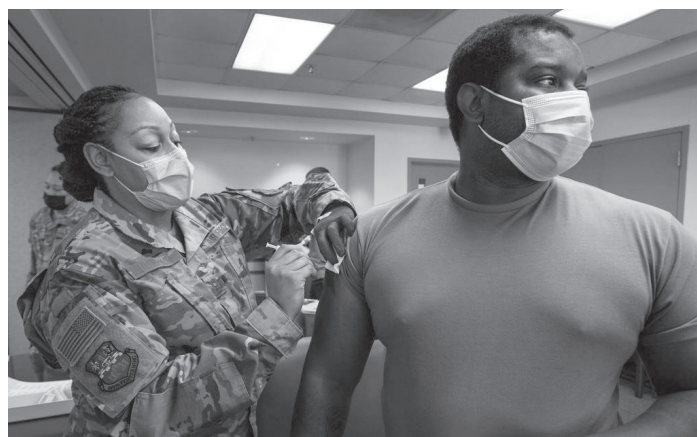
Featured guests include many of Louisiana Leading Ladies like Judge Erica Green, School Board Member, Dawn Collins, Councilwomen Chauna Banks, and Tia Edwards and a number of other extraordinary women in leadership in the area of business, government, education, politics, and community activism.

Tickets are \$50.00. For more information please visit www.acelebrationofwomenla.com.

House Bill to Repeal U.S. Military Vaccine Mandate and Increase Pay for U.S. Servicemembers

WASHINGTON, DC — The US House of Representatives is expected to imminently pass the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which will repeal the U.S. military vaccine mandate and increase pay for U.S. servicemembers. Additionally, the bill counters bad actors such as Russia, China, Iran and others.

"Our servicemembers deserve to be paid appropriately and have the best equipment and technology we can invest in. They need to have the upper hand. The legislation also repeals the COVID-19 vaccine mandate that numerous active-duty military constituents have reached out



Capt. Shamira Conerly of the 149th Medical Group gives Staff Sgt. Timmy Sanders of the 149th Maintenance Squadron his first dose of COVID-19 vaccine on Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas on March 18, 2021. (Senior Airman Ryan Mancuso/Air National Guard)

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ott Marquis, walking on stage to chants of "six more years." He told stories of being raised in Savannah's public housing as the son of a mother who as a teenager worked as a sharecropper and a father who was a small business owner and pastor.

Warnock said the fruits of hard work bore out last night as Georgians put faith into action by voting.

"Georgia you have been praying with your lips and your legs,

with your hands and with your hearts and your heart." Warnock said. "You've put in the hard work and here we are standing together."

In a concession speech at the College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta, Walker thanked his supporters and said he was proud of what his team had accomplished.

"One of the things I want to tell all of you is you never stop dreaming," he said. "I don't want any of you to stop dreaming. I don't want any of you to stop believing in America. I want you to believe in America and

continue to believe in the Constitution and believe in our elected officials. Most of all, continue to pray for them because of all the prayers you've given me, I felt those prayers."

President Joe Biden said he called to congratulate Warnock.

"Tonight Georgia voters stood up for our democracy, rejected Ultra MAGAism, and most importantly: sent a good man back to the Senate. Here's to six more years," Biden said on Twitter.

Congressman Troy Carter Elected Regional Whip by Colleagues

Carter Adds a New Voice to Party's Leadership Team

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Last night, Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. was unanimously elected to the leadership position of Regional Whip in a vote conducted by members of the Democratic Caucus. Louisiana is a part of Region 7, which includes the states of Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina and the territory of the Virgin Islands.

"I'm honored to take on this role and add our voice, Louisiana's voice, to the Democratic leadership team," said Congressman Carter. "The states and territory of Region 7 have many unique issues facing our constituents, including natural disaster response and recovery. I am eager to work with our new Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Democratic Whip Katherine Clark, and Democratic Caucus Chairman Pete Aguilar to uplift the voices of constituents and members of Region 7."

Carter will formally assume the position when the 118th Congress is sworn on January 3rd, 2023 when the 118th Congress convenes.

GAME from page 1

Magee had a career-high night for the Jags with 68 yard off three catches.

The Jags defense played solid all game led by junior cornerback Kriston Davis with 13 tackles and one pass breakup. Junior linebacker Jalan Campbell closed out the night with eight tackles. Senior safety Corione Harris finished the night with eight tackles and 0.5 tackle for a four-yard loss.

Southern has claimed eight SWAC Western Division Championships and made its 8th appearance in the SWAC Football Championship game. The Jaguars say good bye to 19 seniors on Saturday night that has played a vital part of team success this season.



CELEBRATION OF WOMEN

LINKING THE CHAINS TO SUCCESS

2022

DECEMBER 10TH

2022

11:00 AM TO 02:00 PM

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TICKETS \$50

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Audrey McCain



Chauna Banks



Dr. Donesha Clayton



Dawn Collins



Ruth Collins



Dr. Leah Cullins



Tia Edwards



Judge Erika Green



Dr. Eva Kleinpeter



Chrisdyana Morgan



Patricia Stemley Palmer



Joaneane A. Smith



Dr. Gia Tyson



Dr. Katara Williams



Constable Terrica Williams

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A portion of proceeds will go to a nonprofit

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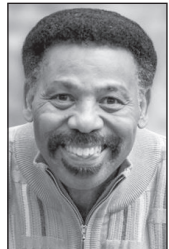
RELIGION

The Reality of Eternity



BR DR. TONY EVANS

In His Presence: Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony" (Luke 16:25).



Tony Evans

At the end of time, we will all face the Lord and He will want to know how we used our time on earth to get ready for eternity. If we only live for earth, all we will receive is earth. But once we start living for heaven, earth is just a bonus to the eternal existence we will enjoy.

It is foolish to try to run from death. Instead, we must decide to be creatures of eternity. Paul said

to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). If you are in Christ you have no reason to fear death because when you die, you will instantly be with God.

Since we were made for eternity, what are we doing in light of what we were made for? Paul set the example when he said: "Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2). Paul's mind was on heaven, but he was still functioning for the Lord here on earth. He was heavenly minded but still did earthly good. Because he lived in light of His eternal purpose, he made his life decisions in light of the reference point of eternity.

Everybody you know is headed toward eternity; nobody has any other choice. This life is not all there is, so we share Jesus Christ with our unsaved neighbors. We live for God's glory because this life is not all there is.

Who's In Your Corner?

You won't get anywhere in the Christian life if you try to do it alone.

BY TIM RHODES

It was a chilly March morning in a state park outside of Atlanta, Georgia. Faint embers of orange had begun to appear on the horizon. At this time, I would have still felt half-asleep had it not been for the butterflies thrashing in my stomach. Sitting in the passenger seat of my friend Charles' pickup truck, I sipped coffee, attempting to calm my nerves before the race.

On the way to the registration table, Charles and I passed what appeared to be elite runners, performing elaborate stretches I had never seen before, much less attempted. Everybody seemed so ready. Though I had run a handful of half marathons before—and even 25k races—I still felt out of place, as if I'd snuck into a club where I didn't belong.

Charles himself was calm and prepared. Coming off a recent 100-mile race (yes, you read that correctly), he was more than ready for the scant 31 we would be running today. Knowing he was by my side gave me the confidence that I desperately needed. In the months leading up to the race, Charles kept up with my progress, motivating me and ensuring I would be prepared. Throughout the week he would text me, asking about my runs and giving guidance on any questions I might have. Even during the race, he stayed with me for the first 10 miles, keeping me company and helping me gear up for the more

grueling stretches later in the course.

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Tim Rhodes

Through the journey of preparing for an ultramarathon, I couldn't help but be reminded of our need for others while navigating our walk with Christ. In Christian vernacular, we often talk about "accountability partners"—a close one-on-one relationship characterized by openness, vulnerability, and encouragement during the ups and downs of life. Our connections in the body of Christ are meant to serve the same purpose as mine with Charles—supporting us at our weakest, cheering us on at our best, and caring for and inspiring along the way.

Consider Hebrews 12:1-2, which describes this dynamic in the church: "Therefore, since we also have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let's rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith." While Charles was a vital partner to train with, ultimately it was a community of friends that advised me along the way.

My brother, an encyclopedia of fitness and exercise knowledge, offered nutrition advice from his past endurance runs. My friend Ian ran with me in our neighborhood, checking in on my progress. Friends from church and coworkers provided valuable insight and information.

Even during the race itself, volunteers at the aid stations provided not only water and snacks but the very necessary laughs and high fives of encouragement. More often than not, they had experienced the same highs and lows of the race in the past.

At the final aid station, I told a volunteer how happy I was to have just a little farther to go. His face dropped as he asked, "Uh, have you ever run this race before? Well, it's actually a little over a 50k," he said slowly, knowing he was knocking the wind out of my already battered sails. "You're running closer to 33 miles."

Our connections in the body of Christ are meant to serve the same purpose as mine with Charles—supporting us at our weakest, cheering us on at our best, and caring for and inspiring along the way.

In almost any other situation, I might have collapsed on the spot. Nearly two additional miles was enough to demoralize me completely. But after the many months of support from friends, and after miles of motivation from Charles during the race, I felt a second (or third—or fourth!) wind and made it over the finish line.

Though we all work out our faith on an individual basis, we were never meant to go solo in charting our Christian walk—what Hebrews 12:1 refers to as "the race that is set before us." We're at our best united in community, "so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same care for one other. And if one part of the body suffers, all of the parts suffers with it; if a part is honored, all the parts rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:25-26). As the body of Christ, we're responsible for each other, ensuring every last one of us crosses that finish line.

Brian Courtney Wilson Announces 2023 Transitions Tour

Houston, TX — Brian Courtney Wilson announces his 2023 tour in support of his newest full-length live album, Transitions.



Brian Courtney Wilson

Special guests still to be announced will open the set of shows, which will City Winery venues around the country. The "Transitions Tour" begins in Chicago on January 25 and wraps in February at the famed Birchmere Music Hall in Arlington, VA. More dates are to be added.

After back-to-back breakthrough albums "A Great Work," "Still," and a slew of Number 1 songs, Wilson returned with new music last month with Transitions featuring the lead single "Always Peace."

Recorded live in Nashville, TN is beautifully rooted in the Black music tradition with Wilson's earnest and intentional presentation. The album has been quickly acclaimed and generates dialogue with listeners about faith, family and community. Teaming up with celebrated producer and music director Dana Sorety, the pair created an audacious musical conversation backed by world-class musicians and singers.

Favorable reception to Transitions continues to pour in upon Wilson's release of the longform live concert video "The Transition Experience" to YouTube.

"Transitions Tour" is booked through Maria Matias Music. Tickets for all shows are on sale now. For ticket and venue information, visit transitionstour.com

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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

Small business owners could be eligible for money through federal initiative

State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI)



SSBCI is a \$10 billion federal program that helps states support small businesses and startups that are creditworthy but unable to access the capital they need to grow or establish their businesses and create jobs.

The first SSBCI was established in 2010. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 reauthorized and expanded SSBCI to increase access to capital and promote entrepreneurship, especially in traditionally underserved communities as they emerge from the pandemic. U.S. Treasury guidelines ensure that Very Small Businesses (VSBs) and small businesses owned by Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals (SEDIs) will receive critical resources to sustainably grow and thrive.

Louisiana received official U.S. Treasury approval for up to \$113 million in SSBCI funds on Dec. 6, 2022. (Read the LED news release here.) Disbursement of the full amount is dependent on hitting federal funding benchmarks for VSBs and SEDIs, whose access to capital may have been limited in the past.

LED, via the Louisiana Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), will work with private equity funds and financial institutions to disburse SSBCI funds via collateral support, equity, micro lending and loan guaranty programs.

A high-level description of each program and its potential financial benefits can be found by clicking the "Programs" dropdown below. Use the directory at left (on a desktop computer) or below (on a mobile device) to access additional detail about eligibility requirements, program rules, application process, participating providers and frequently asked questions about the various programs.

Like the first SSBCI, which concluded in 2017, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 authorizes the new initiative for seven years. Approval of Louisiana's allocation is an important but early step. The process of qualifying and opting in as a participating provider will be ongoing over a period of several months; the same is true of application processes, which vary by program, fund and lender, and are likely to evolve over time.

LED will post all of the latest developments about the program – including updated fund and lender names and contact info as new providers opt into SSBCI program – on this website.

BY CHRIS ROSATO

BATON ROUGE, La. - Small business owners could see some money start to head their way thanks to federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan.

The money is going to come from the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) which was refunded after President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan back in 2021.

Small businesses make up a large chunk of the businesses here in Louisiana, more than 90% in fact. And over 50% of people work for one of them.

While on a call with the White House on Tuesday, Dec. 6, Gov. John Bel Edwards explained how Louisiana will be getting \$113 million out of the \$10 billion allocated across the country.

"That is a tremendous boost to economic resilience and diversification and those are two things that we are super focused on here in Louisiana. In particular, because it gives us a historic opportunity in those underserved urban and rural communities that have struggled," said Gov. Edwards.

After a pandemic that brought on problem after problem and a



horrific wave of hurricanes, two of which were the strongest on record, some small businesses still have yet to catch up with the competition.

"We're confident that we can get these dollars into the hands of Louisiana business owners and entrepreneurs as efficiently and quickly as possible," Gov. Edwards explained.

Folks can start applying toward the end of the first quarter of 2023. But keep in mind, not everyone is eligible because this is not a federal grant.

"What a good candidate might look like is those that are available

that want to participate in venture capital and then on the other side, those entrepreneurs out there that have a great idea that they believe to be market ready that want to talk to investors," said Secretary Don Pierson with the Louisiana Economic Development Corporation. If you are eligible for the money, there will be some guidelines on how to spend it. To view all the specifics and where to apply, visit <https://www.opportunitylouisiana.gov/small-business/> and choose one of the programs on the sidebar.

BILL from page 3

to our office expressing concerns about and has even challenged recruitment efforts. Even President Biden said three months ago that the pandemic was over – it's time to stop punishing those serving and protecting our freedoms," Graves said. "This bill will also put us back

toward maritime supremacy across the globe and advance U.S. interests. Many of our national security ships are built right here in Louisiana. This means this bill gives our state jobs, economic development and a seat at the national security table." Below is a breakdown of how the vaccine mandate is hurting military recruiting efforts and hurting U.S. service members.

- Army: 15,000 soldiers short, 25 percent of target.
- Navy: 587 officers short, barely met target for enlisted sailors.
- Air Force: 5,000 airmen behind on next year's goal, barely met this year's target.
- Marine Corps: Had to increase retention and reduce recruiting targets this year to meet them.

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