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NATIONAL NEWS

LOCAL NEWS

“Black” Project 2025 and Beyond



The Black community must get politically engaged and develop an agenda to deal with the Trump administration’s plans for this country

BY: JEFFREY L. BONEY, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Ever heard of “*déjà vu*”?

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “*déjà vu*” is defined as the feeling one has when they have experienced something very familiar before, whether pleasant or unpleasant.

On November 5th, many Americans experienced a form of “*déjà vu*,” as former Republican president, and now-convicted felon, Donald J. Trump was overwhelmingly re-elected as the President of the United States.

Trump was shockingly elected in 2016, defeating Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton to become 45th president. Trump was subsequently denied a second term in 2020, as the American people voted to oust him, as he was defeated by Democratic nominee Joe Biden. It appeared as if the country was moving on and away from Trump’s controversial presidency.

Negative!

Fast forward to 2024, and the data shows that more Americans, including more Black Americans, voted to give Trump another chance to finish what he started than they did in 2016 and 2020.

There were many issues that played a part in this “*déjà vu*” moment playing out again. The most significant reason that Trump was re-elected was that the majority of White Americans, who make up the majority of the population and registered voters in this country, showed up to the polls and boldly chose the person they wanted to lead this country.

According to the NBC News exit polling, 57 percent of White people voted for Trump, while he received a slight uptick in support from minority voters.

The indictments, court settlements, convictions, character issues, and other past baggage didn’t stop registered voters from re-electing Trump.

One of the most talked about things during the 2024 presidential election cycle was what would happen

if Trump was re-elected, and whether he would push to implement recommended policy changes from the controversial conservative agenda commonly referred to as Project 2025.

Although he denied knowing about Project 2025 as he was asked about it on the campaign trail, Trump knows everything about Project 2025.

Project 2025 is not a myth.

Project 2025 is a living, breathing 922-page document, orchestrated by the The Heritage Foundation—a conservative think tank who has helped influence public policy since the early 1970s.

Now that the Republicans have successfully retained the U.S. House of Representatives and taken control of the U.S. Senate, president-elect Trump will have the ability to potentially implement any, or all, of the proposed public policy reforms mentioned in the Project 2025 document.

If implemented, many of the proposed policy suggestions that would undoubtedly impact Black Americans in a major way, include things like limiting access to quality education for black students; promoting punitive criminal legal policies; jeopardizing access to affordable housing for Black families; undermining Black political power; weakening anti-discrimination laws and cutting essential worker protections; threatening reproductive rights and the health of Black people; exacerbating health disparities caused by environmental racism; eliminating the Head Start program, which is a federal program that provides preschool care and education to low-income families; getting rid of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs in each area of the federal government; denying access for African Americans and women to receive direct small business loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA) in order to start and/or grow their businesses; disbanding the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, a sub-agency that



A scene from The Anderson Center for the Arts’ production of *Black Nativity*

**“An Evening of Elegance”
at The Anderson Center:
A Magical Celebration of
Black Nativity and
Community Spirit**

BY: TERRANCE TURNER,
FORWARD TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Anderson Center for the Arts brought some Sunday-morning spirit to a frigid Saturday night with “An Evening of Elegance” on Dec. 7. The event featured an indoor Christmas-themed vendor market, where patrons enjoyed wine tastings, ornament making, and fun photo ops. But the highlight of the night was *Black Nativity*, a re-imagined version of the famed 1961 play by author and playwright Langston Hughes.

Written and directed by Felecia Lamb, this adaptation closely follows the original in at least one respect: the show opens with the theater in total darkness, while the (outstanding) offstage band played an instrumental version of Donny Hathaway’s “This Christmas.” The lights come up to reveal a shelter, led by Grandma (Dr. Tameka McKeithan). As her grandchildren come in, she has them gather around to hear the story of the very first Christmas.

Into the shelter walks an expectant couple: Zach (Januell Carol) and a heavily pregnant Lizzie (Shataka Payne), seeking shelter for the night. Finding it, they relax on one of the couches while the screen shifts to another couple: Mary (Pastor Reliza Jackson) and Joseph (Derrick Foreman) make their way to the lowly manger where Christ would be born. The top-tier choir (singers Troy Mason II, Cassidy Muhammad, and Kasi Coleman) open the score with “My Lord, What a Morning,” an early Negro spiritual credited to Richard Allen (the first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the first independent African American denomination).

It’s the first of many gospel selections intricately woven into the story: Mary’s birth scene is creatively punctuated by African drums and percussion (with bongos by 11-year-old Armani Mallory, making his stage debut). After the Savior is born, Mason and Muhammad duet on an almost operatic “Sweet Little Jesus Boy” before Mason’s (beautiful) solo on “Mary, Did You Know.” As Mary and Joseph marvel over the child who would change the world, the chorus reassembles for jubilant group numbers: “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” blends smoothly into “Joy to the World.”

As word of Jesus’ birth spreads, the three Wise Men bring gifts to Him, and vocalist Kasi Coleman renders a stirring version of “Jesus, What a Wonderful Child.”

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Entertainment

SCREW THE WORLD: HOW DJ CANDLESTICK IS BRINGING HOUSTON’S CHOPPED & SCREWED LEGACY TO A GLOBAL STAGE

While DJ Screw is no longer with us, artists and collectives like OG Ron C and The Chopstars have carried the torch. One of those Chopstars is Omar “DJ Candlestick” Barton...**Page 4B**

Health

HOW TO DISCUSS VACCINATION WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

During the fall and winter months, respiratory infections such as flu, COVID-19, and RSV can surge. People who are vaccinated lower their risk of getting seriously ill and needing medical care if they get infected. **Page 3B**

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“EVENING OF ELEGANCE” Continued from Front Page



The Three Wise Men depicted in The Anderson Center for the Arts’ production of *Black Nativity*

Meanwhile, back at the shelter, Grandma continues to tell the Nativity story to the children, punctuated by comedic commentary from Miss Amora (radio personality LaKeitha L. Bryant), who questions why the Wise Men didn’t bring blankets or heaters, or maybe a pot of gumbo. After the laughs die down, Grandma finds some truth at the center of the joke: “The reality is, we all need warmth,” she muses. (On a day when temps struggled to get out of the 50s, she’s certainly right.) As Zach himself notes, “Love and a good laugh can make even the coldest night feel warm.”

The rest of Act I deftly shifts between two parallel tales: the timeless Nativity story, wherein Mary and Joseph welcome (and travel with) their newborn child, while Lizzie and Zach anxiously await the arrival of their own little one. Both seeking shelter on a cold winter night, each couple navigates their uncertain circumstances with faith. As noted by narrator Deeone McKeithan: “We see reflections of Mary and Joseph in Lizzie and Zach: the quiet strength, the unspoken fears, the resilience to face the unknown path, and the hope for a better tomorrow.”

After a brief intermission, Act II flies through in a breeze, from Lizzie and Zach’s special delivery to even more special music (“He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands,” a redux of “Joy to the World”). In the closing moments, the music takes over, and the result feels like a revival atmosphere, even down to the closing praise dance to Kathy Taylor’s “Oh, How Precious.” This unexpected ending (missing from the original show) adds yet another new layer to this Anderson Center production, unique for its setting as well as staging.

“An Evening of Elegance” was hosted by writer Joy Sewing, who in 2023 became the first Black news columnist at the *Houston Chronicle*. In her pre-show remarks, Sewing expressed ambivalence about the honor: “The fact that people are celebrating the fact that I was the first columnist in 120 years is almost... a little bit embarrassing to me,” she admitted. “But I take it as an opportunity to continue to write about stories and



The audience watches intently during a powerful moment in The Anderson Center for the Arts’ production of *Black Nativity*.

[about] all of the things that people are doing here in Houston to make a difference, to tell our stories.” Just as Grandma does in *Black Nativity*, it is essential that we continue to tell our children our history because, as Sewing points out, “our history is being erased.”

In that vein, Anderson Center founder and executive director Michelle L. Bonton (whom Sewing introduced) spoke on the need for spaces like the Center. “We support Black creatives so that they can continue telling Black narratives. We want to keep that alive, But the other thing we want to make sure of is that the East Side gets love from an artistic perspective. We are trying to expand arts access in this community.” To assist the Center in this endeavor, visit <https://theandersoncenter.squarespace.com/>.



Dr. Tameka McKeithan portrays the role of Grandma in The Anderson Center for the Arts’ production of *Black Nativity*



A scene from The Anderson Center for the Arts’ production of *Black Nativity*



A scene from The Anderson Center for the Arts’ production of *Black Nativity*



Joy Sewing hosts *An Evening of Elegance*, delivering moving pre-show remarks.

2025 AND BEYOND Continued from Front Page

enforces civil rights laws and investigates schools accused of engaging in discrimination; and eliminating agencies that run Medicare and Medicaid, as well as affiliated offices that research treatments for insidious diseases and approve prescriptions, medical devices, and personal products like cosmetics.

As Trump is set to be sworn in for the second time on January 20, 2025, have Black Americans developed a “Black” agenda since his first term that will help the Black community during his second term?

Once again, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines an “agenda” as a list or outline of things to be considered or done, and an underlying often ideological plan or program to be introduced.

If The Heritage Foundation spent decades and dollars on research and policy-making strategies to develop their own robust and comprehensive conservative agenda, it would make sense that the Black community do the same to ensure the collective needs of the community are addressed.

If working together to develop a “Black” agenda, these five things should be considered priority actions for the Black community, as President-elect Trump heads back to the White House in January 2025.

1) The Black community must convene

a meeting with a remnant of like-minded intellectuals, thought leaders, educators, researchers, legal scholars, judicial scholars, higher-education leaders, community activists, community leaders, public policy experts, healthcare professionals, financial experts, investors, farmers, scientists, entrepreneurs, business leaders, non-profit organizations, grassroot organizations, artists, ministers, entertainers, athletes, insurance experts, law enforcement officials, current and former military veterans, aspiring elected officials, current politicians, and all other respected civic leaders and industry professionals from different walks of life, to form a solid coalition to discuss the issues.

2) The Black community must develop public policy positions and propose legislation at all levels of government, while creating well-thought out strategies and real solutions to get these policies and legislation implemented.

3) The Black community must use economic resources as both an asset and a weapon to influence public policy, address longstanding issues, and bring about growth and change for the Black community.

4) The Black community must become properly educated on politics, public policy, and civics lessons, to learn how these laws and public policies can help the collective Black community.

5) The Black community must break any historical and cultural dependency of expecting anyone else to address issues without a demand and develop a plan to prevent a future recurrence of those issues once they are dealt with and resolved.

There is a saying that “You play the cards you’re dealt,” which simply means that you have to accept the situation placed before you and do your best to navigate life as a result of the position you have been thrust into.

The results of November 5th can’t be reversed, and the Trump administration is going to do whatever they are allowed to do for the next two to four years. The cards have been dealt and it is up to the Black community to decide if it will develop its own “Black” Project 2025 agenda starting in January 2025 and beyond.

CLASSIFIEDS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Request for Proposal – Houston-Galveston Area Council – Public Services– Temporary Staffing, Direct Hire and Other Employer Services – TS06-25

H-GAC is soliciting responses for selecting qualified service providers for Temporary Staffing, Direct-Hire and Other Employer Services to make these types of services available to Customers of the HGACBuy Cooperative Purchasing Program under blanket type contracts.

To view the solicitation documents, visit <https://www.hgacbuy.org/bid-notices>.

Response Deadline: January 23, 2025 @ 12:00 P.M. CST

LEGAL NOTICE

Does anyone know where Skyla Grace Carter father is? Mother Jamika Petro, please call 832-378-2435

PUBLIC NOTICE

CellCo Partnership and Its Controlled Affiliates Doing Business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) proposes to collocate wireless antennas on a 39.1-foot monopole (40.9-foot overall) at centerline heights of 37.58 feet and 9 feet at the approx. vicinity of 3215 2/3 Jackson St., Houston, Harris Co., TX 77004 [Lat: 29-44-14.651 N, Lo: 95-22-17.051 W]. Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to: Trileaf Corp, Zoe Brown, z.brown@trileaf.com, 2550 South IH 35, Suite 200, Austin, TX 78704 – 512.519.9388.

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Cellco Partnership and its Controlled Affiliates Doing Business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) proposes to build a 34-foot stealth pole communications tower at the approx. vicinity of 845 1/3 Echo Lane, Hedwig Village, Harris County, TX 77024. The coordinates of the tower are Lat: 29-46-45.644 N, Long: -95-31-16.780. Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to: Trileaf Corp, Mitra Rahimi, m.rahimi@trileaf.com, 2550 S I-35 Frontage Rd, Suite 200, Austin, TX 78704, 512-519-9388.