

HAKEEM JEFFRIES NOMINATED FOR HOUSE SPEAKER

House Democrats have nominated Congressman Hakeem Jeffries to become Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. If elected, he would be the first Black Speaker.

KEY FACTS

***Nominee:** Hakeem Jeffries, representing New York's Eighth Congressional District*
***Nominated by:** House Democrats*
***Next step:** A full House vote, expected in January 2027*

the MILWAUKEE COURIER

MBM

VOL. LXII NO. 45 "THE NEWSPAPER YOU CAN TRUST SINCE 1964" SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2026

Q&A: Wisconsin Governor-Elect David Crowley on Election Results and Priorities, Including Education, Healthcare, Marijuana, Act 10, Prisoner Commutations

By Drake Bentley

Governor-elect David Crowley proposed dozens of ideas while on the campaign trail, and after his historic election victory, the state's first Black governor understands that the Wisconsin State Legislature is due for a busy year.

The election results were earth shattering for Republicans and provided the Democrats with a mandate for change and solutions. For Crowley, he saw historic election results around the state for a Milwaukee native, but especially in his own hometown.

Before the new administration and Legislature are sworn into office in January, Crowley has announced a transition team and the legislature picked their leaders. Things are moving fast.

But will it be fast enough for the public? Government is often a tedious, slow moving affair.

Crowley discussed the election results and his priorities, including education and healthcare funding and marijuana legalization, in an interview with the Milwaukee Courier on Nov. 16.

Here is a Q&A with Crowley which has been lightly edited for clarity.

It's been about two weeks since a historic midterm election in America. Similarly seen around the country, Democrats had a great night in Wisconsin. If prior elections are an indication, your election result was a blow out as you won by more than 200,000 votes or more than eight percentage points. Did you anticipate winning by that big of a margin?

Absolutely not, Drake. I mean, when we think about it historically this is the largest win that we have seen in almost 30 years. I think 1998 is when we've seen this large of a victory. But I think that this speaks to the fact that people are looking for some change, looking for someone who has the leadership capabilities and the experience of bringing people together to the table. And, while there may be folks who may try to say that this was a mandate, this was a blue wave or a blue tsunami. For me, it's about serving the state and I'm going to be focusing on making sure that we can tackle affordability, healthcare, childcare, property taxes, housing, all those different things. And that's really what my focus is on. While it was a historic night, I'm excited about it, but it's not a motivating factor about how we're going to govern.

It's likely safe to say your Milwaukee election results are the best ever, at least in the modern era. You earned a higher percentage of voters than Barack Obama and Herb Kohl have ever received in Milwaukee. How does it feel to have your hometown turnout for you?

I did not know that. You know, I'm a child of Milwaukee. This entire city, this entire community raised me, and many folks have seen the work that I did as a young person, as a community organizer, as a staffer, and as a state representative, but also being able to deliver as a county executive. And I think that with the work that I have done, and the leadership that I have shown this entire community, it shows that I not only have their belief and faith, but I have the partnership we've been able to collaborate with one another in order to really move this community forward. And I really want to say thank you to all of the city of Milwaukee, everybody in Milwaukee County who showed out to make sure that we got over the hump and won this election in the general cycle. I'm just excited about the opportunities that we have ahead of us.



Former Vice President Kamala Harris and Democratic nominee for Wisconsin governor David Crowley launched canvassers from the party's office on the northwest side of Milwaukee. Source: Pat A. Robinson / Milwaukee Courier

You recently announced a chief of staff and transition team to work through this period before you are sworn in on Jan. 4. How did you land on this group of people?

Well, I wanted to get a bunch of folks, one that represents the diversity of this state, making sure that they weren't just from southeastern Wisconsin, but making sure that we identify people who understand what the government needs to do to uplift communities. But also understands the importance of relationships. And so to have someone like Jeff Pertl, he's been a great person who was working for the state government for many years. He worked in DPI, worked within the governor's executive cabinet before, and he brings a ton of not just expertise but relationships that we're going to need in order to make sure that we move the state of Wisconsin forward. But when I think about this transition team, this transi-

Continued on page 3

Russell Goodwin Responds to Accusations That he's a Lazy Candidate Whose Prior Campaign Needed to be Saved by Opponent Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell

By Drake Bentley

The race for Milwaukee County Executive is on.

County residents will head to the polls in the new year to decide on a new chief executive after David Crowley will resign to become the governor of Wisconsin.

So far, three candidates have announced their intent to seek the office: County Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell, state Rep. Russell Goodwin and Gerald Glazer.

Once Crowley resigns a special election will be called by the county clerk and that election is expected to coincide with the spring 2027 cycle in April.

Goodwin, 44, is already facing opposition due to his prior political positions, including running as a Republican at one point, and his failure to collect enough signatures in the 2022 election for County Board.

A Democratic advisor told the Milwaukee Courier in recent days that in 2022 when Goodwin failed to collect those signatures, Nicholson-Bovell reached out to the Democratic Party of Wisconsin and encouraged them to support his write-in campaign.

The advisor said the state party then funded direct mail, digital outreach, door knocking, and text messages, for Goodwin, who ultimately lost the race. Goodwin was described by Democratic insiders as a "lazy candidate."

Campaign finance reports from 2022 show Goodwin reported more than $5,400 in contributions from the WisDems, which paid for mailers, consulting fees, and online or media advertising.

Goodwin responded to said narrative in a lengthy statement to the Courier, saying the COVID-19 pandemic deterred signature collection and he is unaware that Nicholson-Bovell had any role in helping him:

"In 2022, I spent long days and late nights knocking on doors in the cold to collect signatures. It was the middle of the pandemic, and some people were afraid to open their doors. Some told me they couldn't believe I was out knocking or that Wisconsin was still requiring candidates to collect signatures during COVID. I came up short. That was my responsibility, and I stayed in the race as a write-in candidate. This time, we have a team in place to collect signatures across Milwaukee County and check them before we file.

"I trust God's will for my life, wherever that leads. Romans 8:28 reminds me that all things work together for good, and I believe that experience worked out for my good. On the County Board, I saw what it takes to deliver services while staying within a budget. In the State Assembly, I've seen how decisions about state funding and state law shape what counties can do. I understand how county government works from both sides, and I'd bring that experience to the job of County Executive.

"Yes, Marcelia supported me in 2022. She was kind to me then, and I appre-



State Rep. Russell Goodwin and Milwaukee County Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell are seeking the position of Milwaukee County Executive. Source: Provided by campaigns

Continued on page 7

INSIDE NOV 21

- Page 2 A Seat at The Table
- Page 3 Protect Aging Parents
- Page 5 The Next 250

EDITORIAL

To submit an editorial for publication, please email it to the Milwaukee Courier at **milwaukeecourier@aol.com**. Deadline for editorials are due on Tuesdays at 12:00 p.m.

EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED, THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED ON THIS PAGE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE MILWAUKEE COURIER

SAY SOMETHING REAL

Thanksgiving: A Seat at the Table



Michelle Bryant

By Michelle Bryant

There is something special about a traditional African-American Thanksgiving. It is more than a meal. It is a production, a family reunion, a labor of love, and a ritual that begins long before the turkey hits the oven. For me, it meant driving 12 hours from Milwaukee to Birmingham, Alabama, and walking through the door to the smell of cut celery and onions wafting through the air. My mother always made sure I had "get off the road food." She wanted to ensure that I had enough strength to pick and clean greens, peel sweet potatoes, and, like clockwork, run to the store for a can of "sweet milk."

Picking up my keys, I'd hear the phone ring. My aunts would be calling to make sure I had made it to town safely. Before I could get to the car, I'd hear my brother's motorcycle or loud music coming up the street. We always heard him before we saw him. Soon he'd be in the kitchen rattling pots and my mother's nerves. There was laughter, sampling, holiday decorations being pulled out, and an open invitation to anyone who happened to stop by. Everybody had a place, and there was always room for one more.

But life has a way of lulling us into taking the things we love most for granted.

My mother, Mozella or "Mo" as she was usually called, was the oldest of three children born to my grandparents. Eight years ago, her middle sister, Aunt Carolyn, passed away. Five years ago, my mother was gone. A year and a half later, my Aunt Ann, who was my second mother and youngest of the trio, got her wings. She was quite the hell-raiser, so some of that might be wishful thinking. But one by one, the women who anchored our family were no longer there.

Suddenly, there was nowhere to go. No one calling to ask if I had gotten on the road yet. No one stirring pots or directing traffic in the kitchen. No familiar family home because we sold the house. There was no reason to go back.

My brother and I were left to forge new traditions, travel to new destinations, and redefine what family looks like. While nothing can replace what we lost, we have learned that love has a way of finding us in unexpected places.

I have been fortunate to expand my circle here in Milwaukee. I am blessed to have a seat at many tables, a kitchen where I can hang out, and a host of friends who have become my extended family. People who open their homes, share their meals, and remind me that family is not always defined by blood.

Still, there will never be a replacement for my mother's look of relief when I finally walked through the door after the long drive from Wisconsin. She didn't have to say a word. In that moment, I knew I was loved. I knew I was home. Thanksgiving will never be the same without her, or the aunts who helped make those holidays special. I miss them all terribly.

Yet, with the approach of another Thanksgiving, I am grateful. Grateful for the memories that time cannot take away. Grateful for the traditions that shaped me. And especially grateful for the many people in this community who have stepped up, held the door open, welcomed me into their homes, and made room for me at their tables.

You may never fully understand what that means to me and others in my position. But please know that it matters. Because sometimes, the greatest gift of Thanksgiving isn't what's on the table. It's knowing that there is still a place for you at one. And for that, I am truly thankful.

Little Trickles Become Big Drops: Why Milwaukee Public Schools' Fiscal Oversight Should Return to the School Board



Dr. LaKeshia N. Myers

By LaKeshia N. Myers

In recent weeks, Milwaukee Public Schools administrators asked the Board of School Directors to approve about $3.6 million in spending that had already happened. The money covered dental equipment, asbestos cleanup, architectural design plans and furniture at six schools, all tied to the district's $18 million long-range facilities plan. When Board Vice President James Ferguson asked whether the work was done, Facilities Director Mike Turza stated, "Projects have already been completed, and the money is owed to the companies."

Board Director Christopher Fons put the problem in one sentence: "We should never be voting on things after the fact."

In a district with a budget of roughly $1.6 billion, $3.6 million is a small share. That is exactly the point. Little trickles become big drops when nobody elected to watch the faucet is told it is running. Milwaukee has seen what happens when that goes on for years, and it is time to ask why the board that voters elect to oversee MPS has so little say over its money.

How 1991 Wisconsin Act 39 moved the money

Before 1991, state law required MPS to have a secretary-business manager, a position that kept the district's financial records and held significant power over the budget. The superintendent ran instruction. The business manager ran the money. Other Wisconsin districts, by contrast, assign financial roles such as clerk and treasurer to board members.

1991 Wisconsin Act 39 removed that position and moved financial oversight to the superintendent. Then-Superintendent Howard Fuller, who pushed for the change, asked how he could be responsible for education and have no power over personnel and finances. In spring 1992, the board adopted a plan to eliminate the post and hand its duties to the superintendent.

The result is an arrangement found nowhere else in Wisconsin. MPS is the only school district in the state where financial control sits with the superintendent rather than with the elected board. The district's own board has since tried to claw back some visibility: in 2010 it created the Office of Accountability and Efficiency, which reports to the board. But an office that reports to the board is not the same as a board that holds the authority.

Supporters of the 1991 change said a superintendent held to account for results needed control over people and money. That is a fair argument. It also assumes that the person with the control will tell the public, and the board, what is being spent. Sadly, this has not been the case in MPS for some time.

A string of fiscal crises

The latest $3.6 million request did not arrive in a calm stretch. It followed more than two years of financial trouble.

2024: egregiously late reports and a leadership exit. MPS fell behind on the financial reports and audits the state needs to calculate aid. The state Department of Public Instruction withheld a special education payment of $16.6 million, and the problems led to the resignation of Superintendent Keith Posley. The chief financial officer Martha Kreitzman retired, and the comptroller Alfredo Balmaseda was fired the next day.

2025: a state audit and a repeat failure. An operations audit ordered by Gov. Tony Evers, conducted by MGT of America Consulting at a cost of $2.5 million, found that the central office was not positioned to support schools and that the administration and the school board lacked clear roles. It made 29 recommendations. The same year, MPS missed state reporting deadlines for a second consecutive year, and the state suspended funding again. An $8 million achievement gap payment was withheld until January 2026.

2026: a $46 million overrun. In February, audits showed MPS had overspent its budget by $46 million in the prior

Continued on page 7

EDITORIAL

Kweku's Cypher

Let Me Tell You About My Brotherz



Dr. Miana Graves

Dr. Miana Graves

Each year, I feel called to go home to my beloved Howard University. Some years I attend; others I lovingly look at photos on my phone and imagine myself back home with my people. This year I made the journey home to celebrate 15 years as an Alumni of my beautiful Alma Mater. As anticipated, I was met with warm hugs, beautiful smiles, and the familiar voices and faces I miss so much. The feeling of being back on The Yard is indescribable. While there are many things I anticipate with my return to the Mecca, this year I've found myself reflecting on friendship, brotherhood, and safety in a way I haven't done so before.

To know me is to know that I LOVE a man of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. My love has nothing to do with the gold boots, hops, or infamous "bark" and everything to do with commitment to ***Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift.*** Let's take a quick journey back to 2007, my freshman year at Howard.

My freshman year at Howard was off to a great start. I had the unique opportunity to live in Cook Hall, which was right on campus and best known for housing student-athletes (and me lol). A man by the name of Barack Obama delivered the opening convocation speech for the class of 2011. And this little Cali girl was navigating a brand-new world more than 3000 miles away from everything she knew, all because her mother said, "You cannot go to a White school." As my first Holiday Season away from home approached, I was a little anxious about how I'd spend my time away from home, but I knew I would make the best of it. On a crisp November day when I was headed back to my dorm from the café, I saw a table and a bunch of men wearing purple and gold. I stopped by to ask what they were doing and was greeted by Brother James Thompson (4-A-05). To know James is to love him; he's a Flint, Michigan native and former Marine. James explained to me that they were collecting donations in preparation for an event at The Southeast White House. I asked if I could volunteer for the event and was welcomed with open arms. Since that day, the Alpha chapter Bruhz have been my big brothers.

Fast forward to Howard University Homecoming (HUHC) 2026. I arrived in DC on Thursday (which was a little early for me) and called my big brother JAG (3-A-06). JAG, whose name is also James, is the full embodiment of an Omega Man. He is charming, charismatic, and can talk himself in or out of any situation. I should have known better than to call JAG because I ended up out way past my bedtime. My time out was time well spent and it set the stage for the rest of my homecoming experience. Over the next several days I spent time with some of my favorite Ques in a way I hadn't quite done so before. From Park on

Continued on page 7

the MILWAUKEE COURIER

On April 30th, 2026, Milwaukee Black Media Trust began publishing the Milwaukee Courier Newspaper.

In 2026, it was acquired by Civic Media, which aims to champion democracy through the power of local voices while continuing the Courier's long tradition of centering Black stories, leadership, and community narratives. Today, the Courier remains committed to elevating the issues, achievements, and perspectives of Milwaukee's Black community.

MBM

Contributors

2003 W. Capitol Dr. Milwaukee, WI 53206

Website: milwaukeecourier.com
E-mail: milwaukeecourier@aol.com
Phone: (414) 449 5490
Fax: (414) 449-5836

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to above address
A WEEKLY PUBLICATION

FINANCIAL LITERACY

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

SPONSORED CONTENT

How the Sandwich Generation Can Help Protect Aging Parents' Finances

Planning and scam prevention tips for caregivers balancing kids and parents



If you're raising children while also supporting an older parent, you're likely managing schedules, healthcare needs, day-to-day decisions and even finances. People in this group are often called the **"sandwich generation,"** which now encompasses one in four adults in the U.S.

Women also often carry a disproportionate share of this responsibility: three in five family caregivers are women. Women are more likely to report physical, emotional and financial strain from caregiving, which can make it harder to protect their own well-being and long-term financial security.

For the sandwich generation, the holidays can be a natural time to talk with parents about money, including how to protect their finances from scams. November is Chase Fraud & Scam Prevention Month – designed to help people recognize common scams, avoid in-the-moment mistakes and better protect their money and personal information.

Here are some tips to keep in mind.

Check in and make a plan

Finances can be incredibly personal, and many parents worry that accepting help means losing independence. Start by framing the conversation around peace of mind and organization – not control.

Check in on your finances and long-term plan, too. You'll be better equipped to care for others when your own financial foundation is secure.

Also consider helping your parents create a "financial snapshot." J.P. Morgan Wealth Management's guide for supporting aging parents outlines a few considerations:

- Location of key accounts: banking, investments, retirement, credit cards, insurance
- How bills and recurring expenses are paid
- Whether beneficiaries are up to date
- Where important documents are stored and who has access

Then ask what goals matter most in the years ahead: staying in their home, supporting family, traveling, planning for healthcare or leaving a legacy. Goals can evolve, so revisit them periodically. Planning tools can help – like J.P. Morgan Wealth Plan, a free digital money coach in the Chase Mobile® app or at chase.com.

A financial advisor can help create a plan tailored to you and your parents' needs. An estate planning attorney can document your parents' wishes, including who may act if they cannot make decisions themselves.

Understand common scams

Scammers often use urgency, fear, secrecy or affection to pressure people into acting quickly. Recognizing these tactics can help you and your family spot red flags sooner. Common scams include:

- **Investment scams:** Promises of high or "guaranteed" returns with little risk.
- **Tech support scams:** Requests for payment or remote device access.
- **Impersonation scams:** Messages impersonating trusted organizations or loved ones, asking for money, passwords, account details or other personal information.
- **Romance scams:** Online relationships that lead to requests for money.

Chase hosts more than 1,000 free fraud and scam prevention workshops annually, including hundreds across all lower 48 states throughout November.

Stay proactive and vigilant

If you or a loved one suspects a scam, slow down and stop communicating with the individual immediately. Contact your bank through a trusted channel to review recent transactions and report the incident to appropriate authorities.

Also consider a few simple steps for protection:

- **"Trusted Contact Person":** Designate a trusted adult who may be notified about certain online wire activity.
- **Tech tips:** Use unique passwords, multifactor authentication and account alerts, keep devices updated and monitor accounts regularly for unusual activity.
- **Behavior changes:** Watch for secrecy around finances, unusual transactions, unexpected changes to financial documents or pressure from new acquaintances.

You're not alone

Caregiving is demanding, and it shouldn't be a solo effort. Build a support system – which can include family, friends and professionals such as healthcare providers, attorneys and financial advisors. A thoughtful conversation now can help your parents stay organized and protected in the future.

For free educational resources on planning for yourself and loved ones, visit chase.com/theknow

For more information and practical tips about fraud and scam prevention, visit chase.com/security

The views, opinions, estimates and strategies expressed herein constitutes the author's judgment based on current market conditions and are subject to change without notice, and may differ from those expressed by other areas of J.P. Morgan. This information in no way constitutes J.P. Morgan Research and should not be treated as such. You should carefully consider your needs and objectives before making any decisions. For additional guidance on how this information should be applied to your situation, you should consult your advisor.

JPMorgan Chase & Co., its affiliates, and employees do not provide tax, legal or accounting advice. You should consult your own tax, legal and accounting advisors before engaging in any financial transaction.

J.P. Morgan Wealth Management is a business of JPMorgan Chase & Co., which offers investment products and services through ***J.P. Morgan Securities LLC*** (JPMS), a registered broker-dealer and investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC.

Advertorial

Q&A: Wisconsin Governor-Elect David Crowley on Election Results and Priorities, Including Education, Healthcare, Marijuana, Act 10, Prisoner Commutations

Continued from page 1

tion team is going to help us identify cabinet level members, managers, as well as appointments for different boards, commissions, and councils who truly understand and value the state, who understand that we need to collaborate in order to move this state forward. I'm just so excited to be working with this team within the next few weeks to make sure that we're ready on day one once I'm sworn in on January 4th.

The governor is limited on what the position can accomplish unilaterally. Things will require working with the Legislature and most policies will start there. What has been your experience working with the legislative leaders and what are the priorities as governor?

I got some of my first government starts working in a legislative body, starting as a staffer on the Milwaukee County Board, a staffer in the state Senate and served in the Assembly. I understand the importance of the legislative body. And I know that as governor, this is going to be about partnership and how we work intentionally and strategically to make sure that we're tackling the issues that we heard in the campaign, specifically as it relates to affordability, as it relates to public schools and healthcare and things of that nature. I served with both the new majority leader Dianne Hesselbein as well as the speaker, Greta Neubauer, and we had great working relationships. And I look forward to building on that foundation in the next couple of weeks to make sure that we are going forward as a state. But this is about how we work with one another. As governor, I can't get anything done without the legislature and vice versa. And so I'm looking forward to working with one another to actually deliver real results.

You mentioned affordability. Specifically, how do you all go about lowering costs for the average Wisconsinites?

The first thing that we can do is repeal the minimum markup law on gas. I mean, we're talking about 40 cents a gallon that families are being charged every time they go to the pump and how this can actually be passed down to consumers as well because businesses have to pay for the inflated costs of gas as well because of this war that we have seen happening in Iran. And so, that's absolutely one thing that we can do. But it's also looking at what we can do related to property taxes. Making sure that we're investing more in public education to bring those costs down in healthcare and childcare. But as you can imagine, we're getting those priorities together, we're going to be having those conversations, but we're focusing on how we get this transition team in place to make sure that we can tackle those issues on day one.

President Donald Trump will be in office two more years, despite having a Democratic Congress. Do you see any areas that you can work with the president on in the next two years?

I think that there's always something that we can work with anybody on, it doesn't matter what side of the aisle that you are on. I think that we have a duty. We were elected to make sure that we are representing our constituents and working with those that we agree with or don't agree with in order to deliver those results. And so, whether it's the president or whether it's anybody in the state of Wisconsin, I'm always willing to sit down and have those conversations. Yes, I'm going to make sure that we're protecting the values of the state of Wisconsin, the values and the things that I ran on, and we have to fight back whenever we are being attacked on those things. But it doesn't stop us from pushing forward together. And so I'm willing to work with the current administration in any way possible, but as well as working with our congressional delegation to make sure that we're delivering for Wisconsin. Also, we've done this as county executive. I had to work through a Republican-controlled Legislature to bring resources back down from the state government. We worked with Sean Duffy at the Department of Transportation to invest in our airport and other transportation projects here in the state of Wisconsin. We recently just announced at the county, grant dollars coming from this federal administration to help with veteran homelessness. And so we have a track record of being able to work with anybody and I plan on doing that as governor.

You ran on Medicaid expansion. There were some reports out last week that it's basically impossible. It's dead on arrival. Is that your position now as well?

Look, we know that due to the decisions that were made under the Trump administration, expanding Medicare and getting those federal matching dollars have become an uphill battle. But it doesn't mean that we shouldn't be trying to tackle healthcare here in the state of Wisconsin. And I want to be very clear. I look forward to working with the Assembly as well as the Senate to make sure that we can put healthcare on the table here in the state of Wisconsin. And there are many different ways that we're going to be able to tackle that or be strategic around that. And so I'm looking forward to hunkering down and working with them to see what is really possible. Because at the end of the day, we cannot wait for the federal government. We still have to make sure that we bridge the gap for families and individuals who are in need of healthcare whenever and wherever they are.

Do you think the ultimate solution here is the federal government reengaging on healthcare again and maybe moving to like a Medicare for All system as opposed to the states getting involved here?

Well, look, I think that every state is doing the best thing that they can at this moment in reaction to the decisions that this Trump administration has made. But if we're going to fix healthcare here in the state of Wisconsin and across this country, it needs to happen at the federal level. And this is where we're going to have to lean on our congressional members.

Continued on page 6









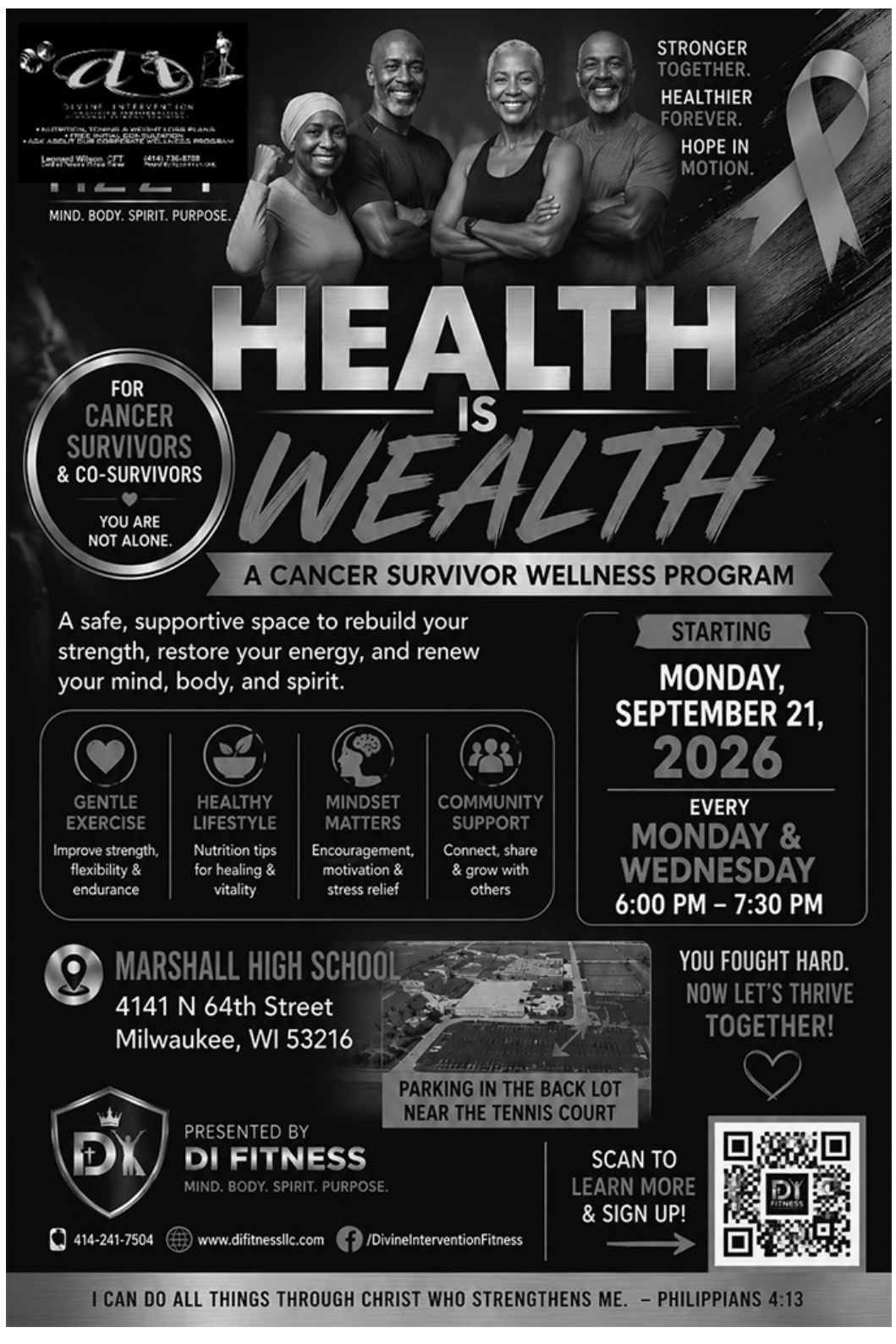
CLASSIFIEDS



MILWAUKEE
The COURIER
NEWSPAPER

FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

www.milwaukeecourier.com



FOCUS

The Next 250



Christopher Walton

By Christopher Walton

Let's be frank here. The American experiment seems to have run out of gas.

Two hundred and fifty years after the summer of 1776, America has gone from a ragtag collection of colonies hugging the Atlantic seaboard to a global superpower influencing the world through our wealth, culture, and technological advances.

We've been a shining beacon in many respects. But as the old saying goes, America does the right thing after exhausting every other option.

The American experiment began without our consideration, even though it was built on our labor. Black Americans helped build a nation that denied our humanity, much less our citizenship. Native peoples were pushed aside on their own land. Latino communities have watched borders cross them. And women, half the country, were largely left out of the game altogether.

Ever since, we've dragged America, sometimes kicking and screaming, toward its professed ideals.

From Emancipation and Reconstruction to the Civil Rights, women's rights, and LGBTQ rights movements, and the election of our first Black President, progress has never been inevitable. It has been demanded, organized, litigated, legislated, and often paid for in blood.

But let us never confuse progress with completion.

As America begins its next 250 years, the question isn't simply whether our democracy can survive. It's whether we're willing to build one capable of serving the America we've become, today and tomorrow.

The time has come for America to remake itself anew.

Let's start with Congress. We have 435 voting members of the House representing a country of roughly 345 million people. That number has been effectively frozen for more than a century while our population has more than tripled.

How can we expect meaningful representation when congressional districts contain hundreds of thousands of people, many approaching a million? Expand the House. Bring government closer to the people it governs. Maybe then they'll hear us better.

And let's talk about the Senate, a chamber that until recently sometimes looked more like a country club in Waukesha than a representative body of this entire nation.

We can begin addressing who gets a voice by giving Washington, DC, a genuine path to statehood and respecting the right of Puerto Ricans and U.S. Virgin Islanders to choose their political futures, including statehood. America can handle a few more stars on the flag.

We should expand the United States Supreme Court, too. Nine justices aren't some sacred number handed down from on high. Congress has changed the Court's size before. We can debate the right number, but let's stop pretending the current arrangement is untouchable or beyond criticism. I think a 13-justice Court, one seat for each federal judicial circuit, would suffice.

Of course, none of this happens without confronting the Senate filibuster. A procedural rule shouldn't become a permanent burial ground for voting rights, civil rights, and democratic reform.

And none of it matters if Americans cannot freely exercise their right to vote.

We cannot celebrate government by consent of the governed while millions of American citizens lack voting representation in Congress. We need a 21st-century Voting Rights Act with strong protections against racial discrimination, real enforcement, and fair representation, particularly for Black voters across the South. The battles over congressional maps, including Louisiana v. Callais, remind us that the fight over race and political power is far from settled. We need federal legislation establishing independent congressional redistricting before the maps drawn after the 2030 census.

But structural reform cannot stop in Washington.

Democracy must deliver in Milwaukee just as much as it must in Jackson, Memphis, and Atlanta. Every community wondering whether government sees them, hears them, or gives a damn about their future is a community in peril.

Our founders didn't know where this experiment would go. They were imperfect men who built an imperfect system, excluding women, enslaved people, and countless others from its promises. We still have a ways to go.

We don't honor their work by pretending it was flawless. We honor the possibility of America by continuing the work they left unfinished.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, a group of colonists declared that a new nation could govern itself. The next 250 years should be about making certain all of us have that opportunity.

America, at its core, represents some of the best of human imagination. It's going to take the imagination and energy of all of us to relight the pilot light of freedom that its original revolution sparked **for the people.**

Historic Elections Bring Joy to an Embattled Nation

Despite economic challenges, civil rights leaders see hope



Charlene Crowell

By Charlene Crowell

The glowing aftermath of November's historic midterm elections not only usher in an annual season of hope and faith but also provide an encouraging sign that our democracy will now address the needs of millions of people who have been either pushed out or locked out of economic opportunity.

Despite federal rollbacks in diversity and inclusion, fair housing, voting rights and more, when 2027 arrives, the nation's elected leaders in states and in Washington will more closely resemble the country's diversity in race, gender, and ethnicity. Beyond this year's lengthy list of historic wins, when new officials assume their duties in January, America will have:

- A Black Speaker of the House of Representatives
- 5 Black governors serving in Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Nevada and Wisconsin
- 7 Black state attorneys general protecting consumers in Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York and Washington state
- 7 Black U.S. Senators representing Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey and South Carolina
- 66 or more members in the Congressional Black Caucus, depending upon final election certifications.

A chorus of civil rights advocates herald both the victories and opportunities for the nation.

"Voters didn't just decide in this election," stated Maya Wiley, president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. "They demanded! They demanded a very different future from the one offered from the current administration and its allies… Across race, gender, sexuality, identity, nation of origin, age, religion, disability, income, and geography, the majority of this country showed what they hold most sacred — their rights and freedoms that are tied to their opportunities and well-being…We cannot just tinker with a past that made progress but proved too fragile and resulted in dreams deferred."

While Janai Nelson, Legal Defense Fund (LDF) President and Director-Counsel, applauded voters' efforts in the November midterm elections, she also quickly noted that the quest for freedom and economic inclusion continues.

"The work of rebuilding our democracy begins now and we must be bold and visionary," said Nelson. "LDF will continue its work with Black communities to hold elected officials accountable to address the very real issues facing our communities: ending the thuggery that has been unleashed by the president's reckless deportation forces, ensuring strong and effective educational opportunities for all students, making health care and housing affordable, and creating fair economic opportunities that give everyone a chance to thrive — not just those at the top. Our vote was not the final word."

The depth and breadth of the nation's financial challenges is underscored in an updated report entitled, ***State of Personal Finance in America Q3 2026***, a quarterly research study conducted by Ramsey Solutions that tracks personal finance behaviors and attitudes of everyday Americans.

According to the update, an estimated 94 million U.S. adults say they're struggling or in crisis financially. The study also found that more than half of Americans - 53 percent

Continued on page 7



Photo Credit: Hope Credit Union



Q&A: Wisconsin Governor-Elect David Crowley on Election Results and Priorities, Including Education, Healthcare, Marijuana, Act 10, Prisoner Commutations

Continued from page 3

I'm excited at the fact that we have Rebecca Cooke and Mitchell Berman, who are going to be joining both Mark Pocan and Gwen Moore in Congress, as well as Senator Tammy Baldwin. We're going to be pushing for more fixes as it relates to healthcare moving forward. And I look forward to partnering with them to not only figure out how we can strengthen what we have here in the state of Wisconsin, but how we can strengthen healthcare across this country. There's no way states are going to be able to fix healthcare completely on their own. This has to happen nationally. And I look forward to working with others to make sure that there's a federal push to do so.

Let's turn to public school funding. I'm not sure if you saw that report that at Milwaukee Public Schools, which you're obviously a graduate of, just barely less than half of the students in Milwaukee are attending MPS. What do you make of that finding?

I know that we definitely have declining birth rates all across the state of Wisconsin, and what we see happening, particularly to MPS, is affecting many school districts across the entire state. We want to make sure that none of our public schools have to dissolve, like we recently just saw happen in one of our communities here in the state of Wisconsin. And so we know that funding public schools is extremely important. And if I'm not mistaken, this particular year we've only had a little over 50% of the referendums that actually passed, which lets you know that communities are strained of resources. You can't continue to put everything on the back of our local property taxpayers and on our seniors who may be on fixed incomes. And so we need the state to step up, to help provide that relief, to make sure that our children have, and our teachers have access to the resources that they need. And so I'm looking forward to working with, again, our new Democratic majorities here in the state of Wisconsin to figure out what that looks like moving forward. But at the end of the day, we need a long-term permanent fix, not just as it relates to our funding formula for education, but also for shared revenue as a whole.

Dr. Jill Underly, head of the Department of Public Instruction, recently proposed using a good chunk of the state's $3 billion surplus to address education. Do you support said proposal?

Yeah, well, I didn't know DPI was a part of the legislative body. But as you can imagine, we're gonna have to figure this out. With the many budget gaps that we're going to see in this budget moving forward, there's going to be a lot of competing priorities. But at the end of the day, we know that public education is going to be a top priority of not just the legislative bodies, but as well as mine. And so we're going to work together to make sure that we can find both short term and long term solutions to make sure that our public schools don't continue to get the short end of the stick.

What do you want to use the surplus on and are rebate checks an option?

As you can imagine, we're going to have to talk with the legislature, and I don't want to negotiate through any print media or anything like that. But at the end of the day, we're going to be focusing on what we heard from voters, and that's tackling the affordability crisis, whether that's through property taxes, public schools, healthcare, childcare, housing, you name it. We're going to put all those things on the table and have a discussion about what this first budget looks like and decide the best way to spend the surplus dollars.

The legislative leaders have said that Act 10 and right to work, the repeal of those are a priority. It's also working its way through the courts. What kind of role do you have in seeing a reversal of Act 10 and right to work?

Well, I know that there's two lawsuits right now going through the state Supreme Court, and I'm very interested in seeing exactly how they rule in both of those cases. But let's just face it, unions, workers, they've definitely been on the menu ever since the Scott Walker era. And they haven't been able to come to the negotiating table to fight for better working conditions and benefits and wages, things of that nature. And so it's important for me that all of our union brothers and sisters, but all workers here in the state of Wisconsin have the opportunity to unionize, to negotiate for a better way of life for themselves and for their families. And so I look forward to working with our legislative body to really look to see what this really looks like because the devil is always in the details. But when it comes down to our union brothers and sisters, I will always stand with them like I have in solidarity to make sure that we continue to protect their rights.

Legislative leaders have also said in interviews that recreational marijuana legalization should happen quickly. This is a top issue for many who look around and see surrounding states with recreational marijuana and wonder what we could use the new revenue on. Voters want this and they want their leaders to do it. Has your position changed?

My position hasn't changed, but as someone who served in the Legislature, the devil's always in the details. And so, we're missing out on tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue that could be funding many of the priorities that we ran on. But I truly believe that it is time for the state of Wisconsin to legalize marijuana, and I look forward to getting that passed. What does that timeline look like? I don't know. I know that a lot of people are high on passing marijuana legally. I want to make sure that we're doing it the right way, the best way for the state of Wisconsin, and we do that by talking to other states that did this by learning the dos and don'ts. I want to make sure that whatever we put in place works for everyone.

Gov. Tony Evers recently announced 14 sentence commutations the other day. He's obviously done a lot of great work on criminal justice reform more than probably any other governor before. Is this something you anticipate continuing?

I commend the governor on bringing commutations back to the state of Wisconsin. I think it's extremely important how we give second chances and set up a lot of people to become better citizens, returning citizens into society. And it is something that I will continue as the next governor of this great state. I believe in criminal justice reform, and believe that we have to strengthen many of our laws as it relates to criminal justice. And look forward to working with the Legislature to do so in some capacity.

The Black caucus in the Legislature is probably the most powerful Black caucus the state's ever seen. Nothing can really get passed without the approval of the caucus. You're obviously the first Black governor in that position. Is there a Black agenda for you? I know you represent the entire state, but is there something that Black folks who really turned out to vote for you and put you in office can expect from you?

Well, I think it's important, one, to just say, congratulations to Senator LaTonya Johnson on her appointment as the co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee. And you think about our new majority leader, Kalan Haywood II and Senator Dora Drake becoming the speaker pro tempore. That's phenomenal, not just for the Black caucus, but for the state of Wisconsin. And I know that the Black caucus themselves are going to continue to have conversations about what their legislative agenda is going to be. But as you can imagine, Drake, the issues that we're going to tackle are not just going to tackle the African-American community, it's going to tackle every single community across this state. And while recognizing that I am the first Black governor, I want to make sure that when the tides rise, all the boats rise. And so when we talk about investments into public education or public transit or healthcare or childcare or raising the minimum wage, these are things that's going to help out, not just Black people, but these are going to help out all communities across this entire state. And I just want to make sure that no matter what ZIP code you live in or what your last name may be, that you can continue to have access to opportunity. And I think that's the most important thing we can be focusing on while making sure that we push back against anything that's going to erode what we value as a state.



Russell Goodwin Responds to Accusations That he's a Lazy Candidate Whose Prior Campaign Needed to be Saved by Opponent Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell

Continued from page 1

ciated it. I can't confirm whether she arranged the state party spending your source described. She supported my opponent, Jordan Roman, in my most recent Assembly primary, and I still respect her. I believe my experience at both levels of government makes me the better candidate for County Executive.

"As for being called lazy, I'd invite your source to spend a day with me. I knock on doors and talk with voters, and I keep showing up for the people I serve. That means visiting sick children, sitting with people in their final hours, feeding people who are homeless, and helping grieving families make funeral arrangements and lay their loved ones to rest. While also taking care of two of my sick elderly aunts one of whom passed away and the other, who had a double long transplant at the same time. I was doing that work while running a competitive Assembly primary, and my team and I earned the voters' support and won. I'll bring that same work ethic to serving Milwaukee County."

Nicholson-Bovell declined to comment on this story.

Goodwin served on the County Board from 2020 to 2022. When he sought re-election in 2022 he failed to collect enough signatures and a number of signatures were disqualified because signers didn't reside in the district.

During a write-in contest, Goodwin lost to his conservative predecessor Deanna Alexander. Goodwin initially called for protests at Alexander's home over prior comments she made that he characterized as racist and anti-LGBT. He would later cancel the protest.

Goodwin would go on to seek a Milwaukee Common Council seat in 2023, when he came in fourth place, ultimately losing to Ald. Larresa Taylor. The next year, Goodwin sought his Assembly seat after LaKeshia Myers decided to run for state Senate. He won a highly contested Democratic primary with just 32.6% of the vote, but sailed to victory in the general election.

Way back in 2014, Goodwin failed to make the ballot for an Assembly race and instead ran a write-in campaign for the Republican primary, but fell short of the 1,000 write-in votes needed to make the general election ballot. He received three write-in votes in the general election.

In 2019, Alexander decided not to run again for the County Board seat and Goodwin was elected without opposition.

Goodwin said in a news release earlier this week that he is seeking the county executive position "to ease the pressure of rising costs on families, make neighborhoods safer, and run county government more efficiently and openly."

The Milwaukee County Comptroller's April 2026 forecast projected a budget gap of about $76 million for 2028 without long-term fixes. Goodwin said he would start by looking for savings in county administration, opening the county's checkbook to the public, and protecting frontline jobs and services as he works to lower the county's share of the property tax bill.

His listed priorities are lowering county property taxes; fighting violent crime and reckless driving; making county jails safer; keeping buses safe, reliable, and affordable; and maintaining parks and investing in students.

Goodwin attended Milwaukee Public Schools, a private school, and graduated from Shorewood High School as a Chapter 220 kid. He participated in a precollege program at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and attended Milwaukee Area Technical College, the University of Memphis, and Oral Roberts University.

Little Trickles Become Big Drops: Why Milwaukee Public Schools' Fiscal Oversight Should Return to the School Board

Continued from page 2

school year, about 2.9 percent of a $1.54 billion budget. Transportation and food costs were the main drivers. Superintendent Brenda Cassellius said the overspending went on for, "many, many, year." The district froze non-essential hiring, and the board later approved a plan to 260 positions.

November 2026: a bank impersonation scam. MPS announced it had lost $450,000 to bank impersonation fraud, recovered $255,000 and was working to recover the remaining $195,000. Meanwhile, MPS CFO Aycha Sawa was still employed by the district as of November 5th and a criminal investigation is under way.

The $3.6 million the board did not know about

District policy, as reported, requires that change orders over $25,000 be reported to the board as soon as practicable or within 60 days after completion. Changes over $50,000 need approval from an executive officer, with notice to the board within 60 days. Therefore, the rule asks the board to learn about spending after it happens.

Superintendent Cassellius said the district's chief operating officer approved the $3.6 million. Left unanswered were when that approval came, whether it preceded the work, and whether the board was told on time. Cassellius said she knew the general categories but wanted specifics before discussing them publicly.

Board President Missy Zombor said she believes the spending did not follow policy and that, even if policy allows after-the-fact action, the board should not take it while trying to restore trust in district finances. Director Fons asked what would happen if the board voted no. The answer: the district would have to find the money to pay the contracts anyway. That is not oversight; that is a signal that the board needs to tighten its administrative policy as soon as possible and advocate for a legislative repeal of 1991 Act 39.

Return the oversight to the people who answer to voters

The School Board is elected by Milwaukee residents. The superintendent is hired and can be dismissed by that board. When the board holds no real authority over the money, the public's representatives are left to read about decisions in the news and vote on them afterward. This is ludicrous.

Returning fiscal oversight to the board does not mean the board should run the district day to day. It means restoring the checks that every other Wisconsin district takes for granted. Those checks could include:

- A finance officer who reports to the board, not only to the superintendent.
- Board approval before spending above a set threshold, replacing reports sent up to 60 days after the work is finished.
- Regular, plain-language budget-to-actual reports to the board and the public, so overspending is caught in months, not years.
- A clear definition of the board's and the administration's roles, as the state-ordered audit urged.

MPS has made progress on its audits and its reporting, and the people doing that work deserve credit. But the fixes of the last two years were driven by state pressure, a governor's audit and a scandal. Lasting accountability should not depend on a crisis. Strong oversight needs a structure that works when things are going well, and that is what 1991 Wisconsin Act 39 removed.

Milwaukee's children, families and taxpayers deserve a board that sees the spending before it is done. The faucet should never run unwatched.

Let Me Tell You About My Brotherz

Continued from page 2

14th to the 86' Bruhz (40th Anniversary) Suite and everywhere in between, I had a ball! While I'd love to share all the details of my HUHC weekend, that is not the purpose of this piece. The purpose of this writing is to share what it means to be loved, respected, and protected by men who are not kin to you.

As a woman navigating the world, there are not many spaces where we can just exist and feel safe around men. Since my first community service event with the Alpha Chapter Omegas, I have always felt safe, and this homecoming was no different. In every space I was with them, I was taken care of. Whether that was ensuring I had water, food, a ride, or someone to walk me back to the hotel in the rain – they had me covered. I never felt as if my drink was unsafe, never felt like I was being sexualized, and never felt concerned about how we'd get from one event to the next. I simply existed! I learned the legend of **Spring 1986 – J. Flash's 20 Bloody Pearls of Two Trick,** ate good, and had a ball with the guys.

It didn't really hit me how freely I lived among men homecoming weekend until I was headed to the airport early Sunday evening. Something about the ride to the airport knocks the homecoming bliss out of you, and the impending reality of work and life starts to creep in. Perhaps it was my mind preparing to transition back to my role as a psychologist that brought me down to earth-- or maybe it was a slight sadness of no longer feeling the safety of the Omega Men around that got me thinking. Regardless, I had the most sobering realization that many women do not feel safe around men and have not had the privilege of just being in the way I had the past few days.

While I could discuss the daunting statistics of women who have been harmed by men or reflect on stories I've heard from patients and friends about harm caused to them by men – I will not do that here. This piece is a space of love and gratitude for them, Omega Men who have uplifted me and embraced me from day one. When I hear "Friendship is Essential to the Soul," I know that friendship exists beyond the members of the Fraternity. If you find a friend in an Omega Man, you've found a friend for life.

This is both a love letter and a thank you to all the Omega Men who have loved and protected me. In no particular order, I will honor them by name:

Tristan Porter, James Thompson, James "JAG" Garris, Theodore Graham, Charles Odia, Rylon McDuell-Batiste, Shaka Mitchell, Kweku Amoasi, Ndubuisi Ahurounye, Alvin Davie Jr., Tory Landry, Kevin Stephens, Brian Haley, and so many others!

Historic Elections Bring Joy to an Embattled Nation

Continued from page 5

- are living paycheck to paycheck.

"When more than half of Americans are cutting back on Christmas gifts, it shows just how much families are feeling the pressure," said Rachel Cruze, personal finance expert and co-host of "The Ramsey Show" and "Smart Money Happy Hour." "Christmas should be a time of joy, not a financial burden that follows you into the new year."

For some federal lawmakers, resurrecting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB) to its rightful regulatory role is a priority. In published comments appearing in a recent article by The Guardian, Representative Bill Foster of Illinois and Senators Raphael Warnock of Georgia and Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada plan to aggressively scrutinize what has happened at the CFPB in recent years.

"Next Congress, my colleagues on the Financial Services Committee and I will investigate the unconstitutional dismantling of the CFPB," Foster said, adding that he and other committee members will pursue "subpoenas, investigations, hearings, and, ultimately, legislative action to restore consumer protections in this country and hold accountable those who seek to profit off the most vulnerable Americans."

Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, a former Harvard professor credited as being CFPB's 'brainchild' is also speaking up for the embattled agency.

"Accountability is coming," said Warren. "If you're a Wall Street executive, Big Tech CEOs, giant corporations that have been cheating people, you should be worried. And government officials who have put their own interests ahead of the public interest, should be worried too."

Hopes for future consumer-friendly reforms also include relief for the 42.6 million student loan borrowers who collectively struggle with $1.7 trillion of debt.

"Borrowers expect the newly elected Congress to address the student debt crisis and work to make student loan payments more affordable," said Natalia Abrams, Student Debt Crisis Center President. "The 120th Congress has an opportunity and a responsibility to fulfill their promises of affordability. Student loan borrowers deserve a seat at the table and real solutions that address the financial burden they carry every day."

Now, before new terms of office begin, is a season for Black America to celebrate our hope, joy, and faith in the future.

As Derrick Johnson, the NAACP President and CEO noted, "Once again, Black voters have proven that we are not bystanders in this country, we are its builders."

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

The MILWAUKEE COURIER NEWSPAPER


ON AIR
WNOV
860 AM 106.5 FM
THE VOICE
Listen & Watch
Live Weekly
YouTube
@wnovthevoice
@860wnov
facebook