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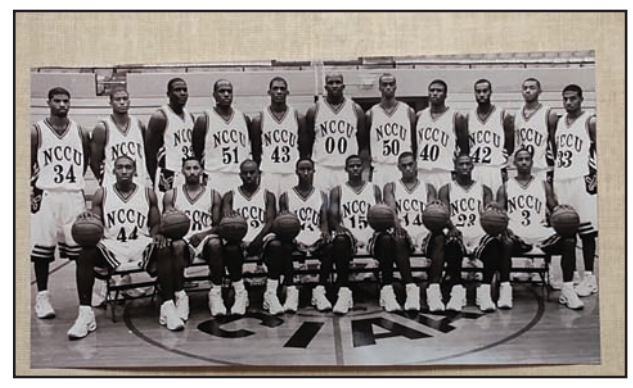
**Former North Carolina Central coach Greg Jackson was honored for his 30th anniversary.**



# Feds urge schools to provide COVID-19 shots, info for kids

By Zeke Miller

*THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is encouraging local school districts to host clinics to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to kids and information to parents on the benefits of the shots as the White House looks to speedily provide vaccines to those ages 5 to 11.

First lady Jill Biden and Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy visited the Franklin Sherman Elementary School in McLean, Virginia, on Monday to launch a nationwide campaign to promote child vaccinations. The school was the first to administer the polio vaccine in 1954. The visit came just days after federal regulators recommended the COVID-19 vaccine for the age group. The White House says the first lady will visit pediatric vaccination clinics across the country over the coming weeks to encourage the shots.

"The vaccine is the best way to protect your children against COVID-19," she told parents in the school's cafeteria, after touring a clinic in the gymnasium that vaccinated 260 students. "It's

Please see **COVID/2A**

# Nine to receive NC's highest award

*STAFF REPORTS*

RALEIGH – The state's highest civilian honor, the North Carolina Award, will be presented to nine distinguished North Carolinians Nov. 18, at the North Carolina Museum of Art. Governor Roy Cooper will present the award.

The 2020 honorees are Dr. Ralph S. Baric, Dr. Francis S. Collins and Dr. Kizzmekia S. Corbett. All will receive the North Carolina Award for science in recognition of their work to develop treatments and vaccines for COVID-19. The 2021 honorees are Dudley E. Flood for public service, David Holt for fine arts, Maria F. Spaulding for public service, André Leon Talley for literature, Timothy B. Tyson for literature and Blake S. Wilson for science.

"Through their extraordinary accomplishments, these individuals have enriched North Carolina and our nation," said Reid Wilson, secretary of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. "Each of them has enhanced the lives of North Carolinians through their lasting achievements in the arts, sciences and public service."

**2020 Award Recipients:**

* Baric has spent the past three decades as a world leader in the study of coronaviruses and now his research is aiding in the fight against COVID-19. Baric's research pioneered COVID-19 treatments, including the drugs remdesivir and molnupiravir, and tested the efficacy and safety of vaccines to prevent the disease. His research group also helped to develop life-saving therapeutic antibody treatments and vaccines that prevent COVID-19 infections.

* Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, has pioneered genetics research and discovered genes associated with many diseases. He recently announced his departure from the NIH after 12 years. He was appointed director in 2009 by President Barack Obama and was asked to remain in that post by presidents Trump and Biden.

* Corbett is a viral immunologist who earned a Ph.D. in microbiology and immunology from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2014. She recently joined Harvard University. Corbett worked on a vaccine to protect people from COVID-19 almost from the beginning of the pandemic in 2019. It was reported that it took a mere 66 days for her team, which partnered with the

Plase see **AWARDS/2A**

KYLIE MARSH

**Durham County Commissioner Nida Allam announces her candidacy for U.S. Senate in downtown Durham.**

# NC's first Muslim female official looks toward Senate seat

By Kylie Marsh

*CORRESPONDENT*

DURHAM – Durham County Commissioner Nida Allam, the first Muslim woman elected to public office in North Carolina, announced her candidacy for the 2022 congressional ticket on Monday. "It's time to take this fight to the federal level," Allam said to a small crowd of diverse and young people in downtown Durham.

Among her platform priorities are raising the federal minimum wage to $15, expanding Medicaid, and pushing forward the Green New Deal. Allam also supports making the path to citizenship easier for immigrants and protecting workers' rights to form a union.

Allam voted to raise Durham County's minimum wage to $15 as county commissioner and promises to bring the fight to the federal level. She says that $15 is "not enough" in Durham, where the "actual living wage is $23 per hour."

"Working families in North Carolina need a representative who will be bold and fight for their interests, not the interests of corporations," she said to cheers.

Allam's political career began after the murder of three of her close friends – UNC students Deah Shaddy Barakat, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha and Razan Abu-Salha, who were shot in Chapel Hill in 2015. Allam says the crime was passed off as a "parking dispute," and that North Carolina "does not have adequate hate crime protections."

Allam has since served as the third vice chair for the North Carolina Democratic Party and chair of Durham Mayor Steve Schewel's Council for Women. She also was a political director for Bernie Sanders' campaign, showing her lean toward the progressive.

Allam is of a younger generation than more experienced Democrats but says that lived experience is worthwhile. "The average age of this district is 36," she said. "We have Democrats in Congress right now in safe blue seats who are holding back President Biden's agenda."

Older Democrats, like Biden, tend to lean more moderate. In debate about Biden's Build Back Better Act, the infrastructure bill at the

Please see **SENATE/2A**

# NC can do better with teacher diversity, experts say

By Greg Childress

*THE POLICY WATCH*

**McAdoo**

Stacey McAdoo always knew that she was gifted. The 2019 Arkansas teacher of the year's mother had been telling her so her whole life. But McAdoo's talents were either ignored or overlooked by teachers in her Little Rock, Arkansas, schools.

That changed in seventh grade when she was assigned to her first Black teacher, Mrs. Anderson. The year was 1988. "Despite being above grade level in most subjects, I was never officially flagged as a GT [gifted and talented] student until her," McAdoo told attendees of the State Board of Education's biannual retreat. McAdoo was the featured speaker for a session focusing on state and national models to encourage more people to go into teaching and to diversify the teaching workforce.

WE ARE TEACHERS

Being flagged as gifted and talented was bittersweet for McAdoo. She was quickly moved to an advanced English class, leaving behind the first Black teacher she'd had. After that, McAdoo said she only had a handful of Black teachers. "I'm lucky," she said. "My brother never had a single same gender, same race educator his entire educational career."

McAdoo is now the Arkansas director of Teach Plus, a national nonprofit that works to empower teachers to lead improvements in education policy and practice. She said the experience with her first Black teacher is consistent with what the research says about the benefits and impact Black teachers can have on African American students. "Black edu-

Please see **TEACHERS/2A**

REPORT

# Record debt drowns HBCU students

By Charlene Crowell

*SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE*

As the cost of a college education continues to rise, an estimated 45 million consumers collectively owe a record $1.7 trillion in student debt, according to the Federal Reserve – a $905 billion increase in just the past decade.

For Black America, the struggle to gain a college education is an even more daunting challenge. While historically Black colleges and universities continue to provide value-priced higher education compared to non-HBCU institutions, financing college often means students and families alike taking on loans that can take decades to retire.

An Oct. 28 virtual panel of student debt experts and cancellation advocates discussed how the ongoing student debt crisis has generally impacted Black borrowers nationwide, and particularly at HBCUs. Co-convened by the United Negro College Fund and the Center for Responsible Lending, and funded by a grant from the Lumina Foundation, the forum emphasized the need for across-the-board student loan cancellation, as well as increased HBCU funding.

"We were taught early on if you go to college, you do well, you can have a great life, only to find ourselves in a debt cycle that many will not be able to get out of," said Derrick Johnson, a panel participant and NAACP president. "Almost half of Black graduates owe more on their undergraduate student loans four years after graduation than they did when they received their diplomas."

For the estimated 300,000 HBCU students attending one of the 101 accredited campuses spread across 19 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands, these funds help but do not fulfill the escalating costs of securing a college degree. Among these students, 80% are Black, 70% are from low-income families and 41% are the first generation of their family to attend college, according to UNCF. As a result, many HBCU students and their parents often need a combination of student loans, Pell Grants, and jobs to offset limited family contributions to college educations.

As students increase job hours as part of financial aid packages, the amount of time required to complete a traditional four-year degree is also increasing. Today, most students (60%) earn their baccalaureate degrees in six years. Only 39% graduate in the traditional four

Please see **DEBT/2A**

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# NC's first Muslim female to run for U.S. Senate

Continued from page 1A

center of his political campaign, progressives were disappointed that many of its key promises were taken out. Allam would have supported it.

North Carolina has redrawn its congressional districts, but lawsuits are pending.

Allam said her colleagues are excited for her campaign and will soon roll out endorsements. She is also faithful in the progressive agenda for the future of Durham. "All of us at the city and county level are ready to get to work for the people of Durham and that's what's gonna be most important," she said.

Since her announcement, Allam has raised over $115,000, with 40% coming from within NC-06. No money has come from corporate PACs her press release states.

COURTESY

Dr. Kizzmekia S. Corbett helped discover the COVID-19 vaccine.

# 9 to receive North Carolina's highest honor

Continued from page 1A

biotechnology company Moderna, to produce a vaccine that entered its Phase 1 clinical trial. Her team's research built on previous coronavirus studies which allowed for a quick turnaround.

**2021 Award Recipients:**

* Flood is a former educator and administrator in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction who was instrumental in desegregating North Carolina schools. During his time at the NCDPI, Flood, along with Gene Causby, was tasked with helping local communities desegregate their schools. Flood spent 21 years at the NCDPI helping to create a state where all students could learn.

* Award-winning musician and storyteller, Holt has spent more than 50 years collecting and performing the traditional music of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains. In 1975, he founded and directed the Appalachian Music Program at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina.

* Spaulding honed her reputation as a strong and progressive leader during nearly 40 years of combined work in state and local government. Spaulding is the former Deputy Secretary of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and the Assistant Secretary for the former Department of Natural Resources and Community Development. She also served as executive director of Wake County Human Services. In 2000, she co-founded The Healing Place, now Healing Transitions, a nonprofit recovery and rehabilitation facility in Raleigh.

* Talley cultivated his love of fashion and fashion magazines early in life and has lived by the mantra that style transcends race, class and time. Growing up in Durham, he nourished his style after discovering fashion magazines at the library as a teenager. Talley's career began with a volunteer position at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1974 with then-Vogue editor Diana Vreeland. He was recently awarded de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France, which recognizes artists and writers, as well as others who have contributed significantly to the arts in France.

* Tyson specializes in the issues of culture, religion and race associated with the civil rights movement, both in his award-winning books and in the classroom where he teaches. His unflinching look at the past helps humanity to strive towards a better, more equitable future.

* Wilson is one of the principal developers of the cochlear implant, a device that has restored hearing to more than a million people around the world. He started his career as a research engineer at Research Triangle Institute in 1974, where he began work in 1977 on the seemingly impossible problem of restoring nearly normal hearing to deaf people through electrical stimulation of the auditory nerve. He is responsible for the development of the "continuous interleaved sampling" (CIS) system used in modern cochlear implants.

# N Carolina can do better with teacher diversity

Continued from page 1A

cators typically refer more students of color into gifted and talented programs than their [white] counterparts do, and they are generally less likely to refer children for disciplinary reasons or to special education," McAdoo said.

In 2018, researchers from Johns Hopkins and American University found that having one Black teacher in elementary schools makes children more likely to graduate high school and significantly more likely to attend college. Discussions about teacher diversity were weaved throughout the two-day retreat that focused on strategies to eliminate opportunity gaps and to ensure the state's 1.5 million students have an opportunity to receive a sound basic education as required under North Carolina's Constitution.

Denise Forte, the interim CEO at The Education Trust, a national research and advocacy nonprofit organization working to close opportunity gaps for students of color and low-income households, said a racially and culturally diverse teacher workforce benefits all children. "It's especially important for students of color who can thrive in classrooms led by teachers who share their racial and cultural background," Forte said during her closing remarks. "Yet, North Carolina, like many states, has made little progress in closing this diversity gap."

In North Carolina, 53% of the state's public school children were nonwhite in the 2018-19 school year. Meanwhile, just 21% of teachers were nonwhite, although that is a 4% increase from 2005-06. Those numbers closely mirror national statistics that show 50% of U.S. students identify as persons of color, while more than 80% of the nation's public school teachers identify as white.

North Carolina recently added three universities that serve predominantly nonwhite students to partner with the North Carolina Teaching Fellows program in hopes of increasing the number of students of color who train to become teachers. The Teaching Fellows Commission selected Fayetteville State University, North Carolina A&T State University and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke to join five predominately white colleges and universities already offering the program.

Winston-Salem State Provost Anthony Graham, also chairman of the Gov. Roy Cooper's DRIVE Task Force, spent more than a year examining ways to increase teacher diversity in North Carolina. He told the State Board of Education a year ago that the benefits of having more teachers of color include improvements in reading and math scores for all students. In addition, a diverse teacher workforce can introduce more culturally relevant practices that affirm students' racial and ethnic identities, reduce dropout rates for Black students, and generate more interest in attending college for students of color.

McAdoo said the research is clear that students of color perform better when they have teachers who look like them. "Each of us knows there's substantial evidence that shows all students, and in particular students of color, do better when they have diverse teachers," she said.

"So, the million-dollar question is why are we having such a hard time recruiting them and why are they leaving the workforce at a higher rate than white teachers?"

# Feds urge COVID-19 shots for kids 5-11 years

Continued from page 1A

been thoroughly reviewed and rigorously tested. It's safe. It's free. And it's available for every child in this country, 5 and up."

At the same time, Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra and Education Secretary Miguel Cardona are sending a letter to school districts across the country calling on them to organize vaccine clinics for their newly eligible students. The officials are reminding school districts that they can tap into billions of dollars in federal coronavirus relief money to support pediatric vaccination efforts.

The Biden administration is providing local school districts with tools to help schools partner with pharmacies to administer shots. And it's asking schools to share information on the benefits of vaccines and details about the vaccination process with parents, to counter disinformation surrounding the shots.

The White House is encouraging schools to host community conversations and share fact sheets on the vaccines and is working with the American Academy of Pediatrics to partner local physicians with schools aiming to share science-based information about the shots. "Parenthood and worrying go hand-in-hand; it's just what we do," the first lady told parents. "So, I can't promise you that the dangers of the world will become any less frightening. Just wait until your kids start driving! But with this vaccine, we can take away at least one of those worries. A big one."

About 28 million kids ages 5 to 11 are newly eligible for shots now that the Pfizer vaccine is approved for the age group. The White House says the federal government has procured enough of the two-dose vaccine for all of them.

# Record student debt drowns HBCU borrowers

Continued from page 1A

years. And the longer it takes to graduate, the number of loans and their indebtedness increase as well.

Pell Grants, a needs-based federal program designed to serve low-income students and their families, has also failed to keep pace with rising college costs. The maximum annual Pell Grant award for the 2020-21 school year is $6,345. Due to the program's sliding scale that takes family income, size, and contributions into account, this aid can be as low as $639. In the 2019-20 academic year, approximately 6.9 million students received a Pell Grant that averaged $4,117.

While this amount of financial assistance is helpful, the actual annual cost of college surpasses the financial capabilities of most Black Americans. For the 2020-21 academic year, the annual average cost of attending a moderately-priced, in-state, public four-year institution is $26,820.

For out-of-state students attending the same college, the annual cost jumps to $43,280, and the average cost of attending a private, four-year college is even higher at $54,880.

By comparison, the annual average cost of attending an HBCU is 28% less than that of a non-HBCU institution, according to UNCF. Average public HBCU tuition and fees for the same academic year are $7,195 for state residents and $14,966 for out-of-state students. At private HBCUs, like Howard University, Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, annual costs run higher, but are still less than $30,000.

In response to these and other educational concerns, a growing chorus of stakeholders are calling for federal student loan forgiveness to alleviate decades-long debt and give all college graduates the opportunity to build wealth.

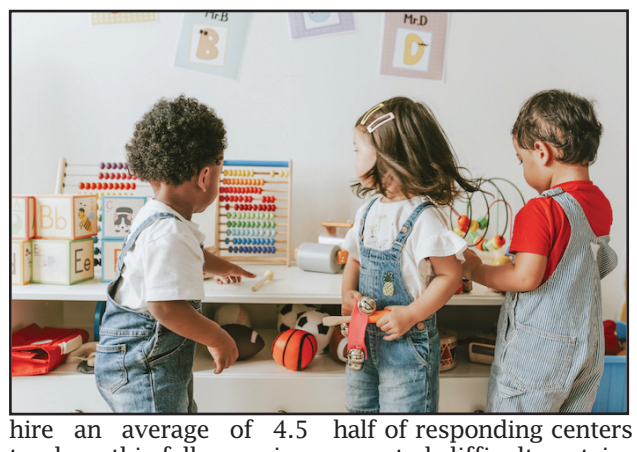
Graduates from many HBCUs earn starting salaries in excess of $50,000. Further, for STEM graduates, starting salaries can bring more than $60,000. At face value, these salaries seem sufficient to begin a career – until the cost of student loan repayment takes several hundred dollars each month away from net earnings.

"HBCUs are known for their culture, homecomings, but, more importantly, they produce the world's greatest and top black doctors, lawyers, engineers, and STEM graduates," said Jaylon Herbin, panel moderator and a CRL outreach associate. "Without our HBCUs, Black America would not be what it is today. We must continue to leverage the support and funding for HBCUs, so that the graduates that they produce are not burdened by student debt."

*Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.*

# North Carolina child care centers search for teachers

By Liz Bell
*EDUCATIONNC*



A bill working its way through Congress would infuse early care and education programs with unprecedented levels of federal funding. Meanwhile, programs are struggling to hire and retain teachers. North Carolina child care centers were searching for an average of 4.5 teachers in September, found a survey from the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council.

The funding in the Build Back Better Act would be a game-changer for young children, families, and teachers, said Dan Wuori, senior director of early learning at The Hunt Institute. It would ensure child care teachers are making livable wages and establish pay parity between early childhood teachers and elementary teachers with similar credentials. "On the presumption that North Carolina and other states are going to move forward and that this is passed, it's going to fundamentally reshape what it means to be a part of this profession," Wuori said.

However, the act is not yet passed, and the particulars of the bill are in flux. The implementation of the funding would also leave lots of decisions up to states and localities. "States are definitely going to need to give consideration to how to beef up their early childhood workforce, how to upskill existing teachers, how to bring new caregivers into the workforce," Wuori said.

Child care centers lost an average of 2.5 teachers from March 2020 to September 2021, with their teaching staffs dropping from an average of 11.5 to nine teachers over the time period.

Providers were trying to hire an average of 4.5 teachers this fall, meaning they were looking to expand the size of their pre-pandemic teaching staffs. This might be because of a need for fewer children per classroom due to pandemic distancing, said Marsha Basloe, president of the Child Care Services Association, which serves as CCR&R agency for nine counties.

Centers who responded to the survey were serving an average of seven fewer children than they did before the pandemic. Sixty-four percent of centers were serving fewer children in September 2021 than in March 2020. The percentage of centers serving 50 or more children dropped from 53% to 44%. One-third of centers reported having to close classrooms with little notice to parents due to staffing challenges.

Eighty-three percent of responding centers said it was more difficult to recruit lead and assistant teachers now than before the pandemic. Eighty-one percent said they receive fewer applications, and 78% said it's harder to find teachers with appropriate higher education credentials for the job. Three-fourths of centers were hiring lead or assistant teachers, and 53% were hiring both. Out of those who were hiring, they were looking for about six teachers on average. About half of responding centers reported difficulty retaining lead teachers, and 55% had challenges retaining assistant teachers.

Providers are trying to attract teachers at a time when the industry is losing teachers to lower-stress jobs, often with better pay, like retail and grocery stores. Almost 60% of centers said they have offered higher wages than before the pandemic. And half of centers agreed that their center was "offering wages comparable to those being offered by grocery stores and retailers such as Walmart, Target, Amazon and other similar employees."

In the short-term, many programs are waiting for stabilization grants to keep their doors open and attract teachers. The grants, funded by the federal American Rescue Plan, will start this month and provide quarterly financial support to child care programs, including home-based providers, over the next 18 months. The state's Division of Child Development and Early Education is allocating more funds to providers who opt in to raising their staff's pay and benefits. "We are hopeful that stabilization funds… begin to stabilize the staff, but it's not the answer," Basloe said. "These are just stabilization funds. They're not going to be the funding that we need to transform the system."

# Women on the court: The journey is long

By Ava Pukatch
*UNC MEDIA HUB*

AVA PUKATCH

**Anita Earls is one of three women on the N.C. Supreme Court.**

It's been 40 years since the first woman – Sandra Day O'Connor – was nominated to the United States Supreme Court. But, 20 years prior, the first woman was appointed to the North Carolina Supreme Court. While more women have served on the North Carolina Supreme Court, there are still barriers to entry.

Anita Earls, one of three female justices of the seven member North Carolina Supreme Court, still remembers the days when she had to prove she belonged in the courtroom. She was an attorney – preparing to argue a case in a part of North Carolina where she wasn't well-known. But when she arrived, people in the courthouse didn't believe that.

"The assumption was that I was a court reporter. I had to, like, really insist, no, I'm an attorney, and I'm here to represent a client," Earls said.

Even some of those clients have been hesitant to work with her because of her gender. She was a trial lawyer at a time when people traditionally saw women as appropriate to handle things like family law cases, trusts, and estates.

"I've had clients who questioned my ability to be an attorney. You know, 'are you really going to be aggressive for me in the courtroom?' If you're because you're a woman, like literally putting it out there because I'm a woman, they're not sure I can be a good attorney."

She says other clients consciously sought women lawyers out – not because of their abilities but because they thought a woman could do more than a man to influence the jury in their favor.

Earls says attitudes have changed, but women still face challenges in the courtroom. There are more female lawyers. And women now make up 43% of elected positions in the North Carolina judicial branch – including judges, district attorneys and clerks.

But, Earls says they're not always treated the same as men. Studies show that female justices on the U.S. Supreme Court get interrupted three times as often. And Elizabeth White, president of the National Association for Women Judges, says many women have a hard time advancing in the legal profession because it's difficult to balance work and family.

"The other problem is that women have not had good mentors. Sometimes the men don't mentor the women in the way that the men should, but I think that's changing," she said."

Partly because women now are serving as those mentors themselves. Four women have served as North Carolina's chief justice, and there have been nine women who've served on the state Supreme Court. That's compared to 90 men, but it's progress.

Former Chief Justice Cheri Beasley, now running for U.S. Senate, was woman No. 7 and the first Black woman to be chief justice. During her tenure on the Supreme Court, the North Carolina Judicial Branch honored women trailblazers.

"We have one celebration, to celebrate the women who had served on the Court, and we also had a celebration to commemorate the African Americans who had served on the Court. It was really important, I think, because representation really does matter, and you know it matters to have leaders who are diverse," Beasley said.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was once asked about when there would be enough women on the court. She said "when there are nine" – something Earls said could happen when people are judged on their skills not their gender.

"If the top legal minds in the country happened to be nine women great, we would pick them because they're the top legal minds," Earls said.

## REPORT

# NC leads nation in Black prison population

By Nadia Ramlagan
*N.C. NEWS SERVICE*

RALEIGH – A recent report from the Sentencing Project finds North Carolina to be one of 12 states in which more than half the prison population is Black.

Criminal justice reform advocates say barriers to reentry often mean people of color end up back behind bars.

Yolanda Taylor, a former attorney for Legal Aide of North Carolina's Wilson office, explained for the 1 in 4 North Carolinians with criminal records who have served their time, many are unable to financially support themselves and their families.

"And we do see how the majority of our clients are African American people who have had past interactions with the judicial system and are now prevented from obtaining a job or obtaining housing," Taylor explained.

Taylor noted legislation such as the Second Chance Act, signed into law by Gov. Roy Cooper last year, will help more individuals get on their feet after incarceration. Beginning Dec. 1, the law will allow certain misdemeanor and felony charges dismissed in court to be automatically expunged, so individuals will not have to file expungement petitions to remove dismissed charges from their record.

Taylor added the criminal justice system disproportionately impacts the poorest Black and Brown communities. "People earning less than 150% of the poverty level are 15 times more likely to be charged with a felony," Taylor pointed out. "Which, by definition, carries a longer sentence, as we know, than those people earning above that threshold."

The report calls on states to eliminate mandatory sentences and stop arrests and prosecutions for low-level drug offenses.

# Wages up as Americans are encouraged to go back to work

By Christopher Decker
*THE CONVERSATION*

After a lackluster jobs report in September, the latest news on employment gives Americans plenty to cheer about ahead of the holiday season. In total, 531,000 jobs were added in October – outstripping the already optimistic predictions of economists. This caused the unemployment rate to fall to 4.6%.

Americans are returning to offices after a year-and-a-half of Zoom meetings and digital water cooler moments. The pandemic had opened the eyes of many potential workers to the possibility that working from home might be preferable to on-site work. But the jobs report shows that this may be passing. In October, 11.6% of employees worked remotely due to the pandemic, down from 13.2% in the previous month.

Working from home offered flexibility, especially to people who held down two jobs. A lot of people found they could get by with one job, work from home and save money on commuting and child care. The drop in remote working could indicate that some families came to realize that while this worked to cover a shorter-term period during the pandemic, it ate away at household savings, getting to a point where working on site was necessary again.

It also signifies a change of attitude that may explain why employment in the leisure and hospitality sector has bounced back. One possible reason for lower-than-expected job gains in September was that people were hesitant to return to worksites where they would have to mix with people – such as at bars, restaurants and in stores – preferring to spend more time at home.

October's jobs report – which saw strong gains in leisure and hospitality – suggests that peoples' ability to delay returning to work may be coming to an end and potentially that they are more open to returning to on-site jobs, perhaps encouraged by vaccination rates and falling case numbers.

There is some evidence that the "great resignation" – or, more accurately, the great "not taking up low-paid jobs" – era was short-lived and winding down. Many potential workers had seemingly been hesitant to return to lower-paid food service jobs as well as employment in the leisure and hospitality sector due to relative low wages and rigid work schedules. But the latest report shows evidence of increases in wages and salaries.

In October, average hourly earnings increased by 11 cents to $30.96 – continuing the upward trend of recent months. It means that average earnings are almost 5% higher that they were a year ago. Wage increases look set to continue for some time. The latest report shows that labor costs increased 8.3% year-on-year in the third quarter as job opening rates remained pretty high, putting further upward pressure on pay. This is great for workers but does pose a challenge to the Federal Reserve, which must keep inflation in check.

On Nov. 3, the Fed said it would begin scaling down its pandemic-era policy of buying Treasury bonds and other assets, which has the effect of gently reducing the supply of money in the economy. The Fed has also said it might lift interest rates earlier than planned if necessary to tamp down inflation risks. The stronger-than-expected jobs report and increases in employment costs may prompt it to act more quickly. That said, the Fed may still want to tread cautiously here. Supply chain concerns remain and will need to be worked out before central bankers can conclude that overall inflation is more than a short-term issue.

There is no doubt that the October jobs report was encouraging. But public sector employment was down, and that is important. This is largely a result of the pandemic. Retail sales were down significantly in 2020 and, as a result, state budgets are tight; in short, they have suffered from lackluster tax revenue sources. This might make it harder for public sector jobs – in local government and schools – to bounce back as robustly as the rest of the economy.



## BUSINESS BRIEFS

**RALEIGH CHAMBER**

* Nov. 15, 4:30 to 6 p.m. – Business After Hours, Triangle Shooting Academy, 6501 Mount Herman Rd. Register at raleighchamber.org.

* Nov. 16, 8:30 to 11 a.m. – Healthcare Forum, Raleigh Marriott City Center

**DURHAM CHAMBER**

* Nov. 18, 1-2 p.m. – Navigating Your Small Business through Financial Milestones. Register at chapelhilldurham.score.org. Online only.

**LAUNCH WENDELL**

Town of Wendell and Wake Tech have partnered to create LaunchWENDELL to help 10-20 entrepreneurs and small business owners execute a business plan. To learn more, visit www.launchwendell.com.

**EMPLOYMENT**

Our StopShopBuyBlack Market is hiring staff. Apply at ourstopshop.com/bbmhiring.

*Send business briefs to info@triangletribune.com.*

## POLL


# Majority of NC Republican voters back Medicaid expansion

By Nadia Ramlagan
*N.C. NEWS SERVICE*

RALEIGH – More than half of North Carolina Republican voters say they support expanding Medicaid, according to a new poll commissioned by the statewide nonprofit N.C. Child.

The findings come as state lawmakers continue to debate expanding the program that would provide health insurance to an additional 600,000 currently uninsured people.

Paul Shumaker, partner at Strategic Partner Solutions, a public issue management firm based in Raleigh, said support increased once GOP voters learned more about who would be eligible for federal health coverage.

"For example, when Republicans learned that only legal residents would be able to apply for Medicaid – undocumented immigrants would receive no assistance – that support grew to 78% in favor, with only 11.8% opposed," Shumaker reported.

The poll surveyed 600 registered Republican voters in the state Oct. 26-28.

Sen. Phil Berger, R-Eden, president pro-tem of the Senate, recently said he would be willing to consider Medicaid expansion as part of homing in on a state budget deal. Berger had consistently opposed the program in the past. North Carolina remains one of 12 states nationwide that refuse to expand Medicaid.

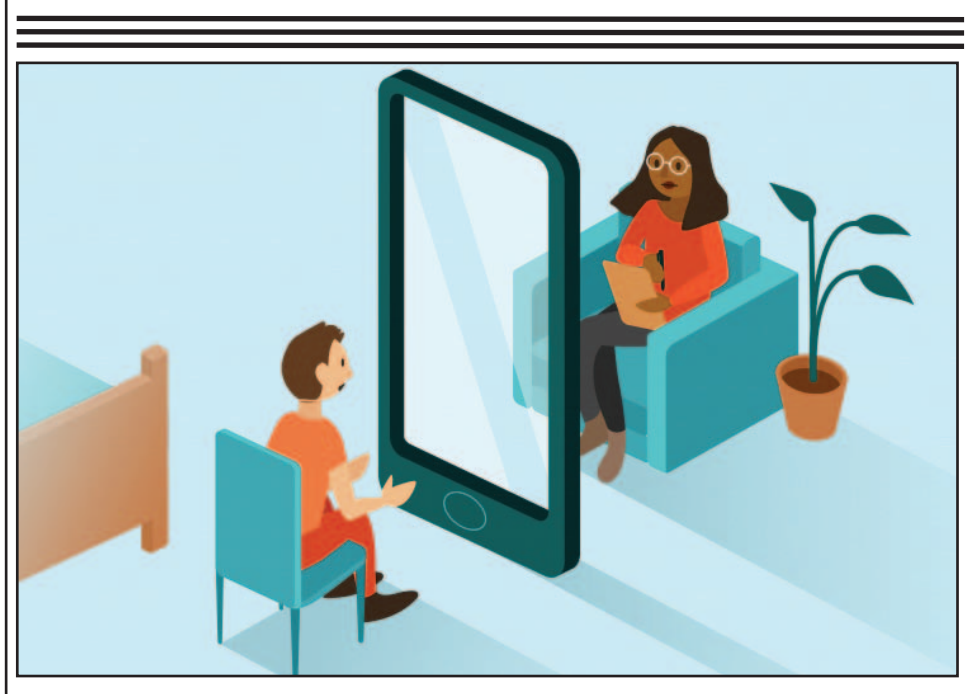
More than 70% of Republicans said they would favor expanding Medicaid if it helped provide coverage to uninsured military veterans, including one out of four veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Shumaker noted increasing veterans' access to health care was heavily supported by those that identified as "very conservative" Republicans. "We have 30,000 veterans in North Carolina, veterans of foreign wars, who currently have health insurance issues, that would qualify for Medicaid expansion," Shumaker pointed out.

North Carolinians working in industries such as hospitality, retail, and construction account for 42% of those working without insurance, and most would be eligible for Medicaid coverage.

Shoemaker added understanding working people would qualify for expanded Medicaid drew the strongest support from poll respondents. "They would have to enroll in a workforce-preparedness development program, and the support there, with that knowledge, grew to 76.6%, with only 10.3% opposed," Shoemaker explained.

More than 70% of Republicans said they would favor expansion after learning Medicaid coverage would help people get the medication and treatment they need for chronic conditions such as diabetes and cancer.



# Virtual therapy may help, but isn't for everyone

By Heidi Perez-Moreno
*UNC MEDIA HUB*

Maddie Ellis was crying in her bedroom. Last fall, she was juggling her responsibilities as a full time UNC student and as the university editor for the Daily Tar Heel. It was too much.

"I just was really stressed all the time and super burnt out," Ellis said. "I really struggled to find joy in each day. I was really just not doing well."

Many days, she was terrified of the idea of making a mistake, and she felt as if she were a failure. The stress was dragging down her personality and her health. She was finding it harder to control her negative emotions. She grew lethargic, which is not her style.

A friend Facetimed her when she was crying. At one point, the friend said, "I've never been more worried about someone than I am about you." Ellis' mother said something similar, leading Ellis to seek professional help. "Maybe if my mom is saying it, maybe it's time," she said.

Ellis raised the volume on the television and climbed into an empty bathtub, a place most isolated from her two roommates. She dialed the UNC-Chapel Hill's Counseling and Psychological Services' 24/7 hotline and made an appointment for a Zoom therapy session. "I'm seeking professional help for something that I've always covered up and buried, and never really sought help for," Ellis said.

Since the start of the pandemic, more and more students have used virtual therapy as a way to seek mental health and wellness care. The university's CAPS program — a popular resource for UNC students — shifted to exclusively provide virtual counseling services after concerns of COVID-19 transmission last year. Transitioning services from in-person to Zoom served as a way to continue offering services to UNC students at a time when many were exhausted and burned out from the stress of a remote semester. Around the same time, classes shifted to remote, and most would stay like that for another year or so.

Please see **THERAPY/5A**

# Black voters showed up for Republicans in Virginia and elsewhere

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA NEWSWIRE

During the decisive victories scored by Republicans on Election Day, significant shifts occurred among crucial voting groups, which has only added to the misery of Democrats.

Notably, Black voters showed up for Republicans in Virginia and elsewhere.

The GOP candidate who defeated heavily favorite Democrat Terry McAuliffe for governor, Glenn Youngkin, garnered 13% of the Black vote and did better overall than former President Donald Trump in every county.

In Virginia's Lt. Governor's race, Republican Winsome Sears (above) earned 17% of the Black vote in her victory against Democrat Hala Ayala – both are women of color.

While Democrats held on in New Jersey, with Gov. Phil Murphy retaining his seat by winning by a razor-thin margin against Republican Jack Ciattarelli, the GOP still made significant gains in the Garden State. Overall, Republicans flipped four New Jersey counties.

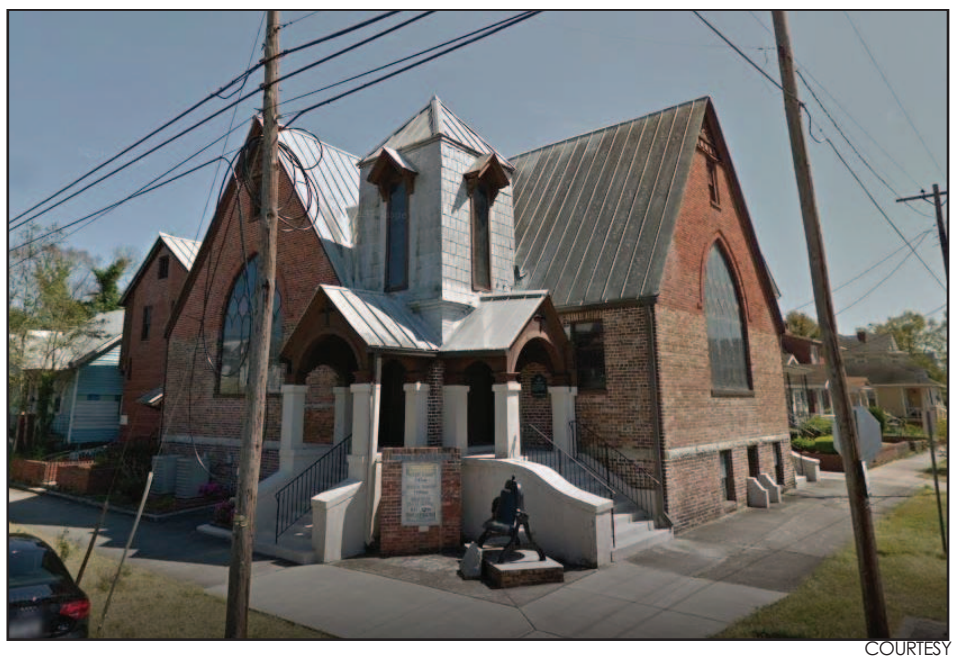
While some point out that the electorate in Virginia was older and whiter than last year's presidential election, many said the inroads the GOP made this year are unmistakable. While Black voters didn't turn out this month as they did for the 2020 presidential election, the progress made by Republicans could also be a significant hint for what lies ahead in the 2022 midterm elections.

"Congratulations to all of the Black Republican candidates who made history Tuesday night winning their statewide and local elections across the country," RNC National Spokesman Paris Dennard stated. "Republican trailblazer Winsome Sears defied the odds to become the first Black woman elected to serve as Virginia's Lieutenant Governor. On the local level, Black Republicans like A.C. Cordoza, Donald Douglas and Jalen Johnson highlight the growth and diversity of the GOP at all levels."

With Youngkin's victory, Denard noted that Black Virginians have a new governor "that supports school choice and is committed to supporting HBCUs in his budgets.

"The RNC remains committed to expanding our party, supporting our Black Republican leaders, and having meaningful engagement through our RNC Black Community Centers," Denard wrote.

# Wilmington pastor honored with historical marker



COURTESY

**A pastor who wrote a key eyewitness account of the 1898 Wilmington Coup soon will be recognized with a new North Carolina highway historical marker in Wilmington. The marker honoring the Rev. J. Allen Kirk, who was a leader in the African American community in the port city, was unveiled Nov. 10 on the anniversary of the coup. Kirk was pastor of the prominent Central Baptist Church, now known as Central Baptist Missionary Church, the oldest African American church in Wilmington.**

**Kirk published a pamphlet, "A Statement of Facts Concerning the Bloody Riot in Wilmington, N.C.," after escaping a mob led by Alfred Moore Waddell, a former Confederate officer and U.S. congressman. Waddell, in the days preceding the election of 1898, called for the removal of the Republicans and Populists then in power in Wilmington. Kirk recounted that day's events and his personal escape from violence.**

# Virtual therapy may help, but isn't for everyone

Continued from page 4A

"Our No. 1 priority at CAPS is the mental health and overall well-being of our students," CAPS Associate and Clinical Director Avery Cook said. "We serve as a possible first step in helping students identify the level of care they need. We then guide them through the process of getting that care, whether it's within CAPS or through an outside provider."

The virtual services aren't the same as in-person counseling. Ellis didn't feel comfortable during her sessions of virtual therapy because the in-person human connection was missing. "I feel like you miss some of the body language cues and you miss so much of that human interaction," she said.

Symptoms of moderate to severe depression among first-year students increased from 21.5% prior to COVID-19 to 31.7% four months into the pandemic, according to research from the Carolina Population Center and the UNC School of Medicine. Within the same time, the prevalence of moderate to severe anxiety went from 18.1% to 25.3% within the same time span.

Black students, in addition to those from gender and sexual minorities, were hit hardest by the pandemic, the research showed.

Matthew Mills, a licensed clinical social worker and professor at UNC-Charlotte, isn't a fan of virtual therapy services. "If I had to choose between the two, I would definitely choose an in-person setting," Mills said. "I think the vibe from most clinicians is trying to figure out how we do our work in a virtual setting effectively when some of us don't operate in our best fields — how do we adapt."

But he understands some of the benefits of virtual therapy, including being more accessible to those who can't find transportation to see a counselor in-person or have a busy schedule.

In addition, many of his colleagues are immunocompromised, and so virtual therapy is the safest route to doing their jobs. "It's here to stay. I don't see it going anywhere," Mills said. "I think it definitely opens a new door."

# It's (already) beginning to look a lot like Christmas

By David Jeremiah
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

EL CAJON, Calif. – One snowy day in the 1940s, Robert White was working as a bellhop in the Grand Hotel in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, when a stranger showed up. The man was a songwriter needing peace and quiet. The Grand Hotel seemed the perfect spot. It was decorated for Christmas, and across the street, Frost Park was a winter wonderland with a beautiful Christmas tree of its own. The streets were bedecked for the season, and the local five-and-dime overflowed with candy canes.

The man left after a few days, and a couple of years later a popular new Christmas song hit the charts: "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas." Meredith Willson, the Broadway composer of The Music Man, wrote of a "tree in the Grand Hotel" and "one in the park as well, the sturdy kind that doesn't mind the snow."

The problem is, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas earlier and earlier. The Christmas season comes too soon for me now. Our accelerated calendar isn't driven by a spiritual emphasis but by economic factors. Christmas is the peak season for retailers. Economists have coined a term "Christmas Creep" for the way retailers keep moving up the holiday season.

I remember when we didn't even think of Christmas tidings until December. Then came Black Friday. Then stores began opening on Thanksgiving. Now Hallmark Channel's "Countdown to Christmas" movie schedule begins in October. Large stores begin their promotions in September, and theme parks begin putting up decorations in August. All this leaves a lot of room for Christmas fatigue.

It's time to slow down a little so we can enjoy Christmas and rediscover its meaning. It wouldn't hurt us to tap the brakes and relish the trip. By giving it some forethought, we can bypass the Christmas frenzy.

Consider this: Our Heavenly Father planned every detail of the first Christmas in advance, and He recorded His plans in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. The Christ Child arrived right on schedule according to the foreknowledge of the Father. The Bible says, "He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20). If God planned the first Christmas in advance, shouldn't we follow His example and do some planning of our own?

Acts 20:28 says, "Take heed to yourselves." Christmas can be a wonderful time of worship and witness, but we have to see ourselves and our circumstances clearly. We can't lose ourselves in the chaos; we need to take heed to ourselves and to those for whom we're responsible.

A is for Attitude. This begins with a worshipful attitude. Matthew 2:11 says of the Magi, "When they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him."

Worship involves being still and knowing He is God. It includes exulting in the wonder of who He is and expressing our wonder in praise and prayer. Perhaps a little downsizing of our plans is in order. I read about a man who had lit up his lawn with thousands of lights for a quarter century. Cars lined up for blocks to see the sight. But now he's calling it quits. His nervous system can't keep up with the pressure. He sold all his equipment – thousands of lights, signs, sleighs, animated figures, village houses, and more – and used the money to offset the medical bills caused by the stress of the production.

B is for Boundaries. Scaling back on the externals of the season enables us to set boundaries, to budget our time and money, and to say "No" when necessary. Why go to every party? Why attend every function? Why volunteer for every opportunity? I'm not suggesting we become reclusive. Don't cut out all your celebrations or bypass every opportunity for sharing Christmas cheer with those around you. But I think you'll agree that the better moments of Christmas are often the quieter ones.

While you're at it, set some financial boundaries, too. A simple gift lovingly given is just as wonderful as an expensive one. Proverbs 17:1 says, "Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife."

The joy of our Christmas isn't found in more and more presents but in the presence of more and more peace.