

Vol. 16 | AUG 2025

Black VOICES



The
DEMOCRACY
Issue

We the People

...domestic Tranquillity, do ordain and establish
...our Posterity, do hereby constitute and establish
...the Supreme Law of the Land

...the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.



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From the Editor

THE SHREDDING OF AMERICA

The fabric of democracy in the U.S. is unravelling before our eyes. The guardians of democracy are failing to protect it, revealing its fragility. This issue of Black Voices centers the threats to our greatness and authenticity as a democratic nation – the “Shredding of America.”

The Constitution, laws, policies, and programs that we believed guaranteed our greatness now appear to be useless, irrelevant paper documents. While the bedrock of our Republic, these documents and their accompanying policies and processes seem to some in power as barriers to complete power and control. The three branches of government that should provide checks and balances have thrown the Constitution and its supporting laws and policies along with the values and moral code that support a Democracy and define our true greatness into the shredder for disposal.

Our nation’s long, tumultuous history through slavery, wars, racial and social oppression did not anticipate that so much progress could be “shredded” in less than six months with the signature of a despot. Yet, through 265 quick and thoughtlessly written executive orders, the U.S. has become a nation to fear or dismiss, not to admire. Who knew that Congress and the Supreme Court, the guardians of our Constitution and laws, would so readily align their formidable decision-making power with those who threaten democracy?

Some who could stop the shredding of America fear speaking out against this travesty of justice lest they get shredded. No one person is responsible for this shredding. As a nation governed by and for the people, we the people

must share responsibility for the decline and take action to stop it and reverse it. The good news is that “We the People” can and must join hands and work together to save our nation. A functional democracy requires its citizens’ commitment and productive energy. No outside force or group can do the work required for healing our communities and nation and preserving democracy.

This democracy is ours to destroy; it is ours to protect. The choice is ours, as are the consequences of our efforts and our failures to act.

Throughout my life’s journey working for Justice, I have met many fellow travelers who shared my commitment to justice and my loyalty to the country, the community and one’s neighbor. Together we can make a difference.

CHARLOTTE KING

Editor-in-Chief, Lewes, DE

This issue’s dedicated authors discuss voter suppression, food insufficiency, and education losses among other topics.

Black Voices can also be YOUR microphone. Speak out. Send your comments, suggestions for future articles, or an article for consideration in a future issue to info@sdarj.org with Black Voices in the subject line.

Even if writing is not your vehicle, you can commit to do something to end the Shredding of America.



A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF



... Ending racism and its corrosive consequences

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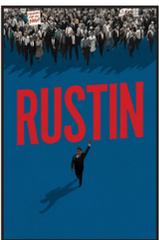
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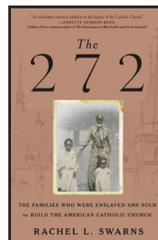
SDARJ Book & Film Discussions

Lewes Library | 111 Adams Ave, Lewes, DE 19958 | 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm



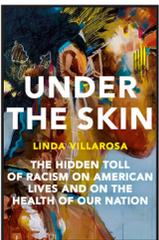
August 26

FILM: Rustin
Supplemental reading: Bayard Rustin:
A Legacy of Protest and Politics.



September 23

BOOK: The 272: The Families Who Were Enslaved and Sold to Build the American Catholic Church
by Rachel L. Swarns



October 28

BOOK: Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on Health in America
by Linda Villarosa



November 25

FILM: What Happened, Miss Simone?
Supplemental reading: I Put a Spell on You: The Autobiography of Nina Simone

Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice Elects New Chairperson and Appoints Executive Director



Rev. Marjorie Belmont, Chair



Gwendolyn Miller,
Vice Chair



Joseph Lawson,
Executive Director

Community Outreach Tour to Launch Under New Leadership

GEORGETOWN, DE – The Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice (SDARJ) proudly announces the election of **Reverend Marjorie Belmont as Chairperson, the appointment of Ms. Gwendolyn Miller as Vice Chair, and the selection of Mr. Joseph Lawson as its first Executive Director.** These leadership transitions mark a historic milestone for the organization as it expands its mission-driven outreach and advocacy efforts across Sussex County.

Reverend Marjorie Belmont, a native of Selbyville, DE, and retired Ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church (presently serving Israel UMC, Lewes, DE), now serves as Chairperson of SDARJ. Rev. Belmont brings over thirty years of ministry, leadership, and community service experience throughout Delaware and Maryland. Her career has included pastoral appointments at several United Methodist congregations, where she initiated dozens of ministries serving children, families, and the underserved.

Rev. Belmont holds a Bachelor of Science in Foods and Nutrition

from Delaware State University and a Master of Divinity from Palmer Theological Seminary. Her deep commitment to equity and education has led to active service on numerous boards and coalitions, including Pathways to Success, Haven Ministries, Cape Henlopen School Board, and the Multi-Faith Steering Committee of the Lewes-Rehoboth area. She serves as Chairperson of SDARJ and Chair of the Peninsula-Delaware United Methodist Conference Delaware District Committee on Ministry.

Reverend Belmont stated, “I am honored to continue serving with SDARJ in this new capacity. My life’s work has been rooted

in service, equity, and creating space for every individual to thrive. Together, under new leadership, we are prepared to take this organization to even greater heights—by listening, leading, and serving with purpose and compassion.”

Gwendolyn Miller, M.S. Ed., newly appointed Vice Chair, is a dedicated and experienced Racial Microaggressions Consultant and Expert Witness. She received her Master of Science in Education from the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, Applied Psychology and Human Development Division. As founder of *Addressing Racial Microaggressions, LLC*, she offers expert consultation and witness services and also facilitates the "Rothman Women in Leadership" program at the University of Toronto.

Miller has held numerous leadership roles, including Chair of SDARJ’s Education Committee, Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for the League of Women Voters of Delaware, and President of the League of Women Voters of Delaware. She also serves on the Advisory Board for the Indian River School District and leads SDARJ’s Community Partnership with the John Dickinson Plantation—a model collaboration focused on reshaping institutional narratives to better represent historically marginalized voices.

Her deep commitment to equity, education, and collaboration continues to shape SDARJ’s strategic direction and impact.

Mr. Joseph Lawson, a Sussex County resident and longtime SDARJ board member (2020–2025), brings decades of corporate and nonprofit leadership experience. A graduate of Yale University with a B.A. in African American Studies and an MBA in Marketing from Columbia University, Lawson has held leadership roles at Verizon, Comcast, ESPN, and Black Entertainment Television, with a career-long focus on promoting diversity in content and leadership.

He has been honored for his nonprofit work with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Divine Alternatives for Dads (DADS), where he was named “Big Brother of the Year” in 2018. As a past board president of the National Association for Multi-Ethnicity in Communications, Lawson helped expand membership, launch national mentoring programs, and hire its first executive director.

As SDARJ’s Executive Director, Lawson is committed to strengthening support for Black communities in Sussex County—especially in underserved western areas—and elevating the voices and needs of Black children and families. His priorities include

growing SDARJ’s educational programs, expanding outreach through the Black Voices newsmagazine and website, and fostering a safe space for allies and advocates dedicated to racial justice. His leadership will be guided by SDARJ’s core approach: listening, leading, and serving.

In alignment with this new chapter, SDARJ is preparing to launch a Sussex County Community Tour, with dates and locations to be announced soon. The tour will introduce residents to SDARJ’s mission and leadership, share important community resources, and offer direct engagement for individuals impacted by racial disparities. Attendees will learn how to connect with services, partners, and programs designed to improve quality of life and promote equity throughout the region.

SDARJ remains steadfast in its mission “to educate, inform, and advocate for racial and social justice, equality, and equity, and to end racism and its terrible consequences.” The organization continues to address the needs and aspirations of the Black community by listening, leading, and serving with compassion, courage, and commitment.

Rev. Marjorie Belmont, Chair
Gwendolyn Miller, Vice Chair
Joseph Lawson, Executive Director

“More Perfect”—The Torturous Perfecting

BY DANIA GRIFFIN



Democracy is once again at an inflection point:

Mass deportations without due process. Masked assailants in unmarked vehicles conducting midnight or mid-day raids, whisking away citizens and immigrants alike.

The wholesale reduction and/or elimination of essential government agencies and

services including FEMA, the Department of Education, HHS, and the National Weather Service. The forced retirements and outright firings of federal employees. Banning and burning books, denying demonstrable facts and replacing them with equally demonstrable lies.

With the seeming intent of redefining reality these illus-

trate the breadth and depth of the insidious and ongoing threat American democracy faces. American democracy is at an inflection point.

But this is not new. Democracy has always been under attack. There have always been enemies without and within who have schemed, plotted, and planned against the common good.

In 1787, the story goes, Benjamin Franklin was asked, "...what sort of government have you given us?" His reported response was, "...a republic...if you can keep it..." Franklin's answer is as relevant today as it was then.

We are at a crossroad. And American democracy is in the balance. As to our part, Franklin's response is clear. "You" (i.e., the people) have the responsibility of keeping it [the republic]." The question today is, "Are we willing to keep it?"

More Perfect

The preamble of the U.S. Constitution begins with, "We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union..."

"More perfect" suggests that the framers of the Constitution understood that from its inception the *idea* of America is to be in perennial pursuit of the *ideal* of America. They understood that it would be an ongoing process. To that point, since taking full effect in 1789, the Constitution has been amended 27 times. America has never been perfect. However, with every piece of legislation, adjudication, and action it has edged a little closer to the "more perfect."

It has been a torturous, serpentine journey. The Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the U.S. Constitution all stumbled on civil rights for women, the enslaved, and the indigenous. The framers proclaimed "liberty for all" while many themselves were enslavers.

They declared the inalienability of human rights while concurrently alienating millions from those same rights. They professed the equality of all men but at the same time instituted the 3/5th doctrine. They promised self-determination for all but denied the right to vote for many.

Three steps forward, five backwards. Extremists advancing, then retreating. Tortuous, torturous and relentless. Yet, still, perfecting.

More Than Documents

The founding documents, as substantive and wonderful as they are, are ultimately humans' feeble attempts to codify the "ought"-ness of the nation even in the face of its often-conflicting and challenging "is"-ness.

But America is more than documents. America is an aspiration. It is a shared vision, one fueled by the core belief that every individual has the right to seek his/her best destiny and realize his/her fullest potential ("life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.")

It seems the founders always had in mind a nation that was beyond their 18th century ability to conceive. A nation that did not yet exist. A "more perfect union" that—in time—would more closely approximate its "ought"-ness.

The Promise of America

No, America was not then and is not now perfect. In fact, at times

it has been provably antithetical to the values expressed in its founding documents.

However, the promise of America has endured. Through continental expansion, Civil War and World wars. Through Slave Codes, Black Codes and Jim Crow. Through internment of our fellow citizens, segregation, and civil rights struggles. Through isolationism, globalism, nationalism, fascism, and Nazism. Through extremists on all sides. Through all of these and so many more, the promise has endured.

It has endured because the vision embedded in the founding documents is larger than the documents themselves. It is a vision of self-actualized citizens. Citizens who are free from fear of persecutions. Citizens who are confident in the promise—if not the actuality—that lawlessness was not and never would become the norm. It has endured because with each iteration, we continue to strive to be better versions of our individual and collective selves.

It Is Tortuous

However, this is not a direct line. There have been and will continue to be zigs and zags, waxing and waning, steps forward, backward, and sideways. Right now, we are in another moment when some of our worst impulses are on full display.

Moreover, we've come face to face with existential choices.

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Increasing food, housing, health, and insurance insecurity. Burgeoning national and personal debt. Climate change. More virulent pathogens. Destruction of our educational system. Gang violence. Political violence. In truth, we are face to face with ourselves. Who do we want to be?

Out Of Many, One

The recent attack on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is an attack on the very soul of America. It is an attack on the framers' vision for America.

Since 1776 *E pluribus unum* has been the traditional—if unofficial—motto of the United States. It means, “out of many, one.” Out of thirteen colonies, one nation emerged. It is a recognition that America is more than one colony or any one individual. We are many. Many ethnicities. Many creeds. Many paths leading us to here and now. America was born of Diversity, is driven by the promise of Equity, and is revealed in the Inclusion promised to every citizen.

The Declaration of Independence begins with “...all men are created equal...with certain inalienable rights...among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” This is not to say that the founders understood the exact evolution of this promise. But they laid a foundation that has enabled the nation to grow and develop as it has... perpetually pursuing “out of many, one.”

It's No Surprise

Consequently, it's not surprising that Americans in deep red states and deep blue states alike have reacted viscerally to recent events. Americans young and old, of every race and ethnicity are standing up and speaking out.

It's very telling that, with few exceptions, left, right, middle; Christian, Jew, Muslim; atheist, agnostic, spiritualist; wealthy, middle-class, or poverty-stricken we can sense the danger. We can see the door to democracy creaking shut even as the door to dictatorship and demagoguery swings wide open. We can see law and order differentially applied where the justice received is determined by political connections, social status, or ability to pay.

And if we are totally, brutally honest, we can see that none of us feel safe. We can see that at any given moment, without warning, any of us can be unjustly accused, whisked away without due process, adjudicated in some secret court, and disappeared forever. Tell the truth. You feel it, too. Don't you?

But this, too, is part of the perfecting.

Proverbs reminds us that “...iron sharpens iron.” This means that going through makes us stronger. That engagement makes us better. From the slave trading blocks of Jamestown, VA to the Inauguration of President Barack Obama, we're better. From fighting for national indepen-

dence in 1776 to the passage of the Civil Rights legislation, we're better. From Father Coughlin (look him up) to Martin Luther King, Jr., we're better. From indigenous/native oppression, through Japanese interment, to the “walls” of moms, vets, and others standing shoulder to shoulder with other Americans and—together—fighting for equal treatment under the law, we're better.

Not perfect. **More** perfect!

It is a tortuous, torturous process.

Our Path Forward

Yes, the perfecting is and always has been torturous. And the future promises more of the same. So, what is our path forward? What do we do?

We have to change our perspective. We can't limit ourselves to focusing only on this momentary experience. History is replete with a litany of wannabe dictators, despots, and demagogues. Evil is ever present. There have always been autocrats, plutocrats, and oligarchs. There has always been someone who will take advantage of our fears who is waiting to translate any moment of uncertainty into a power grab, political opportunity, or an opening for personal economic enrichment.

When we take a step back, we can see that, while they may have had temporary success,

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The Fight for Voting Rights in America **PART I**

BY JESSICA CLARK

After retirement, as an adult education English as a Second Language teacher, for one module I began discussing U.S. history, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution preparing students to become citizens. My mostly Hispanic and Haitian students were expected to know the answers to 100 questions although the actual citizenship test required answers to only twenty-five random questions. In the ten years I taught, not one of my students failed the citizenship test. I wonder, readers, how many of you could pass the random test?

As early as 1789, the Constitution granted states the power to set voting requirements mostly limited to property-owning and tax-paying White males. A few states allowed free Black men to vote and New Jersey included unmarried and widowed women who owned property to vote. It wasn't until 1870, when the 15th Amendment was ratified, that Black and White men had the right to vote. But Black citizens were still disenfranchised due to Jim Crow tactics such as literacy tests, poll taxes, intimidation, and violence. It wasn't until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that Black men were granted the full right to vote. In 1920, three quarters of the states voted to give women – selectively white women – the right to vote and the 19th Amendment was added to the Constitution. Even today, southern voters, especially in

communities of color, still deal with modern-day voter suppression.

The right to vote for Black and White women began in the 1800s when women realized they needed voting rights to reform child labor laws and promote public health. The women's suffrage movement began in 1869 with disagreements about the 15th Amendment granting voting rights to Black men but not women. To extend the vote to women, suffrage depended upon male supporters, who were state legislators and members of Congress. The movement, for the most part, excluded Black women's efforts. Getting the constitutional amendment required three-quarters of the 48 states in the union.

The women's suffrage movement historically excluded Black women's efforts, with a few exceptions. In 1896, the National Association of Colored Women called for reforms to address the economic, educational and social welfare of Black women and children, such as job training programs, fair wages, and child care. Alternatively, thousands of White women opposed suffrage stating it would undermine women's influence in the home and family. They framed their roles, as wives and mothers, as political virtues to advance a more moral government.

In 1916, Jeannette Rankin, a White woman and committed suffragette from Montana, was greeted by lawmakers with a

standing ovation when she became the first woman elected to Congress. For several months, in 1917, the National Women's Party protested in silence six days a week, outside the White House to pressure President Woodrow Wilson to support women's suffrage. On November 10, 1917, thirty-three suffragists were arrested and jailed. They were fed maggot-infested food, beaten and tortured. The suffragists protested with a hunger strike and were brutally force fed. They were released after the Washington, D.C. Court of Appeals ruled their arrests unconstitutional.

Not to be intimidated, Black women and men continued the fight for voting rights. In 1920, Mary McLeod Bethune led Florida voter registration drives while risking racist attacks. Fannie Lou Hamer, the youngest of 20 children born into a sharecropping family and the granddaughter of enslaved people, organized Black voter registration efforts in the South in the early 1960s. In 1963, she and other activists were arrested at a café and held down during an almost fatal beating in a Mississippi jail when she started to scream. They endured four days of abuse. The incident left her with profound physical and psychological effects including a blood clot over her left eye, permanent kidney damage, and a worsened limp. At the 1964 Democratic National Convention, she boldly denounced state-sanctioned

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they've ultimately failed. They have failed because over time they were exposed. They have failed because, eventually, the majority rose up, resisted, and resolved to do what's best for the whole. We must change our perspective.

Identify where we can have the greatest impact. Archimedes of Syracuse, a Greek mathematician and philosopher, said, "Give me a place to stand, and I shall move the world." To effect the change we seek—to move the world—we must find our standing place.

Active engagement in electoral politics is where we take a stand. Join with others who agree with you. Whether as a candidate, worker, volunteer and, most certainly, a voter...STAND! Your vote is your voice. Let your voice be heard.

The upcoming 2026 congressional elections will determine who certifies the 2028 presidential elections. If you want to be heard in January 2028, make sure you are heard in November 2026 (don't forget the primaries that lead up to the election). Choose where you will stand and move the world.

Persist. Your action cannot be a one-off. Follow up your action with more action. You must be in it for the long haul. Your opposition doesn't take days off. Neither can you. Your opponent's opinion doesn't waver with every wind or doctrine. Neither can yours. Your adver-

sary doesn't get distracted by every tweet, post, or revelation. Neither can you.

To achieve your desired outcome, you must exceed your opposition's commitment and conviction. Be ready, stand, stick, and stay. Because that is what it's going to take.

In Closing, the Torturous Perfecting

America is not perfect. But with each step we are becoming "... more perfect..." There have been and always will be ebbs and flows. There'll be times when the nation—divided by race, rank, or any number of human inventions—seems to be torn, coming apart at the seams, poised to utterly fall. Then, there will be other times when we will seem inseparable, indivisible, and indomitable. Both are real.

That is how perfecting works. We are the "iron" that sharpens. America can only be perfected when we change our perspective, chose our point of impact, and persist.

James Weldon Johnson perfectly captures this sense of perfecting in his poem *Lift Every Voice and Sing*.

The 2nd verse reads,

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope
unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat
Have not our weary feet

Come to the place for which our
fathers sighed

We have come over a way that
with tears has been watered.

We have come, treading our
path through the blood of
the slaughtered

Out of the gloomy past

Till now we stand at last

Where the white gleam of our
bright star is cast

He concludes the first verse with,

Sing a song full of the faith that
the dark past has taught us;

Sing a song full of the hope that
the present has brought us;

Facing the rising sun of our new
day begun,

Let us march on till victory is won.

**Perfecting is difficult.
But keep marching!**

There are some powerful enemies ahead. But keep marching!

There is ungodly resistance ahead. But keep marching!

**The pursuit is relentless.
So keep marching!**

**The process is circuitous.
But keep marching!**

**The perfecting is torturous.
But keep marching!**

**Because "...in order to form
a more perfect union...,"
we must keep marching!**

Continued from Page 11 →

tioned violence and described white supremacists' racist violence attempts to block Black people from voting. She stated, with tears in her eyes, "In this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our telephones off the hooks because our lives be threatened daily, because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?"

Women had full voting rights in 15 states and the Alaska territory, but limited suffrage, including voting in presidential elections, in another 12 states before 1920. Women's influence helped build momentum for the 19th Amendment. Yet, still, women of color were often kept from the polls through a variety of tactics; they faced racial and ethnic discrimination and were often violently discouraged from voting. Congress approved the 19th Amendment in 1919 with bipartisan support and according to the 1920 Census, some 500,000 Black women voted in states where their male counterparts were enfranchised. The 19th Amendment was ratified on August 18, 1920 granting women the right to vote. The amendment stated, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." More than 10 million women voted in 1920. Women voter turnout rates have gradually increased and exceeded male turnout rates since 1980.

On March 7, 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr. led 500 activists 54 miles

walking around the clock for three days from Selma to the capital in Montgomery, Alabama, to demand voting rights for Black citizens and emphasize the need for a national Voting Rights Act. The world watched while the peaceful demonstrators were brutally attacked by law enforcement. In the ensuing chaos, a state trooper fatally shot Jimmie Lee Jackson, a young Black demonstrator. State troopers wielding whips, nightsticks and tear gas rushed the group at the Edmund Pettis Bridge and beat them back to Selma. Hundreds of ministers, priests, rabbis and social activists soon headed to Selma to join the voting rights march.

On March 9, King led more than 2,000 marchers, Black and White, across the bridge into a blocked highway by state troopers. Reverend King paused the marchers and led them in prayer and the troopers stepped aside. But in spite of the group turning around, a group of segregationists attacked another protester, the young White minister, James Ray, beating him to death. State officials tried to prevent the march from going forward but a U.S. District Judge permitted the march. On March 21, 2,000 people marched, protected by U.S. Army troops and Alabama National Guard that then-President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered. After walking some 12 hours a day and sleeping in fields along the way, they reached Montgomery on March 25. Nearly 50,000 supporters – Black and White – met the marchers in front of the state capital to hear King and other speakers address the crowd. "No

tide of racism can stop us," King proclaimed, as the world watched the historic moment on television.

President Lyndon B. Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress, calling for federal voting rights legislation to protect Black Americans from barriers preventing them from voting. In August, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawing discriminatory voting barriers such as literacy tests as a requirement for voting, mandated federal oversight of voter registration in areas where tests had previously been used and gave the U.S. attorney general the duty of challenging the use of poll taxes for state and local elections.

→ 15TH Amendment

The right of U.S. citizens to vote: "...shall not be denied or abridged, on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

→ 19th Amendment

..."shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

→ 24th Amendment

"...shall not be denied or abridged...by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax."

→ 26th Amendment

"...who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."

Part II will discuss some more recent fights for voting rights.

Keep Reading on Page 22 →

The Dismantling of Black History: From Trump to Project 2025— and the Future We Refuse to See

BY LAKIA PIERCE, MSW, MSCST

The erasure of Black history in the United States is not a coincidence. It is not accidental, and it is certainly not new. But in the 21st century, particularly since the presidency of Donald J. Trump, this erasure has become more organized, more aggressive, and more

institutionalized. Today, we are witnessing an ideological war not only against the past but against the memory of struggle, resistance, and Black identity itself.

This war is not fought with burning crosses or water

hoses—it's fought with legislation, curriculum bans, judicial appointments, and think-tank blueprints like Project 2025.

What's at stake is more than history. It's the very foundation of civil rights in America and the future of Black freedom.



I. The Trump Administration and the Politicization of Historical Truth

When Donald Trump took office in 2017, he didn't invent the attack on Black history—but he did mainstream it.

His administration's rhetoric and policies sent a clear message: acknowledging systemic racism is unpatriotic. This was most evident in his reaction to the 1619 Project, an initiative by The New York Times that sought to re-frame American history around the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans. Trump denounced the project as "toxic propaganda," and instead, he launched the 1776 Commission—a thinly veiled attempt to promote a white-washed version of U.S. history devoid of its racist foundations.

In 2020, Trump escalated this campaign by signing an executive order banning federal agencies from conducting diversity training that included discussions of Critical Race Theory (CRT) or white privilege. Soon after, Republican-led states across the country introduced legislation to ban CRT from public schools altogether—even though it was never part of K-12 curricula to begin with.

This wasn't about educational accuracy. It was about control of the national narrative—a deliberate attempt to delegitimize Black experience and to sanitize the horrors of slavery, Jim Crow, redlining, mass incarceration, and more.

II. The Historical Context: Presidential Complicity Across Decades

While Trump accelerated the process, he wasn't the first U.S. president to preside over the suppression of Black history.

- Ronald Reagan, in the 1980s, opposed the creation of a national holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and only signed it into law under intense public and congressional pressure. His administration also vilified Black communities through the "War on Drugs," introducing mandatory minimums and three-strike laws that would disproportionately imprison Black men for decades.
- Bill Clinton, often praised for his charisma and outreach to Black communities, signed the 1994 Crime Bill, which massively expanded policing and prison infrastructure. Combined with welfare reforms that cut assistance to the poorest families, his policies helped perpetuate economic and social disparities.
- George W. Bush, while relatively silent on matters of race, oversaw a disastrous federal response to Hurricane Katrina. The suffering of Black New Orleanians became an international symbol of American racial inequality.
- Even Barack Obama, the first Black president, struggled to confront systemic racism head-on. Though his symbol-

ism was powerful, critics argue that his administration often avoided direct engagement with racial justice, preferring the rhetoric of unity over the disruption of white comfort.

The point is clear: presidential administrations across party lines have, to varying degrees, failed to protect and promote Black history.

III. Project 2025: The Ignored Blueprint of Authoritarian Erasure

Released by the conservative Heritage Foundation and backed by over 80 right-wing organizations, Project 2025 is a policy blueprint for a potential second Trump term—or any future administration willing to carry out its agenda.

The plan is explicit in its intent to dismantle:

- All Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts in federal agencies, universities, and even the military.
- Civil service protections, making it easier to fire federal employees with "woke" ideologies—many of whom are Black, brown, LGBTQ+, or women.
- Educational autonomy, by returning curriculum control to states, thereby enabling the banning of discussions about slavery, civil rights, gender equality, and colonialism.

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- Civil rights enforcement, especially Title VI and Title VII protections regarding employment and education discrimination.

In other words, Project 2025 seeks to replace pluralistic democracy with a homogenous, whitewashed, Christian nationalist state.

What makes this more terrifying is the silence surrounding it. Project 2025 has been largely ignored by the mainstream media, underreported by liberal institutions, and underestimated by those who assumed the threat of Trumpism was behind us. That complacency is dangerous.

IV. The Road Ahead: 2028, 2032, 2036, 2040

If this ideology is allowed to take root, the trajectory of Black history and Black freedom becomes perilous.

- By 2028, a hard-right president enacts Project 2025 in full. Federal civil rights enforcement is gutted. DEI programs are abolished. School textbooks omit slavery and Jim Crow.
- By 2032, the Supreme Court—now even more conservative—begins to reinterpret or outright nullify the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, already weakened by *Shelby v. Holder* (2013) and the end of affirma-

tive action in *SFFA v. Harvard* (2023).

- By 2036, segregation becomes de facto policy again through school “choice” programs and education privatization. Black students are isolated in underfunded districts. History books glorify the Founding Fathers but omit Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X, and Angela Davis.
- By 2040, mass incarceration and prison labor evolve into a modern economic engine that mirrors antebellum slavery. Activists are surveilled. Black protest is criminalized. Slavery may not return by name—but its tools of control, disenfranchisement, and labor exploitation will be fully operational.

This isn’t hyperbole—it’s historical repetition.

V. The New Slavery: Progressive Oppression by Design

America has always found new names for old chains.

Today, the slavery of the 21st century wears the face of:

- Incarceration, where prisoners—disproportionately Black—work for pennies on the dollar in what amounts to legalized exploitation.
- Economic deprivation, with wage gaps, housing discrimination, and predatory lending maintaining generational poverty.
- Cultural erasure, as textbooks,

media, and policy erase the Black struggle from public consciousness.

- Surveillance and control, from facial recognition tech in Black neighborhoods to increased policing of Black protest movements.

What we are witnessing is not a return to slavery—it is the evolution of it. A new era of progressive Black oppression, justified by law, masked by patriotism, and executed by bureaucracy.

VI. Conclusion: Memory Is Resistance

The fight to preserve Black history is the fight to preserve Black freedom. If history is erased, so too are the movements that changed it. So too are the people who dared to dream of justice, equity, and liberation.

The architects of this erasure know that. That’s why they fear Black history. That’s why they legislate against it. That’s why they are building a world in which our past cannot be taught—because a people without memory cannot resist.

But we still have a choice. We can sound the alarm, refuse to be silent, and teach the truth—loudly, proudly, and persistently. If we don’t, the future will not just forget us. It will bury us.

Let this be the final warning, and the beginning of the resistance.



Did you know?

Closing Schools to Avoid Integration

“After the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that racially segregated public schools are unconstitutional, white communities went to great lengths to maintain segregated schools. In 1959, Virginia passed a “freedom of choice” law that provided funding for private schools and gave localities the “option” to operate public schools. States such as North Carolina and Georgia passed similar legislation.

Virginia’s Prince Edward County closed its public schools from 1959 to 1963. A foundation opened Prince Edward Academy, a private school available only to white children. But the county created no option for Black students, leaving 2,000

children without access to education. To attend school, Black children were forced to travel to neighboring counties hours away or stay with family or friends in other counties or even other states. Many were denied all formal education for five years.

Charlie Taylor, a Black student who was about to start his senior year of high school, was stunned when he learned the schools were closing. “I lived to go to school,” he recalled later, because “fifty years ago as a black person in this town, [there was] no bowling alley, no recreation center.”

States and localities also en-

acted “temporary” closures to prevent integration. The public high school in Milford, Delaware, was temporarily closed when white community members threatened extreme violence after 11 Black students enrolled. When the school reopened, over two-thirds of the white students withdrew. As a result, the school board removed the Black students and succeeded in preventing integration for eight more years.”

(A HISTORY OF RACIAL INJUSTICE, Equal Justice Initiative, 2024 Calendar, December 2024)

Submitted by Rev. Marjorie Belmont



Free Speech - Limitations and Implications

“Congress shall make no law...abridging freedom of speech.”

(from the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution)

Protecting freedom of speech is a cry of both the political right and left. Free speech is easy to defend when you agree with the content of the speech. The true test is whether you can be OK when the speech represents ideas you find objectionable or offensive. How hard is it to respect someone’s right to support

ideas you abhor and even to disrespect your expression of ideas through speech?

Free speech is not absolute. In his essay *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill proposed that “the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others”¹. Legal

limitations often relate to libel, slander, obscenity, sedition, classified information, copyrights, trade secrets, perjury, and public security. So, unless speech causes harm or has the likelihood of causing harm, it should be unrestricted.

Defining “harm,” however, depends on who is doing the defining. Some would say that



racial epithets or hate speech cause harm. Yet, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul* (1992) that the First Amendment protects hate speech, except in the case of imminent violence. Others have called for limits on what students hear in classrooms about history, especially the history of racial oppression in the U.S. so as not to cause “offense” for those who are White. ICE has arrested people in the U.S. on legal student visas because they have written school newspaper items supporting the citizens of Gaza, as this speech might cause harm to Jews who consider the comments anti-Semitic. Leaders of museums and other repositories of our nation’s history have left their positions

due to complaints that exhibits show bias. Some people even see restrictions on hate speech and racial epithets, displaying the Confederate flag, and statues of Confederate generals and slave owners as counter to the first amendment, ignoring the harm they inflict on Black people. “Political correctness” language is under assault while Congress excoriates college Presidents, forcing them to resign when they do not adequately police negative statements on campus.

The ubiquity of electronic communication further complicates

the exercise of free speech. Should tech companies engage in content mediation and remove “objectional posts” and/or ban some speakers? Who has a responsibility to counter misinformation, and should anyone have the right to make corrections or someone else’s post? Elon Musk bought Twitter and replaced it with X on the premise that twitter restricted free speech, only to delete any X posts critical of its owner. Another concern of the digital age is the commodification of information. Even personal and

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¹Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. 1859. Available at <https://www.econlib.org/library/Mill/mILbty.html>

Standing Up for Democracy Means Standing Up for Public Schools

BY GLORIA HO



Educators have the privilege and responsibility of teaching students what they know and shaping who they become. Schools are not only places where they learn to read and write, but where students learn how to care for one another, treat each with empathy and respect, and speak up for what is right even when it's hard. Schools are also a safety net for students providing healthy meals, physical and mental health care, and a place of belonging.

But today, educators are experiencing something deeply troubling - the slow and deliberate shredding of democracy within the very spaces meant to foster it. Public schools are the cornerstone of democracy. It is about voice, agency, inclusion, truth,

and justice. Yet in schools those very principles are under attack. Educators see it unfolding right before their eyes in the policies being passed, books being banned, histories being erased, identities being silenced, and programs being underfunded.

In the classrooms, they see how hate shows up every day. It can take on the form of racist remarks in the hallway, anti-immigrant slurs whispered in the classroom, or bullying based on faith, gender identity, ability, skin color, etc. The message our students receive is as clear as the writing on the board - some students belong here more than others.

Anyone who walks through the school hallways could see well-decorated classrooms,

walls lined with cheerful artwork, and bulletin boards proudly displaying student assignments. In the classrooms, they'd see students who appear to be engaged and ready to learn. They'd hear a teacher praising students for learning a new skill or pushing through a difficult task.

But what they won't see is the democracy unraveling underneath. They wouldn't see the student teased for wearing the same clothes day after day because his family was evicted and now lives in a hotel. They wouldn't see the child, silent and anxious, because his father was deported, and he's unsure how his family will eat and pay rent. They wouldn't see the student misgendered by a classmate and told she's going to hell. Now, she no longer wants to come to school.

They wouldn't see the student, the only one of color in her class, becoming withdrawn because she is repeatedly called racial slurs. She confided to her teacher that sometimes she wishes she didn't exist. They wouldn't see the boy missing recess, his favorite part of the school day, to appear before an immigration judge who will decide whether he can stay in the only country and school he's ever known. They couldn't see these

things by looking at the students, but educators see them every day in public schools, and they recognize what it means and the impact it makes.

What happens inside our schools mirror what's happening in our communities and our country. Immigrants are vilified as criminals. LGBTQ+ students are stripped of protections. Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are defunded and threatened. Black history is being erased. Asian Americans are mocked with slurs. Book bans grow by the day. Open dialogue about race, identity, and inequality are silenced. And trillions of dollars in tax breaks are handed

to billionaires while education, health, and nutrition programs for students and working families are decimated. The removal of safety nets for our most vulnerable and under-resourced populations reveals what our country truly values and it's not our children.

These aren't just isolated incidents, but effects of a larger, coordinated attempt to erode and dismantle public education. When leaders model hate, it trickles into classrooms and playgrounds shaping how children feel about themselves, interact with each other, and see the world. When schools reflect fear instead of freedom,

conformity instead of critical thinking, silence instead of truth, then democracy begins to quietly unravel.

Schools are the very spaces that should be sanctuaries of safety, belonging, and learning for every student who walks through its doors. That is the promise of public education. When schools are underfunded or become political battlegrounds, it's not only learning that suffers, but food security, mental health care, safety, and stability. Our students are the reason why we must act. If we are serious about defending democracy, we must start by defending our public schools.

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genetic information has gained economic value in the information age. The commodification of information is taking place through intellectual property law, contract law, as well as broadcasting and telecommunications law. Should companies be able to sell your personal information without your consent to profit from your existence? In addition, the current federal budget bill cuts all funding for public mass media claiming NPR and PBS limit access to conservative viewpoints or explanations of events, which would leave the public media to for-profit companies that often sell data about their consumers.

The current political discourse

is one where disinformation campaigns are explicit, where politicians have come to expect their opponents to misrepresent them, and where artificial intelligence programs put words into people's mouths. At the same time, bullying is rampant in schools and in cyberspace, sometimes leading to mental health issues and even suicide. Many of us struggle with broken relationships because of political differences.

Restrictions on speech including the press and media can limit people's ability to make informed decisions about their lives and at the ballot box. As a resident of the U.S., the Constitution promises you the right to express your opinion. The political environment, however,

can have a chilling effect on your willingness to exercise that right. Now is the time to exercise your freedom to speak in support of or opposition to public policies and those who espouse them. Speech includes not only what you say, but also what you don't say, what you write or refuse to endorse, what you wear, peaceful actions, and what you refuse to do.

My hope is that we can all learn how to speak our minds from a place of love and courage while listening with an open mind to various opinions. Listening does not suggest agreement, but it can help find common ground and address root causes of discontent. Being firm and clear about where you stand does not require diminishing another.

The Fight for Voting Rights in America **PART II**

BY JESSICA CLARK

Part I discussed the voting rights fight in the early days of our country. Part II continues the fight in modern times.

Over nine decades, efforts to amend the U.S. Constitution to recognize men's and women's rights have faced major challenges. Recent resurgence of women's activism has refocused attention on gender equality issues, including the ERA and abortion rights.

Congress finally passed legislation known as the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972, recognizing women's equal rights with men under the law. ERA was first introduced to Congress in 1923, approved in 1972, and ratified by 35 out of the constitutionally required 38 states by 1974. (On March 23, 1972, Delaware ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.) Despite concerted campaigns, ERA fell short of the 38 states needed to ratify it to become part of the Constitution. The window for ERA ratification, 1982, is long gone, but legal scholars argue that it is reversible.

The most recent amendment, the 27th prohibiting members of Congress from giving themselves a pay raise before an election, was adopted in 1991. It was written by James Madison in 1789 as part of the Bill of Rights and has spent 203 years in limbo. The ERA and several other amendments remain in the passed-but-never-fully-ratified

category. An amendment granting the District of Columbia voting representation in Congress passed by Congress in 1978 and was ratified in 16 states before it expired. The 1810 amendment prohibiting American citizens from receiving nobility titles from a foreign government, and the Child Labor Amendment, passed by Congress in 1937 and ratified by 28 states, both required ratification by 38 states.

On December 17, 2024, citing opinions from the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel in 2020 and 2022, the Archivist of the United States, Dr. Colleen Shogan, who could certify the ERA as the next amendment to the Constitution, stated, "At this time, the ERA cannot be certified as part of the Constitution due to established legal, judicial, and procedural decisions." The ratification deadline established by Congress for the ERA is valid and enforceable, stated the Justice Department. The ERA has expired and therefore is no longer pending before the states. For more opinions about ratification, visit <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/can-the-equal-rights-amendment-be-brought-to-life>.

In 1973, the Supreme Court recognized for the first time that the constitutional right to privacy "...is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy." *Roe v. Wade* protected wom-

en's rights to make reproductive health care decisions in all 50 states. In 2022, just shy of *Roe v. Wade*'s 50th anniversary, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the landmark decision granting abortion rights for all women. With the ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, millions of women have lost that important right to reproductive freedom. In 2023, the Texas Supreme Court denied a woman an abortion even though her pregnancy was not viable, forcing her to leave the state. At the beginning of 2024, the Texas 5th Circuit ruled that Texas hospitals are not required to perform life-saving abortions. Are we returning to the 1880s with the criminalization of abortions and when maternal death rates climbed from unsafe abortions?

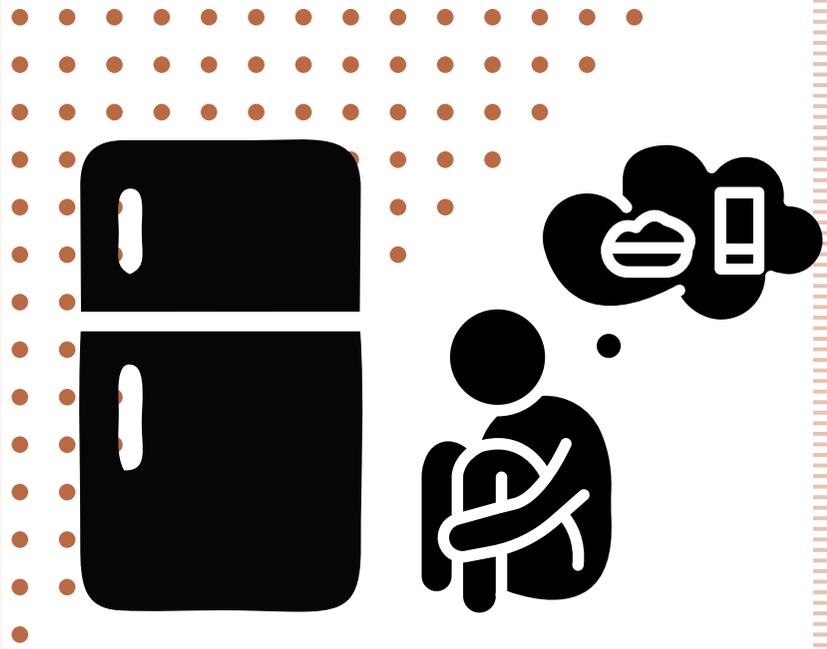
In the 1800s, Black and White women's freedoms and rights lagged far behind those for American men. Women were sharply limited: women were expected to raise their children to become good citizens. They lacked basic legal and economic rights; they could not own property, hold office, or participate in voting. They were discouraged from speaking at public gatherings. Formal educational opportunities were virtually unheard of. In the rare instances of divorce, husbands gained custody of children. In the 1830s, some abolitionist women began to notice some similarities between enslaved

Black men and women and the restrictions placed on their own lives.

With the advent of women's suffrage in the mid-1800s and the resurgence of both Black and White dynamic women leading the charge for women to vote, and since the 1900s to the present, much has been gained for equal rights and freedoms for the enslaved and for all men and women. Even after the Civil Rights Act of 1965 forbade discrimination in voting based on race, efforts by civil rights organizations to register Black voters met with fierce resistance in southern states such as Alabama. As a result, only two percent of Selma's eligible Black voters (about 300 out of 15,000) managed to register to vote.

"We have come a long way, baby," but we still have miles to go to achieve equality for all. We live in a mostly affluent country where the majority of Americans do not experience homelessness, hunger, lack of health care coverage, bombs decimating our neighborhoods, and where our rights and freedoms, for the most part, are recognized and honored. Are we experiencing the chipping away of our rights? Some of us are, to be sure. Where are our champions? Who will speak openly and unabashedly about our rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution? Who will challenge our rights being slowly chipped away by the present administration?

You, readers, are the answer. As my ESL students learned about the history of our country and the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, join parties of your choice and groups such as the League of Women Voters and become not only active, but activists. The history of our country and many of our rights are being challenged. Voting is the answer – and our right as Americans. Your voices are the answer.



Are You Hungry? ... You Need to Eat

The doorbell rang and a neighbor said,

“Hi come on in, How are you?,
Are you hungry?; We are just eating.”

The reply was,

“No, thanks, I just ate.”

What a warm and generous greeting and a genuine response. Well, it depends on your resources; then the response may not be as familiar.

Food insecurity in Delaware is a growing problem as more than 134,000 individuals in 2023 could not afford food on a regular basis, because they had inadequate resources to buy groceries. It is likely, they had to use what money they had to pay for electricity, housing or medications. These hard decisions have become a growing part of everyday life for many of our neighbors.

Feeding America reports in 2019, that the rate of food insecurity in Sussex County was 11.2% and has

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grown to 13.9% in 2023. More than 34,000 residents in our county face the hard choice each day - to eat or to use that money to pay rent and keep their families safe. If there is no money for rent then the family is split up and sent to be with other family members, friends or they sleep in their car/outside. What a heartbreaking and difficult choice. Many factors lead to this point - the cost of food and housing has increased unmercifully, and wages for seasonal workers has lagged far behind what is necessary to maintain stability.

Who are the people who are facing food insecurity?

A large number, 8,000 or 19%, are children of both school age and below. The next large and vulnerable group are those who are older between the ages of 55 - 70 years, living on fixed incomes with little or no discretionary income and little ability to find employment that will change their circumstances significantly. Many, we may know as “the working poor.” They are often working two or three part-time jobs, trying to make ends meet. During the summer, their hours of work increase, but by fall the hours are diminishing. Where one might have been working thirty hours in the summer, by December the best they can get is ten hours a week. The reality is that their maximum earning capability is during the summer months, and they must earn as much as they can to tide them over for those lean-

er months of the winter. If that weren't difficult enough, many deal with transportation issues which makes employment even more difficult. Often families do not have or have lost their transportation and inconsistent winter bus service availability makes getting to a job more difficult. The number of available jobs one can get to within walking distance decreases significantly.

To overcome these obstacles, families have sought assistance from State Service Centers, First State Community Action, Families First and many non-profit organizations like the Community Resource Center to apply for food stamps, financial support or groceries.

Recently, the federal government reduced its financial allocation to the USDA for distribution to state food banks and SNAP (food stamp) allotments are scheduled for reduction in the coming weeks, leaving the community “safety net” with gaping holes.

How can we help the food programs that have faced funding reductions?

The resources will need to be local ones. Fortunately, Sussex County is blessed with generous people and robust volunteer organizations that struggle to provide resources for those in need, but we will need you, the reader, as well. The local food distribution centers and organizations are working to provide canned goods, produce, milk, and meats where

they can. They have partnered with local restaurants, grocery stores, farmers markets, home gardeners, volunteer organizations and churches to rescue and repurpose foods for those who need help.

These organizations are dependent on regular local food drives such as those led by the mail carriers, business organizations and homeowner associations to help fill their shelves. Most importantly, individual families who shop each week with an eye for 2:1 grocery sales are vital. Your gifts make a huge difference in the quantity of food available.

Consider your role in providing food security for our neighbors in the days and weeks ahead. Stop by a local food pantry with your donations and find out how you can continue to make an important difference in helping neighbors. You are essential and you get to meet some wonderful people as well.

Ann Ameigh

Coordinator of the Job Center Community Resource Center. Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

Scan the QR Code below for a full list of food distribution centers in Sussex County.





Thank You, Representative Stell Parker Selby

With the recent resignation of Representative Stell Parker Selby, we pause to honor a legacy rooted in service, courage, and leadership.

Rep. Parker Selby made headlines when she flipped a red seat blue in RD 20 and became the first African American to represent Sussex County in the Delaware House of Representatives. But beyond her historic run, her story is one of lifelong commitment to education and public service.

Before stepping into the legislature, she served generations of students as a Cape Henlopen teacher, administrator, and school board member. Her commitment to children and community has been constant, always grounded in a belief that every child deserves opportunities and belonging.

She was a proud member of the Delaware State Education Association, where she helped shape the union's Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, continuing the

legacy of her father—the first Black president of the Sussex County Education Association—who fought to integrate local schools. Her advocacy and voice gave power to a new generation of educators and students of color.

Rep. Parker Selby was the first of many, and because of her, we're able to walk through the doors she so boldly opened. We thank her not only for opening those doors, but for stepping through them with grace, courage, and conviction.

Returning Citizens Update:

Returning citizens received some support from Delaware's legislature, which passed two helpful bills. One defined the standard terms of probation to a more limited list than the current terms, with tailoring of other terms of probation to fit the offense. A second adopted bill allows the Board of Pardons and the Governor to use compassion in allowing people who are serving long prison terms to return to society to live out their remaining years. Both these actions are consistent with recommendations in the last issue of Black Voices.

Bills that did not complete the process were ones to provide relief from fines and fees, to remove random drug and alcohol testing from the standard terms of probation, regardless of whether the original crime involved substance use or abuse. A constitutional amendment to ban the death penalty requires a 2/3 majority vote in both the House and Senate for two consecutive legislative sessions. This year it a bill to create such a constitutional amendment passed the first round. It will need to pass again in the 2027-2028 legislative session to become part of the Delaware Constitution. Several members of SDARJ's Returning Citizens Support Committee participated in Lobby Days advocating for these bills.

The Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice partnered with several other community groups to raise funds for and bring people together to assemble 100 backpacks for distribution to indigent returning citizens as a helping hand, reaching out to support them. The Seaside Jewish Community invited SDARJ to be part of the organizing groups, along with PIRCOD, The Way Home, the Delaware Center for Justice, and the Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware. The Way Home and PIRCOD advised on appropriate content. The Way Home, First State Community Action, and LaRed received packs to distribute. In addition to the organizers and interested individuals, donors included the Lifers' Group of Sussex Correctional Institution, Mack's Earplugs, M&T Bank, the Psi Iota Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., TruEarth Detergent, Inc., and Teach a Person to Fish Society. On behalf of the recipients, we extend thanks to all who contributed and helped assemble the packs.

SDARJ's Returning Citizens Support Committee (RCSC) sponsored a reentry simulation attended by 100 people. RCSC members, along with ACLU Smart Justice Ambassadors, and Delaware Center for Justice staffed the 15 stations representing various agencies and

organizations that returning citizens often must interact with upon their return. Participants experienced the frustration of returning with few resources and the need to meet the terms of their probation while trying to secure housing, employment, clothing, transportation, and healthcare. All participants found this an eye-opening experience, and some indicated an interest in offering the simulation. Walking a mile in the shoes of another provides important insights into how to help in meaningful ways.

To ensure that we were accurate in our perceptions of the prison situation in Sussex County, four members of SDARJ's RCSC participated in a 7-week Citizens' Academy hosted by the Delaware Department of Corrections. The Academy included tours of facilities, presentations by the Department of Corrections' top staff, and opportunities to interact with DOC leadership.

For more information about the work of SDARJ's Returning Citizens Support Committee or to find ways to support this work, contact Melvin M Mitchell, Chair, SDARJ Returning Citizens' Support Committee, Melvin.m.mitchell@verizon.net, 301-602-2291.



**“Democracy is not a
spectator sport.**

It requires your participation.

It requires your activism.

It requires your voice.”

— BARACK OBAMA



LET'S STOP RACISM FOR GOOD

IN SOUTHERN DELAWARE

JOIN SDARJ FOR LESS THAN **11¢** A DAY.



Your SDARJ membership will put you on the front line in the fight for racial justice and social equality for all...and your dues dollars will support critical programs and benefits, including quarterly issues of this magazine, *Black Voices*, plus:

- High School Student Scholarships
- Training on how to challenge racism
- Monthly Town Hall Meetings
- Book and Film Discussion Groups
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- Youth Academic Achievement Awards
- Ongoing Legislative Advocacy

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① Scan with a mobile device:



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