

Caribbean Today

APRIL 2026



PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MIAMI, FL
PERMIT NO. 7315

Tel: (305) 238-2868
1-800-605-7516
editor@caribbeantoday.com
sales@caribbeantoday.com
www.caribbeantoday.com

Consistently Credible~We Cover Your World

Vol. 37 No. 5

THE MULTI-AWARD WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE WITH THE LARGEST PROVEN CIRCULATION IN FLORIDA GUARANTEED

LIFE OF IMPACT CUT SHORT

From Haiti Roots To City Hall:
The Legacy Of Trailblazer
Nancy Metayer Bowen
... Page 3



Late Coral Springs Vice Mayor and Haitian-American leader
Nancy Metayer Bowen



Bond Required ... Page 5



Ziggy's New Track ...
Page 12



Sheryl Lee Spotlights
Jamaica ... Page 14

INSIDE

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Regional News Page 2 | Food News Page 13 | Sports News Page 19 |
| Local News Page 7 | Spring Health Page 15 | |
| Viewpoint Page 9 | Spring Education Page 18 | |



READ CARIBBEAN TODAY ONLINE AT CARIBBEANTODAY.COM



REGIONAL NEWS



www.caribbeantoday.com

Here Are Some Of The Top Headlines Making Caribbean News:

REGIONAL

Chairman of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, Dr. Terrance Drew, says the region is moving swiftly to deliver humanitarian aid to Cuba as the island grapples with worsening economic and energy challenges.

Speaking at a recent news conference, Drew confirmed that the regional mechanism to support Cuba "is fully on the way," with CARICOM expected to provide further updates as coordination continues.

The initiative comes as Cuba faces severe fuel shortages, widespread blackouts, and deepening economic strain - conditions exacerbated by ongoing U.S. sanctions and restrictions on oil supplies. Since early 2026, Washington has tightened pressure by cutting off Venezuela's oil exports to Cuba and warning countries against supplying crude to the island.

CARICOM's response includes the planned shipment of essential supplies, including powdered milk, rice, beans, canned goods, medical supplies, solar panels, and water tanks. The effort is being coordinated through the CARICOM Secretariat in Guyana and is

supported by Mexico, which has offered free shipping assistance.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump signaled further potential action, stating "Cuba's next" during remarks in Miami, underscoring rising geopolitical tensions.

Although a Russian tanker carrying an estimated 730,000 barrels of crude oil recently reached Cuba, the White House emphasized that the move does not reflect a shift in U.S. policy, noting such decisions will be handled on a case-by-case basis. As pressure mounts, CARICOM leaders say their priority remains clear - ensuring humanitarian support reaches the Cuban people, even as global political tensions surrounding the island continue to escalate.

SURINAME

Former President of Suriname, Chandrikapersad Santokhi, has died at the age of 67 after falling ill at his home. Santokhi was taken to the Academic Hospital in Paramaribo following a medical emergency, where he later passed away. According to media reports, emergency services were called around midday before he was transported to the hospital's emergency unit. The cause of his



Cubans wait to get potable water as the crisis in Cuba deepens, and CARICOM tries to pitch in. (Photo by Yamil Lage/AFP)

illness and death has not yet been disclosed.

Current President Jennifer Geerlings-Simons paid tribute in a statement on social media, noting that Santokhi's "many years of service in various public offices will be remembered." Santokhi, who also served as chairman of the Progressive Reform Party (VHP), was a key figure in Suriname's political landscape. He previously held the post of Minister of Justice and Police from 2005 to 2010 and remained active in national politics as a leader of the opposition. His death marks the loss of a prominent public servant who played a significant role

in shaping Suriname's modern political history.

BERMUDA

Britain's King Charles III is set to visit Bermuda later this month, marking a historic return by a reigning monarch to the British Overseas Territory. Governor Andrew Murdoch announced the upcoming visit but did not disclose the exact date. The trip will be the first visit by a British sovereign to Bermuda in 16 years and King Charles' first to any Overseas Territory since his coronation on May 6, 2023. King Charles last visited Bermuda in 1970, when he opened the island's 350th parliamentary year. The most recent royal visit was in 2009, when Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip marked Bermuda's 400th anniversary of settlement.

HAITI

The United States and Canada have strongly condemned a deadly gang attack in Haiti's Artibonite region that left at least 16 people dead and forced thousands to flee. The assault, blamed on the feared Gran Grif gang, also left at least 19 people injured, with authorities warning the toll could rise as violence continues to hamper assessments. More than 6,000 residents have reportedly fled the Jean-Denis area following the massacre.

The U.S. Embassy said it was "deeply saddened" by the killings, condemning gangs that "continue to murder their fellow Haitians with no respect for human life," while pledging ongoing support for Haiti's police and anti-gang forces. Canada described the attack as "barbaric," extending condolences to victims' families and denouncing what it called terrorist violence.

Haitian police said operations are ongoing in the region as security forces intensify efforts to confront armed groups. Gang violence has surged in Haiti since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, leaving communities increasingly vulnerable.

JAMAICA

Jamaica's economy recorded steady growth in the

first three quarters of last year before a sharp decline caused by Hurricane Melissa, according to the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN).

Director General Leesha Delatie-Budair said the economy grew by 1.1% and 1.7% in the first two quarters, and 5.1% between July and September. However, the economy contracted by 7.1% in the final quarter following the US\$8.8 billion storm impact.

Goods-producing industries fell by 10.7%, led by a 17.7% drop in agriculture, while services declined by 5.9%, with accommodation and food services plunging 31%.

GUYANA

Guyana's Human Services and Social Security Minister, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, has described as "sad and heartbreaking" the death of a seven-year-old girl allegedly killed by her mother during a domestic dispute. Police said Isabella Dabadial, a student of Cooper Primary School, was suffocated on Sunday by her 26-year-old mother, who also attempted to kill her one-year-old son and herself. The child survived and has since been released from the hospital, while the mother remains hospitalized.

Authorities say the woman was experiencing emotional distress after her husband left home days earlier and refused to return. She reportedly told police she had no food and acted after waking Sunday morning.

Dr. Persaud said the Child Protection Agency is supporting the family and stressed the need for greater mental health awareness. "Her brother thankfully made it... an investigation is ongoing," she said, noting many individuals struggle in silence without seeking help.

BAHAMAS

The Central Bank of The Bahamas says the country's economic outlook remains positive for 2026 but warns it could be significantly impacted if tensions in the Middle East persist. In its February report, the Bank noted rising oil prices - now above US\$100 - could drive up energy, transport, and import costs.

Tourism, a key driver of growth, may face weaker demand due to declining U.S. consumer confidence, though proximity to the U.S. could offer some advantage. Despite risks, the economy is expected to expand steadily, supported by tourism and construction, while strong reserves and a stable banking system provide a buffer.

- *Rewritten from CMC & NewsAmericasNow.com*



On August 6, 2026, the island of Jamaica marks the 64th Anniversary of its independence as a sovereign nation. Caribbean Today invites the business community in Jamaica and the United States to celebrate this significant milestone.

Our Independence Supplement! Jamaica at 64

to be published in July 2026, will pay tribute to Jamaica's history, culture, growth and development including the achievements and global contributions of a remarkable people. Promote your products and services in this 28-page keepsake edition, to be distributed widely throughout Florida, New York, Atlanta, and the Caribbean.

CALL NOW TO ADVERTISE!

1-800-605-7516 | 305-238-2868 | Fax: 305-252-7843
e-mail: sales@caribbeantoday.com

Caribbean Today CELEBRATING 37 Years

ADVERTISING DEADLINE: JUNE 24, 2026

From Haiti Roots To City Hall: The Legacy Of Nancy Metayer Bowen

BY CT TODAY STAFF WRITER

The sudden death of Haitian-American Coral Springs Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen has left a deep void across South Florida and the Caribbean diaspora, ending a life marked by service, leadership, and historic achievement.

Metayer Bowen, 38, was found dead at her home on April 1 in what police are investigating as a domestic violence incident. Coral Springs Police Chief Brad Mock said officers responded to a welfare check at her residence on Northwest 127th Avenue around 10 a.m.

Authorities later arrested her husband, 40-year-old Stephen Bowen, who has been charged with first-degree premeditated murder and tampering with evidence. He was ordered held without bond following a court appearance on April 3rd and remains jailed. "I have reviewed the probable cause affidavit. The court does find probable cause for the charges," the judge said during his court appearance.

FIRST ELECTED

First elected in 2020 and re-elected in 2024, Metayer Bowen was serving her second term as vice mayor. She made history as the first Black and Haitian American woman elected to the



Dozens gathered to remember Haitian American Coral Springs Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen on April 4th in Coral Springs.

Coral Springs City Commission.

An environmental scientist by training, she earned degrees from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her work spanned environmental advocacy, disaster relief, and community development, including service on the Broward County Commission on the Status of Women and other advisory boards.

She focused on economic growth, public safety, and sustainability, while also serving as Vice Chair of Haitian Outreach for the Florida Democratic Party.

HONORING HER

Tributes have poured in across the community, with a

growing memorial outside City Hall and a peace march held near the Coral Springs Museum of Art. The Florida Panthers also honored her during an April 2 game.

"Vice Mayor Metayer Bowen was a light in the Haitian community and a true champion for immigrants," said Guerline Jozef, Executive Director of the Haitian Bridge Alliance. "Her advocacy was not performative - it was rooted in lived experience, empathy, and an unwavering belief in the dignity of all people. We have lost not only a partner in this work, but a dear friend. Her legacy will continue to inspire us to fight for justice, humanity, and the protection of immigrant communities everywhere."

"She meant the best for the

city," said Commissioner Joseph McHugh, while Mayor Scott Brook noted the community is seeking solace through unity.

Her family described her as a leader who "led with integrity, compassion, and an unwavering sense of purpose," adding that her legacy will live on in the lives she touched.

Her death comes months

after the loss of her younger brother, deepening the tragedy for a grieving family now calling for privacy and prayers. For many, Metayer Bowen represented progress - proof that Caribbean roots and public leadership can intersect powerfully.



Thousands Of Haitians In Limbo As TPS Battle Heads To Supreme Court

BY DAVID L. SNELLING Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

Since July 15, 2025, the U.S. State Department has placed Haiti at Level 4 on its travel advisory, meaning "Do Not Travel." "Do not travel to Haiti due to kidnapping, crime, terrorist activity, civil unrest, and limited health care," the Department warns. Yet the same administration is prepared to send thousands of Haitians on Temporary Protected Status (TPS) back to the country ravaged by gangs.

For now, thousands are in limbo - kept here now only by a recent court ruling. But the legal battle has now reached all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which will decide whether protections for more

than 350,000 Haitians can be terminated.

The court recently declined to immediately strip TPS under an emergency appeal filed by the Trump administration, but arguments are expected in the coming months.

As the case intensifies, Haitian leaders and immigration advocates are raising alarm about the risks - particularly for children - if deportations resume.

At a March 17th media briefing in Miami, leaders including Thamara Labrousse of Sant La, UN human rights expert William O'Neil, and Prodev Foundation CEO, Blaise Francois Aridou, warned of worsening conditions on the ground.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

LARRY D. PARKS - PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEY

INJURY LAW WITH HEART. SERVICE WITH RESPECT.

When you're injured in an accident, you deserve more than a case number.

You deserve someone who truly cares.



For over 45 years, Attorney Larry D. Parks has proudly served South Florida's *Caribbean families* with honesty, compassion, and results.

- ▶ We represent people in our community who've been hurt through no fault of their own.
- ▶ We know trust is earned. Every client gets personal attention and honest answers.
- ▶ **You've worked hard your whole life, now let us work hard for you.**



CONTACT US: **1-800-990-HELP**

Serving Central and South Florida with personalized experience.

Miami Republicans Step Up For Haitians

BY FELICIA J. PERSAUD

At a time when immigration politics in the United States feels increasingly rigid and polarized, something unexpected is unfolding - and it is happening in Miami, Florida.

A bipartisan effort to protect Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians has gained traction in Congress, not just with Democrats, but with a notable group of Republican lawmakers - many of them tied to South Florida.

And that matters.

For months, the national conversation has painted immigration policy as a one-sided battle. But on the ground, where communities live, work, and vote, the reality is often more complicated.

According to recent reporting, a discharge petition to force a vote on extending TPS

protections for Haitians reached the required 218 signatures, clearing a key procedural hurdle in the House.

The measure, H.R. 1689, would require the Department of Homeland Security to maintain Haiti's TPS designation and extend protections for roughly 350,000 Haitian nationals currently living and working in the United States.

What pushed it across the finish line was not just Democratic support, but Republican backing that advocates are calling historic.

Among those supporting the effort are Republican Representatives Maria Elvira Salazar, Brian Fitzpatrick, Mike Lawler, and Don Bacon - a group that helped close the gap after the petition had stalled for weeks.

Rep. Mike Lawler made the reasoning clear: the crisis in Haiti makes it untenable to send people back.

That statement alone signals something deeper. Because this is not just about policy - it is about proximity.

Miami, in particular, has a front-row seat to the Haitian reality. Haitian TPS holders are not abstract figures in a policy debate. They are nurses, caregivers, parents, business owners, and students.

In Miami-Dade County alone, thousands of public school students have ties to Haiti, and a significant number of TPS holders work in healthcare and caregiving roles - sectors already under strain.

Strip away TPS, and the impact is immediate: families separated, classrooms disrupted, care systems weakened. That is not ideology. That is lived reality.

And that reality is clearly influencing some Republican lawmakers - particularly those representing districts where immigrant communities are

deeply embedded in the local economy.

It is also a reminder that immigration, when viewed up close, often looks very different than it does from a distance.

At the same time, this legislative push is unfolding alongside a high-stakes legal battle. Federal courts have already blocked the administration's attempt to terminate Haiti's TPS designation, and the issue is now headed to the Supreme Court, which is expected to hear arguments later this spring.

That means the fate of hundreds of thousands of Haitians remains uncertain - caught between Congress, the courts, and shifting executive policy. Even if the House passes the bill, it still faces an uphill battle in the Senate.

But the significance of this moment goes beyond whether the legislation ultimately

becomes law. It signals a crack - however tiny - in the hardened narrative that immigration policy must always fall along strict party lines.

Because here is the truth: when immigration is reduced to slogans, it becomes easy to ignore the people behind it. But when lawmakers are forced to confront the realities in their own communities, the conversation changes.

The question now is whether that moment expands - or disappears under the weight of national politics.

Because for the Haitian families whose lives depend on these decisions, this is not about party lines.

It is about stability, survival, and the simple right to remain in a country they have already helped build.



Jamaica's Hurricane Recovery Continues Amid Housing, Health Challenges

Months after Hurricane Melissa battered Jamaica, thousands of residents remain without adequate housing, exposing ongoing gaps in recovery even as diaspora communities step in to help.

According to a report by The Guardian, many Jamaicans are still struggling to rebuild nearly six months after more than 150,000 homes were destroyed or damaged.

"Lots of people still don't have roofs," said Hanover Member of Parliament Andrea Purkiss, pointing to delays in financial support for affected

families.

Residents like Kerry-Ann Vickers, whose St. Elizabeth home was severely damaged, say the impact has been life-altering. "Everything has just been turned upside down," she said, describing the emotional and financial toll.

While the government says billions have been allocated for recovery, officials acknowledge payments are still being rolled out amid high demand.

At the same time, diaspora communities - particularly in the United Kingdom - have mobilized aid shipments,

fundraising drives, and volunteer support. Jamaican High Commissioner Alexander Williams described diaspora assistance as a "lifeline."

The crisis is also fueling broader discussions around climate justice, with officials noting that small island states are disproportionately impacted by global climate change.

Medical Crisis Deepens in Hard-Hit Areas

Health conditions in western Jamaica have worsened, with limited access to care compounding already difficult



Members of JAHJAH Foundation deployed mobile clinics across Westmoreland, St. James, and Hanover, reaching more than 1,300 patients with a team of 80 volunteers. (Photo: JAHJAH Foundation image)

living conditions.

Supported by a \$50,000 emergency grant from Direct Relief, the JAHJAH Foundation deployed mobile clinics across Westmoreland, St. James, and Hanover, reaching more than 1,300 patients with a team of 80 volunteers.

Nurse Joan Rosegreen recalled treating a young mother with dangerously high blood pressure. "This was blood pressure that could cause you to have a stroke," she said.

Clinicians reported widespread infections, untreated chronic illnesses, and growing mental health needs, as many communities remained cut off from services for weeks.

"People were walking around in muddy dirt and water that was contaminated by sewage... they just looked shellshocked," said operations director Karen Shields.

Doctors warn that beyond physical injuries, trauma and uncertainty continue to affect survivors.

Recovery Efforts Intensify as Displacement Persists

More than 90,000

households remain displaced following the Category 5 storm, even as over 90 organizations work alongside the government to support recovery.

Aid efforts have delivered food, clean water, and temporary shelter, while more than 90% of national water systems have been restored, and many health facilities have resumed operations.

"Our kids no longer worry about food. But now we need roofs," said survivor Judene Brown.

Officials say rebuilding homes and infrastructure remains a major challenge, requiring sustained coordination between government, international agencies, and communities.

Storm Name Retired

Meanwhile, the World Meteorological Organization has officially retired the name Melissa from the Atlantic hurricane list. It will be replaced by "Molly," with the 2025 naming list set to return during the 2031 hurricane season.



MetroCONNECT CONNECT TO TRANSIT AND SO MUCH MORE

Convenient, on-demand transit service connecting you to Miami-Dade's transportation system and nearby destinations within one of 12 designated service zones, including:

- Kendall
- South Miami
- And more!
- Cutler Bay
- North Dade

\$3.75 trips per zone

\$1.50 trips from select transit hubs



Scan to Learn More:



For more information, visit miamidade.gov/metroconnect

To obtain this information in an accessible format, please call 786-469-5405.

Jamaican National Sentenced To Six Years In U.S. Drug Trafficking Case

A Jamaican national has been sentenced to six years in prison for his role in an international cocaine trafficking operation, according to the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Jason Duncker, 54, was convicted of participating in a conspiracy involving the movement of large quantities of cocaine between the United States and Mexico. Authorities said that between 2021 and 2022, Duncker trafficked between 75 and 100 kilograms of cocaine.

Prosecutors revealed that in July 2022, Duncker coordinated the pickup of drug proceeds in Chesapeake, Virginia. A subsequent traffic stop led to the discovery of US\$250,004 in cash, which was intended to be sent to co-conspirators in Mexico.

Following his arrest, Duncker fled to Mexico, where he remained until October 2025. He was eventually located in General Terán, Nuevo León,



Jason Duncker

through a joint effort involving Mexican authorities, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). He was later transferred to U.S. custody in Laredo, Texas. Duncker pleaded guilty in December 2025 to multiple charges, including conspiracy to distribute cocaine and interstate travel in aid of racketeering.



Thousands Of Haitians In Limbo As TPS Battle Heads To Supreme Court

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

“Not only do children face forced recruitment by gangs, but also tens of thousands don't have enough to eat, can't go to school or see a doctor,” O'Neil said. “Haiti is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a child.”

The urgency follows a February ruling by U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes, who extended TPS, citing concerns that ending the program may have been influenced by racial bias and would expose Haitians to imminent danger.

Haiti's crisis has deepened since the 2010 earthquake and the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, with gang violence spiraling across Port-au-Prince. More than 2,000 people have been killed and over 1,100 kidnappings reported, while gender-based violence has surged by nearly 49 percent.

Women and children remain among the most vulnerable. More than 580,000 people are displaced, many living in unsafe



People attend a candlelight vigil for Haitians living in the U.S. under the Temporary Protected Status immigration program, in Miami, on Feb. 3, 2026. (Credit: Giorgio Viera/AFP via Getty Images)

campus with limited protection or access to basic services.

For Haitian families in the U.S., the uncertainty is already shaping difficult decisions. Jeanne, a Miami resident who fled Haiti in 2022 with her two young children, says returning is not an option.

“We can't go back there because things got worse,” she told Caribbean Today, declining to give her last name. “I'm

looking at Canada and other places like other Haitians if we can't stay in the U.S. We have better lives here.”

As the Supreme Court prepares to weigh the future of TPS, advocates say the decision will have far-reaching consequences - not just for immigration policy, but for the safety and survival of thousands of Haitian children and families.



EVERY GAME GIVES BACK
BILLIONS TO EDUCATION

1915-218152963-247640

FLORIDA Lottery

it's good fun

Since the Florida Lottery was established in 1988, we've contributed more than \$49 billion to public education in our state, and helped over one million Floridians attend college on a Bright Futures Scholarship. A portion of every Florida Lottery game purchase goes directly to this mission. That means, every time you play, you play it forward.

Learn more at floralottery.com/education

©2025 Florida Lottery

Caribbean Nationals From Three Caribbean Countries Now Face \$15,000 U.S. Visa Bond Requirement

Nationals from three Caribbean countries - Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and Grenada - along with those from 47 other mostly African nations - will now be required to post a visa bond of up to \$15,000 before receiving U.S. visitor visas for business or tourism, under an expanded policy by the U.S. State Department. The rule took effect on April 2nd.

The move is part of a broader expansion of the U.S. visa bond program, which will now apply to 50 countries, targeting nations with higher rates of visa overstays.

Under the policy, applicants for B1 (business) and B2 (tourism) visas may be required to pay a refundable bond ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 at the discretion of consular officers. The bond is returned if the visa holder complies with all terms of their stay and leaves the United States on time.

Caribbean Impact

While the policy spans multiple regions, its implications for the Caribbean are significant. Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica were already included in the program, while Grenada is among 12 newly added countries under the latest expansion.

For citizens of these small island nations, the financial requirement could pose a substantial barrier to travel, particularly for tourism, family visits, and small business engagements in the United States.

U.S. Rationale: Overstays And Enforcement
U.S. officials say the program is designed to curb visa overstays - a longstanding concern in immigration enforcement.



Caribbean nationals from Antigua, Dominica, and Grenada will have to pay \$15,000 U.S. as a bond to get a US visa to visit or do business here.

According to the State Department, the bond requirement has already shown results, with approximately 97% of bonded travelers complying with visa terms and returning home on time.

The government also argues the program reduces taxpayer costs, noting that removing individuals who overstay visas can cost more than \$18,000 per case, while the bond system serves as a financial incentive for

compliance.

Criticism And Concerns

However, critics say the policy risks disproportionately affecting travelers from smaller and developing nations, including those in the Caribbean.

The upfront cost - even if refundable - may be out of reach for many applicants, effectively limiting access to U.S. travel and business opportunities. Immigration advocates also argue that such measures could deepen inequalities in global mobility, particularly for diaspora-connected communities that rely on travel between the Caribbean and the United States.

What It Means For The Region

For Caribbean nationals, particularly from Antigua, Dominica, and Grenada, the new requirement introduces a new layer of financial and procedural complexity to U.S. travel. For governments and regional leaders, it also raises broader questions about mobility, economic ties, and the evolving dynamics of U.S.-Caribbean

relations in an increasingly restrictive global immigration environment.

All Countries

The new countries included in the visa bond program are Cambodia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Grenada, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, and Tunisia.

These countries join 38 nations that are already included in the visa bond program. Those countries are Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Fiji, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mauritania, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Tributes Pour In For Grenadian-American Surgeon Dr. Roland Purcell

Grenadians across North America are mourning the sudden passing of respected surgeon Dr. Roland Purcell, who died last week at the age of 73.

"On March 25, 2026, the Grenadian Caribbean-American community suffered the profound loss of an extraordinary individual, Dr. Roland Purcell," said Cheryl Vincent, a Grenadian-born registered nurse at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn.

Vincent, who was honored alongside Dr. Purcell in 2016 for their community service, told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that he died from a cardiac issue.

She described him as a "distinguished physician specializing in emergency medicine, critical general surgery,



The late Dr. Roland Purcell was born in Curaçao to Grenadian parents. (CMC image)

and vascular surgery," adding that he "exemplified compassion, dedication, and selfless service."

Widely admired for his commitment to patients, Vincent said Dr. Purcell often worked late into the evening, always placing others first.

"For many Grenadians arriving in the United States, he

was more than a physician — he was reassurance and a steadfast advocate," she added.

Grenada's Consul General to Toronto, Gerry Hopkin, called him "a stalwart in healthcare" who championed improvements in regional healthcare and medical tourism.

With more than 45 years of experience, Dr. Purcell practiced in Brooklyn and was affiliated with several major hospitals.

Born in Curaçao to Grenadian parents, he spent his early years there before moving to Grenada. His funeral will be held on April 11 at Holy Family Church in Brooklyn.

- Rewritten from CMC



St. Kitts PM Sounds Warning: Cannabis Legalization Could Risk Economy and Banking System

As global momentum grows around cannabis legalization, St. Kitts and Nevis is taking a sharply cautious stance - with Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Drew warning that getting it wrong could have serious consequences for the country's economy and financial future.

Speaking in Parliament, Drew made it clear that while his administration has already taken historic steps to reform outdated cannabis laws and recognize the rights of the Rastafari community, full integration of cannabis into society must be handled with extreme care.

"We are being responsible with how we introduce cannabis as part of our way of life... it has to be done responsibly," he said, stressing that the issue goes far beyond personal use and touches national stability.

At the heart of the government's caution is a major concern: international banking relationships.

Attorney General Garth Wilkin warned that full legalization could trigger a financial backlash from global institutions, particularly in the United States and Europe, where cannabis remains illegal at the federal level.

"If we were to legalize, our corresponding banking relationships would almost come to an end," Wilkin said, explaining that international banks could cut ties with the Federation if cannabis profits enter the formal financial system.

Such a move, he cautioned, could disrupt everything from trade to basic financial transactions, effectively isolating the country economically.

Still, the government insists it is not backing away from reform. Instead, it is building what officials describe as a "balanced" cannabis framework - one that allows for religious use, protects freedom of conscience, and supports a tightly regulated medicinal cannabis

industry.

Drew, a medical doctor, also raised public health concerns, warning that cannabis - like any controlled substance - must be carefully regulated to protect vulnerable populations.

"When people get a product... they must know that what's in it is actually in it," he said, emphasizing safety and quality control.

The government is also ramping up public education, urging citizens and businesses to fully understand and comply with the law.

The message from Basseterre is clear: while cannabis reform is moving forward, full legalization remains off the table - at least for now - as the country navigates the high-stakes balance between economic survival, legal reform, and global financial pressure.

- Rewritten from CMC



Cuban Medical Brigade Returns Home After Jamaica Ends Health Cooperation Deal



Some of the Cuban medical brigade returning from Jamaica. (Photo: Ismael Batista/Granma image)

Members of Cuba's medical brigade in Jamaica began returning home late last month, following the Jamaican government's decision to terminate its long-standing health cooperation agreement with Cuba.

The second group of medical professionals arrived in Havana on March 26th via José Martí International Airport, hours after an earlier group landed in Santiago de Cuba. Cuban officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Eduardo Martínez Díaz and Health Minister José Angel Portal Miranda, were on hand to receive them.

According to Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jamaica formally notified Havana on March 4 of its decision to end the agreement, prompting Cuba to repatriate the 277 healthcare workers who had been serving on the island.

Cuban authorities described the move as the end of decades of cooperation that delivered critical healthcare services across Jamaica. First Deputy Minister of Public Health Tania Margarita Cruz Hernández praised the brigade's work, stating, "The humble will not forget that you were the first to reach places where no doctor had ever gone before."

Over the past 30 years, more than 4,700 Cuban medical personnel have served in Jamaica, treating over 8 million patients, performing more than 74,000 surgeries, and assisting in over 7,000 births. Through initiatives such as Operation Miracle, nearly 25,000 Jamaicans also received vision care.

- Rewritten from Granma



Miami Gardens State Rep. Robinson Elected To Lead Florida Legislative Black Caucus

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

State Rep. Felicia Simone Robinson has been elected to lead the Florida Legislative Black Caucus, (FLBC), succeeding outgoing chair Darryl Robinson, a Democratic Senator representing Central Florida.

Robinson, a Democrat from Miami Gardens, will be the FLBC leader for the next two years, saying the group's focus is on healthcare affordability, securing funding for K-12 education, supporting economic development, and pushing for criminal justice reforms.

Robinson, 55, previously served as the group's vice chair and ran unopposed for the top spot when the 27-member caucus chose her to lead. "I

am deeply honored to lead the FLBC, which was established in the 1960s to unify Black lawmakers in advancing equity and representation in Florida," Robinson said in a statement. "This position is not just a privilege but a responsibility to advocate for our communities and address the challenges we face."

Robinson said the goal of the FLBC is to work tirelessly to improve and sustain the quality of life for all Floridians. "I am excited to collaborate with my colleagues and community leaders as we strive for progress, equity, and empowerment throughout our great state," she said.

Robinson has been serving in the Florida House of Representatives since 2020.



Miami Gardens State Rep. Felicia Robinson has been elected to lead the Florida Legislative Black Caucus, (FLBC), succeeding outgoing chair Darryl Robinson, a Democratic Senator representing Central Florida. (Photo courtesy of the Office of State Rep. Felicia Robinson)

She has been actively involved in legislative efforts, including refiling this year House Bill 73, which aims to create a public

database to verify voting eligibility for individuals with felony convictions.

Robinson also sponsored legislation for post-surgical recovery homes, access to Medicaid providers, and championed House 353 for Sickle Cell Disease Treatment of Pain Continuing Education.

Robinson gained a foothold in government when she previously served on the Miami Gardens city council and as vice mayor from 2014 to 2018. Robinson was born in Miami Gardens and graduated from North Miami Beach Senior High School in 1988.

She earned a Bachelor of

Science degree in mathematics from Tuskegee University, a Master of Science in math education from the University of Miami, and an EdS in educational leadership from Barry University. Robinson has worked for the Miami-Dade County Public Schools for over 25 years, including as a math teacher, instructional coach and vice principal.

Other new executive members of the FLBC include Broward County Senator Rosalind Osgood as vice chair, Homestead Rep. Kevin Chambliss as Secretary, Gotha Rep. Leonard Spencer as Treasurer and Broward County Sen. Barbara Sharief as Parliamentarian.



New Florida Measure Could Ban Government Support For DEI Programs, Including Black and Caribbean Heritage Events

BY DAVID L. SNELLING
Edited By Felicia J. Persaud

A newly passed Florida bill could significantly restrict local government involvement in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, (DEI), initiatives, including support for Black history and Caribbean cultural heritage celebrations.

The Florida House approved Senate Bill 1134 by a

77-37 vote, largely along party lines. Republican Reps. Chip LaMarca, Hillary Cassel, Will Robinson, Paula Stark, and Jim Mooney joined Democrats in opposing the measure. The bill has been sent to Governor Ron DeSantis for final approval.

Democrats argue the legislation's language is overly broad and could create confusion for local officials, who may face removal from office for

supporting cultural or LGBTQ-related events.

Bill sponsor Rep. Dean Black, R-Jacksonville, defended the measure, stating, "Not only have millions and millions of taxpayer dollars been wasted in the name of DEI, this philosophy has fostered resentment instead of good will; mediocrity instead of merit; and it has divided our society against itself."

The legislation defines DEI broadly, including efforts tied to race, ethnicity, gender

identity, or sexual orientation in hiring, programming, or training initiatives.

While private organizations may continue hosting cultural events, local governments would be barred from funding or promoting them. This could impact widely observed celebrations such as Haitian Flag Day and Jamaican Independence events, particularly in areas with large Caribbean populations.

In Broward County, for example, officials may be

forced to end public events like the annual Haitian Flag Day celebration at the African American Research Library and Cultural Center.

The bill is part of a broader push by Florida leaders to scale back DEI programs. Since 2022, the state has enacted measures limiting how race and gender are addressed in schools, workplaces, and public institutions.



Desantis Signs New Voting Law As Lawsuits Challenge Citizenship Requirement

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has signed sweeping new election legislation into law, introducing stricter voter requirements while drawing immediate legal challenges from voting rights groups.

The most significant change requires verification of citizenship for both new and existing registered voters - a key priority aligned with former President Donald Trump's claims about noncitizen voting, despite limited evidence of widespread fraud.

The law also narrows the types of identification accepted at polling stations, eliminating student IDs and retirement community IDs, while maintaining options such as driver's licenses and military identification.

Voting rights advocates warn that the changes could prevent thousands of eligible voters from casting ballots. The American Civil Liberties Union and other organizations have filed federal lawsuits seeking to block the citizenship

requirement, arguing it could violate constitutional protections and disproportionately impact certain groups.

"Governor DeSantis just signed one of the worst voter suppression laws in modern American history," said attorney Abha Khanna.

State officials defended the law, saying it strengthens election integrity and ensures transparency in the voting process.

While the citizenship requirement is not set to take effect until January 1, 2027, lawmakers delayed its implementation amid concerns it could disrupt upcoming elections.

Critics say the law could create barriers for voters without easy access to documents such as passports or birth certificates, including married women, young voters, and seniors.

Governor DeSantis dismissed the legal challenges, expressing confidence that the state will prevail.



New Leader Named For Jamaica Diaspora Southern Region

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Janice McIntosh, a former executive with the Jamaica National Bank, (JNB), is the new representative for the Southern Region of the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council, (GJDC). This followed the elections, which had voting from January 28th to February 20th.

At press time, there was no vote tally from the respective regions, but McIntosh topped five rivals in her second attempt to lead the 13-state bloc. She succeeds Peter Gracey, who was elected in 2023 but did not seek re-election.

According to Jamaica's foreign affairs ministry, a record 52 candidates contested the elections in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. McIntosh is the lone new GJDC representative in the US, as Dr. Binzie R. Davidson

and Michelle Tulloch-Neil were re-elected to second terms in the West-Midwest and North-East regions.

"This role is deeply meaningful to me. It represents an opportunity to help strengthen the connection between Jamaicans in the southern United States and our homeland. I have great respect for those who have served in this role before me, and I recognize that each representative has worked with dedication to advance the mission of the Diaspora council," said McIntosh. "At the same time, every new representative brings their own approach and perspective."

The GJDC Southern United States Region comprises Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.



Janice McIntosh, a former executive with the Jamaica National Bank (JNB), is the new representative for the Southern Region of the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC). (Contributed image)

McIntosh noted that consistent communication among members in these states

is lacking, which she plans to address now she has taken up the office as of April 1st.

"One of the areas I hope to expand is the use of digital tools and technology to improve communication and engagement across the region. By leveraging modern digital platforms and frameworks, we can connect the states more effectively, share information more widely, and create greater participation within the Diaspora community," she said. "Most importantly, this role is about people - bringing Jamaicans together, strengthening relationships across the region, and ensuring that the Diaspora remains an active and meaningful partner in Jamaica's future."

McIntosh is from Kingston, Jamaica's capital. She has lived in South Florida since 2009, serving as JNB's chief representative officer for 11 years.

A Couple's Volatile Journey Through Marriage

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

As President of the Turks and Caicos Islands Football Association, a FIFA Council Member, and a CONCACAF Council Member, Sonia Fulford is a true example of success, breaking the glass ceiling in a traditionally male-dominated profession. Her husband, Guardvin 'Garvey' Missick, a top professional in the construction and contracting industry, is well-known for high-end residential and commercial projects across the islands.

This power couple from Grand Turk, capital of the Turks and Caicos island archipelago, was the one to emulate. Their love for each other was always on display. They had the perfect marriage... until they didn't!

'Hope In The Ashes: When The World Pressed In We Pulled Closer,' is a raw and honest account of their journey.

Addiction

They walked together, talked together, played together, and prayed together. But when the 'noise' crept in, their lives would never be the same again. Shattered by addiction, this once textbook relationship was seemingly broken beyond repair.

It began with little signs - hiding text messages, always tethered to his mobile phone, suspicious behavior - the kind of 'whispers' your intuition is telling you not to ignore. But eventually these whispers became unbearably loud.

This is not a fictional story; it is a true record of how a marriage was pulled apart by one partner's sexual addiction. Like any other addiction, such as alcohol or drugs, Missick could not help himself. He craved the

high and power that extra-marital affairs gave him. This was Garvey's normal. But let's be honest, this is the Caribbean, where having a woman or women on the side is almost always celebrated, even accepted as a cultural norm.

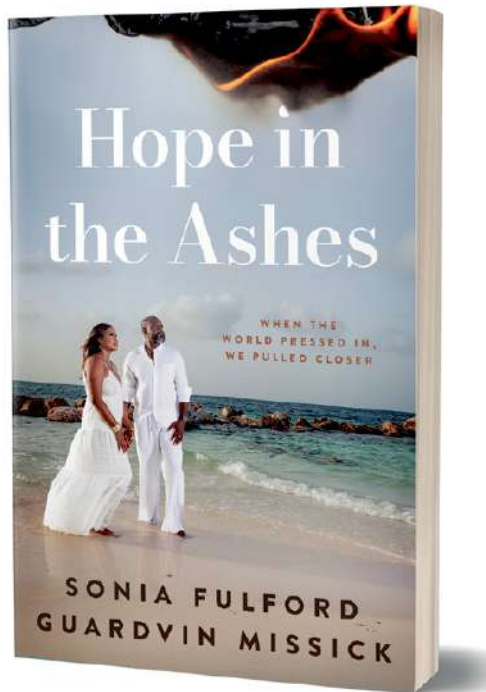
This is a personal story filled with details of sexual encounters, lying, gossip, and humiliation. Why would Fulford and Missick reveal so much of their scarred, torn, raw personal lives publicly?

Because it's no longer about them; it's for all the couples living in fear, not knowing where to turn. It's also about their testimony and faith in God, who led them to transformation and restoration.

"Speaking publicly about our story required ongoing courage. There were those who criticized us for 'airing our dirty laundry' or questioned our motives. But we learned to tune out the critics and focus on the testimonies of those who found hope through our honesty," writes Fulford.

Two Perspectives

She had to learn how to rise and walk again after heartache. But how? The actions of both partners teach us how to do just that. Both voices are present in this book. We look in from two perspectives, as Sonia and Garvey share their personal experiences. That's what's



unique about this book.

We hear two sides of the story, allowing us to step inside each person's shoes and listen without judgment. As difficult as it is, we learn to empathize with the perpetrator as much as the victim because he comes to recognize how his deep betrayal has savagely broken his wife. We also learn about the cultural patterns that helped shape Garvey's behavior.

Writes Garvey: "For years, I had been carrying a mountain of secrets. I lived in shame, deceit, and fear - always trying to manage lies, dodge questions, cover tracks. The weight of it all was crushing. Every time my phone buzzed or Sonia looked at me a certain way, I braced for exposure. I knew she sensed something wasn't right, and I hated the way that made her feel. But when I finally told her

everything - when I laid down the full truth - I felt something break loose inside me. The lies were gone."

But how do you fix all this? How do you get back to some semblance of peace? Forgiveness, therapy, prayers? Well, that's how this couple came through the 'fire.' Certainly not an easy road. They got burned, but the hard work continues, even today.

Sonia and Garvey reclaimed their marriage, knowing that it would be a lifetime of management. There is always temptation for addictive personalities, but coming out of hiding, being courageous enough to face the truth, and a shared commitment are the only ways forward, even when the road is rocky.

As she shares in this quote from the book: "I don't want to paint a fairy tale or pretend this journey is all roses and sunlight. We still have challenging days. There are moments when the hurt resurfaces - uninvited and unexpected. Sometimes I battle intrusive thoughts. Sometimes the shadows of betrayal whisper lies. And yes, sometimes Garvey still wrestles with the shame of his former life. But the difference now is this: We face it together. We no longer hide. We no longer avoid. We confront every hard thing with transparency and grace."

BOOK: Hope In The Ashes: When The World Pressed In We Pulled Closer

AUTHOR: Sonia Fulford and Guardvin Missick

PUBLISHER: Books to Hook Publishing, LLC

PUBLICATION DATE: October 2025

Available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other bookstores

Caribbean Today

Miami Office:

9020 SW 152nd Street
Miami, FL 33157
Tel: (305) 238-2868

Email: editor@caribeantoday.com

West Palm Beach Office:

(By Appointment Only)
5840 Corporate Way, Suite 250
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
(561) 363-7838

www.caribeantoday.com

Send ads to:

sales@caribeantoday.com

Vol. 37, Number 5 - APR. 2026

PETER A WEBLEY

Publisher
publisher@caribeantoday.com

FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Editor
news@newsamericasnow.com

BRANDON WEBLEY

Web Copy Editor
editor@caribeantoday.com

LORNA ASENCOR

Accounting Manager
accounts@caribeantoday.com

HYACINTH LEIBA

Account Executive
hyacinth@caribeantoday.com

SABRINA G. ALEXANDER

Graphic Design
sabrina@gocreateart.design

Opinions expressed by editors and writers are not necessarily those of the publisher. Caribbean Today, an independent newsmagazine, is published every month by Caribbean Publishing & Services, Inc. Caribbean Today is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or photos. To guarantee return, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Articles appearing in Caribbean Today may not be reproduced without written permission of the editor.

American Taxpayers Are Paying Millions For African Nations To Take Deportees

At a time when Americans are facing cuts to healthcare and rising costs for food, gas, and basic goods, a recent U.S. Senate report reveals something deeply contradictory: millions of taxpayer dollars are being paid to foreign governments - including African nations - to take in immigrant deportees who are not their own.



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

According to a report released last month by U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen, Chris Coons, Chris Murphy, Tim Kaine, Jeff Merkley, Cory Booker, Chris Van Hollen, Tammy Duckworth, and Jacky Rosen, the Trump administration has spent more than \$32 million on so-called "third country deportation" deals - sending migrants to countries they have no connection to.

Among the recipients are Rwanda, Equatorial Guinea, and Eswatini - African nations now central to a controversial system raising serious economic, ethical, and geopolitical concerns.

The numbers are staggering. In one of the most extreme cases, the administration paid Rwanda \$7.5 million, plus an estimated \$601,864 in flight costs, to accept just seven people - roughly \$1.1 million per deportee.

Equatorial Guinea received \$7.5 million to take 29 individuals, at an estimated \$282,126 per person.

Eswatini was paid \$5.1 million to accept 15 people.

This is not just immigration policy. This is outsourcing deportation at premium prices. And it is happening with countries that raise serious governance concerns.

Equatorial Guinea ranks 172 out of 182 countries on the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index, placing it among the most corrupt nations globally.

Eswatini ranks 153rd out of 182 countries, with a score of just 23 out of 100, reflecting rising public sector corruption.

Rwanda, by contrast, ranks 41st least corrupt globally, with a score of 58 out of 100, making it one of the stronger performers in sub-Saharan Africa.

Yet, according to the Senate report, there is little to no oversight on how U.S. taxpayer funds are used once transferred. Even more troubling is how inefficient - and at times absurd - this system has become.

In some cases, the United States is paying twice to deport the same individual. One example cited in the report involved a Jamaican national who was deported to Eswatini at a cost of more than \$181,000, only to be flown back to Jamaica weeks later - again at U.S. expense.

The Jamaican government made it clear: "The Government has not refused the return of any of our nationals."

That directly contradicts the administration's claim that third-country deportations are necessary because home countries refuse to accept their citizens. So, what is really driving this policy?

The Department of Homeland Security has argued that some migrants are "so uniquely barbaric that their own countries won't take them back."

But the data - and even internal accounts - suggest something else: a costly system designed less for efficiency and more for deterrence. Or as one lawmaker put it bluntly: "We spent so much of last year hearing about how we have to cut waste... but we are spending millions of dollars on this."

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was even more direct: "For an Administration that claims to be reining in fraud, waste and abuse, this policy is the epitome of all three."

And that may be the most important takeaway. Because this is not just about immigration.

It is about how policy is being executed - through opaque deals, questionable partners, and significant US taxpayer expense - with little accountability and even less transparency.

It is also about what happens

when human beings become bargaining chips in international agreements, sent to countries they have never known, with uncertain protections and unclear futures.

For African nations now drawn into this system, the implications are equally serious - raising questions about sovereignty, responsibility, and the long-term cost of participating in what is effectively a global

deportation network. At its core, this policy raises an uncomfortable question: why are African nations agreeing to take in Black and brown migrants who are not their own, in exchange for millions?

Because when human movement begins to follow money instead of law, it forces us to confront a history we claim to have left behind.

Felicia J. Persaud is the founder and publisher of NewsAmericasNow.com, the only daily syndicated newswire and digital platform dedicated exclusively to Caribbean Diaspora and Black immigrant news across the Americas.



CANNABIS AND SPORTS

Tackling What Athletes Need to Know

Watch a Conversations on Cannabis virtual forum to hear an expert break down cannabis' impact on athletic performance, potential risks and benefits, current regulations, and what athletes should know to stay safe and in the game.



FAMU FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY MEDICAL MARIJUANA EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INITIATIVE



Watch Now

Follow 'Conversations on Cannabis' on



@MMERIForumRadio

Aww, Men Need A Hug Too

For some strange reason, many people do not think that men need affection, too. Truth be told, this may be a result of the very behavior and attitudes that many men display regarding those feelings. After all, men are supposed to be these strong, beast-like creatures who are bereft of emotions, sensitivity, warmth, and certainly do not



TONY ROBINSON

have the capacity to exhibit affection.

It has been established that men have the capacity not only to show love but also to accept love and affection from women other than their mothers. Even so, there is an ironic twist: some people who frown upon, and even forbid, men from showing any form of love and affection. "Don't be a fool, man, don't make her know that you love her, don't show her any affection, for she will walk all over you."

So, the man suppresses his

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

VIEWPOINT



Could 2028 Be The Year The People Finally Pick The President?

BY BEN JEALOUS

This year, America marks 250 years since the Declaration of Independence.

That should make us proud. It should also make us honest.

When my son was 11, we walked the Lexington battlefield in Massachusetts.

As we crossed that ground, I told him our family descends from the youngest person to carry a musket there that day. He was just a boy. He stood in a different unit from his father. Father and son, both there.

Father and son, both fighting for freedom. Father and son, both fighting for the right of a people to govern themselves.

Then I looked at my son and said: He was only two years older than you are now.

That moment has stayed with me.

So has another truth. Our roots in the Revolution run through both Massachusetts and Virginia. We also descend from Richard Bland of Virginia, who argued for the rights of the colonies before independence was declared.

So, this year, as we mark 250 years since the Declaration, we should ask a simple question: Have we finished what those

brave men, women and children started?

Not yet.

We elect our mayors by popular vote. We elect our governors by popular vote. But we still do not count every vote equally when we choose our president.

Try explaining that to a child. It is awkward.

Because democracy rests on a simple idea: the person with the most votes should win. One person, one vote.

Today, that is not how presidential politics works in practice. A few swing states get most of the attention. The rest of the country is pushed aside. Millions of Americans in red states and blue states alike are told, in effect, that their votes matter less in the one race that belongs to all of us.

That is not fairness; that is neglect.

There is another way.

It is called the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. It does not end the Electoral College. It uses it in the way the Constitution allows.

The Constitution gives state legislatures the power to decide how their electoral votes are awarded. Under this plan, states agree to give their electoral

votes to the candidate who wins the most votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. No constitutional amendment is needed.

Virginia is now close to joining. The bill has passed both houses of the General Assembly. If Gov. Abigail Spanberger signs it, Virginia would become the 19th jurisdiction in the compact, joining states such as Vermont, Delaware, Maine and Illinois. Virginia is not some side note in this story. It is one of the places where the American idea of self-government first took root. If Virginia joins now, it will not be breaking with the founding. It will be honoring it.

That is not a radical idea. It is an American one. And it should not belong to one party.

This is not about helping Republicans. It is not about helping Democrats. It is about trusting the people.

That idea is not left-wing or right-wing. It is not urban or rural. It is not Black or white; it is patriotic.

Of course, there are still obstacles. More states would need to join. Lawmakers would need to act. Courts may weigh in. None of this is certain.

But history does not move only when success is guaranteed. It moves when people decide that something is right. And what better time than now?

What better way to honor America's 250th birthday than by taking one more step toward becoming the democracy we have always said we are?

The people who stood at Lexington did not risk their lives so future generations could accept minority rule. They did not fight, so Americans would shrug when the person with the most votes loses.

They fought for freedom. They fought for self-government. They fought for the right of the people to decide their own future.

It is time to finish what they started. Let the people decide. Let the majority rule.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ben Jealous is a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania and former national president of the NAACP.



Aww, Men Need A Hug Too

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

feelings, and the sad cycle of a life devoid of love and affection continues to hang over his head as he walks around bereft of them, never allowing himself to be caught up in the emotions he thinks will expose his vulnerability.

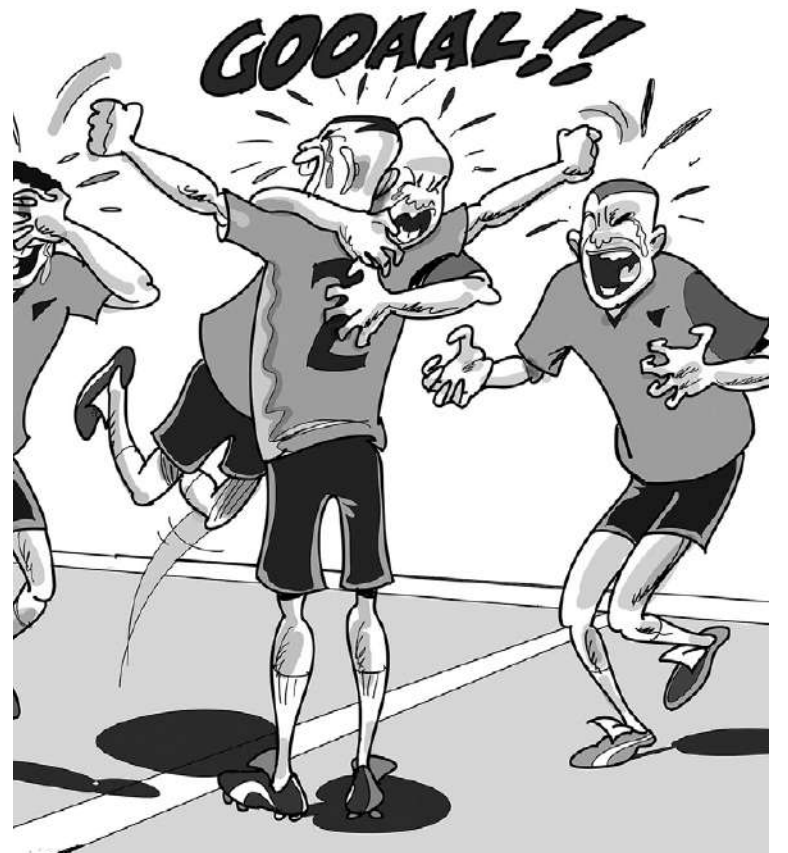
Vulnerability is crucial, for a man can never expose his underbelly; he must learn never to show his weakness, let anyone know that he has an Achilles heel, a tender spot, a chink in his armor that women may exploit. So, he puts on his cloak of invincibility, envelops himself in a shroud of invulnerability that no one can penetrate, for he is a man, and he is impregnable.

There are men who refuse to show any form of love and affection for fear of being considered weak. They will never kiss their woman or give her a hug. Sometimes his feelings and actions are misunderstood and misread, and every time he approaches his woman for a little bout of affection, her response is: "Is what you want, eh?"

No, no, all he wants is a cuddle. A cuddle? It has been documented that there are men who will spend time with prostitutes, not for sex, but just to hug and talk. "Sex workers reveal most shocking requests from men." One such worker said a client said: "Don't worry, I'll pay you for your time, just let me stay here, and you hug me."

To take it even further, a man is not allowed to display any form of love and affection towards another man, for if he does, he's immediately deemed to be gay.

Instead, men fist or elbow bump and say: "Nuff love man." But he is not encouraged to hug and show affection for another man, for that is taboo, except of course, when sports is involved,



for sports is the great exception to the rule, the release, the catharsis that allows big, strong, muscular men to embrace each other.

Not only do they do so, but they display it in public too, in full view of millions of people, as they run and leap into each other's arms, hug and kiss, embrace and caress, and even jump on top of each other after a goal is scored in a football match.

This display of love and affection transcends all taboos, dispels all myths about being gay, and shows men at their most sensitive, as they display true love towards each other. Why is this so, and why are women allowed to show love towards each other, but men cannot?

In many countries, men hug and kiss each other on the cheek when they greet each other or

say goodbye. This occurs in many European and Middle Eastern countries.

Do women want men to show them more love and affection? And conversely, are there men who just want a hug and kiss from their women, a tender show of affection? It's a secret desire of many men, although there are some who are resistant to that.

Hug and kiss your woman, tell your bredrin that you love him, even with a fist bump and hug, for men need love and affection too.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tony Robinson is an independent contributor to Caribbean Today and the views expressed here are his own. He can be reached at seidoIyard@gmail.com for feedback.



DR. LENWARD McCALLA

Practice of Optometry

- Comprehensive Eye Exams • Contact Lens fits
- Diabetic Retinopathy Evaluations
- Glaucoma Treatment and Management
- Children's Examinations • Cataract Evaluations
- Post Lasik Care

11217 S. Dixie Highway • Miami, FL 33156

(305) 378-1915

VISA MasterCard AMERICAN EXPRESS

Advertising just because it's cheap is like riding a bike without a seat.

You either won't get too far or it just might hurt you.

Caribbean Today

WE COVER YOUR WORLD

305-238-2868

Going further giving you more

Tuff Gong Reopens With Marley Legacy Front and Center

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

An animated Stephen Marley beamed as he led patrons through the refurbished Tuff Gong International recording studio in Kingston on March 4th. The historic facility reopened after months of closure, with state-of-the-art equipment and Marley-inspired decor.

The Grammy-winning singer-songwriter described the occasion as “a proud moment for Jamaica and Jamaican culture.” He noted that his father, Bob Marley, was once turned away from recording at the studio, which was previously owned by the Khouris, a family of Lebanese heritage.

“Dis is not about di Marley



Stephen Marley and Cedella Marley at the March reopening of the Tuff Gong recording studio in Kingston, Jamaica.

Tuff Gong International; his son Yohan; Marcia Griffiths and Judy Mowatt, who were members of The I Three, Bob

Records. She also recorded Black Woman, her acclaimed 1980 album, there. “I always felt so comfortable here because it was like my home working with the Marleys,” she said.

The walls of the new-look lobby are adorned with photos of Bob and Rita Marley, Stephen’s parents, and artists who recorded music at Tuff Gong since the Marleys purchased the studio in 1981, the year Bob Marley died from cancer at age 36.

There is also a recreational area in the lobby, with a pool table, a pinball soccer machine, and a table tennis table, catering to artists and musicians taking a break from recording sessions.

Many major artists have recorded albums and songs at Tuff Gong, including Brazilian legend Gilberto Gil, Alpha Blondy of Cote d’Ivoire, Youssou N’Dour of Senegal, and Sinead O’Connor of Ireland.



Marley’s harmony group.

It was a special moment for Mowatt, who started her career at the studio in the 1960s when it was known as Federal



Odessa Chambers (left), daughter of Jimmy Cliff, Marcia Griffiths, and Judy Mowatt at the reopening of Tuff Gong recording studio in Kingston, Jamaica, in March. (Contributed image)

family, wi do it for Jamaica an’ di culture. It’s a proud moment for all of us,” said Stephen.

Also attending the event was his sister Cedella, CEO of

CCH Pounder Leads Global Push Connecting Caribbean, African Creatives

Guyana-born actress CCH Pounder is helping to drive a major new push connecting Caribbean, African, and diaspora creatives through the expansion of the Cross Continental Forum (CCF), as the initiative heads to South Africa in 2026.

The award-winning actress is part of the forum’s steering group as it moves to KwaZulu-Natal, marking a significant step in strengthening global co-production partnerships across the Global South.

“Creation, to me, is our most powerful act of connection,” Pounder said, emphasizing the importance of turning shared cultural heritage into economic and creative opportunity.

The forum, launched by CaribbeanTales Media Group, brings together film and television producers from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Americas to build international partnerships and expand market access.

The 2026 edition will begin with an in-person gathering in South Africa’s Pietermaritzburg Midlands in July, followed by sessions at the Toronto International Film Festival and virtual labs connecting participants worldwide.

Organizers say the move reflects growing demand for globally relevant stories rooted in Black authorship and cultural authenticity, while also positioning Africa and the Caribbean as key players in the global screen economy.

Industry leaders say the initiative is part of a broader shift toward South-South collaboration, supported

by expanding trade and co-production agreements across Africa.

Applications are now open to producers across the diaspora at www.decolonisingcoproduction.com/apply/, with organizers aiming to build long-term pipelines that ensure Caribbean and African stories reach global audiences.



Award-winning Guyana-born actress, CCH Pounder is helping to drive a major new push connecting Caribbean, African, and diaspora creatives.

Mr. Vegas Sparks Dancehall Stir With ‘Gallis Code’

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

With nearly 30 years of rocking the dancehall under his belt, Mr. Vegas has ruffled some feathers along the way. He has had spats with fellow heavyweights like Bounty Killer and Sean Paul, and in 2025, he campaigned relentlessly for the incumbent Jamaica Labor Party in Jamaica’s general election.

He starts 2026 with ‘Gallis Code,’ a song that takes a jab at Khago, who Mr. Vegas claims disrespected dancehall diva D’Angel in the worst possible way. Released in March, the song is on the WYFL ‘riddim.’

“The artist D’Angel inspired Gallis Code. I did not like the way in which a certain producer/artist treated her after she stopped working with him. He went public and insinuated that he slept with her, then later said it was a lie,” said Mr. Vegas.

D’Angel and deejay/producer Khago had a falling-out after the release of ‘Personal,’ their 2025 collaboration. Khago hinted that their relationship was more than professional, which D’Angel has denied.

That inspired Mr. Vegas to write ‘Gallis Code’ for the WYFL beat, which is one of the dancehall’s hottest riddims. It has songs by other high-profile acts such as Spice, Vybz Kartel, Mavado, Cham, and Wormbass.

Khago has not responded to Mr. Vegas verbal jabs. Mr. Vegas has been a leading figure in dancehall music since the mid-



Mr. Vegas was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Reggae Genealogy event in South Florida in February.

1990s when he hit it big with the catchy ‘Heads High.’ Other hits from that period include ‘Nike Air’ and ‘Hot Gal Today,’ which was a collaboration with Sean Paul.

In recent years, songs like ‘Sweet Jamaica,’ ‘I am Blessed,’ and ‘Do You Know,’ cemented his place among dancehall’s elite.

In February, Mr. Vegas was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Reggae Genealogy event in South Florida. Leroy Sibbles of The Heptones, and drummer Sly Dunbar (posthumously) of Sly and Robbie fame were also honored.



Fenty Beauty Expands To Guyana Despite No Rihanna Visit

Rihanna’s global brand Fenty Beauty has officially launched in Guyana, marking a major expansion into the Caribbean market.

Fenty Beauty, the globally recognized cosmetics brand founded by the Barbadian superstar, officially launched in Guyana on March 28th, marking a significant milestone for the country’s retail landscape and highlighting a broader shift in how global brands are engaging with Caribbean markets.

The highly anticipated launch took place at Glamour Beauty’s MovieTowne location in Georgetown, drawing strong crowds despite inclement weather. For many customers, it was a long-awaited opportunity to access a brand that has already built a loyal following across the Caribbean diaspora.

The rollout was spearheaded by Glamour Beauty, one of Guyana’s premier retail chains, founded by entrepreneur Varsha Sharma. According to Sharma, the launch followed a year-long effort

to secure a contract with Fenty Beauty – a process that reflects both the complexity of global brand partnerships and the growing readiness of Guyana’s retail sector to meet international standards.

“This launch proves that Guyana is no longer on the sidelines of beauty,” Sharma told News Room Guyana. “We’re part of it now. We’re not just launching a brand. We’re making a statement that Guyana is ready – that we deserve global brands and that we can deliver world-class experiences right here at home.”

The expansion was supported by Miami-based distributor Essence Corp, which is helping drive Fenty Beauty’s growth across the Caribbean. While the brand has long been accessible through online purchases and informal distribution channels, its direct retail presence in Guyana marks a new level of accessibility for local consumers.

Guyana now joins more

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

Maytals Legacy Lives On Through Leba Hibbert

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

For many years, Leba Hibbert toured the world with her father Toots Hibbert, founder and leader of legendary reggae band, The Maytals. She was a member of 54-46, his harmony trio.

Since 2024, Leba has moved center stage as head of The Maytals. Her father died in September 2020 at age 77. This May, she heads to the United Kingdom for her biggest assignment yet. Leba and The Maytals are headliners for 'Reggae Got Soul: 50th Anniversary Tour,' which is scheduled to start on May 7th in

Cardiff, Wales at Y Plas.

The three-week tour closes on May 30th at Ashton Hall in Lancaster. It will also play in Bristol, London, Leeds, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Manchester, where Toots And The Maytals retain a loyal following.

Reggae Got Soul is the name of the group's 1976 album, which was distributed by Island Records. It contains songs such as 'Never You Change,' 'Living In The Ghetto,' 'Six And



Leba Hibbert, performing at the Corn Exchange in Cambridge, England in 2025, is set to perform with The Maytals beginning on May 7th in Cardiff, Wales. (Contributed image)

Seven Books,' and 'I Shall Sing.' "Reggae Got Soul is a fusion of gospel, soul, and reggae. It's foundational, its history, it's his story. After 50 years, these songs are still relevant and still sung by his fans. It's cause for celebration, and we have to celebrate it," said Leba.

Toots Hibbert first made his name during the ska era of the early 1960s. 'Six And Seven Books' is one of the songs that helped establish him and The Maytals, which comprised Jerry Matthias and Raleigh Gordon.

Other songs, like 'Bam Bam,' '54-46,' 'Funky Kingston,' and 'Pressure Drop,' earned Toots

a global audience, including celebrity admirers such as Mick Jagger, Willie Nelson, and Bonnie Raitt.

Toots And The Maytals won the Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album twice - with 'True Love' in 2005 and 'Got to Be Tough' in 2021.

Leba Hibbert is aware of the high expectations of stepping into her father's massive shoes. "This is personal because it represents the legacy of my father. We're continuing what he's set and put in place," she said. "It's my priority to represent him well."



New Music To Watch: Ziggy Marley, Mojo Morgan And More Lead A Powerful Wave Of Reggae Releases

The global reggae scene is experiencing a powerful resurgence, with a new wave of releases from some of the genre's most respected voices - blending social commentary, cultural pride, and uplifting messages for a new generation.

Leading the moment is nine-time Grammy Award-winning icon Ziggy Marley, who has dropped his timely new single "Racism Is A Killa," accompanied by a striking musical short film. The track, part of his upcoming album Brightside, tackles racism head-on, framing it as a societal disease while offering love and unity as the antidote.

"Racism we gon beat ya, racism we'll defeat ya," Marley declares in the track, which arrives amid ongoing global conversations around inequality and justice.

Recorded alongside his brother Stephen Marley and longtime collaborators, the



Grammy Award-winning icon Ziggy Marley, has dropped his timely new single "Racism Is A Killa."

project explores wellness, mental health, and resilience - marking a new chapter in Marley's musical journey. Marley has also announced his upcoming summer tour across North America. Kicking off on June 19th at Fox Tucson Theatre in Tucson, AZ,

the 20-date tour will make stops in major markets all around the country before concluding on July 22nd in Nantucket, MA. J Boog is set to appear as a special guest on select dates throughout the tour.

MOJO

Meanwhile, Mojo Morgan is taking a grassroots approach with his new single "Spirit," transforming the song into a national movement across Jamaica. More than just a release, "Spirit" is being used to inspire youth through a school tour that combines live performances with motivational talks focused on perseverance, purpose, and self-belief.

"This is more than music... this is something I'm giving to the world," Morgan said, emphasizing his decision to release the track as a free global download to maximize its impact.

GENTLEMAN

Across the Atlantic, German reggae heavyweight Gentleman is preparing for a new era with "Lion," the first single from his upcoming album Gratitude. Known for bridging roots reggae with global audiences, Gentleman's latest track reflects themes of purpose, spirituality, and appreciation for life's simple moments, continuing his legacy as one of reggae's most internationally recognized voices.

ANTHONY B

Adding to the mix, Jamaican reggae veteran Anthony B teams

up with Hawaiian artist Fia on "Big City," a feel-good roots reggae collaboration that blends Caribbean and Pacific influences, reinforcing reggae's global reach.

Together, these releases highlight a defining moment for reggae music - one that balances tradition with innovation while staying rooted in its core mission: to inform, uplift, and inspire.

From global icons to community-driven movements, the message is clear - reggae is not just surviving, it is evolving, and once again commanding the world's attention.



Fenty Beauty Expands To Guyana Despite No Rihanna Visit

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

than ten Caribbean territories where Fenty Beauty products are available, reflecting a steady expansion strategy aligned with rising consumer demand across the region.

At the launch, customers were able to test products on-site, with professional makeup artists providing personalized shade matching and recommendations. For many, the experience represented more than convenience — it signaled a shift in what is available locally.

"It's like knowing that Fenty is here means I can explore skincare and makeup without having to order overseas," News Room quoted customer Matthew Jeffrey as saying. "We've had options before, but mostly drugstore brands. This is different."

The brand's emphasis on inclusivity — particularly its wide range of shades designed to serve diverse skin tones — has been a key factor in its global success and strong resonance within Caribbean communities. Local influencers and beauty professionals have long advocated for its availability in Guyana.

Makeup artist and influencer Chantelle Sewett described the launch as transformative for the local beauty industry. "I'm ecstatic," she was quoted by News Room as saying. "From a makeup

artist's perspective, this is a huge deal. It's big for our country. The fact that we are being recognized — that matters."

Beyond beauty, the launch carries broader economic significance.

As Guyana continues to experience rapid growth driven by its expanding oil sector, rising incomes and increased consumer spending are attracting greater attention from international brands. The arrival of globally recognized names like Fenty Beauty reflects growing confidence in the country's economic trajectory and its potential as a viable retail market.

For consumers, the benefits are immediate: access to premium products without the added costs of international shipping, and the ability to purchase new releases in real time alongside global markets.

For the Caribbean, however, the implications are even more profound.

The launch underscores a shift in how the region is viewed — not as an afterthought, but as a market worth investing in.

Rihanna may not have been there. But her brand's arrival makes one thing clear: Guyana — and the Caribbean — are no longer on the sidelines.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Jamaican Jazz Legend Monty Alexander Set To Electrify New Orleans

April 2026 belongs to Dr. Monty Alexander. The Grammy-nominated Jamaican-born pianist, widely regarded as one of the greatest jazz musicians alive, is set to headline the Jazz Tent at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

Hot off a triumphant reception at Miami's Moss Center last month, Alexander brings his electrifying "Jamaica to Jazz" concert experience to two of America's most storied music stages - commanding a full ensemble of up to seven world-class musicians and turning every performance into an unforgettable journey through the soul of Caribbean sound and the art of jazz. Alexander headlines the Jazz Tent Stage at 5:45 PM, closing out the day as its marquee act.

But this is more than a headline slot. Jazz Fest 2026 is honoring Jamaica - co-presented under Alexander's name - in a landmark cultural celebration



Dr. Monty Alexander, C.D., O.J. (Jazz Baltica image)

dubbed "Jamericana." The Jamaica Tourist Board is actively involved, with representatives confirmed to be on the ground in New Orleans with a full program of Jamaica-themed activities and presentations surrounding the performance. When Alexander sits down at the piano that evening, it will be a moment where Kingston and New Orleans, reggae and jazz, the Caribbean and the American South, converge on one stage. "Jamericana" is Dr. Alexander's signature artistic

concept: the electrifying fusion of Jamaica's African-rooted rhythmic tradition with the jazz born in America's Deep South. At Jazz Fest, the concept reaches its fullest expression - not just music, but a celebration of two cultures, two cities, and one unbroken line of Black musical genius.

Festival: New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival 2026
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2026
Stage: Jazz Tent - Headliner
Time: 5:45 PM
Festival Info: nojazzfest.com/music

With a career spanning more than six decades, Alexander has performed with legends such as Frank Sinatra and Dizzy Gillespie and has released over 75 albums.

Recognized as one of the greatest jazz pianists of all time, Alexander continues to bridge cultures through music, making April 2026 a defining moment in his enduring legacy.



Caribbean Flavors Still Shape The Food Of Panama

BY FELICIA J. PERSAUD

I recently traveled to Panama to celebrate my aunt's 70th birthday and found something I did not fully expect - the unmistakable taste of the Caribbean - almost everywhere in the local food.

From coconut rice and fried plantains to seafood simmered in coconut milk and fiery peppers, the flavors felt instantly familiar to anyone raised in the Caribbean. And that is no coincidence.

Panama's cuisine carries a deep Caribbean imprint, largely because thousands of West Indians helped build the Panama Canal more than a century ago. Workers from Jamaica, Barbados, and other Caribbean islands arrived during the canal construction period between the late 1800s and 1914, bringing with them their cooking techniques, spices, and ingredients. Those traditions never left.

Today, the Caribbean influence remains especially visible in coastal areas like Colón and Bocas del Toro and throughout Panama City itself, where Afro-Antillean communities helped shape the nation's culinary identity.

Many of the ingredients and flavor profiles are immediately recognizable to Caribbean palates - coconut milk, thyme, curry powder, plantains, and spicy peppers such

as the Scotch bonnet or the local ají chombo.

Rice and beans cooked in coconut milk are common staples, similar to Jamaican rice and peas. Seafood is often simmered in rich coconut sauces, while stewed meats reflect the cooking traditions Caribbean migrants brought with them.

During my visit, I encountered these flavors again and again.

One of my first local meals was at En La Fonda in Panama City's historic Old Town, where I enjoyed fried fish served with coconut rice, fried plantains, and vegetables. The dish could easily have come from a Caribbean seaside restaurant.

Later, during a visit to an Emberá Indigenous village outside the capital, lunch included crispy patacones - twice-fried green plantains - paired with fried tilapia. Again, the Caribbean influence was unmistakable.

Another highlight came in Casco Viejo, the beautifully restored historic district of Panama City, where I dined at the elegant restaurant Kobore. There, I had a delicious mahi-mahi dish served in a rich coconut milk sauce that instantly transported me back to the Caribbean.

On my final night in Panama, dinner along the Amador Causeway

at Praia Amador brought yet another familiar plate - prawns in coconut milk served with coconut rice.

Of course, the meal was washed down with Balboa, Panama's well-known national beer.

Across the meals, the flavors were bold, fragrant, and deeply Caribbean. Coconut milk and coconut oil featured heavily, alongside seafood such as corvina, shrimp, and octopus. Plantains appeared in many forms - fried, flattened into patacones, or even mashed.

Breakfast even brought a surprise. At the Renaissance Hotel in Panama City, the restaurant Lila introduced me to mashed plantains - a dish I had never considered eating in the morning and plantain casserole, another example of the region's creative use of the plantain.

The Caribbean culinary legacy in Panama goes beyond just a few dishes. It represents generations of cultural exchange between Afro-Caribbean migrants and the local population, creating what many describe as an Afro-Panamanian or Afro-Antillean culinary tradition.

Among the most iconic foods are bon bread - a spiced sweet bread popular in Afro-Antillean communities - codfish fritters, and souse, a pickled dish made from pig feet or cow heel. Sounds familiar?

Because we in the West Indies have these too!

Together, these foods tell the story of a migration that reshaped Panama's culture.

The workers who arrived to build the canal did far more than dig one of the world's most important waterways. They left behind traditions that remain alive in music, language, and especially food.

One simple example is the coconut rice often served across Panama.

Here is a recipe for Panamanian Coconut Rice with Red Beans, a dish that perfectly captures the Caribbean flavor influence.

Coconut Rice With Red Beans

Coconut rice served on a banana leaf at En La Fonda in Panama City, Panama.



INGREDIENTS

- 200g long grain rice
- 500ml vegetable stock
- 200ml coconut milk

- 1 onion
- 1 red pepper
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 can red beans
- Sea salt and white pepper

METHOD

- Wash and chop the onion and red pepper. Heat the oil in a pan and sauté the vegetables for a few minutes.
- In another pot, bring the vegetable stock and coconut milk to a boil.
- Add the washed rice to the vegetables and stir briefly. Pour the coconut stock mixture over the rice, add the drained red beans, and season with salt and pepper.
- Cook over medium heat for about 15 minutes until the rice is tender.
- Serve warm.

The result is a fragrant dish that reflects the Caribbean flavors that traveled with workers more than a century ago and still define parts of Panama's culinary landscape today.

For Caribbean visitors, the experience can feel surprisingly familiar. Sometimes, a single bite of coconut rice or fried plantains is enough to remind you that the Caribbean story extends far beyond the islands themselves.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



How To Navigate The Grocery Store Without Decision Fatigue

Ever take a trip to the grocery store and feel overwhelmed by all the choices available? Save time and money by opting for products already tested by other consumers. Product of the Year USA, the nation's largest consumer-voted awards program dedicated to recognizing product innovation, has announced the winners of the 2026 Product of the Year Awards. Winners were selected based on the opinions of 40,000 American shoppers through an independent national study conducted by Kantar, a leading global research firm.

So, the next time you're at the supermarket, be on the look-out for this year's winners, which include the grocery store essentials listed below. You can easily find these crowd-pleasing foods and beverages when shopping in-store and online by simply looking for Product of the Year's red seal of approval.

Breakfast: Eggo Protein Waffles and Pancakes

Eggo Protein Waffles are crispy on the outside and fluffy on the inside, while Eggo Protein Pancakes are golden, fluffy and

delicious. Both come in multiple flavors and offer a wholesome, tasty way to fuel mornings with 20% of the recommended daily value of protein in every serving.

Granola: ALDI-Exclusive Simply Nature Granola Bites

Available in Strawberry or Chocolate Chip, these bites are great for breakfast, a midday boost, or a convenient on-the-go treat. With low calories, non-GMO ingredients, and gluten-free certification, they provide a healthy and satisfying option to enjoy anytime.

Healthy Beverage: Clearly Canadian Originals

The original flavored sparkling water has launched a new Sunset Orange flavor bursting with fresh clementine and zesty citrus notes, with a touch of sweetness and a crisp refreshing finish. Crafted with pure Canadian spring water with naturally occurring hydrating minerals, its naturally big flavor relies on simple ingredients.

Hydration: Jumex Hydrolit +Advance

This high-performance hydration drink is designed to fuel

your body and mind, delivering five essential ions for optimal electrolyte balance, natural caffeine for sustained energy, and choline to boost focus and mental clarity. Whether you're training, recovering, or on the go, Hydrolit +Advance goes beyond the basics to keep you performing at your peak.

Kitchen Essentials: Reynolds Kitchens Parchment Cooking Bags

Parchment Cooking Bags offer an innovative way to prepare flavorful meals in just three steps. Place the bag on a sheet pan and fill with your ingredients, fold it closed, and bake. The parchment bags lock in moisture and flavor, making it easy to create delicious, family-sized meals with minimal cleanup. Perfect for busy weeknights, they bring ease, taste and satisfaction to your kitchen.

Meal Ingredient: Knorr Flavor Bases

Knorr Premium Flavor Base is your secret to rich, authentic taste in every dish. Crafted by professional chefs with real, quality ingredients, each jar makes up to 52 cups of flavorful stock perfect

for soups, marinades and roasted vegetables.

Plant Based: Organic Valley Oat Beverage

This new plant-based beverage blends ethically sourced, sustainably grown organic oats, water, and salt with organic MCT oil-rich texture and frothiness. Free from gums and seed oils, it's also non-dairy and lactose-free - perfect for lattes, smoothies, baking and more!

Protein Snack: Tyson Chicken Bites Cups

Delivering 35 grams of protein per serving, these chicken bites can be enjoyed as an appetizer or snack with your favorite dips.

Rice: Ben's Original Single-Serve Rice Cups

These convenient single-serving rice cups offer a quick, easy way to enjoy perfect rice in the perfect size for on-the-go meals, a quick snack or a convenient side for busy days and contain no artificial flavors or colors from artificial sources.

Spreadable Cheese: Rondelé by Président

Blending milk, cream, garlic

and savory herbs into a whipped, creamy spread, this cheese delivers rich, comforting flavor to elevate everyday snacking, simple meals and casual entertaining. Made with no stabilizers, it offers quick convenience and versatility for busy lifestyles.

Additional winners include:

Cheese: Organic Valley Original American Cheese Block
Frozen Dessert: Kinder Frozen Dessert
Frozen Entree: Butterball Cook from Frozen Premium Whole Turkey
Health & Wellness: ALDI-Exclusive Elevation Ultra Filtered Milkshakes
Wine: Elliot Cooper Chardonnay
Zero Sugar Beverage: Clearly Canadian Zero Sugar

For more information and the complete list of this year's winners, visit productoftheyearusa.com. By relying on the recommendations of thousands of consumers, you can load your grocery cart with the self-assurance of a savvy shopper.

- StatePoint



Can We Talk?

Most of us try to attract other people by the friends we keep and the way we carry ourselves.
If you are going to a party or a formal function, don't you dress well?
We all want to promote a favorable impression of ourselves to other people we meet and talk to.
If we agree on that, then think of this. Why should it be any different for your business?
If you want to project a favorable image of your company, in order to win customers, you should keep your company with good friends and...dress your company well in...

Caribbean Today

We cover your world

For information, please call 305-238-2868, or fax 305-252-7843



Peter A. Webley
Publisher

TRAVEL NEWS



www.caribbeantoday.com

Jamaica Shines On NBC's Today Show As Tourism Push Gains Momentum



Jamaican American Sheryl Lee Ralph went viral after sharing this bikini image on Instagram from Jamaica. (Instagram/Sheryl Lee Ralph)

Jamaica took center stage on U.S. television this week as NBC's Today Show broadcast live from Sandals Dunn's River recently, delivering a major global spotlight for the island's tourism

industry.

Hosted by Jenna Bush Hager and Sheinelle Jones, the broadcast featured a vibrant mix of Jamaican culture, music, and celebrity energy. Global stars Shaggy and Sean Paul joined

the lineup, alongside Jamaican American actress Sheryl Lee Ralph, who proudly showcased her deep connection to the island.

Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett said the exposure comes at a crucial time as Jamaica continues to rebound from Hurricane Melissa.

"This kind of visibility is invaluable for Brand Jamaica," Bartlett noted, emphasizing the reach of the show to millions of U.S. households.

Sandals Executive Chairman Adam Stewart said Dunn's River

was chosen as the backdrop because it reflects the very best of Jamaica's luxury tourism offering.

Meanwhile, Executive Producer Talia Parkinson Jones, who was born in Kingston, described bringing the show to Jamaica as a personal and meaningful moment.

Tourism stakeholders echoed the sentiment, with consultant Sean Edwards noting the exposure to more than nine million viewers as a major boost for the island's visibility.

Off-screen, Sheryl Lee Ralph

added her own viral moment, sharing a sun-soaked Instagram video from Jamaica that drew praise from fellow celebrities and fans alike.

"I am home in Jamaica," she wrote, celebrating the island's resilience, culture, and unmatched hospitality.

With global media attention, celebrity influence, and renewed momentum, Jamaica is once again positioning itself as a must-visit destination in the Caribbean.



Three Americans On Cruise, Fined For Marijuana In The Bahamas

Three American nationals, including a 70-year-old man, were fined a total of US\$350 after being found with small amounts of marijuana in the Bahamas.

Jerry Cooper, 70, Anissa Johnson, 53, and Gregory Hightower, 53, appeared before Senior Magistrate Raquel Whymms following the incident on March 30th. Cooper and Johnson were each fined US\$100

or one month in prison, while Hightower was fined US\$150 or one month in prison.

The three were also removed from the Carnival Freedom cruise ship, operated by Carnival Cruise Line, which runs four- to five-day itineraries in the Bahamas and Caribbean.

- Rewritten from CMC



Belize Vows Action After Racist Comment Targeting Miss Universe Ivory Coast

The Belize government and the Belize Tourism Board, (BTB), say they will take a firm stance against inappropriate conduct by licensed tour guides following reports of a racist comment directed at former Miss Universe Ivory Coast, Olivia Yacé.

In a joint statement, officials described the incident as "highly inappropriate" and confirmed that the Tour Guide Committee has been notified and will review the matter, including possible disciplinary action.

"Belize is a warm and welcoming nation, and this behavior does not reflect how we receive our guests," the statement said.

Authorities emphasized that licensed tour guides are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and respect, noting that one individual's



Miss Universe Ivory Coast, Olivia Yacé, was reportedly subjected to a racist remark while visiting Belize. (Credit: Hector Pereira/EPA/Shutterstock image)

actions do not represent the wider industry.

Reports indicate that Yacé was visiting Belize with Miss Universe Belize, Isabella

Zabaneh, when the comment surfaced online after the pair shared a photo together.

Zabaneh expressed disappointment, while Yacé urged positivity, saying the incident would not change her impression of Belize. The tour guide, Alex Mes referred to Yacé, who used a racially derogatory term, has since issued an apology.

Yacé, representing Côte d'Ivoire, was the 4th runner-up at the 74th Miss Universe pageant in November 2025 in Bangkok, where she was also crowned Miss Universe Africa & Oceania. Shortly after, she resigned from her regional title, citing personal reasons and a need to stay true to her values.

- Rewritten from CMC



THE MIAMI-DADE TALENT SEARCH IS BACK IN ITS 16TH YEAR!

Time for Young Performers To Show Their AMAZING Instrumental, Dance, Voice, Original Composition or Spoken Word talent to the WORLD!

**FREE COMPETITION
NO ENTRY FEES!**



**YOUNG TALENT BIG DREAMS
YTBDD 2026**

2026 AUDITION DATES:

Auditions, Semi-Finals and Finals will be held at the **Miracle Theatre, 280 Miracle Mile, Coral Gables, FL 33134**

Saturday, April 4: 2-8 p.m.

Saturday, April 11: 2-8 p.m.

Sunday, April 12: 1-8 p.m.

Sunday, April 19: 1-8 p.m.

SEMI-FINALS

Saturday, May 2: 7 p.m.

Sunday, May 3: 3 p.m.

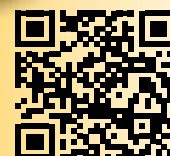
FINALS

Saturday, May 9: 7 p.m.

**GRAND PRIZE:
\$500 CASH**

Courtesy of **Actors' Playhouse**

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER NOW



Colon Cancer Is Claiming Lives For People Under 50 At Alarming Rate

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

A surge in collateral cancer/ colon cancer diagnosis for people under the age of 50 has ecologists and researchers scrambling to zero in on risk factors that usually affect older generations.

For the past several years, colon cancer has been the No. 2 cause of death in people ages 54 and older, as a reported 300,000 succumbed to the deadly disease in the U.S. last year.

But doctors and researchers are sounding the alarm as colon cancer is found in people under the age of 50, with the lowest age being 32 years old. The American Cancer Society reported that eating excessive ultra-processed meats such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and deli meats, drinking, smoking, and alcohol and lack of exercise increase cancer risk by 39

percent.

But some medical experts suggest people under the age of 50 diagnosed with colon cancer might be linked to a toxin in the gut known as colibactin. Colibactin is produced by harmful species of gut bacteria, including the common foodborne pathogen *E. coli*, and the toxin can damage colon cells, leading to colorectal cancer.

Black people are at a higher risk of developing colon cancer than any other race, according to the American Cancer Society. African Americans are about 20 percent more likely to develop colorectal cancer and about 40 percent more likely to die than most other groups.

The disparity in risk factors is socioeconomic status, lack of access to healthcare for screening to detect the disease in its early stages and treatment, smoking, excessive alcohol and processed



meats consumption, and an unsafe environment.

The death of actor Chadwick Boseman, who portrayed the superhero Black Panther and baseball great Jackie Robinson in the movie *42*, from colon cancer in 2020 at the age of 43, sent shockwaves through the Black community and film industry.

Doctors and researchers were scrambling for answers on how a healthy, relatively young man died from colon cancer. "Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in the country," said Durado Brooks, M.D. vice president of prevention and early detection at the American Cancer Society. "This disease is ravaging the Black community, and it is as important as ever that everyone has access to and is receiving the recommended screenings. Even during the coronavirus pandemic, necessary

screening tests remain available to prevent the disease or find it at an early, more treatable stage."

But while colorectal cancer isn't as common in people under the age of 50 as it is in older individuals, it's not as uncommon as many people might think, Dr. Brooks said. In 2026, about 12 percent of colorectal cancers, about 18,000 cases, will be diagnosed in people under the age of 50 in the US, she added.

What's more, while rates of colorectal cancer have been falling in older age groups in recent years, they've actually been rising among young people. Researchers in Florida and beyond are studying the possible link between colon cancer and colibactin, which they say is increasing the diagnosis in people under the age of 50. "Not every environmental factor

or behavior we study leaves a mark on our genome," Ludmil Alexandrov, a professor at U.C. San Diego and a member of the school's Moores Cancer Center, said in a statement. "But we've found that colibactin is one of those that can. In this case, its genetic imprint appears to be strongly associated with colorectal cancers in young adults."

The American Cancer Society recommends that individuals get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week to improve gut health. In addition, consuming just one serving of probiotic-rich foods like yogurt, pickles, sauerkraut, and sourdough bread can help increase levels of beneficial gut bacteria and reduce harmful bacteria by producing acid. These foods also fight harmful inflammation that causes chronic diseases like cancer. Adding plenty of anti-inflammatory fiber to the daily diet is beneficial, too. Fibrous foods like bell peppers, bananas, oats, and asparagus serve as a prebiotic: food for the good bacteria in your gut. Fiber might protect against a range of harmful bacteria, including *E. coli*.



Protecting Progress: Why Innovation Matters For Black Health

BY GUY ANTHONY

Black Americans are more likely than Americans of other races to live with chronic conditions like HIV. They also disproportionately struggle to afford the often-expensive treatments needed to manage those conditions.

So, it's hardly surprising that Black voters care about politicians' proposals to bring down healthcare costs more than any other group.

Most of those proposals are well-intentioned. But they are not all equally beneficial. Recent efforts to impose price controls on prescription drugs threaten to harm the very patients they are meant to help.

Consider former President Biden's signature Inflation Reduction Act, which gave Medicare the power to set prices on brand-name medicines for chronic conditions like diabetes, autoimmune disease, or cancer -- all diseases that Black patients disproportionately struggle with.

These price controls promise short-term cost savings. But they threaten to erase the much larger savings that patients with chronic illness would otherwise see over their lifetimes. That's because price controls disincentivize companies from developing new medicines to compete against existing popular treatments for serious conditions.

Consider HIV. According to the CDC, more than 1.2 million people in the United States are living with HIV, and roughly 31,000 new infections still occur each year. In the 1980s, these diagnoses would have been a death sentence. Today, they represent a manageable chronic illness - a direct result of decades of sustained research and investment in antiretroviral

development, long-acting injectables, and prevention tools like PrEP.

HIV treatments are cheaper and more accessible now than ever. That's not because of government intervention, but because of the price wars that resulted as companies introduced competing therapies and battled for market share.

In fact, had the government prematurely intervened, those competing treatments might never have reached patients, who would still be stuck paying vastly higher prices.

That is precisely the risk our leaders are now taking. Many companies are already scaling back research because of the IRA's price controls. Since the law was passed in 2022, biotech firms have canceled at least 55 research programs.

That is especially dangerous for the Black community. Black patients have historically been overlooked by the research establishment. If companies are forced to scale back research, it is likely that treatments for smaller and more marginalized patient populations will face the greatest risks of being cut.

The Trump administration, meanwhile, continues to push for its so-called "Most Favored Nation" policy that would tie U.S. drug prices to the lower prices arbitrarily set by foreign governments.

The consequences could be severe. "Most Favored Nation" pricing would dramatically reduce companies' revenues on both new and existing medicines, decimating resources for future research and development. Researchers project that, if imposed on Medicare and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)

Get results from a doctor you can trust.

Why am I always tired?

Searching for answers to your health questions?

Get results from a doctor you can trust. With experienced primary care physicians, Broward Health delivers quality care to our community. Book your primary care appointment online at [BrowardHealth.org/PrimaryCare](https://www.browardhealth.org/PrimaryCare).



Broward Health
Well Into Your Future

CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

NEXT DAY APPOINTMENTS

PERSONALIZED CARE

SPRING HEALTH



www.caribbeantoday.com

Haitian-Led Clinic Model Tackles Healthcare Gaps In Little Haiti

BY RENEE DUSSEAU

A healthcare model emerging from Miami's Little Haiti community is drawing attention as a potential solution to growing gaps in access to primary care.

During a recent visit to the Center for Haitian Studies, Health and Human Services (CHSHHS), gubernatorial candidate David Jolly examined a clinic system that emphasizes preventive care and reduces reliance on overcrowded emergency rooms.

Led by Dr. Larry Pierre, the clinic has built a key partnership with Jackson Health System to deliver comprehensive primary care services, a model long envisioned by medical professionals seeking to shift focus from emergency treatment to prevention.



Democratic gubernatorial candidate David Jolly consults with doctors successfully delivering primary care and preventive medicine at a model clinic program in Little Haiti. (Contributed image)

CHSHHS is helping fill critical gaps left by Florida's decision not to expand Medicaid over the past decade—leaving an estimated 1.4 million residents uninsured and limiting access to routine care.

Dr. Rimsky Denis, a Little Haiti native and interventional cardiologist, highlighted the clinic's integrated approach, while Dr. O'Neil Pyke Jackson of Jackson North Medical Center warned of an "emerging

healthcare crisis" without expanded coverage.

Experts say the model works by keeping patients connected to care - even after hospitalization.

"This model is absolute. Serving the underserved should be scaled up," said Dr. Barth

A. Green of the University of Miami.

Jolly said the experience reinforced his healthcare agenda, adding, "My concepts are backed by experts."



Florida Ballot Initiative Process Under Fire Amid Healthcare Push

Florida's citizen-led ballot initiative process is facing mounting criticism following an op-ed warning that recent legislative changes could limit voters' ability to directly influence state policy.

Writing in the Tampa Bay Times, Florida Decides Healthcare, (FDH), Executive Director Mitch Emerson, argued that new laws have made it more difficult, costly, and legally risky for ordinary residents to place issues on the ballot.

"The balance of power in Florida is shifting, and every day, Floridians are losing one of the last tools they have to hold politicians accountable: citizen-led ballot initiatives," Emerson wrote.

At the center of the controversy is House Bill 1205, which critics say adds layers of red tape and introduces potential criminal liability for grassroots organizers. Emerson warned that even minor errors in the petition process could expose volunteers to serious legal consequences,

discouraging civic participation. "When you turn civic participation into a legal minefield, you do not strengthen democracy - you shrink it," he added.

The issue comes as FDH relaunches a statewide campaign to expand Medicaid through a proposed constitutional amendment for the 2028 ballot. The initiative seeks to address a coverage gap affecting more than one million Floridians who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance.

"This is bigger than any one campaign," Emerson said. "If the state can impose sweeping restrictions, then the constitutional right becomes theoretical instead of real."

Advocates say the ballot initiative process remains a critical pathway for voters to act when lawmakers fail to address key issues, including healthcare access.



Protecting Progress: Why Innovation Matters For Black Health

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

Medicaid alone, such policies could cut research spending nearly in half, leading to over 200 fewer new medicines over the coming decade.

And there are also access risks. In countries that rely heavily on price controls, patients often face delayed and restricted access to drugs. Black

communities in the United States already face barriers to consistent care and adherence to treatment. Importing foreign countries' price controls would inevitably have ripple effects across our healthcare system, worsening these disparities.

Health equity is not just about lowering today's price tag. It is also about protecting tomorrow's cures. Black

communities deserve reforms that do both, not price controls that promise cost relief at the expense of future breakthroughs.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Guy Anthony is the president and CEO of Black, Gifted & Whole. This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade.



Redefining what care looks like



This **National Minority Health Month**, we're focused on what truly matters—care that's accessible, inclusive, and built around you. Jackson Health System is proud to stand with our community, delivering care that makes a real difference every day.

Call 786-761-1598 to find a Jackson specialist near you.



Broward Health And Lauderhill Bring Free Healthcare Services To Hundreds

More than 600 residents turned out for a major community wellness event hosted by Broward HealthPoint in partnership with the City of Lauderhill, as part of an ongoing effort to expand access to healthcare across Broward County.

The "Stay Healthy Together" initiative is designed to bring preventive and primary care services directly into neighborhoods, helping to reduce barriers to care and improve health outcomes for local families.

"This is our third launch... and we're going to continue to go out into the community," said Shane Strum, President and CEO of Broward Health. "We're taking medicine and healthcare to everyone out there - we're flipping the model."

During the event, Broward HealthPoint deployed adult and pediatric mobile health units, delivering 25 services including primary care visits, blood pressure checks, and glucose screenings. Families also received pediatric care, while 700 food bags and 700 hot meals were distributed to attendees, volunteers, and staff.

More than 100 participants



Andrea Munroe-Service, Lauderhill Mayor Denise D. Grant, Broward County Commissioner Hazelle P. Rogers, President and Chief Executive Officer of Broward Health, Shane Strum, and Melida Akit, Corporate Transformation Executive at Broward Health, attend the event. (Contributed image)

attended health education workshops covering CPR training, water safety, skin cancer awareness, and chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

"Strong collaboration is essential to building healthier communities," said Melida Akiti, corporate transformation executive at Broward Health.

The event brought together 47 community partners and 128 volunteers, connecting residents with vital health and social support services.

Organizers say the initiative will continue expanding to other cities as part of the broader "Better Together" program, aimed at increasing access to care regardless of ability to pay.



10 Doctor-Recommended Tips For A Healthier You

The American Medical Association (AMA) is offering Americans 10 evidence-based tips for staying healthy long-term:

- **Get Health Screenings:** Schedule preventive visits, tests and screenings so your physician can catch conditions before they become more serious.
- **Manage Stress:** Mental health is part of overall health. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing and yoga can help reduce stress. Ask for help from a mental health professional when you need it.
- **Be physically active:** Start the year off by prioritizing physical activity. Strive for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week. If you have a sedentary lifestyle or primarily sit for long stretches at work, build in frequent breaks to stretch and move throughout your day.
- **Follow A Healthy Diet:** Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages and eat nutritious, whole foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, low-fat dairy products and lean proteins. Avoid unhealthy ultra-processed foods, especially those with high levels of added sodium, saturated fats and sugar. Drinking sugary beverages, even 100% fruit juice, is associated with a higher mortality risk, according to a study published in JAMA Network Open.



- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water or other beverages composed mostly of water, such as milk or herbal tea, to avoid dehydration and to keep your body functioning properly. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired. Adult men should get about 15.5 cups of fluids a day and women should get 11.5 cups, according to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.
- **Get Plenty Of Good Sleep:** To maintain your health and emotional well-being, most adults need 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep. Rest helps boost immunity and improve mental clarity.
- **Update Vaccinations:** Vaccinations remain the best defense against flu and other serious respiratory viruses. Since significant flu activity can stretch into May, it's not too late to get a flu shot. The AMA recommends vaccination as long as the threat of flu remains. Talk with your physician or other health care professional to determine which vaccines are right for you. To

cut through vaccine confusion and have open, honest conversations with your physician, first go to the AMA website for evidence-based information. For help finding a flu vaccine in your area, visit GetMyFluShot.org.

- **Drink in moderation:** If consuming alcohol, do so in moderation as defined by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines: up to one drink per day for women and two drinks for men, and only for adults of legal drinking age.
- **Quit tobacco, nicotine and e-cigarettes:** Ask your doctor or health care professional for resources and guidance to help quit smoking, vaping or using other nicotine products. Make your home and car smoke-free to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.
- **Follow Medication Directions:** When taking prescriptions, store them safely to prevent diversion or misuse, and properly dispose of any leftover medication. If you're prescribed antibiotics, complete the full course to prevent antibiotic resistance.

For more health tips and resources visit ama-assn.org. "Refocus on the healthy choices you want to make," said AMA president Dr. Bobby Mukkamala. "Even tiny changes now can snowball into major gains for your long-term health."

- StatePoint
✱

Prioritize Smoke And Carbon Monoxide Alarms During Your Spring Clean

Spring is the perfect time for a home refresh! While dusting the ceiling fan and scrubbing the tub are likely already on your to-do list, the most essential task of all may not be on your radar: cleaning and testing your smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. A fresh home is great, but a safe one is even better. Did you know that working smoke alarms in the home doubles your chances of safely escaping a house fire? That's according to the National Fire Protection Association. This spring, Kidde, a pioneer in early smoke detection for over 100 years, is highlighting the importance of keeping your smoke and CO alarms up to date. Here's what they want you to know:

- **Install devices throughout the house,** on every level including the living room, kitchen, bedrooms, hallways, basement and garage. It's also a good idea to keep fire extinguishers in the kitchen, basement, laundry room and garage.
- **Smoke and CO devices aren't just plastic boxes –** they're sophisticated mini-computers. Their sensors and circuits constantly analyze air particles, and like any computer, dust and neglect can inhibit their functionality. Clean your alarms this spring, and regularly after that, to help prevent false alarms. Use compressed air or a vacuum cleaner with a soft brush to clean the vents, and then wipe the device with a dry microfiber cloth.
- **Smoke and CO alarms are electronic devices with sensors and circuits that**

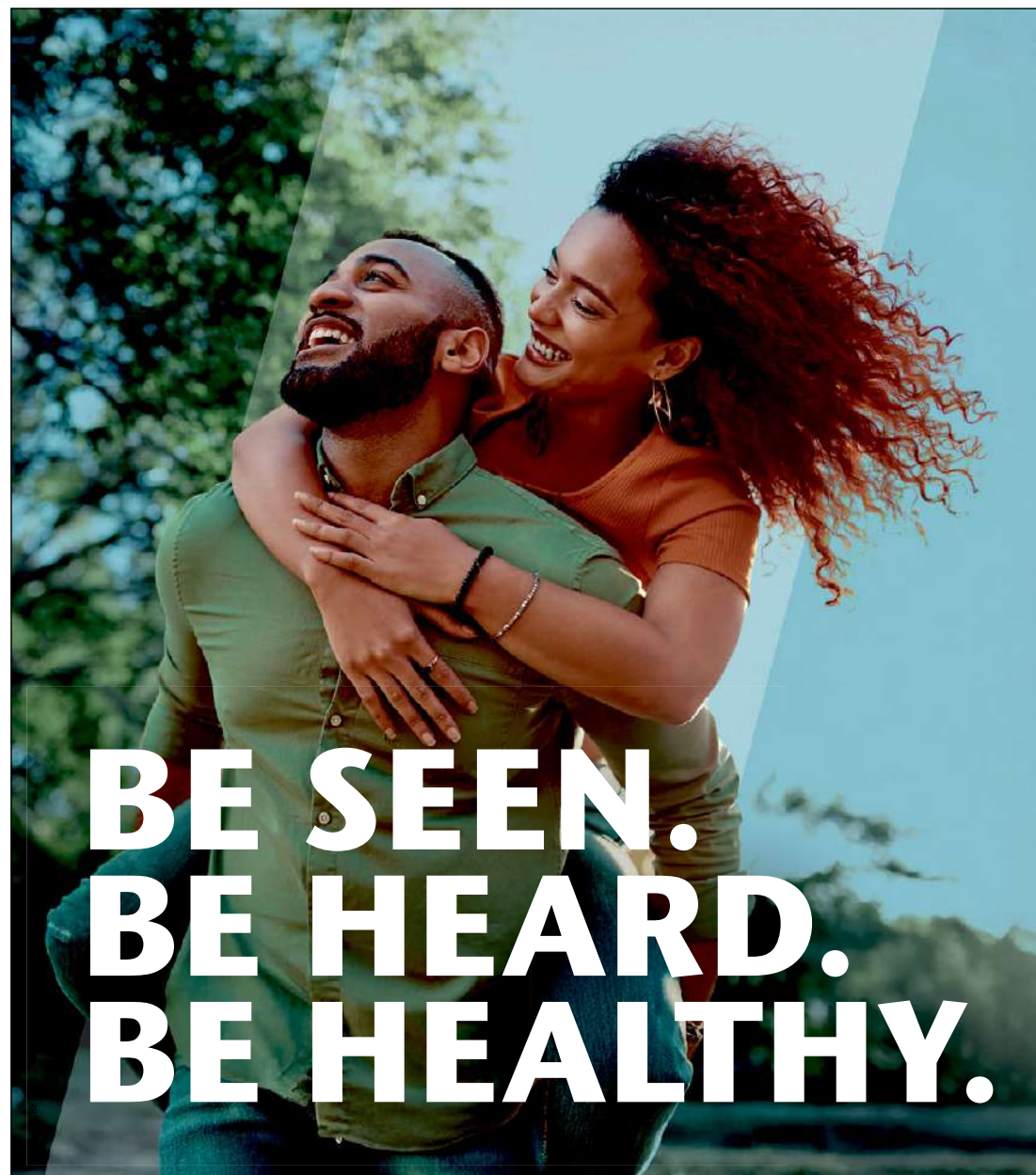
wear out over time. It's recommended to replace them every 5 to 10 years depending on the model. You can determine whether it's time to replace or upgrade your alarms by looking at the manufacturing date. Be sure to opt for self-testing devices that help ensure the alarms are operating as expected, like the Kidde Smoke Alarm, 10-Year Battery Powered or the Combo Smoke CO Alarm, 10-Year Battery Powered, which last a full decade. Kidde's Detect line of devices offer revolutionary technology that provides fast, precise smoke detection, giving individuals and families more time to react and get to safety. The line also prioritizes enhanced sensing technology, which helps to reduce those nuisance alarms that can lead to consumers disabling their devices.

Remember, a self-testing device is not a substitute for a manual push test. No matter what style devices you have in your home, be sure to take time this spring to manually test them, and then monthly after that.

More information about fire and CO safety can be found by visiting <https://www.kidde.com>.

"A happy, healthy home starts with safety. Make sure your fire and carbon monoxide detectors are part of your seasonal refresh routine: clean them, test them, and replace any units that have reached their limit," says Isis Wu, president of Global Residential Fire & Safety at Kidde.

- StatePoint
✱



**BE SEEN.
BE HEARD.
BE HEALTHY.**



A Member of Trinity Health

At Holy Cross Health, we're committed to being a compassionate, healing presence in the lives of our patients. Our mission—to improve the health of the communities we serve—is what drives us every day. Together, our efforts are nothing short of remarkable, and it's your strength and resilience that inspire us to be our best.

From everyday wellness to life-changing treatments, we're here to help you thrive—**with care that's as remarkable as you are.**

BE REMARKABLE.
holy-cross.com

SUMMER EDUCATION



www.caribbeantoday.com

Shocker - Florida Removes Sociology From General Education Requirements At Public Universities

Florida education officials have voted to remove sociology courses from general education requirements at the state's public universities, marking another major shift in higher education policy under Governor Ron DeSantis.

The decision was approved on March 26th by the State University System's Board of Governors following ongoing disputes between state officials and faculty over curriculum changes and academic content.

Chancellor Ray Rodrigues

defended the move, arguing that sociology has shifted away from traditional academic study. "Sociology as a discipline is now social and political advocacy dressed in the regalia of the academy," he said, rejecting claims that the policy undermines academic freedom. Under the new rule, sociology courses will still be offered as electives or for majors, but will no longer be required for all undergraduate students across Florida's 12 public universities. The move follows backlash from

professors and academic groups who criticized revised textbooks for removing topics such as race, inequality, gender, and social stratification.

University of Florida professor William Marsiglio called the changes "an affront to academic freedom," warning that excluding these topics weakens students' understanding of real-world social issues. Only two of the 17 members of the board opposed the decision. Faculty representative Kimberly Dunn argued that



The State University System's Board of Governors voted to remove sociology from general education requirements at the state's public universities.

sociology remains essential to critical thinking and workforce readiness.

The State University System

of Florida serves more than 430,000 students statewide.



Broward County To Cut 3,000 Positions To Balance Budget Due To Declining Student Under Enrollment

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

More than 3,000 Broward County Public Schools employees could lose their jobs in three years under the school district's plan to cut positions to balance a declining budget due to a sharp decline in student enrollment.

Broward County Public Schools Superintendent Howard Hepburn recently presented the proposal to school board members during a meeting, which drew opposition from employees and the union.

The Broward County School Board will vote on Hepburn's comprehensive staffing alignment proposal, which is designed to cut staff by at least 3,000 over three consecutive years.

The school district scheduled several workshops in April and May for Hepburn and his staff to outline his plan, which the school board must approve by June 30, the beginning of budget season.

Broward County School Board member Jeff Holness, who placed Hepburn's proposal on the meeting agenda, said the issue must be addressed as soon as possible, as the school year is drawing to a close.

"While our school district is performing well academically, we have serious financial concerns,"

Holness said in a statement. "We must be resolute in taking action to put our District on a more stable financial path, where we can properly compensate our teachers and staff and efficiently meet the needs of our students."

The school district saw a sharp drop in the student population, 9,498, to begin the 2025-2026 school year. Over the past 10 years, Broward County Public Schools lost roughly 55,000 students to charter and private schools and at Homeschooling.

Florida enacted the state's School Choice program, which allows parents to select from better-performing schools like public charter, magnet, private, and homeschooling, supported by scholarships and educational savings accounts.

In addition, since the US president launched his massive illegal immigration deportation operation in 2025, parents have kept their kids home or enrolled them in homeschooling to avoid being detained.

As a result of declining student enrollment, Broward County decided to shut down several schools starting the next school year and cut back on non-teaching positions. According to the school district's website, the school district currently employs

28,000 full-time and part-time employees.

Hepburn said the school district is expected to lose at least 8,345 students for the 2026-2027 school year and lose state education funds estimated at \$80 million. He said Broward County schools must reduce the budget by cutting staff positions through layoffs and attrition, closing under-enrolled schools, and slashing medical coverage for teachers.

Broward Teacher Union President Anna Fusco opposes the steep cuts, saying the schools are already understaffed. "Understaffed in all phases and that classroom reductions should be the last resort," she said in a statement. She has urged the district to prioritize retention and avoid mass layoffs, especially given the district's current staffing challenges.

Board Chair Sarah Leonardi said she wants to hear analysis from her colleagues and staff on which job positions would be cut and how unionized jobs would be affected. She said the district should save money by eliminating certain administrative positions, exiting redundant contracts, renegotiating necessary contracts, and closing more schools.



Federal Judge Blocks Trump Administration Effort To Collect University Admissions Data

A federal judge has temporarily blocked the Trump administration's effort to require universities to submit data to prove they are not considering race in admissions decisions.

U.S. District Court Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV in Boston granted a preliminary injunction on Friday following a lawsuit filed by a coalition of 17 Democratic state attorneys general. The ruling applies to public universities in the states that are parties to the case.

While the judge acknowledged that the federal government likely has the authority to collect such data, he criticized the policy's implementation, calling it "rushed and chaotic."

"The 120-day deadline imposed by the President led directly to the failure of the National Center for Education Statistics to engage meaningfully with institutions," Saylor wrote.

The data collection was ordered in August after former President Donald Trump raised concerns that universities were using personal statements and other indirect methods to consider race in admissions—something he argues amounts to illegal discrimination.

The move follows a 2023 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down affirmative action in admissions, while still allowing applicants to discuss how race has influenced their experiences.

Attorneys for the states argued the policy could violate student privacy and place undue burdens on universities, which they say were not given sufficient time to comply.

The U.S. Department of Education has defended the initiative, stating that taxpayers deserve transparency from federally funded institutions.

- Rewritten from CMC



HIGH DEMAND HIGH-PAYING CAREERS IN 1 TO 2 YEARS

■ NO LOANS TO REPAY ■ AFFORDABLE ■ CONVENIENT

OUR BEST CHOICE

FOR MORE INFORMATION
305.558.8000
CAREERINAYEAR.COM

NOW ENROLLING!

www.caribbeantoday.com



SPORTS NEWS

Caribbean Athletes Set To Shine At 130th Penn Relays As Milestones And History Collide



The Jamaican athlete to watch at Penn this year is 15-year-old phenom Jason Pitter of Kingston College.

The countdown is on for the 130th staging of the prestigious Penn Relays, and Caribbean athletes are once again poised to take center stage at one of track and field's most iconic events.

Set for April 23-25 at Franklin Field, the annual relay carnival will feature strong participation from Jamaica and across the region, continuing a decades-long tradition of Caribbean excellence at the meet.

Few rivalries define Penn Relays like USA vs. Jamaica in the sprint events.

From the 4x100m to the 4x400m, and even in open events, the two nations consistently deliver some of the most intense matchups of the meet.

This year, Jamaica enters with serious momentum led by a 15-year-old phenom, Jason Pitter of Kingston College.

In March of 2026, Pitter ran 45.76, shattering the Class 2 400m record at the 2026 Jamaica ISSA/GraceKennedy Boys and Girls Athletics Championships.

Standing opposite him is Quincy Wilson of Bullis (MD), one of the most accomplished high school athletes in the U.S.

Wilson has made pivotal strides in his athletic career at this very meet. He made his debut at the 2023 meet, where he anchored the 4x400m in 45.06, helping his team close a massive gap and qualify for finals. In 2025, Bullis returned with championship aspirations but fell short to Kingston College in a race decided by 0.4 seconds.

During this 2026 indoor season, Wilson has already run 45.37 indoors to set a new HS National Record. Taking his speed to the big oval, Pitter and Wilson are in for a major showdown.

Kingston College won four straight 4x400 titles, and with the help of Pitter, will place its sights on another wheel. Since 2019, Bullis has put in a good fight in the HS Boys 4x400 but has consistently fallen short of the Jamaican teams. 2025 marked a turning point for the team after a close finish and a new high school record (3:06.31), and out-leaned Jamaica's other dominant school, Calabar.

Pitter is expected to compete at the Carifta Games, leading into

Penn Relays, which will surely fuel the fires for Penn.

TEAM JAMAICA BICKLE

At the heart of that presence is Team Jamaica Bickle (TJB), the New York-based organization celebrating its 32nd anniversary of supporting Caribbean athletes. Founded by Irwine Clare Sr., TJB provides critical services including meals, transportation, medical support, and subsidized lodging for athletes competing in Philadelphia.

As part of its preparations, the organization is ramping up fundraising efforts ahead of its Labor of Love Resilience Gala on April 12 in Long Island.

This year's Penn Relays will also spotlight Caribbean legacy, with Jamaican long jump standout Elva Goulbourne and Jamaica College's historic 1999 4x800m relay team set to be inducted into the Penn Relays Wall of Fame. In 1999, Jeffrey Wallace, Dwayne Medley, Kenrick Ferril, Masha Jackson ran 7:37.71 - then the second-fastest time ever recorded at Penn. More than two decades later, that performance still echoes across Franklin Field. Now, the world will officially honor them as one of the greatest middle-distance relay teams in Penn Relays history.

Meanwhile, history will also be made for St. Lucia, as St. Mary's College becomes the first team from the island to compete at the event. Backed by Hamilton Reserve Bank, the young athletes will participate in the 4x100m and 4x400m relays, marking a major milestone for the nation's track and field program.

Penn Relays Chairman Michael Barrett welcomed the development, describing St. Lucia's debut as a significant step for Caribbean athletics.

Adding to the excitement, organizers are introducing a bold new event - the 800m hurdles - bringing a fresh twist to the already electrifying meet.

With rising stars, historic honors, and new innovations, the 2026 Penn Relays promises to deliver another unforgettable showcase of Caribbean talent on the global stage.



Reggae Boyz Coach Laments Costly Error After World Cup Exit

Reggae Boyz head coach Rudolph Speid says a single lapse in concentration proved decisive as Jamaica fell 1-0 to the Democratic Republic of Congo in their intercontinental playoff final, ending their hopes of reaching the FIFA World Cup.

In a tightly contested match at Estadio Akron, Jamaica held firm for 90 minutes, showing composure and discipline against a persistent Congolese attack. But with penalties looming, the breakthrough came in the 100th minute of extra time when defender Axel Tuanzebe capitalized on a poorly cleared corner to score from close range. "I think we lost concentration on a set play, and I think that made the difference between winning and losing," Speid said.

Jamaica enjoyed more possession and showed moments of confidence but struggled to convert control into clear scoring chances. Goalkeeper Andre Blake was called into action multiple times to keep the Reggae Boyz in the contest.

Despite the disappointment, Speid commended his players' effort and mindset.

"The players gave 100 percent. I thought they played in a more relaxed manner. We had confidence and belief," he said. "We got a few opportunities, but it wasn't to be."

The loss marks a painful



The Reggae Boyz dream of making it back to the World Cup was ended by the DRC on March 31, 2026: (Photo: AFP)

end to Jamaica's World Cup campaign, with Speid acknowledging the narrow margins that separate success from defeat on football's biggest stage.

Meanwhile, Reggae Boy Bailey Cadamarteri for his part issued a heartfelt apology to the nation after Jamaica failed to qualify for the FIFA Men's World Cup at Estadio Akron in Guadalajara, Mexico.

In a message posted to his Instagram on Wednesday, Cadamarteri expressed both regret and gratitude after the team fell short in their World Cup bid.

"This one is gonna sting for a while, trust me," he wrote. "I know what this meant to the people of Jamaica and for that I want to not only apologize but

also thank you for all the support you've shown me as a nation." Cadamarteri added that it was difficult to articulate his emotions in the aftermath of the defeat but reaffirmed his commitment to the national team.

"All I can say is I know we will be back & I will always be proud to represent my country and wear the badge by my heart," he said.

Cadamarteri, who had scored in a previous qualifier against New Caledonia, started the decisive match alongside Ronaldo Webster.

- *Rewritten from CMC and the Jamaica Observer*



PLEASE JOIN
THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
FOR A

Pre-Mother's Day
DINNER GALA

MAY
FRIDAY **1** 6:30 PM
2026 TIL 1 AM

MIRIAM DEAN PRATT
COMMUNITY CENTER
11201 SW 160TH ST.,
MIAMI, FL 33157

DINNER 7PM-9PM
COST: \$60
REFRESHMENTS ON SALE
ATTIRE: SEMIFORMAL
RSVP 305-238-5151 OR 305-282-7685



Traditions are best shared.

We honor the many ways legacy is passed down and preserved, from cherished recipes and timeless wisdom to the moments that become unforgettable memories.

"These foods remind me of my mom's family traditions and growing up. It's a way to feel close to my heritage."
- Christina S., Georgia

"Culture grounds us. It tells us where we come from, shapes how we see the world, and gives us a sense of pride and belonging no matter where we go. Without it, we lose the thread that ties generations together."
- S. Daley, Florida

"Traditions can live on for many generations. It's how we connect back to those who had us in mind when they established the traditions."
- Erica, Georgia

Publix®