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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# Urban League of Louisiana School Expo 2018

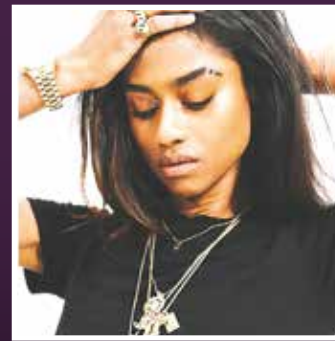
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# Urban League of Louisiana School Expo 2018

*Greater New Orleans Urban League CEO Erika McConduit Speaks on Education, Empowering Communities and Changing Lives*



Urban League of Louisiana staff and volunteers at the 2017 Urban League of Louisiana Schools Expo. The Expo has become New Orleans' largest school choice assisting parents with critical information and opportunities to meet with school operators gaining a clearer picture of their choices in advance of enrollment.

By Edwin Buggage  
Data News Weekly Editor

**February 3, 2018 Free Event at Superdome to Give Information on School Choice**

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans School System has changed in many ways. No longer are the days of neighborhood schools; today it is decentralized and these changes for good or bad seems here to stay. To help parents navigate through this maze of educational choices the Urban League of Louisiana's Annual Schools Expo has come to assist

parents and is the largest school choice event in the City of New Orleans. As new school options continue to emerge, it is critical that parents have an opportunity to meet with school operators up close and personal. Since its inception over a decade ago, thousands of attendees are greeted at the Superdome and welcomed to an array of education providers, community

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## Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

resource organizations, STEM activities, entertainment, food and giveaways! The entire event is FREE and open to the public. It is a premiere event with thousands in attendance and continues to make a strong community impact.

### School Expo 2018: Education, Information and Inspiration

Erika McConduit, is the President and CEO of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans, speaking to Data News Weekly about the event says, "This is an event we have been doing after Hurricane Katrina when the education landscape changed, and we felt it was very important for families to have a place to come and meet with school leaders and get information one-on-one directly from the source and get answers."

The Urban League has partnered with not only public and charter schools but private and a catholic school to give parents the full range of educational options. The event takes place on Saturday February 3, 2018 from 10A.M. TO 2 P.M. on the field of the Mercedes Benz Superdome and is free and open to the public and parking is also free. During the event parents will have the chance to meet with school leaders and community resource providers, apply to PreK-4 programs, early childhood centers and schools on-site (including scholarship schools through OneApp), Complete One-App income verification, STEM activities, games, inflatables and rock wall, performances by schools and organizations, Health Screenings, refreshments provided, FREE school supplies, FREE uniform vouchers.

### Uplifting A Community: It Takes a Village

McConduit understands that choosing a school by itself is not the sole ingredient of a quality education. Therefore, the Urban League has taken a holistic approach and partnered with other stakeholders in the community. "We will have community resource providers that are there, something that we understand that for kids to have a full and robust child development experience go beyond the classroom as well. We wanted to make sure this was a one-stop-shop for families and they could come in



Students will be able to partake in activities provided by STEM NOLA who will be onsite with activities and information exposing the young people of New Orleans to the jobs of the future.

to visit schools and ask questions. And also, to meet organizations that provide things such as tutoring, extracurricular activities like dance, sports and some that do summer programs. That is a new addition for us this year; because we want families to continue to have access to stimulating activities for children when school is not in session."

This year they have also added as per request early childhood providers that will be there sharing information regarding educational support for families with children regardless of their age or national origin. McConduit says this is an event for the whole family; in addition, STEM NOLA will be onsite with activities and information exposing the young people of New Orleans to the jobs of the future.

"This is a family friendly event; we encourage people to bring their kids. We have daycare that is available onsite. We have the Urban League Licensed Head Start staff onsite." Continuing she says, "We have interpreters' onsite for our Hispanic families and our Vietnamese families there and will be on hand to help and walk people through the expo to make sure they have the same access as everyone else."

Knowing the relationship between education and future economic opportunities, she speaks excitedly about the expo and kids getting an opportunity to explore

the in-demand careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, "STEM NOLA is going to be there and that is the jobs of the future and we want our young people to get that exposure. We have a large space where kids can do hands on stuff with Dr. Calvin Mackie, who leads STEM NOLA."

### A Passion for Education and Carrying on a Tradition

McConduit's passion for quality educational access is personal. Throughout her life as the daughter of a longtime school principal and administrator the late Darrell McConduit and her mother Denise McConduit, an Author of children books and advocate of literacy planting the seeds that's been sown where Erika continues to value education and uplifting her community. With passion ringing in her voice she says, "I really do come from a family that was dedicated to literacy and education. I was raised in a household where education was important. Giving back to community was also important and that is fundamental to my upbringing and the person that I am. Education is near and dear to my heart and I feel all families deserve to have the choice that speaks to the needs of their child and I am deeply committed to this mission."

The National Urban League continues to be a relevant organization with its mission to empower African-American and vulnerable citizens. Today many would argue that access to a quality education is one of the most important Civil Rights issues of the 21st Century. For it is in education that many will be given the keys to a successful life in America; it is the thing that can make communities more stable. "We at the National Urban League continue to work towards bettering our communities in a changing landscape and changing systems. We want to make sure that we are in a position to assist the community and transitioning to those changes. And we in the Urban League of Greater New Orleans believe education is important to the building of a healthy community and everyone regardless of race or income deserves a quality education. This is something that not only benefits the individual and their families, but the entire community."



Erika McConduit, (pictured above) is the President and CEO of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans. She stresses the importance of the Expo, in providing the opportunity for families to have a place to come and meet with school leaders and get information one-on-one directly from the source and get answers.



# Carnival Cruise Lines Name Shaq New CFO - Chief Fun Officer

*NBA Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal announced on Thursday night's TNT 'Inside the NBA' broadcast that he's been appointed Carnival Cruise Line's CFO*

## Data News Staff Edited Report

The announcement was made with a tongue-in-cheek video that features Shaq and Carnival president Christine Duffy but omits one minor detail: CFO stands for 'chief fun officer,' personifying the cruise line's newly launched 'Choose Fun' brand campaign.

As CFO Shaq will lend his playful, larger-than-life personality to inspire America to 'Choose Fun' with Carnival when planning their next vacation, and in their everyday lives.

Shaq's role will be brought to life via engaging video content, paid social media and experiential activations, beginning today.

In the first piece of advertising Shaq takes viewers on a humorous, whirlwind 30-second tour of Car-



NBA Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal

nival Vista as he experiences SkyRide, the Havana pool (while fully dressed), Cloud 9 Spa, a burger at Guy Fieri's Burger Joint and, of

course, the basketball court.

The campaign may be an eye-opener for people like Shaq himself, who told Seatrade Cruise News he'd regularly seen cruise ships while living in Miami—he played for Micky Arison's Miami Heat from 2004 to 2008—but had no idea what they offered until he went aboard Carnival Vista for the advertising shoot.

'When I got on the ship, I was blown away. I never new it was that fun,' O'Neal said. 'I just thought it was a boat with a bunch of rooms.'

He reeled off some of the things that impressed him—SkyRide, the barbecue restaurant, the outdoor basketball court, putt-putt golf. He

tried all of them over two days.

'Everyone who knows Shaq knows I like to have fun ... and, guess what, I will be going on two cruises,' he disclosed in an interview. They'll be in 2018, from Miami.

It hasn't been determined if these will be surprise ship visits or planned cruises.

In the interview with Seatrade Cruise News O'Neal also wanted to talk about the new Carnival Horizon, debuting in the spring. Describing the ship, he used the exclamation 'Whoo-Whee!' and even spelled it out for emphasis.

Shaq's appointment as chief fun officer adds a celebrity endorsement to the 'Choose Fun' campaign, which otherwise uses testimonials from 'regular' people.

O'Neal is considered one of the greatest basketball players of all time. Besides Miami Heat, he played for Orlando Heat, the Los Angeles Lakers, Phoenix Suns, Cleveland Cavaliers and Boston Celtics. He has four NBA championship rings, including for the Heat (2006). He has appeared in numerous films, television shows and commercials, and is an active businessman and investor.

'We are very excited to have Shaq as part of the Carnival team,' Duffy said. 'He will serve as a great ambassador, ensuring everyone knows all about our one-of-a-kind brand of fun.'

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**TRULY YOUR NEWSPAPER IN LOUISIANA**



# Big Chief Charles "Lil Charles" Collins White Cloud Hunters

By: Glenn Jones  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

## TRIBAL TIMELINE:

**2012-Present:** Big Chief Charles "Lil Charles" Collins

**1980-2011:** Big Chief Charles Taylor Sr.

**Unknown-1979:** Big Chief Harold Featherson

## 6th Ward Royalty

Big Chief Charles "Lil Charles" Collins, of the White Cloud Hunters is of Royal Stock in the Black Masking Culture of New Orleans. Lil Charles has never held any other position in the tribe but Chief. He was born into the tribe as Little Chief a position he held until the age of 12. After a short hiatus from masking he returned in 2010 as Second Chief, joining his father the Legendary Big Chief Charles Taylor. Big Chief "Lil Charles" received the gang from his father in 2012. His father, Charles Sr. started as Flag Boy of the Yellow Jackets, then moved to Little Chief. From 1975-79 Charles Sr. served as Chief of the Yellow Jackets and in 1980, became Chief of the White Cloud Hunters, an honor passed on to him by Harold Featherson the retiring Chief. Lil Charles said that some of his earliest Black Masking memories were learning how to be a Chief from the example of his father and other elders.

Chief says when he would come home from school his father would be at the rack, sewing. "That's all I knew it was instilled in me by pops." Growing up I picked up on it and I liked it. I don't just like it, I love it." Lil Charles speaks of the time and commitment it takes to mask, as well as the toll it takes on supportive loved ones and family members. "Sometimes guys make decisions to not pay lights to buy beads and feathers and their woman has to be



Big Chief Charles Collins White Cloud Hunters

ok with that. Knowing this comes first," says Chief.

Over the course of 28 weeks we're learning that the sacrifices associated with being Big Chief may confound colonial cultures but are paramount to an unwritten Black Masking refinement process. Not everyone is born to do this, but the warriors that are, blaze an inherently profound trail intentionally isolated from the pages of history, until now.

Q) What's a new tradition in this culture that you don't recall from your childhood masking?

A) At one point, I used to see Indians meet, everybody meeting everybody, Spy Boy meets Spy Boy and so on. You took the time out to do what I did so why I can't see you. Even though you're not my position I still want to show my stuff off.

Q) What does the world need to know about the White Cloud Hunters?

A) We are some pretty Indians.

That's how I feel about it. To each his own, everybody's not going to feel like that. But I feel sorry for a man that don't feel that way about his tribe. We are three generations into this, reaching one teaching one.

Q) As Chief what role does music play in your tribe?

A) As Chief your singing call and response. The song you sing depends on however you feel. You might be feeling good, so you might sing something good. You might be looking for war, you are looking for a certain person, you going to sing a war song, you going to go to talkin' trouble, you letting the world know "go tell him". It just comes, everybody don't have a big entourage. You might get you a guy coming up the street with two or three people and they rollin! Songs just come and us as Indians we can just pop off and just sing

that off da hump (inspiration improvisation) and know it just comes. You know what you want to say and it's just going to come. When you get home you say, "man you heard what I was saying? I was rollin!" But you can never repeat the exact same way what you said.

Q) Besides Indian Red, what is your favorite traditional song?

A) Indians, Here They Come!

Q) Besides sewing what is your favorite part of Black Masking Culture?

A) The dancing part. Challenging another guy with his footwork dancing and the creativity to see what the other man thought, where his mind went. We all go different places with it. Each man got his own thoughts, and everybody goes to that different galaxy, and you be like, "I wonder where he took it to this time".

Q) What's your mission every Carnival?

A) The whole object is to beat yourself. Once you beat yourself who else can beat you? Charles got to beat Charles last time and I know if I beat that one I'm on the right track. I got to constantly beat myself. It's hard to beat yourself when you know you don't put in a lot of work on one so much and your trying to figure out how in the world am I going to beat that. You got to sit down and go back to that drawing board and most of the time it be back there in ya'll head you just got to get it out.

Q) 300 years from now what do you want your legacy to be?

A) I want people to remember me as a person that stepped it up over the years and see how different (progression of suit designs) and the more work (sewing) the better quality, all the way structurally sound till I mastered it.

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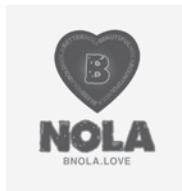
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# NOMTOC Ball 2018

Photos by Michele Burbank  
Data News Weekly Contributor

Mardi Gras Ball Season is in full swing; with its grand spectacles and women donning amazing gowns on full display and men dressed to the nines. Of course, because this is a New Orleans party; there is always the best food and music on full display during this amazing and special time for our City.

On Saturday January 20, 2018 this was the case as the all Black Krewe of NOMTOC held its Annual Ball at the La Nouvelle Orleans Ballroom of the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

Reigning as Queen NOMTOC XLVIII (2018) was Miss Rae' Lyn Denise Fazande, daughter of Mr. Ronald and Mrs. Deborah Fazande Sr. and this year's NOMTOC King is Mr. Barry Charles Guy Sr.

NOMTOC "New Orleans' Most Talked of Club" was founded in 1951 and began parading on the West Bank of New Orleans in 1970. Since its inaugural year NOMTOC has become one of the premiere parades during Mardi Gras season.

Data News Weekly was there to capture this incredible event.



Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events

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# St. Augustine H.S. Purple Knight Bus Dedication Ceremony



## Data Staff Reports

On Monday, St. Augustine High School held a ceremony to dedicate its new Purple Knight bus in honor of the James P. Raymond Jr. Foundation who gave a substantial gift to the school to underwrite the purchase of the bus.

The dedication ceremony commemorating the event was held on Monday, January 22 at 2:30 p.m., in the St. Augustine High School

courtyard. Speakers for the afternoon included Kenneth St. Charles Ph.D., St. Augustine President and CEO, Allen Miller, St. Augustine Board Chairman, and representatives of the James P. Raymond Jr. Foundation. The Very Rev. Henry J. Davis SSJ, St. Augustine High School Chief Religious Officer was on hand to bless the bus and the ceremony.

Members of the Alumni, and the public shared in the event, as The Marching 100

performed for the honored guests.

"We are deeply grateful to the James P. Raymond Jr. Foundation for the many ways they support our school and, in particular, for this remarkable gift and what it represents for the future of education at St. Augustine," Dr. St. Charles said. "This partnership helps us to offer our students the best education and expand their learning opportunities in the region."

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- Now, users will receive an email with a link to download and print the filed-stamped copy upon completion of the Clerk's Office review.

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## To Be Equal

# Haiti Slur

## *Reprehensible, but not Surprising*



**Marc Morial**  
President and CEO  
National Urban League

"Since 1804 Haiti has maintained national independence. I fling these facts at the feet of the detractors of the Negro and of Haiti. They may help them to solve the problem of her future. They not only indicate the Negro's courage, but demonstrate his intelligence as well. No better test of the intelligence of people can be had than is furnished in their laws, their institutions and their great men. To produce these in any considerable degree of perfection, a high order of ability is always required. Haiti has no cause to shrink from this test or from any other." - Frederick Douglass, American Abolitionist, "Lecture on Haiti," January 2, 1893

President Donald Trump's timing could not have been more ironic-or revealing. On the eve of the eighth anniversary of the January 12 earthquake that devastated the island nation of Haiti (and the start of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend), President Trump sat in a bipartisan meeting on immigration reform and publicly questioned why the United States-a nation founded and built by immigrants-should continue to accept immigrants from Haiti, El Salvador and Africa. With a slur heard round the world, President Trump is quoted to have uttered an obscenity to describe those countries-and Haiti, in particular.

This would not be the first time Haiti has been on the receiving end of President Trump's ridicule and contempt. Only weeks before, it was reported that during an earlier cabinet meeting on immigration, the president allegedly complained that immigrants from Nigeria would "never go back to their huts," and that people coming from Haiti "all have AIDS." And despite then-candidate Trump's pledge at a Mi-

ami rally to be the "greatest champion" of Haitian people, the Trump administration has given 60,000 Haitians living in this country under temporary protected status-granted after Haiti's catastrophic 2010 earthquake-until July 2019 to leave or be deported.

The slur is reprehensible and deeply disappointing, but it is not surprising. It lives in a universe of targeted travel bans with discriminatory religious preferences, a candidacy kicked off slandering Mexicans, sympathizing with white supremacists, attacks on protesting Black athletes, and so on. The reported obscenity is, quite frankly, in keeping with past and current sentiments the president has expressed publically and via proxy through his administration's policies.

The true obscenity is that our nation's president is shaping immigration policy, not based on purported American ideals of inclusiveness, but based on the demonization of countries that are primarily Black or Brown; not based on facts, but by stoking

fear; and not based on knowledge, but influenced by a narrow-minded worldview.

Haiti is not a slur. It is the first Black republic in the world. It is the second oldest independent nation in the Western hemisphere after the United States. Haiti achieved its independence by launching the only successful slave revolt in history. But Haiti's fight did not end on the battlefield. It moved to the global arena where external forces would punish and destabilize the young island nation for claiming its freedom, resulting in lasting economic and political turmoil. France forced Haiti to pay more than \$20 billion in today's dollars as reparations for losing a profitable slave colony-drowning Haiti in debt. The United States, which provided aid to the French to help stop the rebellion, subjected Haiti to a crippling economic embargo until it recognized its independence in 1862. Over the years the United States would go on to invade and occupy Haiti, as well as play an oversized role in its politics and elections.

Nonetheless, Haiti is deeply woven into the fabric of America's history and founding. Haitians fought in the Revolutionary War. The city of Chicago was founded by a Haitian immigrant from St. Marc. Haitian music, art and food transformed and shaped the city of New Orleans. And the Haitian slave rebellion was directly responsible for the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the United States.

As a citizen who believes Trump's slander is inconsistent with who we should aspire to be, I abhor the president's misrepresentation of America. As a former mayor of New Orleans, a city richly cultivated by the presence of Haitians, I am distressed by the president's miseducation of the valuable contributions of Haitian immigrants. As the proud descendant of a family who emigrated from Haiti in 1805, I will always challenge the president's wrong-headed assumption that immigrants are the living embodiment of the flaws and failures or upheavals of their countries of origin and cannot contribute positively in their adopted homes.

# Blacks and Politics

## *Either Get Engaged or Get Left Behind*



**Jeffrey Boney**  
NNPA Newswire  
Columnist

Okay, everyone, if you are reading this, welcome to 2018. You made it, and with that being said, I feel that this is the perfect opportunity for us to be honest about an important truth.

First of all, as I see it, it is extremely clear to me, and should be quite evident to anyone who would just simply open up their eyes to see it for themselves, that the Black vote can either make or break an election.

If you don't believe me, I would encourage you to take a look at previous

elections where the Black community was actively engaged and driven to get out and vote in a local, county, state or federal election, versus the times where they were not as excited or motivated to do so.

Take Alabama's recent special U.S. Senate election race involving Republican Roy Moore and Democrat Doug Jones, where people were overwhelmingly surprised to see the exit polls that showed that Black voters made up 29 percent of the overall voter turnout in the entire election—18 percent of Black women and 11 percent of Black men. Exit polls also showed that 98 percent of Black women cast their vote for Jones, while 93 percent of Black men cast their vote for Jones.

These were phenomenal numbers, and definitely the type of numbers that Jones needed to pull off an unexpected victory in a historically and traditionally red state like Alabama.

It was exciting to see this type of political difference making by the Black community, but that excitement was immediately quenched and short-lived, after reading reports that a letter was sent to Jones on Dec. 19 from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and 16 other organizations practically begging him "to commit to hiring a staff that reflects his constituents' racial diversity."

Why wasn't this letter sent before Jones won? Why not get this type of commitment from Jones before engaging the Black community to come out and vote for him, and doing what the Black community always does when it is expected to deliver the turnout and votes necessary to secure a victory for select candidates or select issues on the ballot? I believe it is, because the Black community has grown accustomed to not being respected, especially within

the Democratic Party where they are the most loyal. And before "loyal" Democrats come for my head, because they consider this an attack on the Democratic Party or as an opportunity to try and have us compare the Democratic Party to the Republican Party, I believe the Black community needs to ask itself some really tough questions.

When it comes to the Black community's involvement in the Democratic Party, how are Blacks truly viewed within the party? Despite the Black community having such a strong and dedicated voting bloc across the nation, how many Blacks actually hold key positions within the Democratic Party on a local, statewide and/or national basis? How many Black people are senior staff members in county, state or federal offices across the country?

According to a detailed report

released by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies last year, the majority of White Democratic lawmakers in the U.S. Senate, who have millions of Black constituents, have no Black senior staff members at all. The report also found that while Blacks make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, they only make up 0.9 percent of the top Senate staffers. Is this by design or just an unfortunate oversight?

See, it is one thing to look out at these local, county, state and federal Democratic meetings and conventions and see this sea of diversity, with Black faces mixed in with faces from all other races and backgrounds, but it is an entirely different thing to know that Blacks are not given opportunities to have a real impact in the Democratic Party from within, other

**Commentary,**  
Continued on page 9.



# Top Women's Fashion Influencers to Watch in 2018



**Delaney George**  
Data Fashion & Style  
Columnist

This year is off to a great start especially within the Women's community. Many women have started movements, marches, and other triumphs for the future of all females. Even Oprah said herself that this is the age of women and women's empowerment. Fashion is a female dominated field and there is always a new hot trend, model, or influencer on the rise. These five influencers are on the rise in the fashion world and you don't want to miss their rise to stardom.

**AlealiMay-** If there were an award for the best middle part straight-hair look, Ms. May would take the cake. May is a very diverse, very high fashion Urban Style Influencer. She has styled countless numbers of celebrities but also has done shoe collaborations with brands like Jourdan and Nike. May's style is geared more toward tom-boy urban style with an undeniable shoe or sneaker collection.

**Wuzg00d-** This NYC Fashionista combines color with street style. Many of her clothing and styles are oversized and baggy with sneakers, but her nails, chains, and other accessories has just the right touch on it. Her sneakers are usually always the wow factor in her outfits, but



**Fashion Icon and celebrity stylist Alelai May.** @Alealimay on Instagram



**Fashion model, rebel and fashion influencer @slickwoods** on Instagram



**Fashion Influencers and female DJ, @Venusxgg** on Instagram



**New York Fashion influencer @wuzg00d** on Instagram



**Hip hop enthusiast, director, dj and fashion influencer @Vashtie** on Instagram

she still focuses on highlighting everything she wears from head to toe.

**VenusX-** Female DJ and Fashion Influencer Venus X is all things fun with her pattern like style and awesome makeup choices. Venus likes to do accent eyeshadows and lips with some look to just give that fun sensation. Most of her looks are styles that have a lot of contrast, pri-

mary colors and sheer. If she's ever not colorful in her outfit, be sure her makeup will be.

**Slick Woods-** The Fashion Model and Influencer Slick Woods is the definition of a rebel. Woods combines sets and colors you wouldn't think of pairing and makes them work. Woods has done everything from blonde to green hair. From dressing sexy

to boyish the next day, Woods has the entire fashion industry under control and is most of today's fashion critic's favorite new model.

**Vashtie-** Most may know her as the Downtown Sweetheart or Rapper and Musician Pharrell's ex, but Vashtie is an influencer of many things especially in fashion and hip-hop. Vashtie is

a DJ, Creative Director, Marketing Expert and more. Her style reflects a lot of throw-back 90's and NYC street style. She is considered a mogul in many fields but in the world of fashion, it's safe to say she's a pioneer.

For more information on these ladies' contact Delaney at Delinkey@yahoo.com or dm or message @Delannii on Instagram.

## Commentary, Continued from page 8.

than just voting.

Secondly, as I see it, it is abundantly clear to me that the Black community is oftentimes ignored, disrespected and disregarded by both major political parties until they are needed in the midnight hour to deliver for those who only want their vote but nothing else.

This is important to highlight because, over the last several de-

acades, Black people have voted for Democratic candidates 94 percent of the time in critical federal and state elections.

Black voters turned out in record numbers in 2008 to elect Barack Obama as the first Black president of the United States, with the primary belief that by letting their voices be heard, they would experience the "Hope and Change" he campaigned on. As a result of this record turnout,

Black voters helped elect President Obama to the highest office in the land and they helped elect Democrats to other key positions that helped Democrats gain control of both the House and the Senate. And what did the Democratic Party do as soon as they got control of the House, Senate and the White House? You guessed it! Respective groups within the Democratic Party began advocating for their own competing in-

terests and could care less about Black issues.

And how were Black people rewarded for their 96 percent voting loyalty in 2008? Subsequently, the many issues impacting the Black community were ignored and got pushed further and further to the back of the bus, and Black people were pushed to the bottom of the totem pole.

During a time where Black people should have been experiencing

tremendous gains, we saw Black unemployment at its highest point, increased poverty, property loss and home equity loss at record-numbers in the Black community, and the wealth gap tripled between us and Whites.

Sadly, as I see it, the role of Blacks within the Democratic Party has been one that has relegated us to only being good for faithfully voting

**Commentary, Continued on page 10.**



# Walmart to Raise Wages, Provide One-Time Bonus and Expand Benefits for Associates in Louisiana

*The retailer is Investing \$37.4M in Combined Wage and Benefit Changes for Associates in Louisiana*

## Data Staff Report

Recently, Walmart announced plans to increase the starting wage rate for all hourly associates in the U.S. to \$11, expand maternity and parental leave benefits and provide a one-time cash bonus for eligible associates of up to \$1,000. The company is also creating a new benefit to assist associates with adoption expenses. The combined wage and benefit changes will benefit the company's more than one million U.S. hourly associates, including approximately 21,756 Walmart and Sam's Club associates in Louisiana.

"We are building on investments we've been making in associates, in their wages and skills development," said Doug McMillon, Walmart president and CEO. "It's our people who make the difference and we appreciate how they work hard to make every day easier for busy families."



Associates will hear more from their managers in the coming days about details. Broadly, associates in Louisiana are receiving the following benefits:

- A one-time bonus benefiting all eligible full and part-time hourly associates in the U.S. The amount of the bonus will be based on length of service, and associates with at least 20 years will qualify for \$1,000. In Louisiana, approximately 21,756

Walmart and Sam's Club associates are expected to be eligible for the one-time cash bonus, which is estimated to total \$9,527,500.

- An increase in Walmart's starting wage rate to \$11 an hour, effective in the Feb. 17, 2018, pay cycle. The change is in addition to wage increases already planned for many U.S. markets in the coming fiscal year. The increase applies to all hourly associates in the U.S., in-

cluding stores, Sam's Clubs, eCommerce, logistics and Home Office. More than 18,000 Walmart and Sam's Club associates in Louisiana are expected to receive a wage increase, which is estimated to total nearly \$28 million. Walmart's new average hourly wage for full-time associates in Louisiana will be \$14.17.

- An expanded parental and maternity leave policy, providing full-time hourly associates in the U.S.

with 10 weeks of paid maternity leave and six weeks of paid parental leave. Salaried associates will also receive six weeks of paid parental leave.

- Walmart will provide financial assistance to associates adopting a child. The adoption benefit, available to both full-time hourly and salaried associates, will total \$5,000 per child and may be used for expenses such as adoption agency fees, translation fees and legal or court costs.

"Walmart's leadership in reinvesting the company's expected tax reform savings back into its associates will make Louisiana communities stronger," said Dawn Johnson, executive director of the Louisiana Retailers Association. "I am grateful for this leadership, and pleased that Walmart employees and their families across the state will see immediate benefits like pay increases and expanded parental leave."

## Commentary, Continued from page 9.

Democratic that is known for hitting the pavement to rally the voters in

the hood and in the church, while not having a true voice within the Party. That has to change starting in this New Year of 2018. It's extremely clear to me that we as Black people

need to wake up and get more actively involved with politics, because if we don't do it, we will continue getting screwed over by people who don't have our best interest

at heart and who would rather see us "begging" them for scraps from the table, rather than demanding a seat at the table. We can complain all day about how "White" and "not culturally diverse" the Republican Party is, but the one thing I can respect about them is when they choose to come together about the things that are collectively important to them—they come together.

Don't get historical amnesia on me. Lest we forget that there was a time, not long ago, where the Republican Party once advocated for Black people and Black issues, while the Democratic Party served as the home of the Ku Klux Klan and advocated for segregationist policies that violated and went against the Civil Rights of Black people.

As I see it, the Democratic Party is getting more and more fragmented, while the Republican Party remains consistent with their message and their actions, even if it costs them votes or support. They have conviction and stick to their guns for the whole of the Party. At the end of the day, the Republican Party appears to be on one accord publicly, even when there may be discord internally. This has not been the case with the Democratic Party over the last several decades.

As I see it, Blacks cannot be political squatters, sitting with

our hands out, begging for scraps from the table and waiting to be given our next assignment and told our next move.

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick said it best at the last Democratic National Convention, when he told attendees that they needed to get some "backbone."

All I know is this, Black folks had better get some "backbone" and wake up before we find ourselves becoming comfortable with sitting at the back of the bus again, while the Hispanic community and Asian community figure out a way to work collectively together to advance their political and social position in this country. If we find ourselves in the back of the bus, sadly, it won't be the Republicans' fault or the Democrats' fault. This time, it will be no one's fault, but our own.

Dear Black people: We either get engaged or get left behind.

What's it going to be for 2018 and beyond?

Jeffrey L. Boney serves as Associate Editor and is an award-winning journalist for the Houston Forward Times newspaper. Jeffrey has been a frequent contributor on the Nancy Grace Show and Crime & Justice with Ashleigh Banfield and also hosts a national daily radio talk show called "Real Talk with Jeffrey L. Boney." If you would like to request Jeffrey as a speaker, you can reach him at [jboney1@forwardtimes.com](mailto:jboney1@forwardtimes.com). Follow Jeffrey on Twitter @realtalkjunkies.



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# CBC Members Plan State of the Union Protest

*During Members-Only Meeting, Congressional Black Caucus Plans Protest of Trump at State of the Union*

By Lauren Victoria Burke  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

During a lengthy, members-only meeting on Capitol Hill on January 19, members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) discussed various options to protest the current President of the United States. Their protest plans centered around the annual State of the Union address.

President Donald Trump's second State of the Union address is scheduled for January 30.

The meeting the CBC held to talk over State of the Union protest plans occurred only hours after 66 members of the House voted to act on impeaching the President. That effort was led once again by Black Caucus member Rep. Al Green (D-Texas). Rep. Green's second impeachment try failed 355-66. Three Democrats voted "present."

Weeks after Donald Trump reportedly called Haiti, El Salvador and the continent of Africa "shit-hole countries" during a meeting on immigration with members of Congress in the Oval Office, many members have had it.

CBC members who attended the discussion confirmed that several options of protesting President Trump were discussed including walking out, wearing African themed garb and even not showing up to the State of the Union at all. The more vocal members included Reps. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.), Greg Meeks (D-N.Y.) and Frederica Wilson (D-Fla.).

During an interview with BuzzFeed on January 17, days before



CBC members plan to protest the president's State of the Union address. (Freddie Allen/AMG/NNPA)

the meeting, Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Cedric Richmond (D-La.) mentioned the CBC might hold its own State of the Union.

"We will...discuss how we want to respond to the president's State of the Union. We could go, we could go and walk out, we could go and

hold up fists...or we could not go, or we could hold our own 'State of the Union,'" Richmond said.

A few Black Caucus members have already stated that they will not attend the president's State of the Union address. They include Reps. John Lewis (D-Ga.), Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) and Frederica

Wilson (D-Fla.).

Some CBC members are concerned about Congress' largest caucus not being unified in protest, whatever form the protest may take. Other members wanted to make sure serious issues are highlighted and expressed concerns about the protest taking attention away from serious policy discussion. But in the age of former reality TV star turned President Donald Trump, others say that the best response is to fight fire with fire.

With protests in the air and in the streets around the first anniversary of the start of the Trump presidency, the timing of any protest the CBC may undertake on the night of the State of the Union is likely to receive serious media attention.

Regarding Rep. Green's impeachment attempts, which House leadership is in opposition of, Green pointed out that Trump, "has by his statements brought the high office of president of the United States in contempt, ridicule, disgrace and disrepute; has sown discord among the people of the United States; has demonstrated that he is unfit to be president; and has betrayed his trust as president of the United States to the manifest injury of the people of the United States and has committed a high misdemeanor in office."

Rep. Green's form of protest was a legislative one. On the night of the State of the Union, we are likely to see a more theatrical display.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist, political analyst and contributor to the NNPA Newswire and BlackPressUSA.com. She can be reached by email at [LBurke007@gmail.com](mailto:LBurke007@gmail.com) and on Twitter at [@LVBurke](https://twitter.com/LVBurke).

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