

**BLACK
BY
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VIRGINIAN

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Black Policy Day Edition, February 24, 2026, Black History Month Alive

Fifth Annual
Black Policy Day
2026

**Free the
Opinion
Editorial**

This issue belongs to the
voices shaping West Virginia
in real time



FIFTH ANNUAL
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**MEET
JESSICA
MARTIN**

Jessica A. Martin: "Fancy" With a Following
How a Charleston content creator turns positivity into community influence
Read more about West Virginia's growing creator economy inside.

BLACK BY GOD THE WEST VIRGINIAN

Publisher’s Note

FREE THE OP-ED

For Black West Virginians, writing op-eds and letters to the editor is not optional — it is civic power.

Op-eds shape public debate. They influence policy. They document what we believe in real time. They become part of the historical record.

And yet too many of our strongest voices are locked behind paywalls.

Let me say it plainly:

When we have to read your powerful opinion pieces through screenshots, because the original article requires a subscription, ideas that are meant to serve our communities are not being served due to a lack of accessibility.

For generations, leaders like Rev. Matthew Watts, Rev. Ronald English, and David Fryson wrote hundreds of op-eds and letters that shaped conversation across this state. Much of that writing now sits behind digital barriers. Their words contain advocacy, theology, strategy, and lived experience. They deserve to be read without restriction.

At Black By God, we publish op-eds that are not behind a paywall.

We believe Black thought in Appalachia should be

accessible — not filtered by subscription models that limit who can engage. When you publish with us, your work can be shared freely, cited openly, and archived in a way that keeps it available to the people it was written for.

We understand the media ecosystem. Publishing in legacy outlets may bring a different kind of visibility, feedback, or institutional recognition. There are strategic reasons people choose those spaces, and we respect that.

But when access matters most — when you want your ideas to circulate widely in the community — Black By God is here as a viable platform.

We are building something intentional: a living archive of Black West Virginian thought leadership that will be preserved in the archive (JSTOR), with accessibility.

So write. And consider where it lives.

Free the op-ed.

— Crystal Good
Founder & Publisher
Black By God: The
West Virginian



February 24, 2026

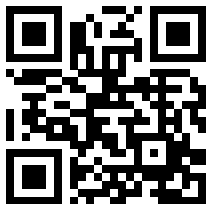
Published by Black By God, LLC
BlackByGod.org
Publisher and Editor: Crystal Good

Graphic Design:
Alexander Vance
AlexandersArts.com

Cover Photo:
Jessica Martin in front of the WV
Capital building at the 2025 Black
Policy Day Event

Printed in Beckley, West Virginia
by The Register-Herald

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Telling Our Stories on Purpose: Meet Traci Phillips



For Traci Phillips, journalism has never just been about headlines — it’s about responsibility. As Reporter and Managing Editor for Black By God: The West Virginian, Phillips helps shape how Black stories are told across the Mountain State. From Black Policy Day coverage at the Capitol to spotlighting entrepreneurs, farmers, artists, farmers, and everyday community leaders, her work centers voices too often left out of traditional narratives. Phillips brings more than two decades of media experience to BBG. Before focusing her work fully on Black Appalachian storytelling, she built a strong foundation in both national and local newsrooms. She worked as Executive Producer for Radio One’s national Black talk network on XM Satellite Radio, contributed reporting to CBS NewsPath (B.E.T. Nightly News), and supported congressional coverage at C-SPAN. Her commitment to public information also led her into public affairs roles with the State of West Virginia and CAMC (Charleston Area Medical Center), where she produced statewide programming, coordinated press efforts, and helped translate complex healthcare and policy issues for broader audiences. Following her time at CAMC, Phillips served as News Editor at WCHS-TV in Charleston, where she worked across newsroom operations, assisted in writing and editing stories, and helped shape daily news coverage.

Today at BBG, Phillips oversees story development, edits print and digital content, coordinates contributors and interns, and continues reporting in the field. She also contributes as a Folkways Reporter for Inside Appalachia with West Virginia Public Broadcasting, documenting culture and heritage across the region. Her approach remains consistent: show up, listen carefully, and tell the story right. Because for Phillips, this work is more than journalism. It’s documentation. It’s preservation. And it’s ensuring Black West Virginians are reflected — not as a footnote, but as history in motion.

Welcoming Our 2026 Black Policy Day Interns

Behind the Scenes of This Print Edition

As you hold this Black Policy Day print edition, know that it reflects careful editing, research, and collaboration. This year, two emerging journalists worked inside that process — strengthening every page with intention and integrity.



Alivia Grace Pierce
Black Policy Day Issue Intern
Black By God: The West Virginian
Alivia Grace Pierce is a soon-to-be graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, earning a B.A. in Africana Studies and History of Art and Architecture. Her academic

work centers cultural preservation, digital humanities, and community-based research. For this edition, Alivia researched historical context, verified policy details, and strengthened the factual foundation behind multiple stories. With experience in libraries, museums, and archival spaces, she brings precision and care to documenting underrepresented histories.



Nyshyne Frieson
Black Policy Day Issue Intern
Black By God: The West Virginian
Nyshyne Frieson brings a creative, community-centered approach to storytelling shaped by a background in performance and collaborative work. During this print cycle, Nyshyne carefully proofread articles, tightened language, flagged inconsistencies, and helped ensure that the voices represented in these pages are honored with clarity and care. Passionate about public

service and regional storytelling, Nyshyne approaches media as a tool for connection — helping stories move people while remaining grounded in community accountability.

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OPINION

West Virginia's Maternity Care Crisis: Why Licensing Community Midwives Is an Ethical and Practical Necessity

By Staysha Quentrill, CPM

West Virginia is in the midst of a maternal health crisis. Large portions of the state are classified as maternity care deserts—regions where pregnant people lack timely access to obstetric providers, birth facilities, or both. Hospital closures, provider shortages, geographic isolation, and persistent poverty have combined to create a system that fails far too many families. As policymakers search for solutions, one clear and evidence-based option remains conspicuously absent from meaningful consideration: the licensure of Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs).

Who Are Certified Professional Midwives?

Certified Professional Midwives are nationally credentialed maternity care providers who specialize in low-risk pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care. CPMs are trained through rigorous clinical education pathways that include extensive hands-on experience, competency-based assessment, and a national board examination. They provide comprehensive prenatal care, attend births, offer postpartum and newborn care, and are educated to identify complications and initiate appropriate consultation or transfer when needed. CPMs are licensed or regulated in the majority of U.S. states and are an integral part of the maternity

care system in many rural and under served areas. West Virginia, however, continues to prohibit licensure for CPMs—despite overwhelming evidence that the state desperately needs more maternity care providers. For families without reliable transportation, paid leave, or childcare, accessing prenatal care or traveling hours to give birth is not just inconvenient—it is dangerous.

"For families without reliable transportation, paid leave, or childcare, accessing prenatal care or traveling hours to give birth is not just inconvenient—it is dangerous."

Delayed or absent care increases the risk of poor outcomes for both parents and babies.

A Community-Based Solution

Community-based midwives offer a practical, cost-effective, and culturally responsive solution. CPMs often come from the communities they serve. They understand local barriers, build long-term relationships with families, and provide care that is accessible and continuous. Because they practice outside of hospital systems, CPMs are able to reach populations that frequently fall through the cracks of institutional healthcare—including rural families, low-income households, and people who have experienced discrimination or trauma within the medical system. More than half of West Virginia's population lives in rural areas. A maternity care model that relies exclusively on hospital-based providers is simply insufficient to meet the needs of this state. By licensing CPMs, West Virginia could immediately expand its maternity care workforce using professionals who are already trained, already practicing in neighboring states, or already serving West Virginia families without legal recognition or protection.

Licensure would allow for regulation, accountability, collaboration, and integration—benefits that prohibition cannot provide.

There is also a profound ethical concern at stake. When a state restricts access to safe, evidence-based maternity care options—particularly in the face of known provider shortages—it places families at risk. Pregnant people do not stop needing care because services are unavailable. They either go without, delay care, or seek support outside the formal system.

Denying licensure to CPMs does not eliminate community midwifery; it simply pushes it into the margins, where collaboration and transparency are more difficult. Ethical public health policy prioritizes access, safety, and autonomy—not ideological exclusion.

Federal Funding, Missed Opportunities

This issue is especially urgent given West Virginia's recent receipt of federal funding aimed at transforming rural maternity care and reducing health disparities. These initiatives are intended to improve outcomes, expand access, and support innovative, community-driven solutions.

Yet despite repeated outreach, CPMs and midwifery advocates report that they have not been meaningfully engaged, consulted, or included in planning conversations. Emails and calls seeking collaboration have gone unanswered. This silence stands in stark contrast to the stated goals of equity and transformation.

If the objective is truly to reduce disparities, then excluding an entire category of trained maternity care providers—particularly those who serve rural and marginalized communities—undermines that mission. CPMs bring not only clinical skills, but also educational expertise, community trust, and a proven ability to deliver care in resource-limited settings.

A Call to Act

West Virginia has an opportunity to lead with courage and common sense. Licensing Certified Professional Midwives would not replace obstetric care—it would complement it. It would expand options, strengthen safety nets, and affirm that all families deserve access to competent, compassionate maternity care close to home. Continuing to deny licensure in the face of a maternity care desert is no longer defensible. The health of West Virginia's families depends on action.



BBG THRILLED TO CELEBRATE STAYSHA QUENTRILL'S NEW YORK TIMES FEATURE ON MIDWIFERY IN WEST VIRGINIA

BY BLACK BY GOD: THE WEST VIRGINIAN

OPINION

Black History Month and the Fight for Black Maternal and Infant Health in West Virginia

By Rhonda Rohembe

Happy Black History Month! For the past 100 years, communities across the United States have celebrated Black life during the month of February. It is a time to uplift Black achievements, contributions, resilience, and so much more. America as we know it—West Virginia as we know it—could not exist without the Black community.

And while that is a beautiful sentiment, Black History Month is also a time to reflect on the cost of those contributions. It is a time to acknowledge the legacy of slavery, segregation, and discrimination, and the ways those systems continue to shape the lives—and health—of Black people today. To move toward an equitable future, we must acknowledge and repair this country's legacy of violence toward marginalized communities.

Over the past several years, researchers have highlighted one glaring disparity in American society: Black mothers and babies are dying at alarming rates. Even when controlling for factors like household income and education, Black infant and maternal mortality rates are often two to three times higher than those of white mothers and babies.

These realities sparked national outrage—including here in West Virginia. Despite the state's relatively small Black population, advocates knew Black West Virginians were not immune to the legacy of medical discrimination, limited health care access, and gaps in the social determinants of health that impact Black communities nationwide.

In response, advocates, researchers, health care providers, and impacted community members across the state formed a Black Infant and Maternal Health Coalition. The goal was to better understand racial disparities in infant and maternal deaths in West Virginia and to use that knowledge to educate communities

and advance policy solutions that improve outcomes—not only for Black families, but also for rural and low-income communities statewide.

The data confirms what families have been saying for years. Between 2020 and 2022, West Virginia's Black infant mortality rate was 13.4 deaths per 1,000 births—more than double the state's overall rate of 6.4 per 1,000. Even more troubling, the West Virginia Fatality Mortality Review Team found that 25 percent of infant deaths between 2017 and 2022 were preventable.

In its 2025 report, the Review Team also shared racial data on maternal deaths for the first time—after sustained advocacy. Despite accounting for fewer than four percent of live births between 2017 and 2023, Black mothers represented eight percent of maternal deaths in West Virginia. Overall, 70 percent of maternal deaths were deemed preventable.

At the same time, access to maternity care is rapidly disappearing across the state. In 2006, West Virginia had 35 hospitals that delivered babies. Today, only about half remain.

These statistics have rightly alarmed lawmakers, who have introduced legislation championed by the coalition—such as bills to expand access to doula services and to create a pathway to licensure for certified professional midwives. Research shows that doulas and midwives improve birth outcomes by reducing preterm births, lowering rates of postpartum depression, and providing culturally responsive care. Importantly, they can also travel to communities that would otherwise be left without essential maternity services.

These are just two of many policy solutions that can improve Black maternal and infant health in West Virginia. Health care access

takes many forms, but lasting change requires us to remember our history and confront the conditions that created today's disparities.

Just as a rising tide lifts every boat, addressing the historical harms experienced by Black West Virginians will improve health outcomes for all mothers and babies across the state.

Congratulations Rhonda Rogombe Families USA 2026 Health Advocate of The Year

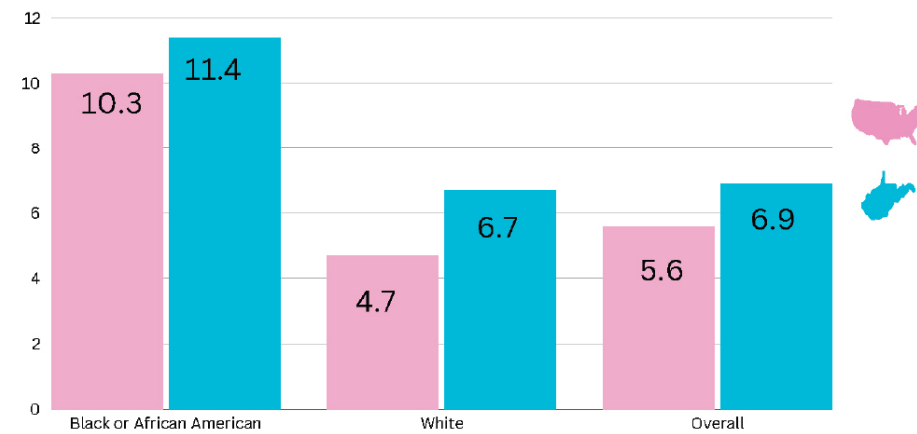


Submit Your Op-Ed: We want to hear from YOU. Email info@BlackByGod.org

BLACK INFANT AND MATERNAL HEALTH IN WV

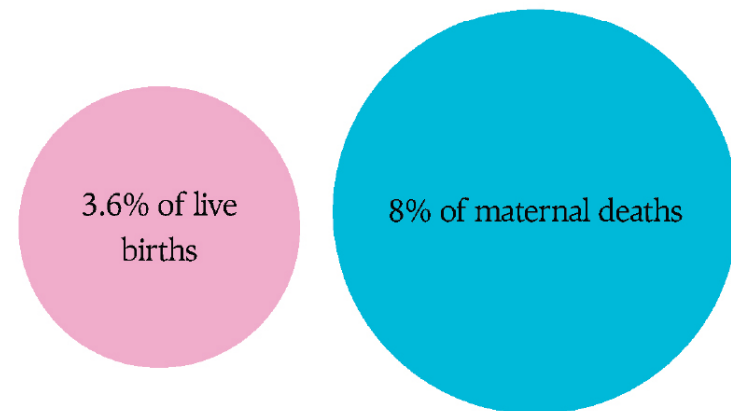
Infant and maternal mortality rates are often considered an indicator for the overall health and well-being of a community. In West Virginia, we have an opportunity to improve infant and maternal health through proactive health policy advancements.

West Virginia's Infant Mortality Rate Exceeds the National Average (mortality rate per 1,000, 2017–22)



In 2021, the most recent year of data publicly available, one-quarter of infant deaths in West Virginia were due to Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID). Other prominent causes of infant death were sleep-related, prematurity, and other medical-related issues. West Virginia's rate of infant deaths is higher than the national average and Black babies are nearly twice as likely to die in the prenatal period or their first year of life as white babies.

Black Moms Dying at Disproportionate Rate (percent of WV Black live births and Black maternal deaths, 2017–23)



West Virginia experiences a handful of pregnancy-related deaths each year; in 2023, there were three. The most common causes between 2017 and 2023 were infections, mental health conditions, and other health issues like hemorrhages, embolisms, and cardiovascular conditions. Between 2017 and 2023, Black women in West Virginia made up fewer than four percent of live births but eight percent of maternal deaths; nearly 70 percent of all maternal deaths were considered preventable, which is on par with national data.



Overall infant mortality in West Virginia exceeded the national average according to the most recent data available. Black West Virginia infants were more likely than their white peers to die before turning one year old.

2x

Nationally, the maternal mortality rate is over two times greater for Black mothers than their white peers.



Mortality is just the tip of the iceberg. For every maternal death, there are an estimated 75-100 cases of life-threatening complications during or after childbirth, which can have major, long-term effects on health and well-being.

BLACK INFANT AND MATERNAL HEALTH IN WV

Proactive Policies Can Improve Infant And Maternal Health In West Virginia

Ensure Access to Health Care for All

- There is a strong relationship between access to prenatal care and infant and maternal health outcomes: infants who received no prenatal care died three times as often as babies who did receive this care in WV (2017-2022).
- Access goes beyond insurance; it must also address the maternal care deserts that exist across West Virginia, as well as barriers like lack of transportation.
- Increasing pathways to service for Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) and doulas are just two of many ways to improve health care access.

Create Pathways to Service for Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) and Doulas

- A certified professional midwife (CPM) is a health care provider trained to provide medical services during and after pregnancy and childbirth. They work alongside hospitals, and often doulas, to provide holistic care services to support healthy pregnancies.
- CPMs can be licensed in 38 states and DC.
- Doulas are trained birth workers who provide non-medical support throughout pregnancy, during childbirth, and after pregnancy.
- Both CPMs and doulas have been shown to improve birthing outcomes, including fewer preterm births, decreased unnecessary c-sections, and reduced postpartum depression and anxiety.

Reverse Destructive Public Health Care Policy

- Congress passed HR 1 ("One Big Beautiful Bill Act") in July 2025, which contains significant cuts to the safety net, including the largest cuts to Medicaid (which 30 percent of West Virginia families rely on for health insurance) in program history.
- The legislation creates barriers to health care that many will find difficult to navigate, forcing thousands of people off the Medicaid program and away from their health care.
- While pregnant people are supposed to be exempt from new restrictions, past examples of administrative burden have shown that many will fall through the cracks.
- HR 1 also puts pressure on state budgets that forces difficult decisions about how to pay for health care. If the state cannot make up the lost federal funds, decision-makers may need to cut important services (like extended prenatal care, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment) to make ends meet.



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OPINION

West Virginia's Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs Faces Funding Changes Amid Continued Community Work

CHARLESTON, W.Va.

— The Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs (HHOMA) — a state agency created to serve under served populations and provide a forum for discussion on issues affecting minorities statewide — is operating under uncertain funding for Fiscal Year 2026, even as it continues outreach and listening tours across the Mountain State.

Funding Issue Highlighted by News Coverage

In “*Governor's Office: Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs not being shuttered*,” **Steven Allen Adams** reported for **WV News / News and Sentinel** that HHOMA received **no dedicated general revenue line item in West Virginia's Fiscal Year 2026 budget** signed by Governor **Patrick Morrisey**. The story notes that while HHOMA had been funded at about **\$396,726** in Fiscal Year 2025, no new appropriation was included for the current year, raising concerns about the office's financial footing. In the same report, Alex Lanfranconi, Communications Director for the Governor Morrisey, is explaining that no new funding was included **because the office has sufficient existing funds to continue operations**. **Jill Upson**, Executive Director for Governor Morrisey, would take an economic development position while serving as Acting Director to maintain statutory duties.

Political Pushback to Funding Changes

The *WV News / News and Sentinel* article also details political pushback: during a Summer meeting of the West Virginia Democratic Executive Committee, Vice Chairwoman **Teresa Toriseva** criticized the decision, calling it an “abuse of executive authority” and suggesting that the administration might be effectively defunding HHOMA despite the Legislature's 2012 law that created it.

What is HHOMA's Statutory Mission?

The **West Virginia Code (§5-26-1)** describes the statutory mission of the Herbert Henderson Office

of Minority Affairs as the office serves as **a forum for discussion of issues that affect the state's underrepresented groups**, identify best practices and services, review research, make policy recommendations to the Governor Morrisey and Legislature.

Community Outreach and Listening Tours

While funding conversations continue, the HHOMA has continues community programming. In July 2024, WV MetroNews reported in “*State Office of Minority Affairs launches series of listening tours across communities around the state*” that the office conducted a statewide **listening tour** to engage residents in Montgomery, Mount Hope, Parkersburg, and Welch. During this tour, Executive Director **Jill Upson** emphasized the goal of meeting with communities to discuss the issues that uniquely affect them. Upson described her mission to be **fostering productive dialogue and connecting underresourced groups with state support pathways/services**. The statewide tour was also documented in an official **HHOMA press release** announcing scheduled stops and the office's intent to gather community feedback and forward those insights to partner agencies and the Legislature, including sessions in Montgomery, Mount Hope, Parkersburg and Welch from July through October 2024.

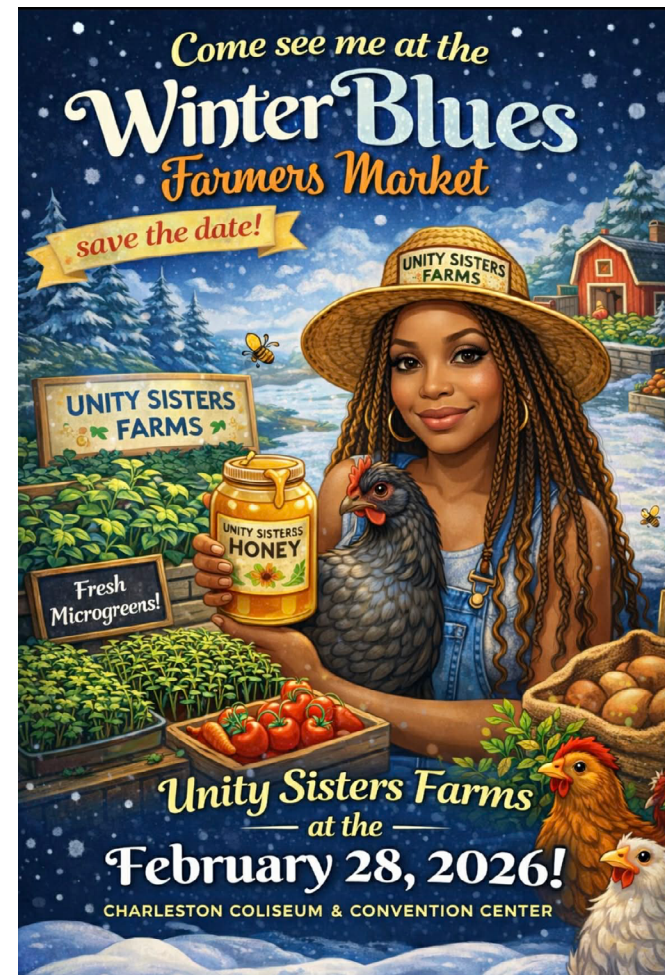
Long-Term Local Engagement

Additional local reporting from *News and Sentinel* describes how HHOMA's listening tours extend to cities like Parkersburg, with a September 2024 community meeting scheduled at the **Wood County Senior Citizens Association** and **Parkersburg Art Center**. At this meeting, Executive Director Upson invited residents to engage in meaningful dialogue about pressing issues affecting their lives.

Why HHOMA Matters

The Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs is named after **Herbert Henderson**,

a civil rights lawyer and longtime West Virginia NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) leader whose work helped dismantle segregation and expand Black freedoms in the state. HHOMA's mission reflects his legacy by fostering conversation, leadership, and collaboration across historically underrepresented West Virginians. Even as funding uncertainties persist with our current state budget, HHOMA's ongoing listening tours and community outreach demonstrate that the office continues to hold power in connecting state government with residents, across 55 counties.



OPINION

161 Years Of Black Loyalty Rewarded With Eradication of DEI in Almost Heaven WV

By Reverend Matthew J. Watts

Slavery was abolished in West Virginia 161 years ago on February 3, 1865. It appears that to commemorate West Virginia Emancipation Day in West Virginia, Senator Patricia Rucker, Berkley (R), has entered SB-879, This Bill if passed and signed into law would repeal the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs (HHOMA) Statue passed in 2012. The HHOMA was charged to coordinate government funded programs to address the well document racial disparities in West Virginia. It never remotely fulfilled its mission

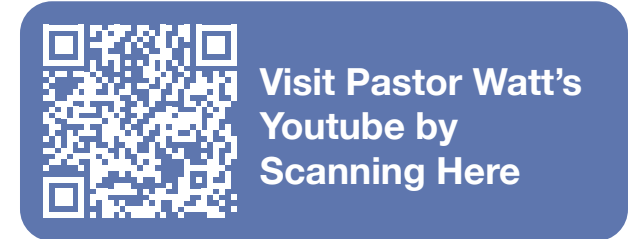
Senator Rucker's SB-879 compliments Governor Patrick Morrisey 's aggressive attack on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion which is a frontal assault on all Black people in West Virginia. Blacks account for only 3.5 percent of West Virginia's total population which equates to approximately 65,000 residents. Blacks do not nor have they ever posed any serious threat to the political, social, economic or cultural ruling structures controlled by whites in West Virginia.

In fact, one could argue that from decades of chattel slavery until the uncertain present, Blacks in West Virginia have been the most loyal, faithful and dutiful citizens. Per capita they have sacrificed as much if not more than any other group to advance West Virginia. Blacks' sacrifices have included decades of chattel slavery. Blacks have fought on the Union side during the Civil War and in every other military conflict in which America has been engaged. Black men who were former slaves were recruited from the southern states by ruthless railroad and

coal barons to help mine the coal and construct the railroad tunnels through the southern West Virginia mountains. They labored under abhorrent inhuman conditions while performing this arduous work. Many died within months of entering the Hawk's Nest tunnel from in-hailing the harmful silica dust which hardened their lungs until they suffocated. Most who died were not even afforded a dignified funeral or burial. Rather they were buried unceremoniously in unmarked graves without their families being notified of their deaths.

For some unknown reason many whites in power in West Virginia have always been suspicious of Blacks. This suspicion, though unwarranted, has remained despite decades of Blacks undying loyalty, patriotism and decency. This suspicion became evident in 1919 following World War I. After the war, many Black servicemen returned to the south from military service overseas. Overseas, they had been treated with some dignity and respect. Many found it difficult to accept the southern segregation, racism and dehumanizing system of Jim Crow segregation, and its racial apartheid. As is often the case the southern racist resorted to random acts of violence and terrorism as a tactic of fear and intimidation to maintain the social order. Riots broke out in over twenty-six cities and towns across the country during this period.

The West Virginia Legislature, fearing the prospects of racial violence in West Virginia, passed a bill in 1919 to establish the West Virginia Bureau for Negro Welfare and Statistics. The Bureau was



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View his channel 13 interview by Scanning Here

charged with collecting, and compiling data and statistics on every facet of Negro life in West Virginia. This law required that data be compiled every two years and presented to the governor and legislature. In essence there was a census on Negroes every two years.

One hundred and twenty-five years ago the West Virginia Legislature passed a law to surveil Black people every two years. Presently, a newly elected governor and legislature are working to eradicate any pathway to fair opportunity for Blacks and other marginalized groups. It appears that the reward to Blacks for their loyalty, decency and patriotism is legislative and gubernatorial insults. And they call this place Almost Heaven. Help us LORD Jesus.

There's A Farmer On The Flag



Black land. Black hands. Black futures.

In the **Black By God** podcast, *There's a Farmer on the Flag*, host **Mavery Davis** talks with farmers **Jason Tartt** and **Dural Miller** about Black farming in Appalachia — from food sovereignty and cooperative economics to memory, inheritance, and what it means to stay rooted on your own land.

This series centers Black agricultural knowledge that has too often been overlooked, while pointing toward futures grounded in ownership, stewardship, and community.

Sign up for the BBG newsletter to get information when the episode drops.



Interested in being a guest or sharing your work? Contact us at BlackByGod.org



OPINION

Principles vs. Party Lines: Navigating Leadership in Public Service

By Anitra Hamilton

Leadership in public service is necessary but is very complex. Every vote you cast, every alliance you create, and every compromise through debate all play a part in the decisions that you make. Are you going to stand firmly on principle or move strategically with the party are decisions that must be made every single day.

Being a principled legislator means that your actions are in accordance with your core values. This is the result of consistent decision making and requires a level of self-awareness as it relates to what you value and how it relates to the topics that we often debate as legislators. You must identify key principles that you will not compromise on and whether these principles revolve around integrity, evidence-based policymaking (such as strong vaccine laws), or a particular moral framework (such as abortion). **Moral frameworks are the ethical principles and values that guide us to how we judge what's right or wrong** which then informs our decisions. I don't believe we take the needed time to consider our moral frameworks and what guides our daily decisions. These influences could be inclusive of philosophy, religion, cultural norms, or even personal lived experiences. Without intentional thought, many fail to realize

Without intentional thought, many fail to realize that our internal compass is what helps us navigate decision making especially when faced with complex decisions

that our internal compass is what helps us navigate decision making especially when faced with complex decisions and as a lawmaker, competing policy interests. As a principled legislator, it's important

to be transparent with constituents, even when it's tough. Listening to varying perspectives is paramount but you must weigh that against your foundational beliefs while ensuring your beliefs are rooted in both facts and ethics. This consistency is what builds long term trust.

On the other hand, a partisan legislator is someone who decisions generally and consistently align with their political party's platform, and their intentional vote remains in line with the party's goals and agenda. Partisan legislators don't always side with their party agendas, but their decisions and priorities are typically shaped by the ideology that the party holds. These combined efforts can actively work together to advance the legislative agenda of that party and be the basis of political debate and/or negotiations with the opposing party. **While partisanship can create strong advocacy surrounding certain topics and issues, it can also be the foundation of gridlock or hinder efforts to compromise.** Partisan leadership is shown to be effective in the context of within the party. This leadership helps to push a unified agenda, gives clarity of direction, and rallies support from the party. I do feel there is a fine line that must be purposely recognized with this type of leadership because it can lead to a deeper polarization within the party which can limit bipartisan collaboration and lead to political gridlock. Effective leadership, even when partisan in nature, knows when to stand firm and when to build bridges.

It has been my goal, as one of the newer legislators, to be a principled legislator. I strive daily for my decisions to be influenced by integrity, evidence-based policy making, and a moral framework that is inclusive of what's best for my constituents but balances my foundational values. Being a member of The People's

House, my goal is to focus on **practical solutions that work in the real world.**

To achieve this, there must be an intentional balance between sticking to partisan ideology and being willing to compromise while prioritizing outcomes that benefit people. Many times, that is inclusive of crossing party lines. I strive to concentrate on what's workable and effective. I have learned that there isn't a one size fits all style of leadership and that to be effective for our constituents we must be sensitive to context and be flexible in our ability to collaborate. I believe that all parties are guided by some ideological stances, and that these stances serve great purposes but as an effective legislator, **focusing on evidence, results and lived experiences will help us to adapt and adjust to approaches in achieving more practical, workable solutions.** Being a principled legislator allows for servant leadership because it places my constituents at the center of my purpose for being a legislator. Instead of seeking power for my own sake or that of my party, I lead by serving the needs, well-being and growth of my community. While my core values have been a guide to my policy decisions, servant leadership allows those decisions to be applied with empathy, humility, and a genuine desire to uplift others. There are certain elements of servant leadership that keep the people the center of your purpose. One is by engaging with constituents. This can be done by holding town halls, listening tours, and meeting with individuals to show that you are not only listening but actively showing you care about their needs. Secondly, remaining transparent about my values and the decisions that I'm making, always showing how they serve the public. And lastly, mentoring others, empowering voices that may be unheard, and to remain humble, knowing that I here to serve and not just to lead.

Get in Where You Fit in!

FIFTH ANNUAL

BLACK POLICY DAY

WV STATE CAPITOL ROTUNDA

BLACKBYGOD.ORG

BVIWV.COM

BLACKPOLICYDAYWV.ORG

2.24.26

DID YOU KNOW?

February 3, 1865, is West Virginia's true emancipation date.

While many people associate freedom with the Emancipation Proclamation or Juneteenth, slavery did not officially end in West Virginia until February 3, 1865 — when the state Legislature passed an act abolishing slavery.

West Virginia entered the Union in 1863 as a slaveholding state, adopting gradual emancipation rather than immediate freedom. That meant many Black West Virginians remained enslaved even after statehood.

February 3 — known by advocates as **Freedom Day** — marks the moment slavery formally ended here by law.

Protect What Matters Most.



Anthony Dean

Insurance Advisor

With Caldwell Insurance Agency

Auto • Home • Life Insurance

Personalized Coverage. Local Service.

Call/Text: 681-235-0482

Website: caldwellinsurancewv.com



No Menthol Sunday is an annual call to action to highlight the detrimental impact commercial menthol tobacco products have on Black communities.

Community Education Group will mark this important day with an in-person event in Charleston. We want you to be part of it!

Contact dwalker@communityeducationgroup.org to learn more.



LOBBY THE LOBBYISTS

By Crystal Good

Let's be honest: lobbyists are powerful. They hold access, they hold information, and they hold influence over the people who make the decisions that affect your community. And yet, somehow, they feel untouchable. But here's a radical thought—why not reach out to them directly? Why not *lobby the lobbyists*?

I know what you're thinking: "Crystal, lobbyists are not there to take my call." And you're right—most of the time, they're not. They're busy, calculating, and often operating behind the scenes. But that's exactly why this is the moment to try. Lobbyists are the gatekeepers of information and the amplifiers of influence. If you care about criminal justice reform, Medicaid expansion, voting rights, or any other issue that matters to your community, understanding who is representing what—and why—can change the game.

Step 1: Know Who Lobbyists Are

Head to the [West Virginia Ethics Commission Lobbyist Directory](#). Download the current PDF, open it, and use the search function (Ctrl+F or Cmd+F) to find keywords related to your issue:

- "Criminal justice"
- "Racial justice"
- "Education"
- "Healthcare"

You'll see names and organizations linked to the topics you care about.

Step 2: Collect Contact Information

Once you find a lobbyist, note:

- Their name
- The organization they represent
- Any contact info listed (email, phone, or business address)

This is your target list. These are the people influencing policy behind the scenes, and now they are *within reach*.

Step 3: Draft Your Message

Your goal is **not to intimidate or argue**, but to make your voice heard. Here's a template you can use:

Hello [Lobbyist Name],
My name is [Your Name] ...

Keep it respectful, clear, and concise.

Think of it as a briefing you'd give a legislator—you're sharing facts, values, and your perspective.

Step 4: Follow Up and Track Responses

If the lobbyist responds, take notes. Compare what they say to the positions of the legislators they influence. If they are not advocating for your issue, that is *critical information*. Repeat this process with multiple lobbyists to build a complete picture of influence on your issue.

Step 5: Why This Works

Many activists assume that only legislators matter—but lobbyists shape the conversation behind the scenes. By identifying who they are, what they represent, and how they operate, you're no longer operating in the dark. The system puts this information online for transparency—you just have to use it.

Calling, emailing, or sending a note to a lobbyist is not audacious—it's civic engagement. It's saying: *I see what you're doing. I'm paying attention. And my community matters.*

So do your homework. Make the call. Ask the questions. Take note of the answers. Black Policy Day is about more than showing up—it's about understanding the levers of power and using them. Lobby the lobbyists. They're not untouchable—they're just untapped.

Find Current Registered Lobbyists here



BLACK POLICY RESOURCE & ACTION GUIDE

What This Is

This guide is more than a list of issues: it is a roadmap for engagement. It connects

everyday West Virginians to organizations, government agencies, advocates, and decision-makers, so no one has to navigate the system alone.

While this agenda centers Black West Virginians, the policies included uplift all families who are struggling: rural and urban, Black and white, working-class and

low-income alike. This is about access, dignity, and opportunity, and making sure our voices are part of the decisions that affect our lives.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Policy change happens through legislation, committees, media, community organizing, and relationships. You can engage at every level.

This Guide Is Designed To Be Used:

- **Individually** — to stay informed and engaged
- **Collectively** — to host community conversations, teach-ins, workshops, or forums
- **In Community Spaces** — by supporting Black-owned businesses through meetings and events

YOU BELONG HERE

You do not need to be a policy expert — your lived experience is expertise.

COMMUNITY ACTION IDEAS

- Plan local events using this guide
- Partner with Black-owned restaurants, cafés, bookstores, and venues
- Create space for discussion, storytelling, and collective action while keeping resources circulating in Black communities

Understanding the Policy Process

1. Track Legislation

Steps:

1. Visit www.wvlegislature.gov
2. Click “Bill Status”
3. Search by keyword (examples: child tax credit, CROWN Act)
4. Note the bill number (HB or

SB) and assigned committee

2. Follow Committees & Submit Testimony

Most policy decisions happen in legislative committees, not just on the House or Senate floor.

How to Engage:

- Monitor committee schedules
- Attend hearings when public comment is allowed
- Submit written testimony via email

3. Lobby the Lobbyists

Registered lobbyists have

direct access to lawmakers and influence policy outcomes.

TESTIMONY TIP

Testimony does not have to be long or technical. Include the bill number, your position, and how it affects you, your family, or your community.

Action Steps:

- Find lobbyists at ethics.wv.gov
- Ask where they stand on key issues
- Share your perspective

4. Amplify Your Voice in Public Ways to Amplify:

- Use social media and tag lawmakers
- Write op-eds or letters to the editor
- Share personal stories via email, video, or posts

Black By God: The West Virginian publishes op-eds on issues affecting Black and marginalized communities

Submit at: blackbygod.org

Work With Community & Black Organizations

Statewide Black Organizations

- NAACP West Virginia
- West Virginia Black Voter Impact Initiative
- Black Voters Impact Initiative (BVII)

Black Sororities & Fraternities

Sororities: Delta Sigma Theta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Zeta Phi Beta, Sigma Gamma Rho

Fraternities:

Alpha Phi Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Psi Phi, Phi Beta Sigma, Iota Phi Theta

College & University-Based Groups

- WVU: BSU, Collegiate NAACP, BLSA, NSBE, African Students Association, Black Alumni Association
- WVSU BSU, Marshall University BSU, Bluefield State Black student groups

Faith-Based & Community Coalitions

- Black churches and faith-based networks

POLICY HAPPENS EVERYWHERE

Policy change also happens in the media and in your community.

COLLECTIVE POWER

Partnering with trusted organizations strengthens advocacy, builds power, and prevents duplication of work.

BLACK POLICY RESOURCE & ACTION GUIDE

HOW TO USE THESE SECTIONS

Each policy area explains why the issue matters, what to watch for, who is involved, and how to engage.

Key Policy Areas & How to Engage

Economic Stability & Workforce Opportunity

Why It Matters

Black West Virginians experience higher poverty and unemployment rates due to long-standing barriers to quality jobs and economic opportunity.

What to Look For

- Job creation and local hiring initiatives
- Workforce training and apprenticeships
- Minimum wage policies
- Childcare support
- Broadband investment

Key Government Agencies

- WV Department of Commerce
- WorkForce West Virginia
- WV Department of Revenue
- Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs

Organizations & Advocates

- WV Center on Budget & Policy
- WV Small Business Development Center
- Mountain State Justice
- Tuesday Morning Group

Education & Youth Development

Why It Matters

Education is a key pathway out of poverty and strengthens families and the future workforce.

What to Look For

- Childcare subsidy increases
- School funding reforms
- Counselor and nurse staffing requirements

Key Government Agencies

- WV Department of Education
- WV Department of Human Services
- WV Higher Education Policy Commission

Organizations

- Together for Public Schools
- WV Education Association
- WV Kids Count
- Child Care Resource & Referral

Public Safety & Community Stability

Why It Matters

Over-incarceration disrupts families and limits economic mobility.

What to Look For

- Probation reform
- Reentry support programs
- Expungement and record-sealing

Organizations

- ACLU of West Virginia
- Mountain State Justice
- American Friends Service Committee

Health & Family Well-Being

Why It Matters

Black maternal and infant mortality rates remain unacceptably high.

What to Look For

- Medicaid expansion
- Maternal mortality review funding
- Doula and midwife reimbursement
- Paid family and medical leave

Organizations

- March of Dimes WV
- WV Primary Care Association
- Our Future WV
- WV Association for Young Children

Infrastructure, Housing & Environment

Why It Matters

Safe water, stable housing, and reliable infrastructure are basic needs.

What to Look For

- Water infrastructure funding
- Lead pipe replacement
- Affordable housing tax credits
- Environmental remediation

Organizations

- WV Rivers Coalition
- WV Citizen Action Group
- WV Community Development Hub

Food Security

Why It Matters

Food insecurity affects health, education, and family stability.

What to Look For

- SNAP protections
- School meal funding
- Farm-to-school initiatives
- Summer food programs

Organizations

- Mountaineer Food Bank
- Facing Hunger
- WV Food & Farm Coalition
- American Friends Service Committee

Pick One Thing

You do not have to do everything. Choose one action and start there.

Take Action

- Track bills at www.wvlegislature.gov
- Find and contact your legislators
- Attend hearings and give public comment
- Submit written testimony
- Join local organizations
- Check ethics.wv.gov
- Share your story with Black By God: The West Virginian
- Host conversations locally — especially in Black-owned spaces

Companion Resources

1. ACLU of West Virginia – How to Get Involved with the WV Legislature
2. WVU LibGuides – West Virginia Policy & Legislative Resources
3. WV Citizen Action Group – 2026 Legislative Session Resources

Go Deeper

These guides can be shared at events or used as workshop handouts.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Tracking legislation helps you identify when community voices have the greatest impact.

WHEN WE EAT TOGETHER, WE BUILD POWER

A Black Policy Day Call to Support Black-Owned Restaurants — Monthly, City by City

200 PEOPLE • 1 RESTAURANT • 1 DAY

WHAT IS A BLACK OUT?

Intentionally showing up to a Black-owned restaurant to support and strengthen the local Black economy—**TOGETHER.**

BLACK POLICY DAY IS ASKING YOU TO:

Commit to a Monthly Black Out in Your Town.

Every Month. Not Once. Not a Special Event.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

More Than Food: Gathering Spaces • Jobs • Culture • Black Farming.

HOW TO DO A MONTHLY BLACK OUT



Pick a Day

Lunch • Weeknight • After Church



Pick a Black-Owned Restaurant



Invite People

• Social • Texts
• Community Groups



Show Up & Spend

• Eat • Tip Well
• Be Intentional



Talk With Purpose

• Use the Resource Guide



Do It Again Next Month

THE CALL:

- Once a Month.
 - In Your Town.
 - At a Black-Owned Restaurant.
- Then Do It Again.**

UPCOMING BLACK OUTS!

♥ **Charleston:** Sumthin Good Soul Food
Date: Feb. TBD



HONORING THE ONES WHO LIFT US UP

2026 Honorees

Young people saw themselves more clearly because of them.

The “Honoring the Ones Who Lift Us Up” Award recognizes the mentors, educators, organizers, and leaders who are shaping young people right now. Each honoree was nominated by a young person under 25 who felt seen, supported, and strengthened because of their presence.



Alecia Allen

Clinical Director & Licensed Professional Counselor

Keep Your Faith Corporation / KYFC — *South Charleston, WV*

Alecia Allen is a licensed professional counselor and clinical director at Keep Your Faith Corporation, a minority-owned behavioral health center providing culturally responsive care across West Virginia. Young people describe her as a steady mentor whose encouragement and guidance help them build confidence, set goals, and stay engaged in their education and community.

Dr. Sonya Armstrong

Professor of Mathematics & Academic Leader

West Virginia State University — *Institute, WV*

Dr. Sonya Armstrong teaches mathematics and has led her department at West Virginia State University, earning respect for her commitment to students' academic growth. Young people say she pushes them to think bigger and believe in their own potential, blending high expectations with care that fosters long-term confidence and ambition.



Ericke Cage

President

West Virginia State University — *Institute, WV*

Ericke S. Cage serves as the 13th President of West Virginia State University. His leadership centers opportunity, access, and belonging for students, helping remove barriers while affirming young people's aspirations. Students describe him as someone whose support helps them imagine and pursue futures that once felt out of reach.



Teresa Holmes

Community Leader & Youth Engagement Organizer

Boots on the Ground Youth Leadership Academy — *Eastern Panhandle, WV*
Teresa Holmes, “The Story Telling Maven,” leads efforts that connect young people to civic engagement and community service. Those who nominated her highlight her consistent presence, service-oriented leadership, and encouragement that pushes young people to step into confidence and civic involvement.



Dr. Shanequa Smith

Restorative Justice Practitioner & Civic Engagement Advocate

Black Voter Impact Initiative & Community Practice — *Charleston, WV*

Dr. Shanequa Smith is a restorative practitioner and community organizer who co-founded the Black Voter Impact Initiative and Black Policy Day. Young people say she connects them to civic engagement, advocacy, and real pathways to involvement — showing that change happens through informed participation and community building.



THE AFRO-LACHIAN FOOD NETWORK



Join the BBG AgriCULTURE newsletter and help nourish stories of Black land, labor, and foodways in Appalachia.

T&T Organics - Jason Tartt



A premier mountain agriculture enterprise and training farm in McDowell County specializing in high-tunnel production and economic diversification.

Mear Mae's Meadow - Chamear Davis



An urban farm specializing in pasture-raised chickens for fresh eggs, and a bee apiary that provides raw honey and other bee products.

Unity Sisters Farm - Licia Pannell



A "Micro and Macro" urban farm producing both microgreens and market vegetables while serving as hands-on training hub for youth and community members.

HARVEST - Dural Miller



The food systems development arm of Keep Your Faith Corporation, focused on strengthening local food production, education, and community access.

Chef Ke - Keyarna Frederick



A culinary leader championing the farm-to-table experience. She transforms raw harvest into culturally rich meals, demonstrating the delicious potential of eating local.

Miss Ruby's Corner Market - KYFC



A social enterprises of Keep Your Faith Corp) The community retail anchor ensuring West Side residents have consistent brick-and-mortar access to healthy, local food.

"NO RACE CAN PROSPER TILL IT LEARNS THAT THERE IS AS MUCH DIGNITY IN TILLING A FIELD AS IN WRITING A POEM." - BOOKER T. WASHINGTON (MALDEN, WV)

Carrying that legacy forward, we are the architects of a new agricultural economy. This coalition of growers, educators, and entrepreneurs is united to build a self-sustaining food system for West Virginia

Rooted & Resilient

Cultivating the Afro-Lachian Food System

From the coal camps to the city limits, we are reclaiming West Virginia's agricultural legacy. By connecting urban farms, rural producers, and value-added partners, we are building a self-sustaining food economy that creates generational health and wealth.

THERE IS NO CULTURE WITHOUT AGRICULTURE
- ELDER TARIK ODUNO

FOOD POLICY FOR THOUGHT:

- **The 5% Mandate:** The WV Fresh Food Act encourages state institutions to buy at least 5% of their food from local farmers. We are the supply chain that makes that possible.
- **West Virginia's recent Medicaid waiver** allows funding for "Food as Medicine" initiatives. Our network is ready to turn those prescriptions into produce!

01

ECONOMIC CIRCULATION Keeping food dollars in our local community

02

GENERATIONAL HEALTH fresh nutrient dense food as medicine

03

SHARED INFRASTRUCTURE collective processing & distribution



Black Gardeners & Growers of WV

Do you identify as a BIPOC farmer, grower, or gardener in West Virginia? Join our Facebook group to connect with a statewide community sharing everything from growing tips and tricks to lessons learned and other resources!

Get Involved!

Connect!

Learn!

Volunteer!

Donate!

Chef Ke



YOUNGGIFTED & BLACK FELLOWS SPOTLIGHT

Young, Gifted & Black in Policy: Recognition, Reflection, and the Work That Continues



Scan here to read the full story

Entering its fourth year, Young, Black & Gifted in Policy has grown into a consistent space for recognizing Black West Virginians engaged in policy, advocacy, and civic life across the state, the country, and the world. Read their stories. Join the conversation. Tell BBG about a Young, Black & Gifted leader in your community.



Our Legislative Candidates



DuRon Jackson
SD-5



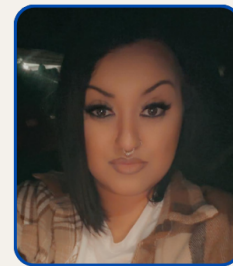
Quincy Wilson
HD-1



Sean Hornbuckle
HD-25



Treyvon Simmons
HD-37



Brianna Percy
HD-39



Joyce Brown
HD-52



Hollis Lewis
HD-57



Cookie Claytor
HD-59



Antira Hamilton
HD-83



Regina Dyer
HD-99

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
BLACK POLICY
DAY**

**ON FIVE YEARS OF
POWERFUL ADVOCACY**

You've lifted community voices,
strengthened our democracy,
and brought West Virginians
together to learn, organize,
and take action.

**WE'RE PROUD TO
STAND WITH YOU.**
— WV CITIZEN ACTION GROUP
WVCAG.ORG

Black By God, The West Virginian

EXTRA!! EXTRA!!

**TIRED OF YOUR VOICE
GOING UNHEARD?**

**SHARE YOUR STORY.
SHARE YOUR TRUTH.
SHARE YOUR VOICE.
SUBMIT YOUR LETTER OR
OP-ED TODAY!**

BLACK BY GOD

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I am deeply grateful for the overwhelming support and trust you have shown me. Thank you for standing with me and believing in our shared vision for a brighter future.

As we move forward, I humbly ask for your continued support. As a native West Virginian from McDowell County, I grew up in the heart of the coalfields, with a rich family legacy as the daughter and granddaughter of a coal miner. My life has been shaped by hard work and the power of unions and hard working West Virginians. As a champion for healthcare, community leader for the state, advocate for education, and women's health, I am dedicated to fighting for the issues that matter most to us all.

Together, we can continue to make a difference for West Virginia.

Warm regards,
Delegate Anitra Hamilton

Anitra
HAMILTON

**JOIN OUR
FOLK
reporters
PROGRAM**

CONTACT: JACKIE@BLACKBYGOD.ORG

BBG FOLK REPORTERS

**WELCOME TO BBG'S
FOLK REPORTER
REVOLUTION.**

BBG FOLK REPORTERS

PLEASE JOIN US

DJ LAURYN TRILL

VENDORS

INFLATABLES

FACE PAINTING

International Women's Day Celebration

HADDAD RIVERFRONT PARK
CHARLESTON, WVMAR 8
3PM-6PMSTRONGER
togetherGIRLS JUST
WANNA HAVE
FUNDAMENTAL
HUMAN RIGHTSLET'S CELEBRATE AND UPLIFT
WOMEN IN OUR COMMUNITY!

Mama's Meatloaf by Ronnie Marie Tartt

Secret ingredients: Love and Mama's Meat Sauce**Serves 6-8 | Prep time: 20 minutes | Cook time: ~1 hour**

Ingredients

- 2 lbs ground beef (80/20 for juiciness)
- 1 cup Mama's Meat Sauce, plus more for topping
- (Ketchup may be substituted if needed)
- 1 cup breadcrumbs (or crushed toast)
- 1 cup cornflake crumbs
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/2 cup finely chopped green pepper
- 1 can of tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. In a large bowl, gently combine ground beef, onion, green pepper, garlic, breadcrumbs, cornflake crumbs, tomatoes, eggs, salt, black pepper, and crushed red pepper. Mix until ingredients are thoroughly distributed.
3. Stir in ¾ cup Mama's Meat Sauce, reserving the rest for topping.
4. Shape into two loaves and place in loaf pans or on a baking sheet.
5. Spoon additional sauce over the top.
6. Bake for 45-60 minutes, until the internal temperature reaches 160°F and the top is caramelized.
7. Let rest for 10 minutes before slicing.



MAIA THE RAINBOW Q&A

A West Virginia Therapist's Vision for Helping Children Thrive



When Maia feels something big — fear, joy, anger, wonder — her hair begins to glow.

Not because something is wrong, but because something important is happening.

As a West Virginia therapist, mother, and public health practitioner with **Keeping Your Faith Corporation**, I created Maia the Rainbow to help children recognize their emotions not as problems to hide, but as signals to understand — and strengths they can learn to carry with them.

Maia the Rainbow is a four-part reading and viewing series that blends evidence-based developmental theory with childhood imagination and adventure. In Maia's world, emotions show up as light and color. When feelings grow overwhelming, practical calming tools become extraordinary acts of courage, creativity, and self-discovery. Her inner world is visible — and that visibility permits children to notice their own.

Behind the magic is a deeply grounded public health reality. West Virginia families are resilient, but many of our children grow up navigating high rates of adverse childhood experiences, limited access to behavioral health support, and ongoing learning gaps — particularly in rural communities. At the same time, educators and caregivers are working urgently to strengthen early literacy, knowing that reading proficiency shapes not only academic outcomes, but lifelong opportunities.

Research consistently shows that early literacy and emotional development are deeply connected. Children who learn to regulate emotions, communicate their needs, and see themselves as capable are more likely to succeed in school, build healthy relationships, and enter adulthood with confidence. These skills — self-regulation, resilience, self-understanding — are also

among the strongest predictors of long-term wellbeing and workforce success.

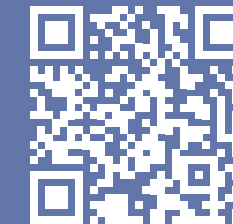
Rather than teaching coping strategies as lessons or directives, *Maia the Rainbow* weaves emotional wellness directly into the story. Children aren't told what to feel or how to behave — they watch a character they care about navigate her inner world and discover tools that already live inside her. This project grew from both my professional work and my lived experience as a parent. I see every day how powerful it is when children are given language, imagination, and affirmation to understand themselves — especially when those stories reflect the communities they come from.

Maia the Rainbow is dedicated to my daughters, nieces, nephews, and **all of the children turning their lived experiences into adventure in Appalachia**. Because children's stories don't just entertain — they shape how young people see themselves, their emotions, and their futures.

When kids learn early that their differences and feelings can become strengths, they move through the world with more confidence, compassion, and faith in who they are becoming.

The first book in the four-part series is now available. Families and educators can learn more at **Maiatherainbow.org**

Visit their webpage



Jessica A. Martin: “Fancy” With a Following

How a Charleston content creator turns positivity into community influence



JESSICA A. MARTIN:
“FANCY” WITH A FOLLOWING

BY BLACK BY GOD: THE WEST VIRGINIAN

If you’ve spent any time on Charleston-area Facebook, chances are you’ve seen Jessica A. Martin. She’s uplifting small businesses, sharing fundraisers, spotlighting local events, and posting mental health reminders right when you need them. And she does it all completely, unapologetically herself.

Known online as [@YealmFancyHuh](#), Jessica may look like she’s everywhere — but at heart, she’s a homebody who fiercely protects her peace. She has intentionally created a cozy, positive-energy sanctuary at home. “If I’m not out and about doing my thing, I’m getting my peace at home doing my thing,” she says.

That balance shows. She’s not performing positivity. She’s living it.

Jessica, 36, is originally from Rand, West Virginia — a small town often overlooked and labeled as poverty-stricken. Where some see stigma, she sees strength. Being from Rand shaped her resilience and fuels her desire to bring light wherever she goes. Now living in North Charleston

with her husband and 12-year-old son, she carries that pride into everything she builds.

She’s also the owner of Fancy Five Buck Fashion LLC, a small business selling \$5 accessories for women, men, and kids. Jewelry, keychains, statement pieces — if it completes an outfit, she likely has it. The name comes from a nickname she’s carried since she was about 12 years old: “Fancy.” Always put

together. Nails done. Hair done. When her business took shape, she knew the name had to stay.

But Jessica didn’t plan to become a local content creator. It happened organically.

A self-proclaimed nerd and former “MySpace guru,” she’s been building digital spaces for years — designing graphics, creating party flyers, and experimenting with layout long before content creation was a job title. She started by simply being herself online: sharing day-to-day life, highlighting local news, encouraging people, and showing up for her community. Within a year, her following grew quickly.

Her motivation is simple: change the narrative.

“There can be some negative stigma surrounding Charleston,” Jessica says. “Charleston is what you make it.”

At the core of everything she does is this belief:

Charleston is beautiful. Charleston is community. Charleston is possibility — if you choose to see it that way.

When someone is in crisis, she uses her platform. If a small business is struggling, she highlights it. If a family needs help, she shares the fundraiser. With a following rooted in Charleston, she feels a responsibility to show up.

“If I’m going to have all these followers, and most of them are local, I need to help people as much as I can,” she says.

While people often compliment her humor or energy, what truly matters to her is impact. Hearing that someone’s business is thriving after she shared it — that’s what warms her heart.

Through five-dollar accessories, “goofy videos”, heartfelt fundraisers, and daily reminders that this place is worth loving, Jessica A. Martin is quietly reshaping the narrative — one post at a time.

If you want to find her, Facebook is her home base under Jessica A. Martin. You can also follow [@YealmFancyHuh](#) on TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat.

And she’s doing it by being exactly who she’s always been: Fancy.

Facebook



Instagram



TikTok



Snapchat



WEXTENSION

2026 WEST VIRGINIA SMALL FARM CONFERENCE

February 26 - 28

Charleston Coliseum
and Convention Center



Farmers Grow Food and Communities

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Clarenda “Farmer Cee” Stanley

is the Founder and CEO of Green Heffa Farms, a regenerative farm and natural wellness brand based in Liberty, North Carolina. Since launching the company in 2018, Farmer Cee has emerged as a nationally recognized voice at the intersection of regenerative agriculture, climate resilience, and values-driven entrepreneurship. Green Heffa Farms is one of few farms in the United States to earn Certified B Corporation status, with several products also carrying Soil & Climate Health verification. A sought-after speaker, Farmer Cee is a TEDx presenter whose work challenges audiences to rethink who belongs in agriculture, how climate-positive farming can drive economic justice, and what it means to build profitable businesses rooted in land stewardship. Her insights draw from both lived experience and deep business expertise, bridging sustainability, food systems, and cultural leadership.



When you shop with us, you get stylish and trendy products and contribute to a meaningful cause. Every purchase you make goes towards supporting BlackByGod.org, an independent Black-owned news and storytelling organization that centers Black voices in West Virginia and central Appalachia.

SCAN HERE

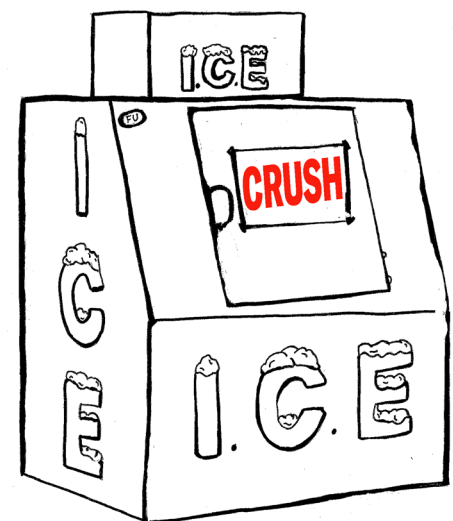
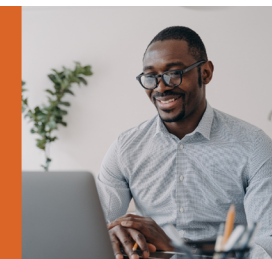


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[BlackByGod.shop](#)
or by scanning the
QR code

BBG
THE WEST
VIRGINIAN

Offers Special
Advertising Rates to
West Virginia Black
Businesses

CONTACT US!



PEOPLE MOVING THE MOUNTAINS

In West Virginia, Black policy progress has never come from a single office, election, or institution. It comes from educators who plant seeds, pastors who tell the truth when it's uncomfortable, builders who refuse to let communities disappear, advocates who show up year after year, and elders whose lives quietly shape entire generations.

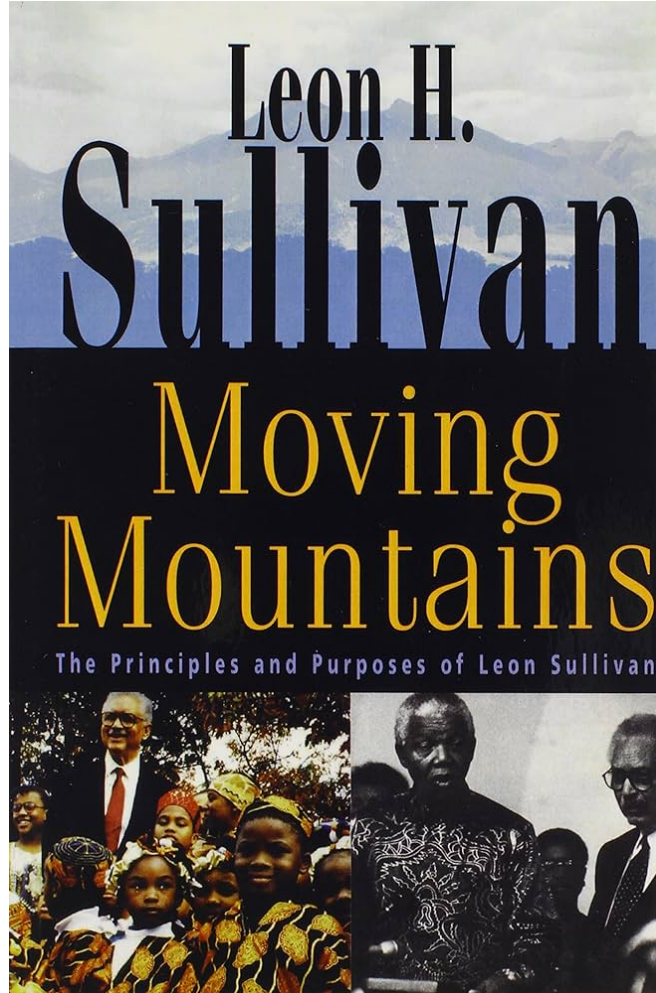
People Moving the Mountains honors individuals—past and present—who have transformed policy from an abstract idea into lived change.

Named in honor of Charleston-born Rev. Leon Sullivan's book *Moving Mountains*, this spotlight highlights West Virginians who, like Sullivan, turn vision into action. From classrooms to statehouses, churches to neighborhoods, these leaders shape policy, create opportunity, and build generational wealth—proving that meaningful change in Appalachia comes when people choose to move mountains.

Karen Williams

Karen Williams spent nearly 40 years as an educator, but her impact on West Virginia reaches far beyond the classroom. From public schools to higher education, her career—and her life—reflect a deep belief that education is one of the most powerful tools for policy change.

BBG selected Karen Williams because moving mountains doesn't always happen in the spotlight. Sometimes it looks like decades of steady leadership—educating, organizing, healing, and planting seeds that allow entire communities to grow.



Elliot Hicks

Elliott Hicks' leadership has long centered youth development, athletics, and mentorship as tools for community stability. His work recognizes that policy doesn't begin in the Legislature—it begins in neighborhoods, gyms, and places where young people learn discipline, confidence, and accountability.

BBG selected Elliott because investing in youth is policy work, even when it doesn't wear a suit.



Kenny Matthews

Kenny Matthews uses his lived experience as a formerly incarcerated West Virginian in recovery, but his impact on West Virginia reaches far beyond his own story. Through his work—and his advocacy—he reflects a deep belief that those closest to injustice should help shape the policies meant to change it.

BBG selected Kenny Matthews because moving mountains looks like training others to share their stories, challenging laws that expand incarceration, and building pathways to food, housing, and education for returning citizens—planting seeds of dignity that allow entire communities to grow.



Loretta Young

As President of the West Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, **Loretta Young** brings strategic, data-driven advocacy to civil rights enforcement across the state.

BBG selected Loretta because sustained change requires leaders who demand outcomes, not promises.



PEOPLE MOVING THE MOUNTAINS: POSTHUMOUS

For My People — Margaret Walker (1937)

Written decades before the Civil Rights Movement, Margaret Walker's *For My People* honors generations of Black struggle, endurance, and collective strength. In moments when we mourn the loss of Black leaders, her words remind us that leadership lives in the people themselves:

"For my people everywhere singing their slave songs repeatedly: their dirges and their ditties and their blues and jubilees, praying their prayers nightly to an unknown god, bending their knees humbly to an unseen power..."

And later, in a call that refuses despair:

"Let a new earth rise.
Let another world be born."

As we remember those we have lost, Walker's poem insists that grief must give way to growth — and that the next generation will rise carrying both memory and mandate.

THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS, RECEPTION, & BOOK SIGNING

"Been to the Mountaintop!"

With speaker William H. Turner, author of *The Harlan Renaissance: Stories of Black Life in Appalachian Coal Towns*

Friday, March 20, 6:00 pm-8:15 pm.

Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center

Sponsored by Huntington Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, and Marshall University Office of Academic Affairs

49th Annual Appalachian Studies Association Conference
Power of a Place, Power of Its People
Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia
March 19 - 21, 2026

Robert Manuel Hardy Jr. (Posthumous)

Robert "Bob" Hardy Jr. moved mountains through housing, youth mentorship, and faith-centered leadership. As CEO of the Charleston Economic and Community Development Corporation, he helped build and restore more than 100 homes on the Westside because he believed ownership created dignity and opportunity.

BBG honors Bob Hardy because policy without builders has no backbone—and his work still stands.



Kitty Dooley (Posthumous)

Attorney **Kitty Dooley** dedicated her career to advancing civil rights and ensuring that the law served those most often denied its protection. Her work strengthened accountability within legal systems and expanded access to justice across West Virginia.

Kitty understood that policy without enforcement is only theory. Through disciplined advocacy and principled leadership, she helped translate legal frameworks into real protections for Black communities.

BBG honors Kitty Dooley because justice requires both courage and consistency—and her legacy reflects both.



YOUR WATER. YOUR VOICE. YOUR POWER.

Together, we can champion policy to protect drinking water, conserve public lands, and strengthen our resilience.



wvrivers.org/policy



OPINION

The Creator Economy, Micro-Influence, and the Rise of the Influencer Journalist

By BBG

The creator economy is no longer emerging — it is established and expanding. Global projections estimate the industry could approach **\$480–\$500 billion by 2027**, driven by brands shifting advertising dollars away from traditional media and toward digital creators. Influencer marketing alone is expected to surpass **\$24 billion in global ad spend in 2025**, according to industry reports. But the real shift is not just economic — it is structural. The power to shape narrative has moved.

Micro-Influence Is Driving the Industry
Contrary to popular belief, the creator economy is not dominated by celebrities. Micro-influencers — creators with 5,000 to 50,000 followers — make up the largest share of the market. Nano-influencers (under 10,000 followers) represent an even larger percentage across platforms like Instagram. Why does this matter? Because smaller creators often have **higher engagement rates** than major influencers. Their audiences are more localized, more trusting, and more responsive. For brands — especially small businesses — this means measurable return on investment. In practical terms, a creator with 8,000 highly engaged local followers may drive more foot traffic than a celebrity with 800,000 passive viewers. That reality creates real opportunity for Black creators rooted in community.

The Rise of the Influencer Journalist
One of the fastest-growing segments within the creator economy is what media analysts call **influencer journalism** — creators who report, document, and interpret community events directly through social platforms. These creators:

- Break local news in real time.
- Highlight fundraisers and crises before traditional outlets.
- Provide cultural context mainstream media often overlooks.
- Engage directly with audiences through comments and livestreams.

Influencer journalists are filling information gaps — especially in smaller markets where newsroom budgets have shrunk. In Black communities, this shift is particularly significant. Historically underrepresented in traditional media, Black creators are now documenting their own stories, amplifying small businesses, and shaping public discourse without editorial gatekeeping. This is not simply content creation. It is narrative ownership.

The Economic Opportunity
For Black creators, especially in local markets like West Virginia, monetization pathways are increasingly accessible — though not always equitable. Studies show Black creators still face pay disparities and reduced brand access compared to white peers. However, the decentralization of media opens new local opportunities:

- Partnering directly with small businesses.
- Building subscription communities.
- Hosting sponsored live events.
- Selling digital products and services.
- Leveraging affiliate marketing.

When Black creators collaborate with Black-owned and local businesses, advertising dollars circulate within the community rather than flowing outward to national platforms. That shift matters economically. Not viral celebrities but trusted local media voices. And that trust has value.

Monetization Isn’t Just Possible — It’s Practical
Here’s how creators of all sizes — especially those rooted in local communities — can generate revenue:

Brand Partnerships & Sponsored Content
Paid posts, business spotlights, event coverage, product placements.

Affiliate Marketing & Social Commerce
Commission from product links via Instagram Shop, TikTok Shop, and affiliate platforms.

Subscriptions & Memberships
Recurring income through Patreon, Facebook Subscriptions, or YouTube Memberships.

Events & Workshops
Sponsored panels, pop-ups, vendor markets, and live podcast recordings.

Digital Products & Services
E-books, courses, templates, consulting, merchandise.

Direct Fan Support
Tipping tools and exclusive content platforms.

OPINION

Desegregation and the Black Community: A Necessary Step That Carried a Cost

By Delegate Hollis Lewis

Black History Month is not only a time to celebrate our collective achievements, study the often-hidden history of Black people in America and throughout the world, and reflect on our ongoing fight for freedom. In doing so, when analyzing more recent history, many within Black intellectual spaces often return to the topic of desegregation. Questions are frequently raised about whether it ultimately benefited Black society and what lessons can be learned from that pivotal moment.

When we talk about desegregation in America, the conversation is often framed in simple moral terms, **right versus wrong, justice versus injustice**. Morally, the end of legalized segregation was unquestionably necessary, particularly as it related to freedom of movement, equitable access to services, and, in my view, the constitutional violations of the interstate commerce clause. But history is rarely simple. For many Black communities across the country, desegregation came with unintended consequences that disrupted Black neighborhoods, institutions, and economic foundations in ways that are still felt today.

Before desegregation, segregation forced Black Americans to build parallel systems. Black-owned businesses thrived because they had to. Black teachers were often highly educated and taught generations of children because they were excluded from white institutions. Doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs created a **self-sustaining economic ecosystem rooted in necessity and resilience**, often centered within their own neighborhoods. These institutions were more than services; they were **anchors of identity, culture, and community pride**.

When desegregation arrived, it opened doors that had long been shut; it also disrupted many of these Black-centered systems. Integration often meant the closing of Black schools, and while Black consumers gained access to previously white-only businesses, many Black-owned establishments struggled to compete in a suddenly unequal marketplace. Perhaps most devastating was the **decentralization of Black strategic planning hubs**. In many cities and towns, economic power shifted away from Black neighborhoods, **weakening local institutions that had once served as pillars of stability**. In some ways, desegregation caused us to throw out the proverbial “baby with the bathwater.”

Acknowledging these consequences is not a rejection of desegregation. Rather, it is an honest recognition that **progress can come with tradeoffs, especially when structural inequality remains unaddressed**.

The reality is that desegregation was necessary because segregation itself restricted freedom, not only social freedom but economic freedom. Black Americans could not travel safely across state lines without fear or humiliation. Interstate commerce, from lodging to transportation to basic services, was limited by discriminatory laws and practices. A person’s ability to move, work, or simply exist in public spaces depended on race. That was **not merely unjust; it was incompatible with a functioning democracy and a modern economy**.

Freedom of movement mattered. The right to participate fully in interstate commerce mattered. The ability to choose where to shop, where to eat, where to stay, and where to learn mattered. Desegregation made those freedoms real in ways that segregated systems never could.

The challenge and perhaps the failure of that era was not the decision to desegregate, but the **absence of policies designed to protect and strengthen Black economic institutions during the transition**. The focus leaned too heavily toward equality rather than equity. Integration opened opportunities, but it did not come with sufficient investment in Black businesses, equitable school funding, community stabilization, or safeguards against economic displacement. As a result, many communities experienced integration not as empowerment, but as a gradual erosion of local autonomy and wealth.

Today, we must be mature enough to hold two truths at once. Segregation was unjust and had to end. At the same time, the process of desegregation exposed **long-standing inequities** and, in some cases, accelerated the **loss of Black-owned infrastructure** that had sustained communities for generations.

Moving forward requires rejecting the false choice between integration and self-determination. True equity means both access to the broader society and the strength of our own institutions. Policies that support minority entrepreneurship, equitable education, community reinvestment, and economic mobility are not a step backward they represent the **unfinished work of desegregation**.

Desegregation was not the end of the journey; it was a turning point. It expanded freedom of movement and participation in the national economy, but it also revealed how fragile progress can be when economic justice is left behind. The lesson is not to romanticize segregation-era systems or to ignore their harms. The lesson is to ensure that **the pursuit of equity never requires a community to sacrifice its foundation in the process**.

OPINION

By Katonya Hart

This Smile Is For You: Crown Corner



“Oppression doesn’t always move fast. Sometimes it stretches across generations. If you only study today, you’ll never understand how yesterday was designed to control tomorrow.”
— Malcolm X

I remember a head full of beads hanging from tiny braids, each braid sealed at the end with a tiny roll of kitchen foil so the beads wouldn’t slip off. The foil shined silver against the dark of my hair. When I was a little girl, doing my hair was a ceremony. It took time. I would sit between my mother’s knees, sometimes on a pillow, sometimes on my own knees, so that she could reach the tender kitchen at the back of my neck. Most days, my hair was styled in neat

cornrows—straight lines, curved parts, different designs that showed her patience and skill. Rare was the occasion I got beads.

Beads cost. They were popular. And they cost.

But when I had them? I felt beautiful.

A thousand tiny braids, bent with beads and barrettes, bright patterns lined up just right—black, white, red; blue, white, blue. My mother’s hands moved steady, adding a little oil, parting, braiding, rolling foil, sliding beads into place. It could take hours. When she finished, she leaned back and let out a deep breath. I turned just in time to see a slight smile of satisfaction cross her face before she straightened up.

“Go ahead now,” she’d say. “And don’t you lose not one of them beads.”

I ran to the bathroom mirror. It was fabulous.

I swung my head from side to side just enough to hear them click together. That sound—soft plastic tapping—was music. My hair was short back then. It didn’t hang or swing much on its own. But with beads? It moved. It had rhythm. It had presence.

This was an Easter hairstyle on a regular school day. Nobody could tell me nothin’. PERIOD.

My older brother wore a blowout afro, shaped just right by the barber, his face framed in a perfect circle. My younger brother kept his hair close, athletic, military-style, like my granddaddy. Uncle would bless his head with the clippers, and it would be done in minutes.

And then there was me in the middle—the girl.

Hair was different for me. It was time. It was cost. It was care. It was art.

My grandmother didn’t braid my hair, but she’d brush it at night while we got ready to rebraid it. Sometimes she paid the lady down the street to press it with a hot comb before special Sunday services. I was an Usher—not Junior Usher, but Usher. I had the crisp black-and-white uniform, gloves, and a badge to prove it. When my hair was pressed bone straight, little curls flipped at the ends, laid carefully so no one could see where my ear had been burned.

Hair was pride. Hair was presentation. Hair was protection.

My mother worked hard. Even after long days, she would take down my braids, wash my hair, and stay up late on a Friday night to cornrow them again. Or Saturday, if Sunday meant pressing it straight. Dax and Blue Magic would come out, and she’d work until it was done.

I don’t remember why that particular week she decided to fill my head with beads. But I remember the feeling. I was so proud. So beautiful. So seen. And I remember how quickly that feeling was interrupted.

A note was sent home.

The gym teacher made me take out every last bead. Not gently. Not kindly. Snatching them loose. Saying they were distracting. Saying they weren’t appropriate for school. I remember the sting on my scalp. The shame was creeping in where pride had lived just hours before.

Not after that did I wear beads to school again.

Not after I learned that something so joyful, so cultural, so deeply rooted in love and tradition, could be treated like a problem.

That’s why the CROWN Act matters.

The CROWN Act—Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair—ensures that no child is punished, shamed, or sent home because of their natural hair or protective styles like braids, locs, twists, or beads. It recognizes that our hair is not a distraction. It is not unprofessional. It is not inappropriate. Oppression doesn’t always move fast. Sometimes it hides in dress codes. In school policies. In “professional standards.” In small humiliations that teach children to shrink themselves.

But we can interrupt it.

We can make sure no little girl ever has to sit in a gymnasium while someone snatches her joy out bead by bead.

This smile is for her.

For more information or to join the fight to pass the CROWN Act in West Virginia, contact Katonya Hart: PFAE_join_us@yahoo.com

FOLK REPORTERS

Who Gets To Be a Journalist?

As West Virginia’s legislative session unfolds, Black By God is expanding who gets to tell the story.

Through our **Folk Reporters** program, BBG is training



WV lawmakers consider bill to include maternity leave in public school & university leave banks

By Aliyah Smith

and supporting everyday West Virginians to cover the Legislature — not just career journalists or people with journalism degrees. We believe a good reporter is someone curious, cares deeply about

their community, and is committed to telling the truth.

You don’t need a degree from an elite school to report on your community. You just need commitment and care.

BBG’s Folk Reporters program provides training, mentorship, and publishing support for community members ready to step into the role of citizen journalist.



WV Senate committee advances bill removing curriculum, vaccine and standardized test requirements for private schools

By Skylar Cale



WV senate advances bill to criminalize sending people abortion pills

By Aaliyah Jones



WV bill would outlaw and penalize programs offering needle exchange services

By Aaliyah Jones



WV Senate committee advances bill to reduce fees for small farms

By Aliyah Smith



WV lawmakers once again advance bill to help create on-campus food and health aid pantries

By Tiara Brown



WV Senate once again advances bill to increase prison sentences and parole requirements

By Aaliyah Jones



Morrissey wants \$10 million for AI flood warning. The bill to allow it would also remove a resiliency fund’s spending requirements around poor communities & payments to homeowners.

By BabyT Sexton



WV House advances bill that would criminalize giving undocumented people a ride home

By Maya Krueger & Ellie Heffernan



WV House committee advances bill that could lower child labor standards

By Tyler West

Interested in becoming a Folk Reporter or learning more?

Contact
ellie@blackbygod.org

WV DEMOCRATIC PARTY BLACK CAUCUS

CANDIDATE SPOTLIGHT

CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Zandria "Z" Lansdowne to the race for Berkeley County Commission. Best of luck, Z!

Z. LANSDOWNE
Berkeley Co. Comm.

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus congratulates Charleston City Councilman Mike Ferrell for filing for re-election. Best of luck, Mike!

MIKE FERRELL
Charleston Council - Ward 9

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Joyce Brown to the race for West Virginia House, District 52. Best of luck, Joyce!

JOYCE BROWN
WV House - 52nd

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus congratulates Councilman Larry Moore, who has filed for re-election for Charleston City Council, Ward 4. Best of luck, Larry!

LARRY MOORE
Charleston Council - Ward 4

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Charles Shaw, to the race for the Cabell County Board of Education! Best of luck, Charles!

CHARLES SHAW
Board of Ed. Cabell Co.

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Cookie Clayton to the race for WV House, District 59! Best of luck, Cookie!

COOKIE CLAYTON
WV House - 59th

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Brianna Pearcy to the race for WV House District 39! Best of luck, Brianna!

BRIANNA PEARCY
WV House - 39th

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Treyvon Simmons to the race for WV House District 37! Best of luck, Treyvon!

TREYVON SIMMONS
WV House - 37th

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Lanae Johnson to the race for Jefferson County Commission! Best of luck, Lanae!

LANAE JOHNSON
Jefferson Co. Comm.

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus congratulates Councilwoman Jennifer Pharr, who has filed for re-election for Charleston City Council. Best of luck, Jennifer!

JENNIFER PHARR
Charleston Council - At Large

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus recognizes Delegate Anitra Hamilton, who filed for re-election for the WV House, District 81! Best of luck, Anitra!

DEL. ANITRA HAMILTON
WV House - 81st

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes DuRon Jackson to the race for West Virginia Senate, District 5. Best of luck, DuRon!

DURON JACKSON
WV Senate - 5th

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Regina Dyer to the race for WV House District 99! Best of luck, Regina!

REGINA DYER
WV House - 99th

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus congratulates Quincy Wilson to the race for WV House, District 1! Best of luck, Quincy!

QUINCY WILSON
WV House - 1st

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus congratulates Martec Washington for filing to run for Mayor of Charleston. Best of luck, Martec!

MARTEC WASHINGTON
Mayor of Charleston

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus recognizes Delegate Hollis Lewis, who filed for re-election for the WV House, District 57! Best of luck, Hollis!

DEL. HOLLIS LEWIS
WV House - 57th

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus recognizes Delegate Sean Hornbuckle, who filed for re-election to the WV House, District 25! Best of luck, Sean!

SEAN HORNBUCKLE
WV House - 25th

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus congratulates Councilman Tommy Spurlock for filing for re-election to the South Charleston City Council. Best of luck, Tommy!

TOMMY SPURLOCK
So. Charleston Council - Ward 2

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus welcomes Malyka Knapp-Smith to the race for Charleston City Council, Ward 8. Best of luck, Malyka!

MALYKA KNAPP-SMITH
Charleston Council - Ward 8

★★★★★



CANDIDATE
Spotlight

The West Virginia Democratic Party Black Caucus congratulates Charleston City Councilman Chuck Overstreet for filing for re-election. Best of luck, Chuck!

CHUCK OVERSTREET
Charleston Council - Ward 3

★★★★★

