

Vol. 2, No. 1 Spring/Summer 2022

BLACK GIRL TIMES REDUX



FEATURING:
THE 2022
LEGISLATIVE
REPORT
CARD

We OUT HERE

THE SEPTIMA CLARK
ACADEMY'S SECOND YEAR

GROWING THE GOOD
IN MISSISSIPPI

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THE LIGHTHOUSE CHEERS
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UNITA BLACKWELL

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Reader,

So much has changed in the six months since our last publication. So much. We knew we wanted this issue to have a heavy focus on policy analysis when we started planning for it back in January. Perhaps bracing for impact when you know what's coming isn't enough. It still hurts. We saw weak, "progressive" state bills; unresponsive representatives, and an overturned Roe v. Wade. All of this while life has still moved forward.

People don't operate in silos. There isn't just one part of our life impacted by policies, one part affected by financial literacy and an influx of cash. We are whole people under systems, resisting oppressions and driving change all at once. Not to mention, we're trying to find some happiness and good times here and there in the middle of all that.

Aside from a regressive political landscape turning treacherous, we've been living our own individual and collective lives at The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects. As I write this, we are preparing for two of our most beloved team members to step away in a couple weeks—one for a leave of absence and another is relocating and entering a fourth grade classroom to teach. Both conversations brought me to tears with their complicated mix of emotions. I am genuinely happy for and proud of them both. And I'm sad for us; I'm also grateful.

This year has taught me more than I could articulate in any editor's note. I can articulate this, though. These women are leaving on good terms. They're not leaving because anything went wrong in our professional relationships. We've all worked hard, given our best and accomplished a lot. We care deeply for each other. I can say, unequivocally, my ego needed that. The other thing I'm grateful for is to see what I've been building toward and wanting experience manifesting.

When I set out to curate the culture of The Lighthouse, I wanted a space where people grow, say what they needed and wanted freely so we could talk about it (even if the organization or I were unable to fully support the need or desire). For that to be happening now—for these women to be able to say their own versions of "I love it here and need to step away," is joyous and sobering.

One of the things life has taught me this year for sure: Even joy can bring grief.

So as we look back on the first half of 2022, we'll tell you about some of the things we've accomplished via initiatives, programs, and civic engagement. We'll introduce you to our first-ever Legislative Report Card and Barefootin' Leadership Consortium grantees, and we'll also look ahead. I encourage you, like we'll be doing here on the editorial staff and the rest of the organization, to sharpen your imagination, keeping in mind bell hooks' words in her 2001 work *Salvation: Black People and Love*. She writes simply, "If love is not present in our imagination, it will not be there in our lives."

Onward, upward, and rest when you need to.

— Natalie A. Collier, editor-in-chief

THE SEPTIMA CLARK ACADEMY LOOKS BACK AT SECOND YEAR AND AHEAD TO THE NEXT

Perdita Patrice



The 2021-2022 school year was another for The Lighthouse records. The pandemic continued to rage and school districts all over the country were stretched thin. Many children returned to the classroom

after in-person learning interruptions and extended virtual learning during the 2020-2021 school year, so there was a lot to catch up on by the fall of 2021.

The Septima Clark Academy (SCA), established in 2020, was originally created to address pandemic isolation facing students and help them as they continued down the virtual learning path. After helping scholars through the first pandemic school year, administrators began to consider what it would mean to create a school that intentionally centered "academic curricula and enrichment programs, exposure, and experiences that serve the needs and whims of our scholars."

"Our aim was to provide each of our girls with an individualized learning experience," Chief Learning Officer, Pamela Thompson says. "We spent time getting to know as much as we could about the past academic experiences, present and future hopes, goals and dreams of each girl, and used that information to create a plan that would guide her journey through our classroom and curriculum. We wanted each girl to feel like she owned her journey, that she had the intelligence and wisdom to participate



in its direction and the confidence to engage it for her own personal benefit."

As the school year approached, staff members were excited and ready to teach and interact with students. The five scholars ranged from grades six through nine and were learning significantly different concepts and teaching them would be a challenge, but not one the educators were unprepared for.

Despite the anxieties of another pandemic school year, the students arrived for their first day of school ready to learn. "They were a little quiet at the beginning, but happy," Lead Teacher, Sefut Shan says.

Due to the challenges of the pandemic, virtual learning, and the summer slide, students had learning deficits that needed to be addressed to facilitate success as they moved through the year's course work.

"When they came to school, the gap in their knowledge about math and science was significant, Shan says. "The challenge was to bridge the gap and prepare them for their current grade. During the first term, we mostly did review activities so we could move forward with higher math concepts. We



started to work on basic concepts of algebra and then introduced the concept of geometry and blended it with algebraic expressions."



Students worked hard to strengthen their skills and catch up all the while receiving a well-rounded education that included standard subjects like English, history, and science, and tapped into their artistic sides.

"My favorite part of the school year was [around] February, when the students started making connections between the art lessons and some of the other learning they were doing with other instructors," Arts and Enrichment Instructor, Jeanette Miller says. "That [was the] point where it switched from just being Wednesday art class with a single focus project to Art with a capital "A," where the students would apply lessons from prior classes to the work they were doing in that class. I think that happened about the time that we created entries for the Doodle for Google contest with the theme of self-care. They had to think about ways they care for themselves and how to translate that into an image. So it became more than just putting paint on paper, it was about how they feel and how they see themselves in the world."

The learning didn't stop at creating art though, students got to learn

about different aspects of art and how it can influence communities.

"[We had] lessons focused on the purpose and impact of art museums in community, how to view and experience art in that setting, land museum etiquette," Miller says. "The students also asked for an end of the year trip out of town to see bigger art museums, so we spent a couple of sessions learning how to research, plan and write a proposal for the trip, which was ultimately approved by the executive leadership team."

Scholars enjoyed the fruits of their labor as they stretched their legs, and their minds, when they visited the Mississippi Museum of Art, during an end of the year overnight trip to New Orleans, La.

As we settle into the dog days of summer, SCA staff is already hard at work planning the next academic year.

"Next school year, I hope that we are able to fill the few spots we have open with more girls who are ready to explore with us," Thompson says. "I hope to see all of our girls out in the community more, learning, discovering, researching, creating. Ultimately, I hope to see more girls coming into a fuller understanding of how wonderful and powerful they already are, and what they'll do with that awareness."



If you are in the Jackson-Metro area and interested in sending your scholar to the Septima Clark Academy, email info@septimaclarkacademy.org to learn more.

Be a Light for Black Girls and Women

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects is constantly creating new and innovative programming that will help Black girls and young women in the Southeast.

In order to continue this work, we rely on the support of our sponsors like you. Our sponsors join our vibrant community of creatives, activists, educators, teachers, and students, and are invited to join in our vital work. All of our sponsors are recognized as real partners in our work.



Our mission is to be a revelatory, unflickering light for Black girls and young women in the Southeastern United States through focused programming and by creating spaces of solidarity and safety for them.

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- An invitation to participate in our Reese|Brooks|Gilbert Collegiate Leadership Initiative (RBG) by hosting interns or assigning mentors.
- Access to diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings and lunch 'n learn sessions for your employees.
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ANTI-CRT BILL OFFICIALLY PASSED, GRIM FUTURE FOR STATE EDUCATION

Jaylin Jones

On March 14 of this year, Governor Tate Reeves

officially passed **Senate Bill 2113**, a bill described as a ban on Critical Race Theory (CRT) within Mississippi's public education system.

In a **previous article**, we covered how this seemingly harmless bill empowered the state to punish schools by cutting their funding if they are found to be teaching CRT or "compelling" students to affirm that any sex, race, ethnicity, religion or national origin is inherently superior."

The bill was derided as unnecessary and questionable by critics, as CRT is not being taught in any of our state K-12 schools. Critics asserted that the bill had instead restricted the free speech of educators in the public school system, incentivizing them to stay away from discussions of "controversial" topics.

Cheryl Jenkins, PhD, is the Associate Director of the Center for Black Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi and shared her thoughts on the influence these bills may have. "I think what it does for education is that it takes away a lot of the freedom that we thought

we had to educate students about how certain systems in this country have worked historically," Jenkins said.

With the public's understanding of America's racist history and oppressive systems already limited, something like this could make existing gaps in knowledge worse. Even our own state's politicians have difficulty reckoning with race, a prime example of this being Gov. Tate Reeves himself saying "**systemic racism does not exist in America**" despite **contradictory evidence**.

"There's an old saying that those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it, and I think that's true. We learn about the past to critique and correct," said Jenkins. "I think it's very beneficial for students and people in general to understand how the world once worked, and history is a great barometer for that."

When asked about the motivations people might have to restrict these productive conversations, Jenkins cited the recent improvements to racial equity and justice in this country.

"We've had the first Black president, and a lot of things shifting us to a more equitable society. For some reason, I think that's a little scary to people who are not used to these changes."

She went on to quote Kimberlee Crenshaw, one of the creators of CRT, by saying "Reform inevitably reproduces retrenchment and backlash."

In an era where misinformation and media manipulation are rampant, it is not only negligent to restrict the teaching of our nation's history, but it may also be actively dangerous.

The United Nations released a **report** in 2021 about how the isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic gave extremists the perfect chance to (exploit) vulnerabilities in the social media ecosystem to manipulate people and disseminate conspiracy theories," with the goal of inciting terrorism and spreading dangerous rhetoric. In other words, the increased isolation people experienced during the pandemic lockdowns made many people easier targets for radicalization.

Recent events have made this more apparent than ever. On May 14th, **a white supremacist shot and killed 10 people in a supermarket in Buffalo, New York**. The suspect was radicalized by racist, deeply flawed rhetoric he engaged with online during 2020.

From this and other events, it seems that now is a horrible time for people to lose educational resources on systemic racism and the reality of race issues in our country. Without said resources, they're ever more susceptible to the myths and fear mongering that can take place in online spaces.



GROWING THE GOOD IN

MISSISSIPPI

Perdita Patrice

Having enough food to eat is something many of us take for granted, but if you're using or have used programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) you're keenly aware of how necessary it is to make food supplies stretch. Food insecurity — a household's inability to provide enough food for every person to live an active, healthy life — is something that too many Americans face.

The burden of food insecurity means many SNAP recipients must choose between either food that lasts longer and stretches their benefits further or fresh produce that has a limited shelf life but provides important nutrients the body needs. This is a decision no one should have to make. To help make the healthy choice the easy choice, The Lighthouse partnered with the American Heart Association—Southeast (AHA)—and other organizations on the [Grow the Good campaign](#). The campaign promoted bills like Senate Bill 2077 and House Bill 555, both of which proposed to increase funding that would provide an additional \$700,000 annually for SNAP incentive programs to help Mississippi families purchase more fresh produce and "provide matching dollars to participating retailers and farmers markets for SNAP recipients to purchase

additional fresh fruits and vegetables," according to the AHA campaign website.

According to AHA, boosting SNAP incentives would increase economic activity. For every five dollars spent on SNAP incentives, an additional nine dollars would be generated, and more than 3,000 small businesses in Mississippi depend on SNAP and its incentives to survive. The incentives are also forecasted to positively impact farmers' markets in underserved areas, which are more likely to thrive when they accept SNAP benefits. Advocates also note more access to fresh foods would improve public health through reduced healthcare costs, as low-income adults participating in SNAP incur nearly 25 percent less in medical care costs. The difference is even greater for those with hypertension and coronary heart disease.



PHOTO: JEN WOLFF/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



PHOTO: ANDRII ANNA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The burden of food insecurity means that many SNAP recipients must choose between either food that lasts longer and stretches their benefits further or fresh produce that has a limited shelf life but provides important nutrients the body needs.

This incentive stood to bring several positive changes to Mississippi communities, but it wasn't easy getting the legislative powers on board. It took two years and two legislative sessions for advocates to get SB 2077 and HB 555 passed

"[The Lighthouse] did a lot of advocacy work like town halls, asking people to contact their legislators to get the bills passed," Lighthouse Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator, Angela Grayson, says. "[We also] partnered with a local food pantry and we provided [attendees] with recipes on how to prepare the produce they [received in their boxes]. [Recipients received] cookware, several \$100 gift cards to the grocery store, [and] food saver bags. [We also] talked to people about the shelf life of vegetables, so they would be empowered to choose fresh food versus processed

food, because a lot of the time people choose processed foods because they have to make things stretch."

After two years of hard work, the fruits of everyone's labor paid off when SB 2077 was passed by the Mississippi Legislature on April 24, 2022.

Kathryn Rehner-Sullivan, AHA Advisor, Internal Relations, contacted advocacy partners to celebrate the news via email writing, "I'm so proud of what we accomplished, and it wouldn't have been possible without [all organizations] tireless commitment to making Mississippi a better place for all of us."



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LEGISLATIVE ROUND-UP IN MISSISSIPPI, WHERE RACISM STILL RULES

Adam Lynch

The GOP-dominated legislature and the state's Republican governor in Mississippi delivered few bills friendly to Black residents during this legislative session. If anything, they delivered outrage.

ROADBLOCKS TO BLACK VOTING

Gov. Tate Reeves capped anti-Black sentiment by preserving a reprehensible Jim Crow law for another year with a personal veto. The state still uses felony disenfranchisement constitutional language designed specifically to target Black voters, which effectively kills voting rights for almost 16 percent of Black voters according to [research](#). Reeves made clear in his veto statement he's perfectly fine with that.

"Felony disenfranchisement is an animating principle of the social contract at the heart of every great republic dating back to the founding of ancient Greece and Rome," Reeves said, showing fealty to the "animating principle" of stifling Black votes.

Mississippi's felony disenfranchisement laws work by blocking the voting rights of a person convicted of a felony, even after they've served their time and paid their debt to society. White racists remaking the state constitution in 1890 made clear their intent when they created it. Solomon Saladin Calhoun, president of the state's 1890 convention, [stated](#) white leaders' intent very clearly.



"Let's tell the truth if it bursts to the bottom of the universe," said Calhoun. "We came here to exclude the Negro. Nothing short of this will answer."

Calhoun and his presiding bigots then set about erecting felony disenfranchisement, along with a host of other roadblocks to Black voting, including literacy tests and poll taxes. It takes an act of the state legislature to reinstate their voting right, so very few disenfranchised persons regain their right to vote. [Research](#) suggests only 335 of 166,494 people who completed their sentence convinced the governor or the legislature to restore this basic American right between 2000 and 2015.

But Reeves' blasé racism squares perfectly with a statement made earlier this year by Apportionment and Elections Committee Chairman Jim Becket, who admitted to The Lighthouse he regularly kills similar anti-Jim Crow bills in his committee because Republican leaders just can't get their heads around erasing Jim Crow completely. In his words, the racist law is just too useful to the GOP to entirely toss.

"Well, we got to decide on how it should be changed. There have been measures that disallow everyone that's incarcerated to vote, that after a certain period of time one can vote. And there are measures that can change who can vote, which felons should be on a list, which felons shouldn't. There are measures that would address the issue in multiple ways, but there has not been a consensus on how to do that. That's all I got to say on that."

Becket was quick to remind us in that same conversation he "wasn't (there) when the law was created," so he's definitely not racist.

BALLOT INITIATIVE STILL DEAD IN MISSISSIPPI

Mississippians elect some of the most regressive politicians in the U.S. but tend to vote progressively on ballot initiatives. In 2020, a majority of voters dumped the state's racist confederate flag and [approved a new design](#) without its rebel element. Almost 80 percent of voters



voted recently to dump a Jim Crow-era election trick that lets legislators pick their best buds as campaign winners when no candidate receives a majority of votes. And most recently, Mississippi voters even [approved an initiative](#) legalizing marijuana. The state's conservative majority has few reasons to appreciate being undermined by the true democracy of a ballot initiative, and apparently, so do the courts. State supreme court judges destroyed the whole ballot initiative process last year at the behest of Madison Mayor Mary Hawkins Butler who wanted marijuana legalization reversed. The court agreed so vehemently they jettisoned not only the legalization of marijuana but the ballot initiative that allowed it. According to [Mississippi Today](#), it was the first time in modern U.S. history that a court struck down an entire initiative process. That's how much they hate marijuana.

Oddly, the Mississippi House and Senate failed to passed legislation reinstating

the ballot initiative this legislative session, despite legislators dumping tons of lip service and support for it. For now, this tiny process of democracy no longer exists in Mississippians.

DIVORCE STILL A BALL AND CHAIN

The Mississippi legislators also killed a bill that would have finally allowed women to get out of an abusive marriage with a no-fault divorce option, like most states. [SB643](#) was intended to update Mississippi's witchcraft-era divorce laws that make divorce difficult for impoverished women who are financially dependent upon an abusive spouse. As of July, Mississippi remains one of only two states (South Dakota is the other) without a true "no-fault divorce" law. This means if one spouse does not want a divorce—either because of bitterness, codependency, or vengeful malice—they can refuse the divorce and pile unaffordable court costs and lawyers' fees onto the estranged spouse.

Spouses in Mississippi who seek a divorce must first prove one of [12 \(ridiculous\) grounds for divorce](#) and

provide "clear and convincing evidence" to the court for the legal separation. This means proving to the court that your spouse indulges in behavior like bigamy, habitual drunkenness, and adultery. Whether your spouse suffers from impotency also counts as legitimate grounds for divorce. Outlining these reasons and setting them before a court gets expensive fast, as lawyers begin demanding and processing phone records and texts to prove the existence of infidelity and so on.

A more frequently used option available to battered women includes "habitual cruel and inhuman treatment," but even something as extreme as that requires confirmation before the court, and that requires expensive lawyers picking through reams of hospital bills and police reports to prove the existence of bruises and injury. Despite all that investment, evidence can be difficult to gather, if the abusive spouse refuses to let you see a doctor during all those physical abuse.

The onerous 12 grounds for divorce are still holding tight in Mississippi because of the state's Bible belt status and the religious right's hold over state politicians.

Rest of story continued on page 22.





PHOTO: INEZ CARTER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

MATERNAL HEALTH DEFEATED IN MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

Angela Grayson

During this year's 2022 legislative session, Mississippi lawmakers had an awesome opportunity to stand up for mothers across the state by passing legislation that would extend continuous postpartum Medicaid coverage from three months to one year. Senate Bill (SB) 2033, authored by Senator Kevin Blackwell (R)

and sponsored by bipartisan supporters—placing it on the moderate partisan end of the bill spectrum—seemed to be a no-brainer for legislative support and eventual law, since the legislation isn't new and 20 other states passed similar bills during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, Mississippi, goddamn.

For the second year in a row, House and Senate members failed to pass legislation that would benefit women, particularly Black women. In a state constantly polling at the top of all the worst lists and bottom of the best lists regarding maternal health, SB 2033 was a step in the right direction.

According to a needs assessment on maternal and child health conducted by the Mississippi State Department of Health, Mississippi mothers receive poor quality care due to socioeconomic and insurance status; numerous mothers

are uninsured because they make too much money to qualify for Medicaid but don't earn enough to pay for private insurance. Additionally, provider shortages are common across the state, and access to care is further limited to women in lower socioeconomic classes.

Once you add in the inconvenience of also being a Black woman, these statistics take on even more dire realities for social determinants of health such as housing insecurity, poverty, and food insecurity—all underlying causes of maternal mortality. Black women in Mississippi are three times more likely to experience pregnancy complications than any other demographic. The Center for Mississippi Health Policy reports that 86 percent of maternal deaths in Mississippi occur postpartum, and in 2021, 46 percent of mothers covered by Medicaid reported no postpartum visits.

Almost all negative outcomes surrounding maternal mortality rates increase for Black women when adding race as a factor. An America's Health Rankings recent study shows that 28.7 Black mothers die per 100,000 live births in Mississippi compared to 18 white mothers that die per 100,000 live births.

While the overall maternal mortality rate in Mississippi is 22.6, which is lower than the national average (about 24 per 100,000 in 2020), there is no denying Black mothers are dying at much higher rates, making maternal health a Black women's rights issue here in the state.

This is why the state has an infant mortality rate 1.5 times higher than the national average, and why 1 in 5 women are uninsured and do not receive postpartum care. How could a state fail to pass measures—with bipartisan support—to help reduce the amount of harm facing women after two years in a row, even with public outcry, advocate support, and thousands of women across socioeconomic lines standing together in support?

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects took particular interest in SB2033 for these very reasons. Through the Black Women Vote Coalition (BWVC), our organizing mechanism here at The Lighthouse, we gathered thousands of Black women by way of more than 60 different organizations to join us in several actions pointed at putting pressure on various members of the Senate, particularly the Medicaid Committee Chair, Joey Hood, when the bill stalled after being referred to committee in February of this year.

SB2033's journey in the state's legislative session took its supporters on an emotional roller coaster ride before, ultimately, being suspended and dying on the House Chamber Calendar.

Once SB2033 was placed in Committee, advocacy and organizing groups had high hopes about the bill. The BWVC, in partnership with other health and women's groups, started our crusade to persuade Joey Hood to Save Moms—a series of online action days where we encouraged Mississippi residents and voters to reach out to Committee Chair Hood and other lawmakers who had the power to move the bill from committee to the floor for a vote.

In our Lighthouse-led press release, signed by more than 60 women-led organizations, BWVC member, social worker, and mother of five, Dr. Pam Scott-Jackson said, "Access to healthcare is important in all stages of pregnancy, but especially in the fourth trimester and beyond. As a social worker and a mother, I know firsthand that healthcare can help prevent postpartum depression and decrease the risk of neglect and potential abuse. Senate Bill 2033 would expand health care access for mothers, giving them the opportunity to live long, healthy lives for themselves and their families."

Rest of story continued on page 22.



PHOTO: BIG JOE/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

"FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW HOUSE AND SENATE MEMBERS FAILED TO PASS LEGISLATION THAT WOULD BENEFIT WOMEN, PARTICULARLY BLACK WOMEN."

THE Barefootin' LEADERSHIP CONSORTIUM FINDS ITS GRANT RECIPIENTS!

The Barefootin' Leadership Consortium, a grantmaking and capacity building movement led by The Lighthouse, works by resourcing organizations and individuals in their efforts toward a shared movement of liberation, especially as leaders and organizations "set out barefootin'" along their way. Our grantmaking prioritizes programs and projects led by Black women/gender-expansive persons and other women/gender-expansive persons of color primarily focused on organizing and storytelling. This year the Consortium was able to regrant a total of \$77,500, thanks to a relationship with Purposeful, an organization "Remaking the world with and for girls."

We are happy to announce the 2022 grant recipients, in alphabetical order:

Global Gateways (Jackson, Miss.) – Shameka Reed

Global Gateways ensures that all students, especially those of underserved and underrepresented communities, have access to opportunities afforded through global education exchanges.

Growing Resilience in the South (GRITS Inc.), Jackson, Miss. – Sade Meeks

GRITS Inc. works to improve the health of communities through an increased awareness of nutrition, food history, and culture.

iLead, Jackson, Miss. – Tosha Taylor

iLead Mississippi equips extraordinary young leaders to create positive and sustainable change in the community of Mississippi and the world. Their goal is to identify and nurture the leader inside every participant. Their passion is to change the narrative and trajectory for youth in underserved communities.

Larita's House, Hattiesburg, Miss. – Chandra Dewberry-Hardwick

Larita's House Domestic Abuse Foundation is an organization established to help victims of domestic violence regain control of their lives and emerge from the darkness of doubt, anger, fear, and despair to the light of hope, strength, and plans for a happy and productive future.

Mississippi Queer, Trans, People of Color Community Fair, Miss. – Natt Offiah

MS QTPOC works through wellness

activities such as art, music, games, and culturally relevant ceremonies to create a space of wellbeing and healing for Black and Brown members of Mississippi's Queer and Trans communities.

People's Advocacy Institute, Jackson Miss. – Rukia Lumumba

The People's Advocacy Institute's mission is to equip people most impacted by systemic violence with the tools to disrupt the criminal and juvenile punishment systems and create a new system founded in human justice, re-education, restitution, restoration, and individual and collective healing.

Supernova Momma LLC, Atlanta – Natasha Nelson

Their mission is to help Black and neurodiverse families break the generational curse of systemic racism and ableism in households, schools, and offices through support in a mutually caring, empathetic, and respectful environment.

Thirty-One, Jackson, Miss. – Frances Meeks

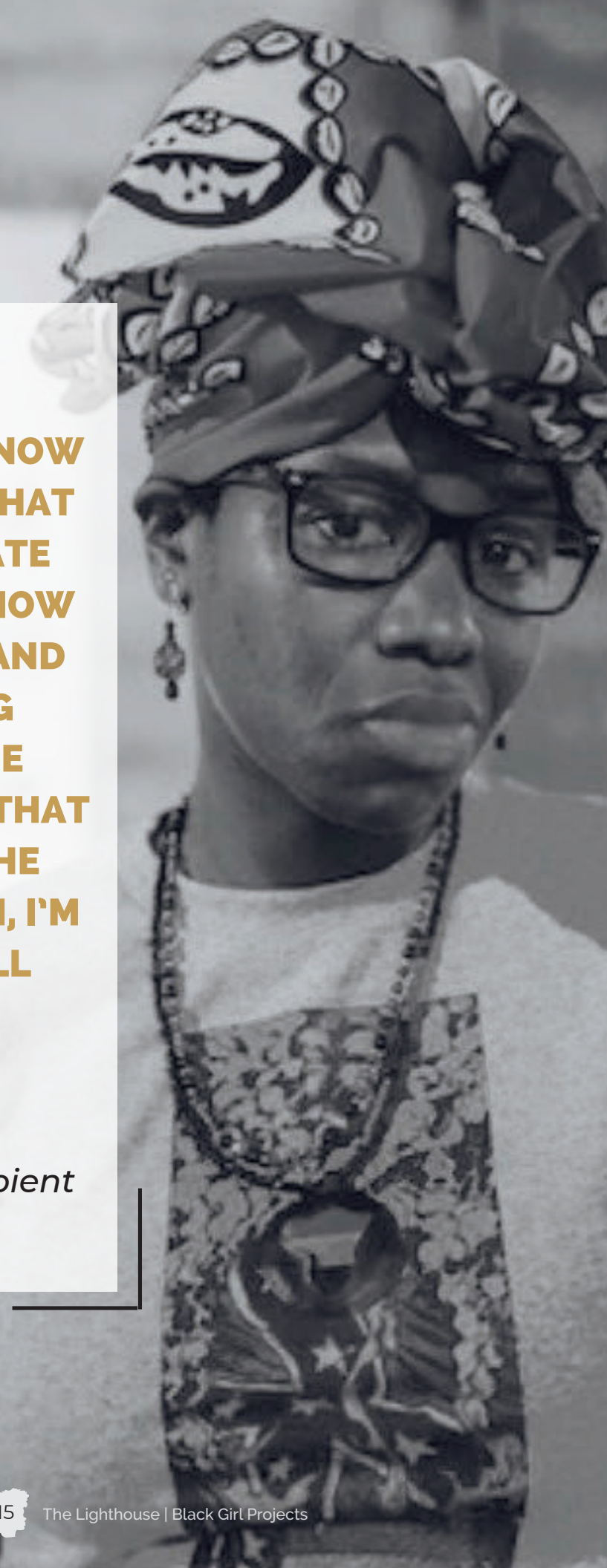
Thirty-One is a faith-based mentorship program designed to uplift and assist marginalized women.

Watch That Black Girl Fly, New Orleans – Charity Clay

Watch That Black Girl Fly introduces Black girls to Drone Storytelling, which combines drone piloting basics and the art of aerial photography and videography to better highlight the stories of Black women in STEAM endeavors. It also provides opportunities for Black girls to develop their own voices, pilot their own paths and share their experiences with the world by celebrating their unique perspective.

"I FEEL UNSTOPPABLE! I KNOW I HAVE A GREAT PROJECT THAT CAN INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE PEOPLE BY CELEBRATING HOW AMAZING BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE. BUT FINDING SUPPORT IS ALWAYS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE. WITH THAT REMOVED BECAUSE OF THE BAREFOOTIN' CONSORTIUM, I'M EXCITED BECAUSE IT WILL ACTUALLY HAPPEN."

*Charity Clay
Director, Black Girl Fly
Virginia Hamilton Grant Recipient*



MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATORS PASS EQUAL-PAY BILL AS WRITTEN, ENSURING UNEQUAL PAY FOR MINORITY WOMEN

Dawson Johnson

This April, Governor Tate Reeves signed House Bill (HB) 770, making Mississippi the last of the 50 states to enact an equal-pay bill.

As its written, the Mississippi Equal Pay for Equal Work Act will prohibit employers from paying "an employee a wage at a rate less than the rate at which an employee of the opposite sex in the same establishment is paid for equal work on a job, the performance of which requires equal skill, effort and responsibility, and which is performed under similar working conditions." However, the document also contains conditions state leaders fear will further marginalize the state's minority women.

Before its passage, Cassandra Welchin, leader of the Mississippi Black Women's Roundtable, called the bill "a sham of an equal pay law" and urged Gov. Reeves to veto the bill.

In a statement released in March, the Mississippi Black Women's Roundtable pointed out the bill's shortcomings, saying, "Paying a woman less than a man doing the same job based on her salary history or continuity of employment discriminates against women and caregivers. But this sham 'equal pay'

bill allows employers to do just that. This act is significantly more narrow than the federal Equal Pay Act, which applies to all employers and employees, regardless of size and hours worked. Part-time employees experience pay discrimination and are

"PAYING A WOMAN LESS THAN A MAN DOING THE SAME JOB BASED ON HER SALARY HISTORY OR CONTINUITY OF EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATES AGAINST WOMEN AND CAREGIVERS. BUT THIS SHAM 'EQUAL PAY' BILL ALLOWS EMPLOYERS TO DO JUST THAT."

predominantly women, so it is especially important for them to be protected."

The Center for American Progress called any measure taking salary history into account "a textbook example of structural bias" because "salary history ... relies on false assumptions and biases about the relationships among salary, worker value, and market value." In addition to allowing employers to base an employee's salary on their salary history, HB770 lets an employer use a "seniority" or "merit system" or "any other factor other than sex."



Before Gov. Reeves signed HB770, Welchin said the Mississippi Black Women's Roundtable worked with Rep. Sonya Williams-Barnes and Sen. Angela Turner-Ford to compose two pieces of legislation that would

address the concerns of equal pay for minority women; however, both HB770 and its sister bill SB2451 passed in their respective bodies with the provisions in question unaltered.

The Mississippi Equal Pay for Equal Work Act took effect July 1, 2022.

Ayana Sabree

As a birth worker, the state of our current culture and society terrifies me. Since 2018, I've worked as a full-spectrum doula in Central Texas. I serve the most vulnerable folks in our community, which has provided me the opportunity to truly see and understand the need for abortion care in our society. People with uteruses and people who identify as women deserve to make the best choices for their families in the present and the future. Criminalizing the healthcare option of abortion will strip people of their rights to do what's best for themselves.

When Politico released "a draft majority opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito and labeled 'Opinion of the Court,' in which conservative justices sided with the state of Mississippi in the case Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization," which stands to reverse Roe v. Wade, I, like many others, knew how much worse things stood to get for birthing people in this country.

Rest of story continued on page 23

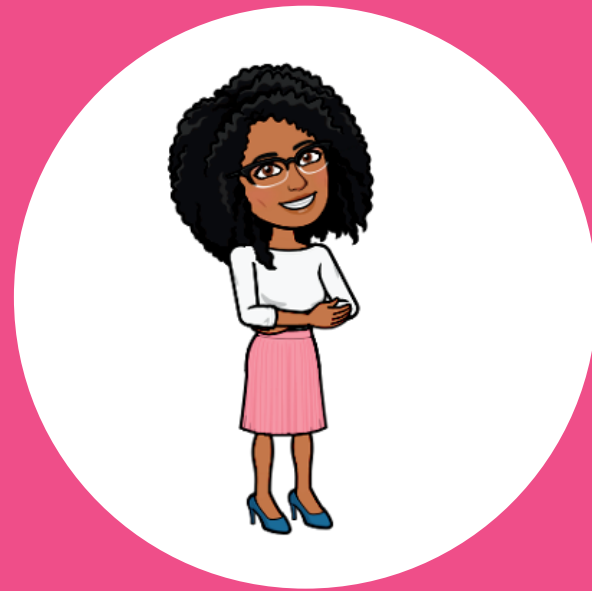
THE COMPLEXITY OF PARENTING SHOULD BE A PART OF THE ABORTION DEBATE



PHOTOS: PIZVES/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



we're looking for a MANAGING EDITOR



Overview

The managing editor at The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects serves as the planner and manager of daily operations for the McGee Project, the organization's storytelling and news platforms.

The editor is responsible for organizing and coordinating the project reflective of the mission and values of TL|BGP.

Submit info to:

jmiller@loveblackgirls.org

Send updated resume and clips to with "McGee Project, Managing Editor" in the subject line.

Some Things to Note

- Job Status: Part-time, potential for full time
- Compensation: \$20-\$30/hour, based on experience
- Location: Jackson, Miss.-Metro area, Raleigh-Durham, Austin, Chicago Metroland or remote
- Closing Date: Priority given to applicants who submit on or before August 21

See the the full job posting at loveblackgirls.org/joinourteam/

BGX GETS A SEAT AT THE TABLE

LaTanya Lane

In late 2021, The Lighthouse was selected to participate in the Table Stakes Initiative. Created by the Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local News at the UNC's Hussman School of Journalism and Media, the Initiative provides small, local media organizations the opportunity to work with experts in the field to identify and overcome challenges and create sustainability and success in today's digital landscape.

Since becoming a part of the Table Stakes Initiative, The Lighthouse has gained access to trainings focused on increasing clarity of the Black Girl Times' (BGX) mission and creating strategies to accomplish it. The 2021-2022 Table Stakes cohort includes newsrooms from across the South. During events, The Lighthouse learns from both experts and peers about how to grow our audience and develop sustainable funding models. Being a part of the Table Stakes Initiative has also meant meeting regularly with

our coach, Alesha Williams Boyd, the Editor-in-Chief at Mashable. In our meetings with Boyd, she creates space for us to review our goals, create tiny experiments to accomplish them, and, when the changes we are trying to make seem overly daunting, she encourages and cheers us on as we work to overcome our challenges

So far, our participation in Table Stakes has been a welcome opportunity for the editorial team to step away from the day-to-day aspect of running our news and storytelling room to think about the bigger picture. We have been able to define concrete goals we would like to achieve and have explored what it might mean to do things differently to achieve them. Some things about participating in the program have been difficult. Being an all-Black media organization has created moments where our needs are different from those of others in the cohort and not always met. Also, it has sometimes been difficult to take the learning from two days focused on



strategy development and goal setting back to the everyday life of BGX.

But slowly, we see changes taking hold. Our time in Table Stakes has resulted in a stronger social media and newsletter strategy. It has helped us cultivate resilience and curiosity for the moments when our experiments do not work as we planned or don't work at all. We have six more months in the program. It will be exciting to see how we continue to get stronger and grow as a result of our participation.



PHOTO: ALAN S. WEINER, NYTIMES

THE LIGHTHOUSE CHEERS PROGRESS ON HOME OF UNITA BLACKWELL

Adam Lynch

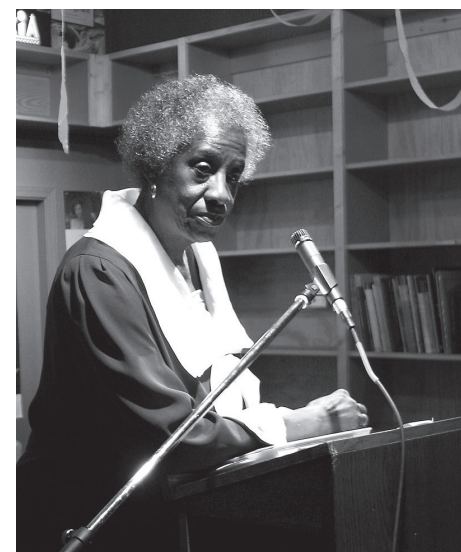


PHOTO: WILLIAM PATRICK BUTLER

This year The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects was delighted to announce the listing of the home of Civil Rights icon Unita Blackwell on the National Register of Historic Places. Blackwell — who became Mississippi's first Black women mayor when she won an election in the small Delta town of Mayersville— used her historic property to host countless civil rights meetings throughout the 1960s. The property consists of three buildings: a shotgun home she occupied during her perilous years as a civil rights activist, a more modern home she occupied during her later years as town mayor, and a neighboring shotgun shack Blackwell bought and added to her original property.

Her historical shotgun shack, dubbed the "Freedom House," served as a haven for civil rights workers laboring to bring true democracy to Mississippi's hotly segregationist Delta. Blackwell hosted and worked with groups such as the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP).

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects' Founder and President, Natalie A. Collier, says it is her intent to restore the dilapidated Freedom House to its humble beginnings and convert it to a modest museum venerating Blackwell's legacy and the advent of the Civil Rights Movement in one of Mississippi's most bloodthirsty, segregated territories.

Collier says she conducted tours to the Mayersville property years ago while working at a different nonprofit and was saddened by the deterioration of a site with such an invigorating history.

"I saw how in disrepair it was. It wasn't in as bad a shape then, but the side door was open, and the grass hadn't been cut. But every year I would take a group of young women there," Collier said. "There's something to be said for monuments to people, but not all monuments have to be grand. Also, it needs to be known how quickly people can take for granted the heroes who were right there (among us)."

Collier explained that memorials to the historical labor of women often fall to the wayside, while society venerates and preserves shrines to male icons.

"It's easy to lose track of the history right there with you but I think it especially happens to heroes who are women," Collier said. She added that the historic Jackson, Miss., home of Medgar Evers, a civil rights leader gunned down in front of his family in 1963, would likely have never have reached a comparable stage of deterioration.

Blackwell's home has fallen into considerable decay, despite her

contribution to history and to progress in the Mississippi Delta. She organized local Black voters to overwhelm local elections and properly reflect the two-thirds African American population of her county. During the 1964 Freedom Summer, she also became a member of the executive committee of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and traveled to Atlantic City to protest the "official" all-white, segregationist Democratic Party delegation at its own convention. She also led several economic protests on behalf of repressed Black field workers.



seat she pulled down numerous federal grants to pave streets, build a sewer system and pressure phone companies to supply the area with more telephones. She also sued the county school system for segregationist practices and served as a U.S. ambassador to China.

Blackwell died in 2019 from complications connected to Alzheimer's, and historians argue that her lengthy historical imprint is significant in terms of improving the lives of Delta residents. Collier says the roof that protected such work deserves preservation.



While pushing for voting rights and economic parity, Blackwell and her partners also worked to upgrade the community of Mayersville from a tiny collection of impoverished shacks with no telephones, streets, or water infrastructure. Wealthy white farmers had spent centuries siphoning away community capital, leaving residents a "sewer system" of poisonous open ditches. Wealthy planter families and gas station owners openly discouraged wealth-building in Black communities and even deterred Black residents from owning automobiles and would refuse to sell them gasoline if they managed to buy one.

Blackwell defied decades of political and financial repression and helped organize the neighborhood into a town and then ran for mayor. After winning her

In honor of Blackwell's commitment, The Lighthouse is sponsoring a select group of minority-owned nonprofits through its Barefootin' Leadership Consortium. Our project, named for Unita Blackwell's autobiography, Barefootin': Life Lessons from the Road to Freedom, offers our beneficiaries mutual aid, community, and shared resources.

Nonprofits selected for help this year include Global Gateways, iLead Mississippi, Growing Resistance in the South (GRITS Inc), Thirty-One, Supernova Momma, People's Advocacy Institute, Larita's House Domestic Abuse Foundation and the MS Queer, Trans, People of Color Community Fair.

Continued from page 11

BUDGET-BUSTING TAX CUTS AND MONEY PROBLEMS AMID A 'WINDFALL'



The federal government sent millions of dollars to states over the last two years to soften the economic damage of the COVID pandemic. This gave perpetually low-money states like Mississippi a one-time financial bonanza. The Republican-controlled House and Senate took advantage of the cash not by fully funding education or buttressing struggling rural hospitals by enacting tax cuts for its wealthiest residents. Politicians voted to cut tax state brackets, which inevitably gives high-income residents the biggest portion of the cut because wealthy

people pay the highest proportion of income tax. The state's poorest residents will get no benefit from the cut, which is a pity because almost 20 percent of the state's population is below the poverty line, with even more hovering just above it.

Critics point out that the cut will annually deplete state income tax revenue by \$525 million, when it fully kicks in after four years. Income tax accounts for more than 30 percent of all state revenue, so accountants predict the flush will empty coffers and force residents to deal with even more extreme cuts in services.

"Cutting taxes now would have a serious opportunity cost, reducing the state's ability to meet the needs of our communities and escalate long-term harm to our economy and working families," said OneVoice Policy Analyst Kyro Roby.

Supporters say a significant tax cut will spur economic growth and attract new residents to Mississippi, but youth fleeing the state's underfunded schools, empty towns and nonexistent entertainment venues say they're not leaving because of high prices. The state, they say, is already about as cheap as it gets, being one of the poorest in the nation. And legislators perpetually underfund K-12 schools and other government services. They shorted the state's Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), even while decimating the budget. The program pays the very minimum to keep schools open, but local papers reported Republican leaders failed to fully fund it by \$304 million. Legislators did manage to steer an extra \$83 million toward MAEP, but then they turned around and stuck the program with the cost of a new \$45 million teacher pay raise.

While shortening the budget in several places the governor voted in generous pay raises for himself and others. Reeves signed a bill awarding state leaders an average \$50,000 pay hike, with the governor making \$160,000, up from \$122,160, and the attorney general making \$150,000, up from \$109,000. The Insurance Commissioner gets a nice little \$60,000 bonus, up from \$90,000, and the Secretary of State gets a tidy little \$30,000, up from \$90k.



Continued from page 13

Scott, along with several health organizations and professionals stood with BWVC on our day of action and during the virtual town hall where our actions proved fruitful as SB 2033 moved to the Senate floor for a vote. As fate would have it, the same time a war of sorts was happening in the Senate between Lt. Governor Delbert Hoseman and Speaker of the House Philip Gunn. When the two and their counterparts could not come to an agreement over the state's budget revenue, with Hoseman refusing to eliminate the state income tax, Speaker Gunn retaliated by holding SB 2033 hostage and killing any chance of extending coverage for mothers in our most vulnerable communities. After several proposed resolutions to bring the bill back, it died with no action being taken before the session deadlines.

As devastating as this was for the millions of women in our state, BWVC is even more inspired to continue our advocacy and organizing efforts around legislation like SB 2033. We will continue to work with local lawmakers to reintroduce the bill next session, and use our contacts and resources to ensure we can tell the story of the women this bill would help. A bill that should have passed, if it were not for a fight between two men, who will never know the burden of motherhood.

Continued from page 17

Women, and the labor we perform, are greatly devalued in our society. It's taken for granted that becoming a parent is every woman's dream rather than a choice. And those of us who do choose to parent, well, we're just supposed to shut up and suffer in silence when we inevitably have our struggles with it. Reversing Roe V. Wade gives the vocal and powerful few exactly what they want from us: silence as they deny people with uteruses the ability to have control of and determine the best path for their futures.

These people are making decisions that will have ripple effects across generations. There are many different reasons birthing people consider abortion. For instance, the new mom-to-be excited about her first pregnancy—how must she feel after medical testing reveals the fetus has a genetic anomaly that would result in the demise of the baby soon after delivery? Should that mother suffer through nine months of pregnancy knowing her baby might be stillborn or only survive a few moments outside the womb? Some would want the opportunity to carry the fetus to term, but others might not want to go through the emotional pain and turmoil that choice would incur.

Consider the kinds of thoughts a mother of two who's struggling financially must consider when she learns she's pregnant with her third child. Without access to abortion care, she would be forced to have a child she couldn't provide the care she might otherwise want to. After having a third child, what kind of care would the first two children have? Beyond the obvious financial responsibilities, to be able to have the

dexterity to handle the physical, mental, and emotional burdens that come with having children, forced parenting isn't something anyone should have to suffer through. Knowing she won't be able to properly care for another baby, the decision to get an abortion isn't necessarily an easy one, but I trust

nothing to aid in maintaining and helping that life prosper once born. The fact Roe v. Wade will be overturned shows not the regression of our society, but how the powerful voices of the few are overpowering the voices of the many. The desires of privileged white men, people who will never have to have their

"REVERSING ROE V. WADE GIVES THE VOCAL AND POWERFUL FEW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANT FROM US: SILENCE AS THEY DENY PEOPLE WITH UTERUSES THE ABILITY TO HAVE CONTROL OF AND DETERMINE THE BEST PATH FOR THEIR FUTURES."

her to know what's best for her and her family. We all should trust her decision. For this final example, people often suggest adoption. This suggestion ignores the fact **there are about 424,000 children** in foster care waiting to be adopted and cared for today. This country is in desperate need of more caring foster parents who provide safe and loving homes. "Pro-life" advocates could rally around foster parents and encourage people to open their homes to kids who need them. Instead, they focus their attention on pregnancy and birth, and we hear endless stories about abuse, neglect, and poor conditions many foster children face at the hands of the adults who are supposed to care for them.

In this oligarchical and capitalist society we live in, folks want people to have babies just to say they "protect and care about life," but do

bodies policed in the same way birthing people's bodies are policed, should not have more say over the choices birthing people are able to make.

These so-called pro-life advocates are never the ones that have to put themselves in harm's way when abortion care becomes illegal. They will never have to deal with the repercussions of women dying from unsafe abortions or the families and communities left shattered by those deaths.

The choices we make today will impact our immediate future and the futures of those around us. We need to stand in our power and ensure our society doesn't continue to regress into darkness. The fight for reproductive rights will continue. We will continue to work to make sure that every birthing person has access to safe and accessible reproductive health care.

INJUSTICE
ANYWHERE
IS A THREAT TO
JUSTICE
EVERY WHERE !!!

PHOTO: JOHNNY SILVERCLOUD/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

THE 2022 LEGISLATIVE REPORT CARD



Politics, specifically the act of proposing and passing legislation, isn't a spectator sport (though some lawmakers treat it like it is). The laws our elected representatives argue over aren't abstract ideas relegated to courthouses or college campuses; they have material effects on the lives of Black women at the federal, state, and local levels.

At The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects, we stress the need for Black women, girls, and gender-expansive people to be more than just passive observers of the political process. We call on Black women, particularly southern ones, to involve themselves in the shaping of legislation, as well as the analysis and challenging of the political process itself.

Higher Heights published a report at the beginning of 2021 breaking down the gender and racial demographics in U.S. Congress. They found a meager 4.9 percent of congressional seats were held by a woman of color. Paring it down even further, they found out of all the women in congress, only 18.1 percent were Black women. A parallel 2021 study conducted by the State Innovation Exchange in collaboration with the National Organization for Black Elected Legislative Women found those numbers to be worse on a national level. There are a total of 7,383 state seats across the entire country; 4.82 percent were occupied by women of color. For a state like Mississippi, whose population is 20 percent Black women, metrics like these are especially concerning, given only 7.47 percent of the state's legislative body comes from the demographic in question.

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects seeks to rectify such gross underrepresentation by holding our elected officials, on both the state and federal levels, accountable for their policy positions and their alleged dedication to uplifting Black women

and the communities they come from. To that end, we are proud to introduce our annual legislative report card.

What is the Annual Lighthouse Black Girls Project's Legislative Report Card?

Legislation is often goal oriented. Under ideal circumstances, a fledgling law begins as a problem-solving exercise. But that's just it: Legislation usually addresses a specific problem. It doesn't always address the people the problem affects.

Our legislative report card is designed with the whole person in mind. When evaluating legislation, we like to take a moment to analyze how its verbiage will affect Black women, their loved ones, and their surrounding communities from a holistic point of view. That's why our annual report card is a continuation of our Laws, Liberation, and Love | Legislative Standards.

So what are we looking to see? That each piece of legislation addresses Black women and their gender, but not gender in a binary way. We're talking about gender-expansive legislation that protects the entire community. We're also looking at legislation through the lens of race, ensuring that all members of the African diaspora are properly empowered and encouraged to participate in the legal process.

We're also looking for laws that break through the systematically repressive structures that mark traditional education, thereby democratizing opportunities across our communities. That's why our report card also stresses the need for legislation that encourages social mobility.

Finally, we're grading the efforts of our elected officials based on demographic-intensive benchmarks. Does the piece of legislation in question raise up the family unit, no matter what its composition might look like? Does it help people of all ability levels? And does it avoid the traps of ageism and age-based discrimination?

Finally, our report card applies one more key layer of analytical scrutiny; does the legislation in question address all these factors simultaneously. If not, it's just a statutory heap of words that does nothing for the lives of Black women, girls, and gender expansive people.

The Importance of Addressing Policy and Research

So what is our report card intended to do? Its purpose is multifaceted.

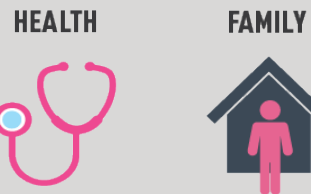
For starters, it's meant to hold Mississippi's elected leaders truly accountable for the words—and laws—they put to paper. But it's about more than just that. It's also meant to democratize policies, as well as the information and research that went into them, making them readily available to Black women and their surrounding communities.

At the Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects, we have a strong belief that policy is most effective when we are directly involved in its creation. It's our goal to foster women-focused leadership in our respective communities. That's why we listen and work alongside community stakeholders. We are no strangers to political adversity and oppression. Our headquarters is only five minutes away from the Pink House, the now-closed women's health clinic and sole abortion clinic in the state. As you may know, this clinic was the focus of Dobbs vs. Wade. Jackson Women's Health Organization, who's ruling led to the overturn of Roe vs. Wade. This, among many, many other reasons are why we put such importance on the idea of policy and research. With the rollout of our first-ever legislative report card, we hope to spur Black girls, women, gender expansive people, and you, if you're none of these, to get involved or reengage in policy setting and civic engagement on any level possible.



S.B. 2077: MISSISSIPPI HEALTHY FOOD FAMILIES PROGRAM; CREATE.

ISSUES



LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2077 was created to increase access to farmers' markets with fresh fruits and vegetables for Mississippi residents who receive SNAP benefits. Non-profit organizations participating in the program must demonstrate a record of building a statewide network, conducting community outreach and data collection. They must also produce stands and implement funds for distribution. Users of SNAP funds get purchases matched by the state. Eligible fruits are defined as any fresh, frozen, whole, or cut fruits and vegetables that do not contain added sugar, fat, oil or salt.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Law W/out Governor's Signature

STATUS



SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Charles "Chuck" Younger (R-MS-017)

COSPONSORS LIST VOTE

YEAS (Total: 114): Aguirre, Anderson (110th), Anderson (122nd), Anthony, Arnold, Bailey, Bain, Banks, Barnett, Barton, Beckett, Bell (21st), Bell (65th), Bennett, Blackmon, Bounds, Boyd, Brown (70th), Burnett, Busby, Byrd, Calvert, Carpenter, Clark, Clarke, Cockerham, Crawford, Creekmore IV, Crudup, Currie, Darnell, Denton, Deweese, Eure, Evans (45th), Evans (91st), Faulkner, Felsher, Ford (54th), Ford (73rd), Foster, Gibbs (36th), Gibbs (72nd), Goodin, Guice, Hale, Haney, Harness, Hines, Holloway, Ladner, Lamar, Lancaster, Mangold, Massengill, McCarty, McCray, McGee, McKnight, McLean, McLeod, Mickens, Miles, Mims, Morgan, Newman, Oliver, Osborne, Paden, Patterson, Pigott, Porter, Powell, Read, Reynolds, Roberson, Robinson, Rosebud, Rushing, Sanders, Sanford, Scoggin, Scott, Shanks, Smith, Stamps, Steverson, Straughter, Summers, Taylor, Thompson, Tubb, Tullos, Turner, Walker, Wallace, Watson, Weathersby, White, Williams-Barnes, Wright, Yancey, Yates, Young, Zuber, Mr. Speaker.

NAYS (Total: 8): Bomgar, Brown (20th), Criswell, Eubanks, Hobgood-Wilkes, Hopkins, Owen, Williamson.

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects unanimously supported SB 2077 because it gives Black women and children and underserved communities access to fruits and vegetables that they would otherwise not have.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2077.xml>



S.B. 2899: COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS; PROVIDE THAT HEALTH INSURERS MAY NOT DENY THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE AS A CONTRACT PROVIDER.

ISSUES



STATUS



TL|BGP STANCE



GRADE ASSIGNED

A

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2899 proposes that community mental health facilities not be denied the right to participate as contract providers. It proposes alternative delivery systems and health programs regulated by the state. Under this agreement, the community health center must agree to provide mental health services that meet requirements set by the insurance agency. The community health center must also agree to the reimbursement terms set by insurance agencies.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Approved by Governor

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Nicole Boyd (R-MS-009)

SENATE VOTE

Unanimous approval

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

Our organization unanimously supports Senate Bill 2899 because the legislation proposes that insurance companies no longer be allowed to deny treatment by providers without proper cause. Mississippi has only 14 independent regional community health centers serving 82 counties. Senate Bill 2899 will help ensure that Black girls and women are able to get proper mental health care from providers without fear of being denied by insurers.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2899.xml>



S.B. 2321: HUMAN TRAFFICKING; CREATE CIVIL CAUSE OF ACTION FOR ENGAGING IN OR BENEFITING FROM.

ISSUES



STATUS



TL|BGP STANCE



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2321 requires courts to find those participating/benefiting from human trafficking liable for all damages caused by the trafficking of that person. Under SB 2321, claimants (those making the claim of trafficking) who prevail in a suit may be awarded compensatory damages for both mental and physical anguish, court costs, and reasonable attorney's fees.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Approved by Governor

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Tyler McCaughn (R-MS-031)

SENATE VOTE

Unanimous approval

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

We support SB 2321 because it removes responsibility for victims to pay for their own court bills and allows additional compensation for mental anguish and therapy and other costs. The bill does not harm Black girls or women, and it provides adequate resources and remedies to victims of human trafficking.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2321.xml>



S.B. 2437: CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI CORRECTIONAL FACILITY; AUTHORIZE PILOT WORK INITIATIVE.

ISSUES
JUSTICE
STATUS
ENACTED
TL BGP STANCE
THUMBS DOWN
GRADE ASSIGNED
D
IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?
UNSURE

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2437 creates a Pilot Work Initiative at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. The initiative will be limited to 25 prisoners To be paid no less than the prevailing wage for the position and under no circumstance less than the federal minimum wage.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Approved by Governor

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Juan Barnett (D-MS-034)

COSPONSORS LIST VOTE

None

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

Granting incarcerated people a fair wage adheres to TL | BGP legislative standards, but SB 2437 is just a pilot program of only 25 people. Therefore, TL | BGP does not have a position towards this bill and will require further information to determine a stance.

Bills such as SB 2437 claim to address critical economic and social issues without reducing or eliminating the problem. A pilot program of 25 people will not eradicate the fact that working in prison in the United States looks more like a slave system than a fair labor market. The state of Mississippi would need a more complex law that regulates wages within the prison system to dignify the work of incarcerated people, especially Black girls and women.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2437.xml>



H.C. 32: SAFE AND HEALTHY PREGNANCIES FOR WORKING WOMEN DAY IN MISSISSIPPI; DESIGNATE FEBRUARY 14, 2022, AS.

ISSUES
HEALTH
STATUS
INTRODUCED OR PREFILED
TL BGP STANCE
THUMBS UP
GRADE ASSIGNED
A
IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?
YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Concurrent Resolution 32, proposed by Democrat representatives, would designate February 14 as "Safe and Healthy Pregnancies for Working Women Day" in the state of Mississippi, to raise awareness for working, postpartum mothers. This day would be used to spread awareness of the precautionary measures that are needed in the workplace to protect the health of pregnant women and prevent/reduce premature births, birth defects, and infant mortality.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Sonya Williams-Barnes (D-MS-119)

KILLING COMMITTEE

House Rules Committee, under the direction of Rep. Rob Roberson, R-Starkville. Members: Shane Barnett; Manly Barton; Edward Blackmon, Jr.; Randy P. Boyd; Philip Gunn; Gregory Holloway, Sr.; Mac Huddleston; Brent Powell; Jason White

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

Most pregnant women continue to work while pregnant, under conditions that may not be healthy or beneficial for both mother and baby in utero. The goal of the bill was to provide these mothers with safe and effective ways to continue working, while supporting them with tools they need to cause little to no harm to the baby.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HC/HC0032.xml>



S.B. 2862: APPROPRIATION; CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF-ARPA FUNDS.

ISSUES
FAMILY
STATUS
PASSED SECOND CHAMBER
TL BGP STANCE
THUMBS UP
GRADE ASSIGNED
B
IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?
YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2862 allots \$60 million from the coronavirus state fiscal fund to the Department of Child Protective Services to provide assistance to families who receive welfare and have children, specifically youth negatively impacted by COVID 19.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Conference

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Briggs "Briggs" Hopson (R-MS-023)

HOUSE VOTES AGAINST THE BILL

Bomgar, Criswell, Hopkins, Horne

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

This bill presented economic opportunity and economic empowerment by allowing families to receive economic assistance for hardships faced during the pandemic.

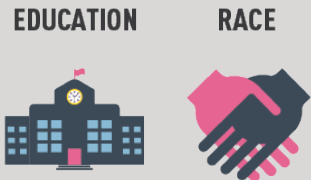
SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2862.xml>



S.B. 2113: CRITICAL RACE THEORY; PROHIBIT.

ISSUES



STATUS

ENACTED



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS DOWN



GRADE ASSIGNED

F

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

NO

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2113 prohibits the teaching of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in all Mississippi public institutions. The bill is sponsored by 20+ republican senators, on the false basis that CRT teaches that some races, sexes, ethnicities, religions, or national origins are inherently superior, or that individuals should be adversely treated on such characterizes. This bill declares that no entity or educational department shall expend funds for any purpose that would violate the provisions of the bill.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Approved by Governor

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Michael McLendon (R-MS-001)

HOUSE VOTE

Yeas (Total: 75): Aguirre, Anderson (122nd), Arnold, Bain, Barnett, Barton, Beckett, Bell (21st), Bennett, Bomgar, Bounds, Boyd, Brown (20th), Busby, Byrd, Calvert, Carpenter, Crawford, Creekmore IV, Criswell, Currie, Darnell, Deweese, Eubanks, Eure, Felsher, Ford (54th), Ford (73rd), Goodin, Guice, Hale, Haney, Hobgood-Wilkes, Hood, Hopkins, Horan, Horne, Huddleston, Kinkade, Ladner, Lamar, Lancaster, Mangold, Massengill, McCarty, McKnight, McLean, McLeod, Mims, Morgan, Newman, Oliver, Owen, Patterson, Pigott, Powell, Read, Robinson, Rushing, Sanford, Scoggin, Shanks, Smith, Steverson, Tubb, Tullos, Turner, Wallace, Weathersby, White, Williamson, Wright, Yancey, Zuber, Mr. Speaker.

Nays (Total: 43): Anderson (110th), Anthony, Bailey, Banks, Bell (65th), Blackmon, Brown (70th), Burnett, Clark, Clarke, Cockerham, Crudup, Denton, Evans (91st), Faulkner, Foster, Gibbs (36th), Gibbs (72nd), Harness, Hines, Holloway, Jackson, Johnson, Karriem, McCray, Mickens, Osborne, Paden, Porter, Reynolds, Rosebud, Sanders, Scott, Stamps, Straughter, Summers, Taylor, Thompson, Walker, Watson, Williams-Barnes, Yates, Young.

Absent or those not voting (Total: 3): Evans (45th), McGee, Miles.

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

This bill received unanimous opposition from TL|BGP. It is both regressive and harmful to Black girls and women, as well as the people of Mississippi. Bill text does not once mention CRT, nor define what it is and what it is not. The bill falsely presents itself as a preventative for bigotry.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2113.xml>



H.B. 698: RIVERS MCGRAW MENTAL HEALTH DIVERSION PROGRAM; REVISE TO CREATE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT COURTS.

ISSUES

HEALTH



STATUS

PASSED SECOND CHAMBER



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

A

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

UNSURE

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 698 recognized the need for judicial intervention to establish court processes and procedures that are more responsive to individuals with mental illnesses. This legislation was an attempt to reduce recidivism and the incarceration of people with mental illnesses.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Conference

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Thomas "Tom" Reynolds (D-MS-033)

COSPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Kevin Felsher (R-MS-117)

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

This bill received unanimous support from The Lighthouse for addressing the mental health care needs of those accused and incarcerated. Key issues that contribute to recidivism include overwhelmed courts and the criminalization of mental illness. This bill was a step in the right direction

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB0698.xml>



S.B. 2033: RECIPIENTS OF MEDICAID; EXTEND POSTPARTUM COVERAGE UP TO 12 MONTHS.

ISSUES

HEALTH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS



STATUS

PASSED ORIGINAL CHAMBER



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2033 proposed extending Medicaid for up to 12 months of postpartum care for women who qualify for Medicaid as a pregnant woman. Qualified pregnant women who would be eligible for Medicaid as low-income family members would be able to take advantage of this continued postpartum care. They would remain eligible as long as the child is a member of the woman's household and as long as she continues to remain eligible.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died On Calendar

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Kevin Blackwell (R-MS-019)

KILLING COMMITTEE

House Medicaid Committee, under the direction of Rep. Joey Hood, R-Ackerman. **Members:** Randy P. Boyd; Chris Brown; Bryant W. Clark; Dana Criswell; Becky Currie; Bob Evans; Debra Gibbs; John W. Hines, Sr.; Missy McGee; Sam C. Mims, V; Daryl Porter; Rob Roberson; Omeria Scott; Fred Shanks; Jerry R. Turner; Jason White; Henry Zuber III

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

TL|BGP supported Senate Bill 2033 because the legislation was beneficial to Black girls and women who are postpartum mothers. There are a number of women who do not qualify for Medicaid but still do not make enough to afford insurance or they do not work for employers who provide insurance. These women often do not receive proper healthcare.

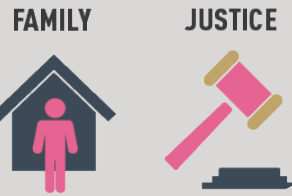
SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2033.xml>



H.B. 592: CHILD SUPPORT; SUSPEND FOR INCARCERATED PERSONS UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS.

ISSUES



STATUS

PASSED ORIGINAL CHAMBER



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

C

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

UNSURE

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 592 proposed to suspend child support payments for parents incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized for a period of more than 6 months.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died On Calendar

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Angela Cockerham (I-MS-096)

KILLING COMMITTEE

Senate Judiciary A Committee under the direction of Chairman Brice Wiggins, R-Pascagoula. **Members:** Juan Barnett; Jason Barrett; Barbara Blackmon; Nicole Boyd; Dennis DeBar, Jr.; Jeremy England; W. Briggs Hopson III; Dean Kirby; Tyler McCaughn; Chris McDaniel; David Parker; Derrick T. Simmons; Angela Turner-FordIII

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

A majority of voters at The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects voted in favor of House Bill 592, but some did not. While this legislation did present some opportunities, the stipulations that accompanied these opportunities were arguably near impossible for people exiting the penal system, or any incarceration system. This legislation came with a two-month grace period for released parents to address that concern. However this issue remained a point of concern for TL|BGP because of the challenges that accompany prison release. The organization felt this time frame was too short to benefit parents.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB0592.xml>



S.B. 2451: MISSISSIPPI EQUAL PAY ACT; ENACT.

ISSUES



STATUS

PASSED SECOND CHAMBER



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS DOWN



GRADE ASSIGNED

D

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

NO

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

The purpose of the Senate Bill 2451 is to enact the MS equal pay act, prohibiting an employer from paying employees at wage rates smaller than employees of another sex for equal work, unless a wage differential is based upon one or more specified factors.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Conference

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Brice Wiggins (R-MS-052)

HOUSE VOTE

MS Sen. Nicole Boyd (R-MS-009)

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

Deliberating factors for us included a potentially flawed seniority and merit system, a system measuring earnings by quantity or quality of production and several differentials based on factors other than sex. However, the amendments made to the original bill led to a new bill that included even more factors setting a wage differential based on salary history or continuity of employment history. The last factor could punish women taking maternal leave.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2451.xml>



**H.B. 20: ANATOMICAL GIFTS;
PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RECIPIENT BASED ON DISABILITY.**

ISSUES

HEALTH



STATUS

ENACTED



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

**IS THIS BILL GOOD
for Black girls and women?**

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 20 prohibits discrimination against organ transplant recipients based on disability. Individuals are frequently denied access to a vital transplant due to mental illness such as depression, or a history of addiction. Transplant rosters assume some recipients are incapable of complying with post-transplant medical requirements, or they lack adequate support systems to ensure compliance with post-transplant medical requirements. This bill outlaws such discrimination.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Approved by Governor

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Lee Yancey (R-MS-074)

COSPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Noah Sanford (R-MS-090), MS Rep. Randy Rushing (R-MS-078), MS Rep. Becky Currie (R-MS-092), MS Rep. Fred Shanks (R-MS-060), MS Rep. Steve Massengill (R-MS-013), MS Rep. William Arnold (R-MS-003), MS Rep. Jill Ford (R-MS-073), MS Rep. Jody Steverson (R-MS-004), MS Rep. Dan Eubanks (R-MS-025), MS Rep. Carl Mickens (D-MS-042)

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

TL|BGP voted unanimously in support of H.B. 20 with its emphasis upon equal treatment and giving every person the opportunity to live a better life through anatomical gifts.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB0020.xml>



**H.B. 589: THE SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE FOR COLLEGE
STUDENTS ACT; CREATE.**

ISSUES

JUSTICE



STATUS

PASSED ORIGINAL CHAMBER



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

**IS THIS BILL GOOD
for Black girls and women?**

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 589 would have mandated every higher education institution to have a sexual assault policy accessible to students on institution websites. The policy must be updated and all employees and staff must be properly trained to assist students who report a policy violation. It also demanded procedures to be in place to handle reports of violations, and other requirements.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Brice Wiggins (R-MS-052)

KILLING COMMITTEE

Senate Universities and Colleges Committee under the direction of Sen. Rita Potts Parks, R-Corinth. **Members:** David Blount; Albert Butler; Chris Caughman; Joey Fillingane; Hillman Terome Frazier; Josh Harkins; J. Walter Michel; David Parker; John A. Polk; Daniel H. Sparks; Bart Williams

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects unanimously supported this bill providing an opportunity to hold colleges and universities accountable for more effectively managing sexual assault, and sexual relationship violence. Sexual violence is an important conversation for women, particularly Black women, because Black women are assaulted at a rate greater than any other racial group.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB0589.xml>



S.B. 2244: JUVENILE OFFENDERS; PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING OPTIONS.

ISSUES

JUSTICE



STATUS

PASSED ORIGINAL CHAMBER



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2244 proposed to provide alternative, shorter sentencing options for minors who commit serious crimes. These crimes would normally carry the harshest punishments including life, life without parole, and the death penalty. With this legislation the sentences would be 25-50 years for capital offenses, 20-40 years for 1st degree offenses, and 15-30 years for 2nd degree offenses. If the court finds the usual sentencing to be unconstitutional the minor will be eligible to receive lighter sentencing, based upon the offense and the preference of the trial judge.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Joey Fillingane (R-MS-041)

KILLING COMMITTEE

House Judiciary B Committee under the direction of Rep. Nick Bain, R-Corinth. **Members:** Jeramey Anderson; Shane Barnett; Joel Bomgar; Sam Creekmore IV; Dana Criswell; Jill Ford; Debra Gibbs; Jeffery Harness; Stacey Hobgood-Wilkes; Kevin Horan; Lataisha Jackson; Dana McLean; Tom Miles; Gene Newman; Solomon C. Osborne; Jansen Owen; Daryl Porter; Rob Roberson; Jody Steverson; Sonya Williams-Barnes; Brady Williamson; Shanda Yates; Henry Zuber III

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

Due to the amount of power given to a judge by this legislation The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects did not enthusiastically support this bill. This bill proposed that some minors, based on the jurisdiction of the judge, receive shorter sentencing for serious crimes. After concluding that cases without juries were more common in Mississippi than many of us realized, we determined that the legislation was consistent with Mississippi law, even if we did not agree with it. Overall, the Lighthouse supported this bill.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2244.xml>



H.B. 832: MENTAL AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL ACT; ENACT TO PROVIDE FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS AND CERTAIN TRAUMA-INFORMED TRAINING.

ISSUES

EDUCATION



HEALTH



STATUS

PASSED ORIGINAL CHAMBER



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 832, sponsored by both Democrat and Republican state representatives, addressed the quality and lack of mental health care services in Mississippi public schools. This legislation would require at least one mental health counselor in every school and one counselor per 250 students, as funding and qualified personnel become available. The bill would also require mental awareness and trauma-informed approaches in educator preparation programs.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Angela Cockerham (I-MS-096)

KILLING COMMITTEE

Senate Appropriations Committee under the direction of Sen. W. Briggs Hopson, R-Vicksburg. **Members:** Kevin Blackwell; Jenifer B. Branning; Albert Butler; Kelvin R. Butler; Kathy L. Chism; Dennis DeBar, Jr.; Scott DeLano; Hillman Terome Frazier; Rod Hickman; Angela Burks Hill; Robert L. Jackson; Tyler McCaughn; Michael McLendon; J. Walter Michel; Philip Moran; Sollie B. Norwood; Rita Potts Parks; Joseph M. Seymour; Sarita Simmons; Benjamin Suber; Jeff Tate; Angela Turner-Ford; Brice Wiggins; Bart Williams

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

HB 832 would have addressed the quality and lack of mental health care services in Mississippi public schools. This legislation would have required educators to be trained to identify trauma and mental health issues among students. This bill received unanimous support from TL|BGP because it had the potential to cultivate mentally healthier students and better approaches to the mental health care needs of MS students. Research shows students are more likely to seek mental health help if the service is provided.

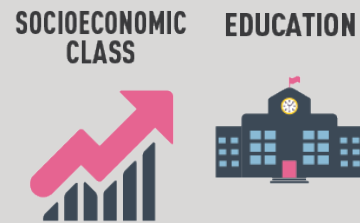
SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB0832.xml>



H.B. 587: APPROPRIATION; JACKSON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT BUILDING REPAIRS ON CERTAIN CAMPUSES.

ISSUES



STATUS

INTRODUCED OR PREFILED



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 587, sponsored by Rep. Zakiya Summers [D], would fund the costs of repairs to school buildings on certain campuses for Fiscal Year 2023. These schools included Jim Hill High School, Provine High School, Whitten Middle School, Blackburn Middle School, Van Winkle elementary School, Pecan Park Elementary School, Lake Elementary School, and Isabel Elementary school. This legislation requested \$2 million for repairs.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Zakiya Summers (D-MS-068)

KILLING COMMITTEE

House Appropriations Committee under the direction of Rep. John Read, R-Gautier. **Members:** William Tracy Arnold; Manly Barton; Charles Jim Beckett; Richard Bennett; C. Scott Bounds; Randy P. Boyd; Charles Busby; Bryant W. Clark; Alyce G. Clarke; Angela Cockerham; Dana Criswell; Becky Currie; Dan Eubanks; Casey Eure; Jeff Hale; Greg Haney; John W. Hines, Sr.; Joey Hood; Steve Hopkins; Kevin Horan; Mac Huddleston; Lataisha Jackson; Timmy Ladner; Vince Mangold; Sam C. Mims, V; Bill Pigott; Noah Sanford; Jerry R. Turner; Percy W. Watson; Jason White; Charles Young, Jr.

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

The bill received unanimous support from TL|BGP. The funding and repairs could ensure safer spaces and learning environments for JPS' majority-Black student body. It had the potential to positively impact the physical health and educational performance of Black girls and women and other school children.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB0587.xml>



S.B. 2485: MISSISSIPPI WORKFORCE AND SENIOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT; PRESCRIBE STATE TAX CREDIT FOR QUALIFIED PROJECTS.

ISSUES

AGE



STATUS

PASSED ORIGINAL CHAMBER



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2485, sponsored by Senator Barbara Blackmon [D], would have provided a housing tax credit equivalent to the federal housing tax credit. These projects include housing facilities with rent limits and median income limits for residents.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Sen. Barbara Blackmon (D-MS-021)

KILLING COMMITTEE

Senate Finance Committee under the direction of Sen. Josh Harkins, R-Flowood. **Members:** Juan Barnett; Jason Barrett; Barbara Blackmon; David Blount; Nicole Boyd; Hob Bryan; Joel R.Carter, Jr.; Chris Caughman; Lydia Graves Chassaniol; Jeremy England; Joey Fillingane; John Horhn; David Jordan; Dean Kirby; Chris McDaniel; Chad McMahan; David Parker; Derrick T. Simmons; Melanie Sojourner; Daniel H. Sparks; Joseph Thomas; Mike Thompson; Neil S. Whaley; Chuck Younger

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects supported this bill proposing a program providing benefits to low-income renters. It would have increased the number of units available for low-income renters and provided potential benefits to Black women and Black girls.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2485.xml>



H.B. 782: APPROPRIATION; MDE TO ASSIST PARENTS IN PAYING SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR COST OF LOST/DAMAGED ELECTRONIC DEVICES ASSIGNED TO STUDENTS.

ISSUES

SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS



STATUS

INTRODUCED OR PREFILED



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 782 would have assisted parents of students in “at-risk of failing” public-schools in meeting the financial obligations for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices assigned to students for Fiscal Year 2023.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Charles Young (D-MS-082)

KILLING COMMITTEE

House Appropriations Committee under the direction of Rep. John Read, R-Gautier. **Members:** William Tracy Arnold; Manly Barton; Charles Jim Beckett; Richard Bennett; C. Scott Bounds; Randy P. Boyd; Charles Busby; Bryant W. Clark; Alyce G. Clarke; Angela Cockerham; Dana Criswell; Becky Currie; Dan Eubanks; Casey Eure; Jeff Hale; Greg Haney; John W. Hines, Sr.; Joey Hood; Steve Hopkins; Kevin Horan; Mac Huddleston; Lataisha Jackson; Timmy Ladner; Vince Mangold; Sam C. Mims, V; Bill Pigott; Noah Sanford; Jerry R. Turner; Percy W. Watson; Jason White; Charles Young, Jr.

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

This bill adheres to TL|BGP legislative standards by addressing barriers to advancing education opportunities. Moreover, the bill doesn't harm Black girls and women, but benefits them. TL|BGP supported this bill unanimously.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB0782.xml>



H.B. 1280: BONDS; AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE TO ASSIST CITY OF JACKSON WITH MAKING REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS.

ISSUES

HEALTH



STATUS

INTRODUCED OR PREFILED



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

A

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 1280 invested in the city of Jackson's water and sewer systems, authorizing the issuance of State General Obligation Bonds to provide funds to assist the city in paying costs associated with repairing and upgrading the city's water and sewage systems.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Earle Banks (D-MS-067)

KILLING COMMITTEE

House Ways and Means Committee under the direction of Rep. Trey Lamar, R-Senatobia. **Members:** Shane Aguirre; Willie Bailey; Nick Bain; Earle S. Banks; Shane Barnett; Donnie Bell; Edward Blackmon, Jr.; Joel Bomgar; Chris Brown; Larry Byrd; Lester Carpenter; Carolyn Crawford; Michael T. Evans; Bob Evans; Jeffrey S. Guice; Gregory Holloway, Sr.; Robert L. Johnson III; Bill Kinkade; Steve Massengill; Doug McLeod; Ken Morgan; Randall Patterson; Brent Powell; Thomas U. Reynolds; Rob Roberson; Randy Rushing; Omeria Scott; Rufus Straughter; Tom Weathersby; Lee Yancey; Henry Zuber III

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

TL|BGP voted unanimously in support of H.B. 1280. Jackson's water and sewer system infrastructure suffers from extensive issues ranging from the age of pipes to ineffective water treatment. The city is in a cycle of struggling to gain appropriate funding to address these problems while keeping services affordable. Jackson is a majority Black city and the state's white Republican leadership routinely kills bills benefiting the city.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB1280.xml>



H.B. 1532: APPROPRIATION; DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FOR MAGNET COMMUNITY HEALTH DISPARITY PROGRAM.

ISSUES



STATUS

INTRODUCED OR PREFILED



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

B

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 1532 would have provided funding to the MAGnet community Health Disparity program to address pandemic-related impacts on marginalized communities for Fiscal Year 2023. Minority and disadvantaged communities experienced disproportionate pain from the COVID-19 virus, including death and infection rates. The bill would have appropriated \$11 million from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery fund to develop and implement plans to mitigate these disproportionate negative impacts through vaccine delivery and the monitoring of high-risk patients.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Orlando Paden (D-MS-026)

KILLING COMMITTEE

House Appropriations Committee under the direction of Rep. John Read, R-Gautier. **Members:** William Tracy Arnold; Manly Barton; Charles Jim Beckett; Richard Bennett; C. Scott Bounds; Randy P. Boyd; Charles Busby; Bryant W. Clark; Alyce G. Clarke; Angela Cockerham; Dana Criswell; Becky Currie; Dan Eubanks; Casey Eure; Jeff Hale; Greg Haney; John W. Hines, Sr.; Joey Hood; Steve Hopkins; Kevin Horan; Mac Huddleston; Lataisha Jackson; Timmy Ladner; Vince Mangold; Sam C. Mims, V; Bill Pigott; Noah Sanford; Jerry R. Turner; Percy W. Watson; Jason White; Charles Young, Jr.

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

House Bill 1532 proposed to assist people of color in the state of Mississippi who die at a disproportionate rate. While TL|BGP supported the legislation, the concern with this bill was that our communities have needed this resource prior to COVID.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB1532.xml>



S.B. 2356: THE REAL YOU ACT OF 2022; ENACT.

ISSUES

INTERSECTIONS



STATUS

OUT OF COMMITTEE



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS DOWN



GRADE ASSIGNED

F

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

NO

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Senate Bill 2356 would have prohibited physically incarcerated offenders from requesting a name change and prohibit minors from requesting legal recognition of a gender transition. The bill's motivation was to prohibit convicted sex offenders from changing their names, as they would not be identifiable as the name (given at registration) in the system. This bill would only allow a minor or parent to petition for a gender transition ID if a licensed physician or psychiatrist provided a letter of support, or if a chancery clerk provided a letter of support for the gender transition petition.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Earle Banks (D-MS-067)

KILLING COMMITTEE

Senate Judiciary A Committee under the direction of Chairman Brice Wiggans, R-Pascagoula. **Members:** Juan Barnett; Jason Barrett; Barbara Blackmon; Nicole Boyd; Dennis DeBar, Jr.; Jeremy England; W. Briggs Hopson III; Dean Kirby; Tyler McCaughn; Chris McDaniel; David Parker; Derrick T. Simmons; Angela Turner-Ford

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects Policy & Research Team voted in opposition of S.B. 2356 because it did not live up to TL|BGP legislative standards, specifically for gender, and was rooted in transphobia. The legislation restricted opportunity and personal freedom for incarcerated persons, seemingly unnecessarily. If passed, S.B. 2356 could have allowed serious biases to enter the correctional system in terms of who is allowed a name change and who is not. For these reasons, and the fact that the bill does not address a set need or provide a particular benefit, our team voted to oppose this legislation.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/SB/SB2356.xml>



H.B. 875: MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM ACT OF 2022; ENACT TO REQUIRE FOR CHILDREN FOUR YEARS OF AGE.

ISSUES

EDUCATION



STATUS

INTRODUCED OR PREFILED



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

A

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 875, by Rep. Randy Boyd [R], would have created a universal state prekindergarten program with the goal of ensuring all preschool aged children an opportunity to begin school before kindergarten, with no additional cost to the parents.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Randy Boyd (R-MS-019)

KILLING COMMITTEE

House Education Committee under the direction of Chairman Richard Bennett, R-Long Beach. **Members:** Manly Barton; Randy P. Boyd; Charles Busby; Larry Byrd; Alyce G. Clarke; Angela Cockerham; Carolyn Crawford; Sam Creekmore IV; Clay Deweese; Kevin Felsher; Stephanie Foster; Debra Gibbs; Jeffrey S. Guice; Gregory Holloway, Sr.; Mac Huddleston; Timmy Ladner; Vince Mangold; Carl Mickens; Daryl Porter; Rob Roberson; Rufus Straughter; Zakiya Summers; Cheikh Taylor; Kenneth Walker; Jason White

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE

HB 875 would have enacted universal prekindergarten in the state of Mississippi, making a Pre-K education accessible to all eligible children in the state of MS, regardless of socioeconomic status and family economics. This bill received unanimous support from TL|BGP. Kindergarten students with a pre-K education tend to perform better than those without a pre-K education, both academically and cognitively/socially.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB0875.xml>



H.B. 1203: RACIAL PROFILING PREVENTION ACT; CREATE.

ISSUES

JUSTICE



STATUS

INTRODUCED OR PREFILED



TL|BGP STANCE

THUMBS UP



GRADE ASSIGNED

C

IS THIS BILL GOOD for Black girls and women?

YES

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

House Bill 1203, sponsored by Rep. Solomon Osborne [D], would have created the Racial Profiling Prevention Act. The bill would require law enforcement agencies of the state to develop policies prohibiting traffic stops motivated by a motor vehicle operator's personal characteristic, including race. This bill would also require agencies to collect information of traffic stops and submit any reports or complaints of alleged racial profiling to the local district attorney. This bill was an attempt to decrease and hold officers accountable for actions motivated solely by race, color, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, immigration status, etc.

LAST TIMELINE ACTION

Died In Committee

SPONSORS LIST

MS Rep. Solomon Osborne (D-MS-032)

KILLING COMMITTEE

Senate Judiciary B Committee under the direction of Nick Bain, R-Corinth **Members:** Jeramey Anderson; Shane Barnett; Joel Bomgar; Sam Creekmore IV; Dana Criswell; Jill Ford; Debra Gibbs; Jeffery Harness; Stacey Hobgood-Wilkes; Kevin Horan; Lataisha Jackson; Dana McLean; Tom Miles; Gene Newman; Solomon C. Osborne; Jansen Owen; Daryl Porter; Rob Roberson; Jody Steverson; Sonya Williams-Barnes; Brady Williamson; Shanda Yates; Henry Zuber III

EXPLANATION OF TL|BGP STANCE


TL|BGP unanimously supported H.B. 1203 with its focus on ending racial profiling in the State of Mississippi. Its goal was making all citizens feel safe when being addressed by law enforcement and ensuring just cause when stopping a citizen.

SOURCE LINK

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2022/pdf/history/HB/HB1203.xml>

“If **love** is not present in our imagination, it will not be there in our lives.”

— bell hooks



Onward, upward,
and rest when you need to.



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