

5,314 weeks, since the **1921 Tulsa Race Massacre**

MURIEL MIGNON LILLY CABELL was 7 when her family's home and photography business on North Elgin Street were destroyed by the white mob.

It's long overdue for the criminals who destroyed the Historic Greenwood District in 1921 to be held accountable. Each week we remember survivors or descendants.

HOUSE MOVES EDUCATION PLAN: \$500 MILLION OF NEW FUNDING, NEW PARENTAL CHOICE TAX CREDIT

By **BENNETT BRINKMAN** AND
TRES SAVAGE, NONDOC

Standing with two dozen of his House Republican colleagues around him, Oklahoma Speaker Charles McCall (R-Atoka) today announced an education proposal that pairs school-choice reform with \$500 million of additional public school funding. The House proposal would mandate a \$2,500 teacher pay raise and provide districts with up to an additional \$2 million each for discretionary investments, while also creating new per-student refundable tax credits for private school and homeschool families.

EDUCATION PLAN *On A2*



ILLUSTRATION THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE

STATE

OKLAHOMA PANEL CERTIFIES \$2B MORE FOR LAWMAKERS TO SPEND

By **ASSOCIATED PRESS**

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A panel led by Gov. Kevin Stitt determined Friday that Oklahoma lawmakers will have about \$2 billion more to spend in next year's budget than they did in the current one.

OKLAHOMA BUDGET *On A3*

STATE

HOW A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER, CONSERVATIVE, BECAME A CULTURE WAR TARGET

By **JENNIFER PALMER**, OKLAHOMA WATCH

Sharon Hurst is in the crossfire of a culture war. The Bartlesville restaurant owner has been harassed by an anti-gay, conservative pastor. Then, last week, a one-minute video of a drag queen performance inside her Bartlesville restaurant was posted by

CULTURE WAR TARGET *On A3*

STATE

OKLAHOMA LAWMAKERS FILE 40 ANTI-LGBTQ BILLS

By **ARI FIFE**, OKLAHOMA WATCH

Oklahoma lawmakers have introduced 40 bills limiting LGBTQ Oklahomans' healthcare access, inclusion in schools and options for self-expression this legislative session, an Oklahoma Watch analysis shows.

ANTI-LGBTQ BILLS *On A5*

STATE

POST-ROE, NATIVE AMERICANS FACE EVEN MORE ABORTION HURDLES

By **LAURA UNGAR** AND **HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH**, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A few months after South Dakota banned abortion last year, April Matson drove more than nine hours to take a friend to a Colorado clinic to get the procedure. The trip brought back difficult memories of Matson's own abortion at the same clinic in 2016. The former grocery store worker and parent of two couldn't afford a hotel and slept in a tent near a horse pasture — bleeding and in pain.

Getting an abortion has long been **POST-ROE NATIVE AMERICANS** *On A8*

LOCAL

OKLAHOMA CIO: VETERANS' INFORMATION STORED OUTSIDE STATE NETWORK



PHOTO RODNEY PRODUCTIONS, PEXELS.COM

By **TRES SAVAGE**, NONDOC

The state's chief information officer told members of the Oklahoma Veterans Commission on Wednesday that six databases maintaining veterans' personal identification information are being managed on a site outside **VETERANS INFORMATION** *On A9*

NATION

New Orleans HBCUs Revive the Tradition of Black-Jewish Scholar Relations

By **TAMERRA GRIFFIN**, WORD IN BLACK

After Dillard University President Dr. Rochelle Ford began her term last July, she visited the school's shuttered National Center for Black-Jewish Relations, which was established in 1974 and closed in 1997, and read a book about past symposiums held on **SCHOLAR RELATIONS** *On A13*

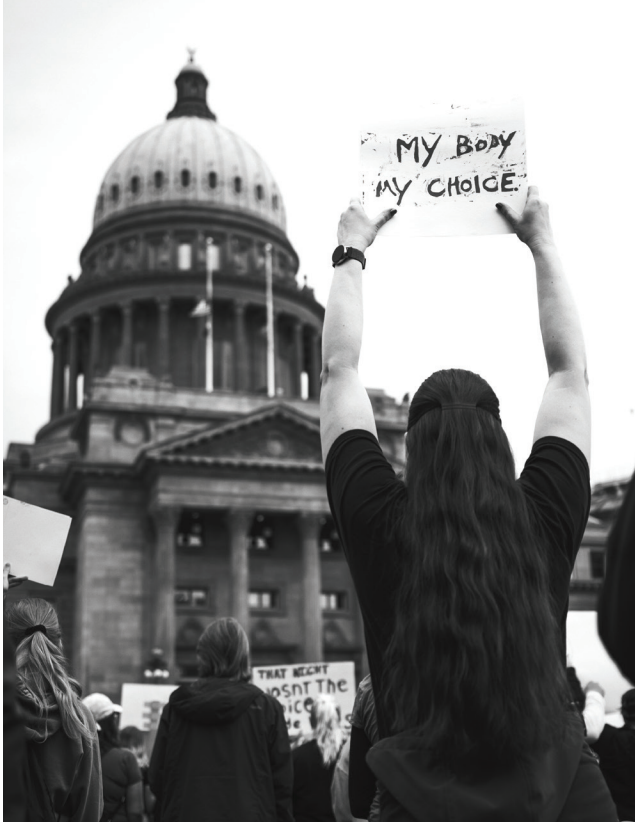


PHOTO BRETT SAYLES, PEXELS.COM



EDUCATION PLAN from AI

The plan, announced as one measure but split into two bills to avoid constitutional concerns, changes the public dynamic of education-related negotiations between the House and Senate in only the second week of the year’s regular session. Lawmakers have until the final Friday in May to craft next fiscal year’s state budget, and the House’s proposed \$500 million increase for common education would be even larger than the historic teacher pay raise passed in 2018 ahead of the teacher walkout.

“We feel that the plan supports parents and students and also supports teachers and schools,” McCall said. “This is an every kid wins policy and funding plan.”

Three hours after McCall’s press conference, as Senate members were still reviewing the details, the House Appropriations and Budget Committee advanced the two measures: HB 2775, containing the appropriations, and HB 1935, proposing the tax credits.

The HB 2775 vote finished 27-8, with all Democrats on the committee opposing it after raising concerns about a per-district \$2 million cap on the undesignated \$300 million section of the bill. Rep. Mark Vancuren (R-Owasso) and Rep. Judd Strom (R-Copan) also voted against the bill.

HB 1935 also advanced out of the committee 27-8, with the same lawmakers opposing. Rep. Melissa Provenzano (D-Tulsa) debated against both measures.

“We’re creating two systems and tracks for kids — the public schools who teach everyone and the private schools who pick and choose,” she said.

McCall, who artfully dodged a question the week prior about whether he is considering a 2026 gubernatorial campaign, sat with his colleagues through the full committee meeting, an atypical occurrence for the busy leader of the House. When Vancuren voted against the first measure, McCall smiled at his colleague and cracked a joke.

After the meeting, Vancuren explained his reason for breaking from the rest of his caucus.

“The main reason was because I discussed it with my district extensively, and over the time of talking with them back and forth trying to explain the bill to them, they came to the conclusion that they did not support the bill,” Vancuren said.

We’re creating two systems and tracks for kids — the public schools who teach everyone and the private schools who pick and choose.

Rep. Melissa Provenzano (D-Tulsa)

Vancuren added that he will “try to explain” the proposals to his constituents further in the hope “I can represent them with a yes vote on the (House) floor.”

Treat: ‘We are very methodical’

McCall and House leaders held their press conference 30 minutes before the Senate Republican Caucus was scheduled to meet for lunch. The closed-door Senate GOP meeting lasted two hours, with the House’s plan receiving deep discussion. Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat (R-OKC) said the meeting could have lasted longer.

“(I) appreciate them putting forth this plan, and we’re still trying to digest it all,” Treat said at his own press availability. “We are very methodical. We went through all the details we knew. Obviously, I am a proponent of school choice.”

HB 2775 would put an additional \$150 million into the state funding formula for a mandatory \$2,500 across-the-board teacher pay raise, and it also proposes an additional \$300 million for public school districts that “basically can be used for anything within the academic realm,” according to McCall. An additional \$50 million would address funding disparities for poorer districts through the Redbud framework created last year.

In what would also be a significant expansion of school choice policy in Oklahoma, HB 1935 proposes the so-called “Oklahoma Parental Choice Tax Credit Act,” which would offer parents refundable tax credits of up to \$5,000 for a child enrolled in a private school and up to \$2,500 for a child who is homeschooled.

The tax credits, which carry an estimated potential fiscal impact of between \$246 million and \$300 million in lost revenue collections, are slightly different than the education savings accounts — or school vouchers — that failed last session and that have been championed by

leading conservative groups and politicians.

The tax revenue impact could affect another 2023 session priority of Republican legislative leaders and Gov. Kevin Stitt: tax reform, which largely fell apart during negotiations last session. Asked how the potential \$800 million impact of McCall’s two education proposals could impact tax reform conversations, Treat said the session is still young.

“We’ll take a look at it globally. We’re in week two of session, so we’ve got some time to analyze it and see where we’re at,” Treat said. “I’ve appointed some people from the Senate to work with the House and governor on tax reform ideas, and they have their initial meeting today. So I don’t see these as mutually exclusive. I think the conversation continues. Obviously, if any tax reform were to reduce revenue, this is spending revenue, and you have to balance it all out.”

McCall acknowledged that the education plan has “implications” for other budgetary negotiations this session, and he said to expect “continued discussions throughout the session on tax reform.”

“Everything we do up here has an impact, and everything that we do has to be considered throughout the session,” McCall said. “And ultimately when we come to the budget. We are in a very strong revenue position in the state. We have record level reserves. We want to keep we want to keep the state in fiscal position as well.”

McCall emphasized that he believes in his plan’s benefits for Oklahoma students.

“The House maintains its position that good education policy should work everywhere in the state of Oklahoma,” McCall said. “We believe that this plan benefits every student, parent and teacher in the state of Oklahoma. We have had discussions in the past about the mechanisms of ESAs or vouchers — this plan does not contain those mechanisms. This plan that we

will roll out today — the House’s education plan — provides for less government intrusion into local districts and the personal lives and finances of Oklahomans.”

Baker: ‘We figured out the solution’

As proposed in HB 1935, McCall’s tax credit plan would allow parents to claim up to \$5,000 per child if they send their children to private school and up to \$2,500 per child for homeschool expenses. McCall emphasized that parents would have to provide proof of related expenses to claim the credit.

If the bill passes, it would take affect July 1, but the tax credits would be retroactive so that parents could claim the reimbursement this year. The tax credits would be refundable, meaning parents could claim the credit and receive up to \$5,000 cash if they had no state income tax liability.

In the House Appropriations and Budget Committee meeting, House Common Education Chairwoman Rhonda Baker (R-Yukon) said the Oklahoma Tax Commission “would promulgate the rules” for the bill if it becomes law, including receipt requirements and proof of enrollment.

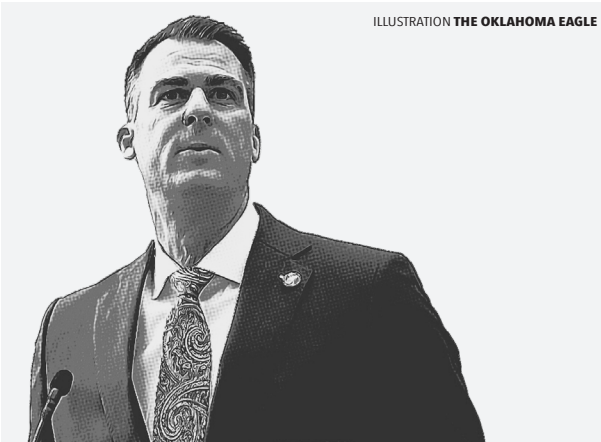
In an effort to ensure the two bills’ permanence if they become law, McCall also said the tax credit program would stop if future budgets passed by the Legislature do not maintain the proposed increased education appropriations.

“The authorization of the tax credit will be tied to the new level of funding for public education in the state of Oklahoma,” McCall said. “(If a) future legislature does not fund education going forward at this new base, then the tax credit will be suspended until funding is restored.”

In his announcement, McCall emphasized the differences between his proposed tax credits and the more controversial private school vouchers, which he has said he opposes. McCall said tax

EDUCATION PLAN Continued On A3

Legislature
will have
\$12.6 billion to
spend



KEVIN STITT, Governor, state of Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA BUDGET from AI

The Board of Equalization certified that the Legislature will have \$12.6 billion to spend in the budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. That’s an increase of \$2 billion from last year’s \$10.6 billion that lawmakers were authorized to spend.

The Legislature also has another \$1.4 billion stashed away in state savings accounts and \$700 million that was appropriated last year to help lure a manufacturing facility

to Oklahoma that didn’t materialize.

Despite the rosy financial projections, Republican state Sen. Roger Thompson, the chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, warned that much of the additional revenue lawmakers have to spend, more than \$1.3 billion, is one-time cash that wasn’t spent last year. He said that revenue is non-recurring and should only be spent on one-time projects.

Thompson also cautioned

that the available revenue is based on projected collections and could end up being lower, particularly if oil and natural gas prices continue to fall. The price of crude oil has fallen from about \$92 per barrel at the beginning of November to about \$75 per barrel this week.

“We’ve got a warmer winter than had been anticipated ... and so I think natural gas will go down as well,” said Thompson, of Okemah. “And those are our two big revenue drivers.”



Gov. Kevin Stitt and State Supt. of Public Instruction Ryan Walters argued for a school choice proposal

EDUCATION PLAN *from A2*

credits form a better school choice plan than vouchers because they do not draw from existing school appropriations.

McCall did say that if every private and homeschool family took advantage of the proposed tax credit, the total cost in revenue could be between \$246 million and \$300 million. However, he said he did not believe all families would take advantage of the tax credits.

Gov. Kevin Stitt and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters have both argued for a school choice proposal this session, and they have cited their recent

elections as evidence for a “mandate” from Oklahomans for such a system.

McCall said Stitt is supportive of his bill.

“Gov. Stitt is aware of this plan and he is supportive of the plan unless he’s changed his mind in the last few hours,” McCall said. “He’s excited about it. I think he really likes the House’s approach where we are ensuring that education for every kid in the state is addressed in this building.”

Stitt’s press secretary, Kate Vesper, offered a brief statement.

“We are encouraged by the House’s momentum to ensure students across Oklahoma can receive a high-quality education,” Vesper said.

Walters tweeted a video of himself

Total cost in revenue could be between \$246 million and \$300 million

at the State Department of Education on Thursday praising the proposal.

“It will empower families across the state to choose the school of their choice,” Walters said. “This is a great step in the right direction. This does a tremendous job of giving that comprehensive school choice to every family in the state of Oklahoma.”

McCall’s tax credit bill comes as Sen. Julie Daniels (R-Bartlesville) and Sen. Shane Jett (R-Shawnee) have already filed their own bill in the Senate to create a voucher or education savings account (ESA) system.

“I’m just learning about it,” Daniels said at the Capitol after McCall’s press conference. “We were just in caucus talking about it. I think it’s a very positive step forward, and I’m still for

robust school choice, so I’m giving it new consideration.”

In the House GOP press conference, Baker supported the tax credit plan while appearing to offer veiled criticism of vouchers.

“This House has been very diligent about being careful to protect our constituencies, and I want you to look around the room, and I want to give credit to everyone that’s standing here because when the attacks were upon us, what did we do? We got together and we worked and we figured out the solution without selling out to special interest groups that were putting pressure on us,” Baker said. “What we have seen in the past didn’t necessarily represent or protect every child in the state — this does.”

Libs of TikTok, which has 1.8 million followers... exposes so-called leftist

CULTURE WAR TARGET *from A1*

Libs of TikTok on Twitter – where it’s been viewed more than 1.2 million times. The tweet describes the drag queen’s dancing, says the show was in front of children and billed as family friendly.

Libs of TikTok, which has 1.8 million followers, posts videos to fight a culture war by exposing so-called leftists. Its founder remained anonymous until exposed by The Washington Post last year. The posts feed right-wing media, influence



SHARON HURST, seeks to make her Bartlesville establishment Crossing 2nd different from other restaurants. Now the Air Force veteran who votes conservative finds herself targeted in a culture war.

politicians and shape anti-LGBTQ public policy.

Hurst says the post mischaracterized the performance; it was an event for adults in the back of the restaurant, Crossing 2nd in Bartlesville.

“What they’re trying to do is link us to children,” she said.

In a phone interview Tuesday, Hurst described herself as conservative. She voted for Ryan Walters for state superintendent of schools — who retweeted the post on Jan. 22 from his

campaign account and wrote, “these are not Oklahoma values.”

Before opening Crossing 2nd, she worked for two decades in the oil and gas industry as a petroleum engineer. She’s also a veteran who served seven years in the Air Force.

She’s Jewish, her husband is Christian and they respect each other’s differences, she said.

“I opened this place so it could be an inclusive place,” she said. “We don’t care who you are, as long as you

don’t hurt others.”

She opened Crossing 2nd in February 2020, two weeks before restaurants and bars shuttered at the start of the coronavirus pandemic. They hosted their first drag show later that year and it brought in more than 100 customers, so they started hosting the shows twice a month.

“They’re not weird,” Hurst said of her customers. “They’re normal people. It’s entertainment.”

The drag shows made Crossing 2nd the target of the leader of a Tennessee-based ministry called Warriors for Christ. Members of the group travel the country to protest drag queen story time and pride events.

Warriors for Christ was labeled one of Tennessee’s anti-LGBTQ hate groups in 2021 by the Southern Poverty Law Center, an Alabama-based not-for-profit whose work includes tracking and exposing hate groups and extremists in the U.S.

Hurst said Warriors for Christ’s Rich Penkoski has been harassing her and her customers on social media. In a November YouTube post that includes the same video footage as the one on Libs of TikTok, he calls her a liar and writes “do NOT give them your business until they publicly repent for this abomination.”

Leaders of Oklahomans for Equality Bartlesville also say Penkoski harassed them. A Washington County judge granted a temporary protective order against Penkoski for protesting the Bartlesville Pride event, which Oklahomans for Equality Bartlesville hosted, shouting “vulgar and obscene things” while holding a sign that read “Got AIDS Yet” as well as making a threatening Facebook post that he

has since deleted, according to court records.

Penkoski spoke during a public meeting of the Bartlesville City Council in support of an ordinance banning “adult entertainment” in public parks, even though he doesn’t appear to live in Bartlesville. The city council on Jan. 3 moved forward with the ordinance, despite warnings from city staff that there could be legal and unforeseen consequences of restricting performances in public parks, according to a story in the Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise.

Hurst, the owner of Crossing 2nd, said though she’s been targeted, too, she sees a difference between the pride event and the drag shows at her restaurant: pride was held in a public space but Crossing 2nd is a private business.

Crossing 2nd held its last drag show in December, and Hurst said she won’t be having anymore because of the hate and divisiveness and the potential for violence — a doughnut shop in Tulsa has been vandalized twice after hosting an art event featuring drag queens. The second time, the assailant damaged the shop with a molotov cocktail and left behind an envelope with anti-LGBTQ messages and scripture according to a Washington Post story.

“It’s gotten so out of hand,” Hurst said.

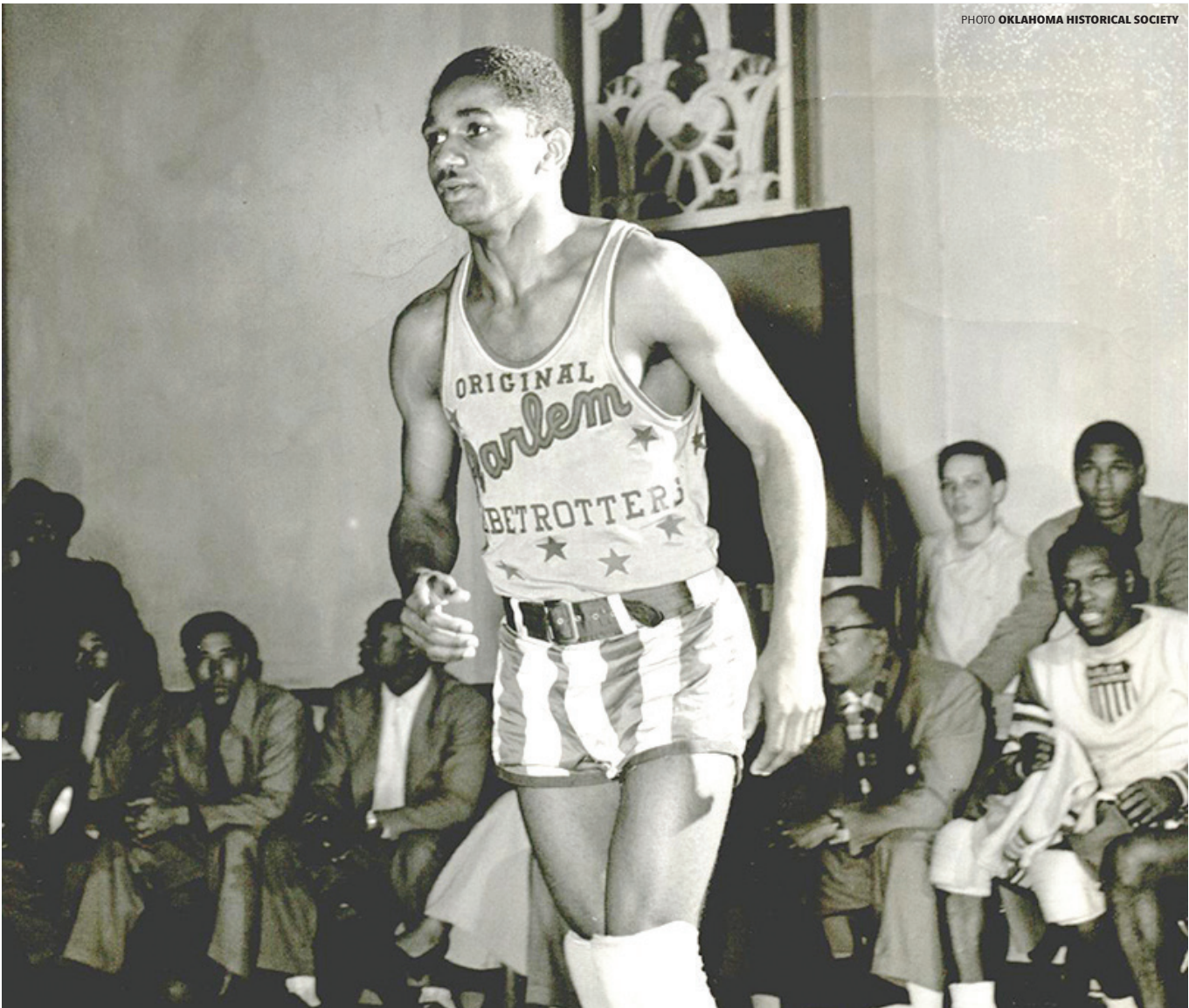
JENNIFER PALMER, has been a reporter with Oklahoma Watch since 2016 and covers education. Contact her at (405) 761-0093 or jpalmer@oklahomawatch.org. Follow her on Twitter @jpalmerOKC.

Marques Haynes

Harlem Globetrotter and Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Member

By LARRY O'DELL, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND CULTURE

In his forty-six-year career Marques Haynes played professional basketball and was billed as the world’s greatest dribbler.



MARQUES HAYNES, 2012.201.B0253.0456, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS.

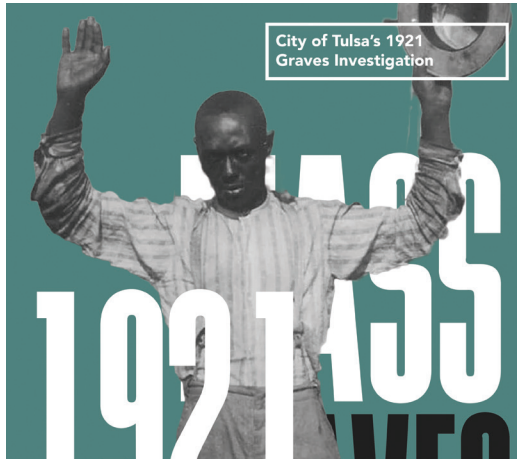
In his forty-six-year career Marques Haynes played professional basketball and was billed as the world’s greatest dribbler. Born March 10, 1926, in Sand Springs, Oklahoma, in 1941 Haynes captained the town’s Booker T. Washington High School to a Negro national championship held at Tuskegee, Alabama. His team defeated the Oklahoma twins Lance and Lawrence Cudjoe of Seminole’s Booker T. Washington. The three later teamed to lead the Langston University Lions to a record of 112 wins to only three losses and a fifty-nine-game winning streak. The trio also anchored Langston to a 1946 upset victory of the Harlem Globetrotters in an exhibition game at Oklahoma City. The next year Haynes and the Cudjoes played in Globetrotter jerseys. Haynes’s first stint as a Globetrotter lasted

until 1953. In 1948 and 1949 Haynes and the team defeated the National Basketball Association (NBA) champion Minneapolis Lakers and George Mikan. In 1950 the Globetrotters refused to sell Haynes’s contract, depriving him of being the first African American in the NBA; he later declined NBA opportunities in 1953 and 1955. After a contract dispute with the Globetrotters, he created a rival team, the Harlem Magicians, in 1953. During these early years the Globetrotters and Magicians traveled all over the world and played basketball games before dignitaries and global leaders. Contrastingly, they suffered discrimination at home and had difficulty locating hotels and restaurants that would serve an African American troupe. In 1972 Haynes rejoined the Globetrotters as a player

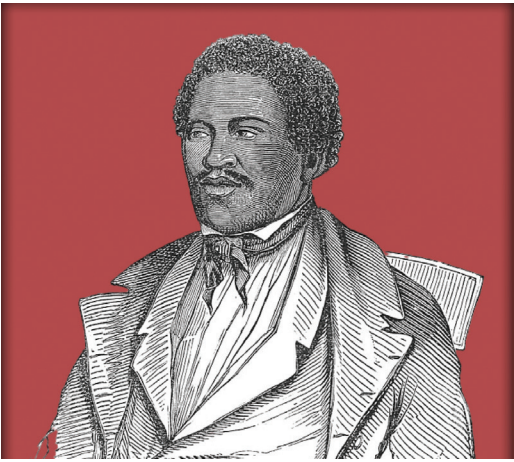
and coach, remaining with the team until 1979. From 1979 to 1981 he toured with the Bucketeers. He then played with the Harlem Wizards from 1981 through 1983. His last nine years of professional basketball were with his recreated Harlem Magicians from 1983 until 1992. Haynes earned the distinction of being the first Harlem Globetrotter player glorified in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. He has also been enshrined in the Langston Hall of Fame, the NAIA Hall of Fame, and the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame. Haynes, Meadowlark Lemon, and Wilt Chamberlain are the only Globetrotters to have their jersey numbers retired. At the dawn of the twenty-first century Haynes resided in Dallas, Texas, with his family. He died on May 22, 2015, at the age of eighty-nine.

THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY is an agency of the government of Oklahoma dedicated to promotion and preservation of Oklahoma’s history and its people by collecting, interpreting, and disseminating knowledge and artifacts of Oklahoma.

Featured Last Week



Latest Developments
In The 1921 Graves Investigation



The Revolutionary Act
of Black Love



Race Against
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The Oklahoma Eagle

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PHOTO WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH

PROTESTORS gathered against legislation that would ban transgender medical care and other bills that target LGBTQ Oklahomans at the state Capitol on Monday Feb. 6, 2023.



State Legislators Across The Nation Introduced 315 ANTI-LGBTQ BILLS

ANTI-LGBTQ BILLS from AI

When the first bills were considered Wednesday by a Senate committee, about 30 LGBTQ community members lined both sides of the meeting room, wearing bright pinks and blues in support of the trans community two days after Gov. Kevin Stitt called for a statewide ban on gender-confirming procedures for minors in his State of the State speech.

Those community members were excluded from discussion on a bill banning gender-confirming care for minors and another that was modified to block public funds from going to providers of gender-confirming care. The Senate Rules committee allowed no time for public comment.

The bulk of the hour-long meeting was taken up by the committee's Democratic members, Sen. Julia Kirt, D-Oklahoma City, and Sen. Kay Floyd, D-Oklahoma City, asking rapid-fire questions of the bill's authors, Sen. David Bullard, R-Durant, and Sen. Julie Daniels, R-Bartlesville.

Daniels and Bullard struggled to answer questions about vague or undefined aspects of their bills. Daniels failed to reference specific peer-reviewed reports she used to develop her bill. Kirt and Floyd were the only votes against sending both bills to the Senate floor.

After the meeting, Nicole McAfee, the executive director of LGBTQ advocacy group Freedom Oklahoma, stood in a huddle of protestors, many visibly dejected.

"It is not an easy session," McAfee said to the group. "Being here is never an easy thing. And I want to thank you all for bearing witness to what happened today."

More bills like these could be advancing. Among the proposals filed by state Republican legislators are bills that would limit classroom discussion of gender and sexual orientation, prohibit the use of pronouns based on gender identity in schools and ban drag shows in public places. At least 16 of those bills could affect gender-confirming care for minors and adults.

Stitt signed a bill basing school-sponsored sports team membership on biological sex last spring. He signed another law into effect banning nonbinary birth certificate gender markers or gender marker changes for trans people after a civil liberties group sued the state over an executive order banning the markers.

Another law went into effect this school year requiring public school students to use the bathroom that aligned with their biological sex. No violations were reported to the state Department of Education last semester and the law is being challenged by the ACLU. In September, lawmakers voted to prevent OU Children's from receiving federal American Rescue Plan Act funds unless it stopped providing gender-confirming procedures to minors.

About 30 LGBTQ community members lined both sides of the meeting room, wearing bright pinks and blues in support of the trans community two days after Gov. Kevin Stitt called for a statewide ban on gender-confirming procedures for minors in his State of the State speech.

In many cases, Republican legislators are aiming to increase restrictions.

"I think that the level of harm threatened when we see people jump onto these trends at this volume is just shocking," McAfee said.

State legislators across the nation introduced 315 anti-LGBTQ bills last year. At least 180 bills have already been introduced this year. Mississippi lawmakers have filed 30 with many similar themes, including limits to gender-confirming care and discussion of gender and sexual orientation in classrooms.

As community members and advocates in Oklahoma brace for potential impacts, they say vague language and incomplete bills blind them to what could be coming. And McAfee said COVID-19 led to an increased disconnect between legislators and constituents, in many cases shielding lawmakers from any direct knowledge of their bills' harmful effects.

Limits To Gender-Confirming Care

Stitt has called on the Legislature to send him legislation banning gender-confirming procedures and hormone therapies for minors statewide multiple times, the latest coming Monday in his State of the State address. Eleven of the 16 related bills aim to do that. A handful would limit care for adults.

Though most bills provide definitions for the procedures they're banning, Senate Bill 787 and Senate Bill 789 by Sen. Rob Standridge, R-Norman do not. ACLU Oklahoma policy director Cindy Nguyen said the wording of restrictions can often be vague, which can create a chilling effect for physicians that provide procedures that could be affected.

Nathan Dahm, R-Broken Arrow, filed a bill banning minors from accessing gender-confirming care. Medical providers who provide that care illegally could risk losing their license, according to the bill. Dahm, who ran unsuccessfully for former U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe's seat and reaches his state Senate term limit in 2024, said he's been concerned about the effects of the procedure on people under 18 for years and has filed similar legislation multiple times.

Three other bills focus on preventing young adults from accessing gender confirmation. Rep. Jim Olsen, R-Roland, authored a bill prohibiting anyone under 21 from accessing those procedures.

Olsen, who was elected without opposition in two of his three terms, said he intended the bill to restrict access to puberty blockers, hormone therapy and gender-confirming surgery. He pointed to recent decisions by Sweden, the Netherlands and Great Britain to make gender-confirming procedures more difficult to access.

Dahm filed another bill that would block Medicaid reimbursement — or the use of state

or federal money — for gender-confirmation providers. He said the measure would work similarly to the state's Medicaid block for non-life saving abortions. Dahm said adults should be able to decide whether to receive gender-confirming care for themselves. He also acknowledged that the Medicaid ban could prevent some from accessing that care.

Proponents tout the benefits of gender-confirming care, but the potential risks are still largely unknown. As of October, there had been no long-term studies following people who received gender-confirming care as children to measure their satisfaction with their treatment as they aged. Little is known about the effects of stopping or reversing a transition process, which some advocates warn trans people could be forced to do if gender-confirming care is limited or banned.

The Trust Women clinic in Oklahoma City, which offered abortions until they were banned in Oklahoma, announced last month it would begin offering hormone therapy for minors and adults. ACLU Oklahoma and Lambda Legal promised legal action on any law restricting access to gender-confirming care.

There have been reports of Texas residents leaving the state over anti-LGBTQ laws in recent months. Olsen said he hadn't considered the impact that legislation like his could have on their desire to stay in Oklahoma. Dahm said he's spoken with trans constituents and noticed that many disagree with the proposed legislation, but he doesn't expect to see a similar phenomenon in Oklahoma.

"I've heard that they don't like it and they're disappointed in it, but I know that there are communities (in the state) that are very welcoming to them, that would be supportive to them," Dahm said.

Affected Public School Policy

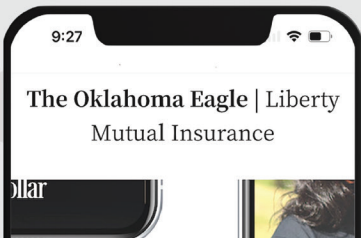
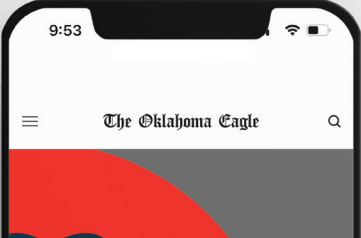
There have been 14 bills introduced aimed at changing Oklahoma school policies and giving more control to parents and school administrators. Four authored by Sen. Cody Rogers, R-Tulsa, and Bullard, have been assigned to the Senate Education Committee.

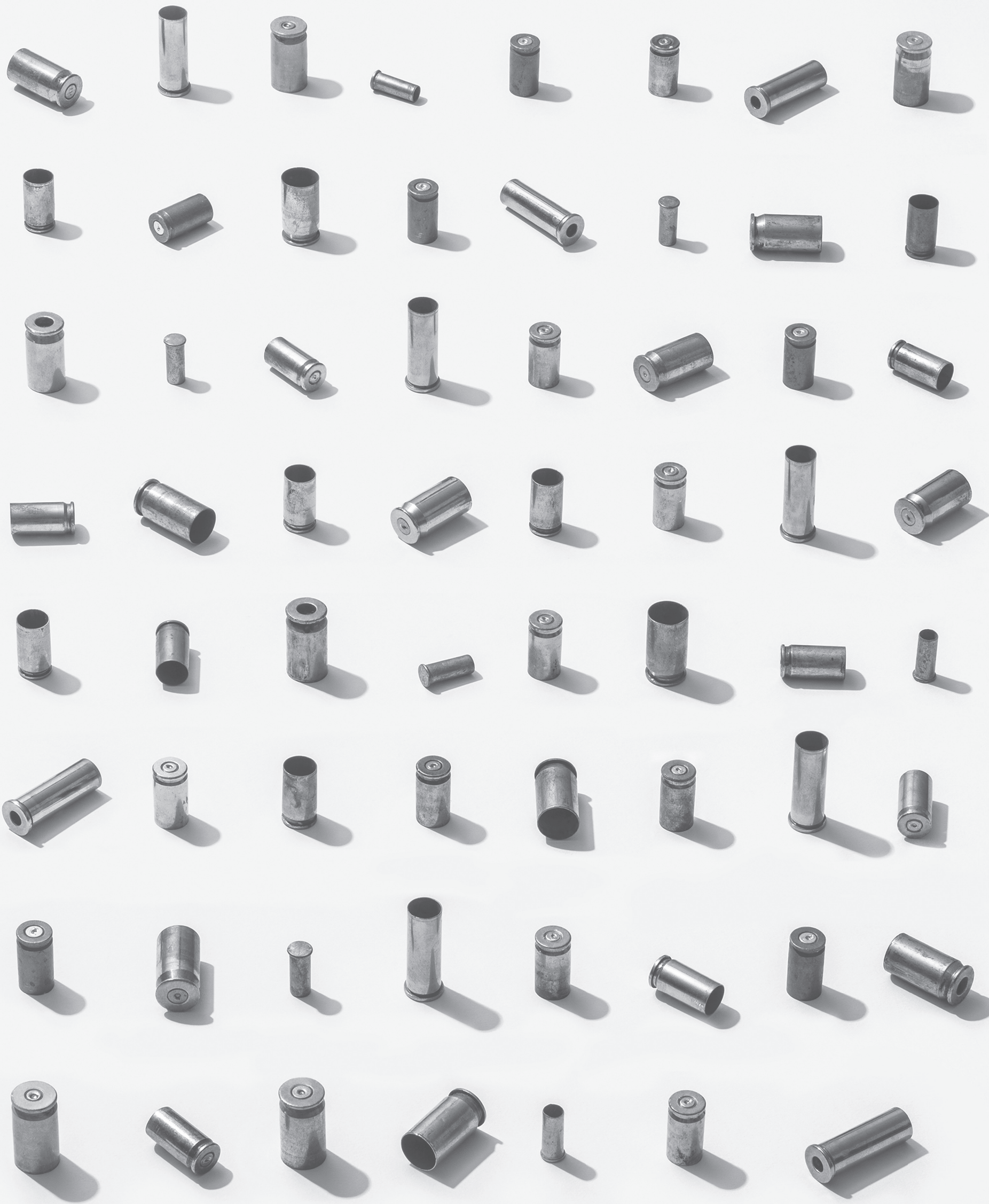
Five of the school-related bills would limit instruction about gender and sexual orientation or ban it for elementary school and early middle school students.

Rogers filed a bill banning instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation in kindergarten through sixth grade. He also filed a bill requiring parents to give written consent for their child to be referred to by pronouns that don't align with their biological sex, or to be called a name that's not a version of the ones on their birth certificate.

Sen. Shane Jett, R-Shawnee, authored a bill that would prohibit that instruction for the same age

ANTI-LGBTQ BILLS Continued On A8





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NOTICE

Published in The Oklahoma Eagle:
February 3 and 10, 2023.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
PROJECT NO. 2023- MPO (C3)

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an order by the Mayor of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, sealed bids will be received in Room 260 of the Office of the City Clerk, City of Tulsa, 175 E. 2nd Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103 until 8:30 a.m. the 10th day of March, 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. 2023-MPO (C3)
NON-ARTERIAL MILL, PATCH &
OVERLAY

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 2036N0001Z.Streets.CWNARP.4281.42813243-541106
2 0 3 6 N 0 0 0 1 Z . S t r e e t s .
CWNARP.4282.42823243-541106

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Monday, February 13, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. and will be held through video conferencing with Microsoft Teams, invitation presented on the City of Tulsa's website at this link: <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/engineering-services/construction-bids/>

Attendance at the Pre-Bid Conference is MANDATORY. Bids will not be received from contractors who did not attend the Pre-Bid Conference.

Bids will be accepted by the City Clerk from the holders of valid pre-qualifications certificates from the City of Tulsa in one or more of the following classifications: A or C

Drawings, specifications and contract documents for construction of said public improvements of the said project have been adopted by the Mayor of said City. Copies of same may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Engineering Services, 2317 South Jackson, Room 103, North Building, for a non-refundable fee in the amount of \$50.00 made payable to the City of Tulsa by check or money order.

Contract requirements shall include compliance as required by law pertaining to the practice of non-discrimination in employment.

The overall aspirational Small Business Enterprise utilization goal for this project is ten (10) percent.

Attention is called to Resolution No. 18145 of August 23, 1988, requiring bidders to commit to the goal of employing on the project at least fifty percent bona fide residents of the City of Tulsa and/or MSA in each employment classification.

Attention is called to Resolution 7404 of November 8, 2006, requiring bidders, their subcontractors and their lower-tier subcontractors to hire only citizens of the United States.

The City of Tulsa itself is exempt from the payment of any sales or use taxes, and pursuant to Title 68 O.S. Section 1356(10), direct vendors to the City are also exempt from those taxes. A bidder may exclude from his bid appropriate sales taxes, which he will not have to pay while acting for and on behalf of the City of Tulsa.

A Certified or Cashier's Check or Bidders Surety Bond, in the sum of 5% of the amount of the bid will be required from each bidder to be retained as liquidated damages in the event the successful bidder fails, neglects or refuses to enter into said contract for the construction of said public improvements for said project and furnish the necessary bonds within thirty days from and after the date the award is made.

The bidder to whom a contract is awarded will be required to furnish public liability and workmen's compensation insurance; Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds acceptable to the City of Tulsa, in conformity with the requirements of the proposed contract documents. The Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds shall be for one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price.

All bids will be opened and considered by the Bid Committee of said City at a meeting of said Committee to be held in the City Council Room of City Hall in said City at 9:00 a.m. on the 10th day of March 2023.

Dated at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 3rd day of February 2023.

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk

NOTICE

Published in The Oklahoma Eagle:
February 10 and 17, 2023

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
PROJECT NO. AI 23-001

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an order by the Mayor of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, sealed bids will be received in Room 260 of the Office of the City Clerk, City of Tulsa, 175 E. 2nd Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103 until 8:30 a.m. the 10th day of March, 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. AI 23-001 CENTRAL
BUSINESS DISTRICT ALLEYWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 2036D0007Z.Streets.CBD-SA.4281.42813243-541106
2036D0007Z.Streets.CBD-SA.4282.42823243-541106
2036D0007Z.Streets.CBD-SA.4283.42833243-541106

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. and will be held through video conferencing with Microsoft Teams, invitation presented on the City of Tulsa's website at this link: <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/engineering-services/construction-bids/>

Attendance at the Pre-Bid Conference is MANDATORY. Bids will not be received from contractors who did not attend the Pre-Bid Conference.

Bids will be accepted by the City Clerk from the holders of valid pre-qualifications certificates from the City of Tulsa in one or more of the following classifications: A or C

Drawings, specifications and contract documents for construction of said public improvements of the said project have been adopted by the Mayor of said City. Copies of same may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Engineering Services at the City of Tulsa Engineering Services, 2317 South Jackson, Room 103, North Building, for a non-refundable fee in the amount of \$50.00 made payable to the City of Tulsa by check or money order.

Contract requirements shall include compliance as required by law pertaining to the practice of non-discrimination in employment.

The overall aspirational Small Business Enterprise utilization goal for this project is ten (10) percent.

Attention is called to Resolution No. 18145 of August 23, 1988, requiring bidders to commit to the goal of employing on the project at least fifty percent bona fide residents of the City of Tulsa and/or MSA in each employment classification.

Attention is called to Resolution 7404 of November 8, 2006, requiring bidders, their subcontractors and their lower-tier subcontractors to hire only citizens of the United States.

The City of Tulsa itself is exempt from the payment of any sales or use taxes, and pursuant to Title 68 O.S. Section 1356(10), direct vendors to the City are also exempt from those taxes. A bidder may exclude from his bid appropriate sales taxes, which he will not have to pay while acting for and on behalf of the City of Tulsa.

A Certified or Cashier's Check or Bidders Surety Bond, in the sum of 5% of the amount of the bid will be required from each bidder to be retained as liquidated damages in the event the successful bidder fails, neglects or refuses to enter into said contract for the construction of said public improvements for said project and furnish the necessary bonds within thirty days from and after the date the award is made.

The bidder to whom a contract is awarded will be required to furnish public liability and workmen's compensation insurance; Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds acceptable to the City of Tulsa, in conformity with the requirements of the proposed contract documents. The Performance, Statutory, and Maintenance bonds shall be for one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price.

All bids will be opened and considered by the Bid Committee of said City at a meeting of said Committee to be held in the City Council Room of City Hall in said City at 9:00 a.m. on the 10th day of March 2021.

Dated at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 10th day of February 2023.

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk

NOTICE

Published in The Oklahoma Eagle:
February 10, 2023.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
PROJECT NO. 2036A0008Z, 2036A0010Z,
2036A0011Z, 2036A0012Z, TMUA ES
2020-02

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an order by the Mayor of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, sealed bids will be received in Room 260 of the Office of the City Clerk, City of Tulsa, 175 E. 2nd Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103 until 8:30 a.m. the 10th day of March, 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. 2036A0008Z, 2036A0010Z, 2036A0011Z, 2036A0012Z, TMUA ES
2020-02 ARTERIAL STREET RECONSTRUCTION WEST EDISON ST. FROM NORTH 33RD WEST AVE. TO NORTH UNION AVE. WEST PINE ST. FROM SOUTH 25TH WEST AVE. (GILCREASE MUSEUM RD.) TO NORTH UNION AVE. NORTH 33RD WEST AVE. FROM WEST EDISON ST. TO WEST APACHE ST.

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 2036A0008Z. Streets.ArtRhb.4282.42823122-541101; 2 0 3 6 A 0 0 1 0 Z . S t r e e t s . A r t R h b . 4 2 8 2 . 4 2 8 2 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 6 ; 2 0 3 6 A 0 0 1 1 Z . S t r e e t s . A r t R h b . 4 2 8 2 . 4 2 8 2 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 6 ; 2 0 3 6 A 0 0 1 2 Z . S t r e e t s . A r t R h b . 4 2 8 2 . 4 2 8 2 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 6 ; 2 2 3 1 S 0 0 0 1 8 . S e w e r L i n e s . S e w e r . 7 5 0 0 . 7 5 0 0 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 1 ; 2 1 3 1 S 0 0 1 1 Z . S e w e r L i n e s . S e w e r . 7 5 0 0 . 7 5 0 0 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 1 ; 2 2 3 1 S 0 0 0 1 4 . S e w e r L i n e s . S e w e r . 7 5 0 0 . 7 5 0 0 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 1 ; 1 9 3 3 2 0 0 2 2 Z . S e w e r - L i n e s . 7 5 2 0 . 7 5 2 0 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 1 ; 2 3 1 S 0 0 0 1 5 . S e w e r L i n e s . S e w e r . 7 5 0 0 . 7 5 0 0 3 1 2 2 - 5 4 1 1 0 1 ;

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. and will be held through video conferencing with Microsoft Teams, invitation presented on the City of Tulsa's website at this link:<https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/engineering-services/construction-bids/>

Attendance at the Pre-Bid Conference is MANDATORY. Bids will not be received from contractors who did not attend the Pre-Bid Conference. Bids will be accepted by the City Clerk from the holders of valid pre-qualifications certificates from the City of Tulsa in one or more of the following classifications: A or C

Drawings, specifications and contract documents for construction of said public improvements of the said project have been adopted by the Mayor of said City. Copies of same may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Engineering Services at the City of Tulsa Engineering Services, 2317 South Jackson, Room 103, North Building, for a non-refundable fee in the amount of \$50.00 made payable to the City of Tulsa by check or money order.

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The overall aspirational Small Business Enterprise utilization goal for this project is ten (10) percent.

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All bids will be opened and considered by the Bid Committee of said City at a meeting of said Committee to be held in the City Council Room of City Hall in said City at 9:00 a.m. on the 10th day of March 2023.

Dated at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 10th day of February 2023.

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk

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PHOTO PAVEL DANILYUK, PEXELS.COM

“The Bill Also Bans Organizing A Drag Queen Story Hour In Public Spaces

ANTI-LGBTQ BILLS from AI

group, but it also states that for other grades, an equal amount of time must be spent on the “two-gender perspective.”

Jett filed five other school-related bills, including one that states that if a student disputes their biological sex, they can establish their identity with school administrators by sending in a physician’s statement indicating their reproductive anatomy, normal level of testosterone and an analysis of their genetic makeup. That bill also bans schools from creating, enforcing or endorsing a policy respecting, favoring or promoting “non-secular sex based identity narratives” because those identities are part of the secular humanism religion.

Jett also authored a bill banning public schools from making available books with LGBTQ issues as their “primary subject.” The Oklahoma

Watch’s four attempts to reach Jett for comment were unsuccessful.

Rep. Danny Williams, R-Seminole, authored a bill amending the parents’ bill of rights to allow parents to inspect all classroom materials. Another authored by Bullard allows parents to inspect all curriculum, tests and surveys related to sexual orientation or gender identity before their student participates.

Emerging Trends In Legislation

Bullard and Jett authored bills with identical language that would ban lewd acts and obscene material in public spaces where minors or other individuals could observe. Another, authored by Rep. Collin Duel, R-Guthrie, could ban drag performers from involving or presenting minors in their performances.

Rep. Kevin West,

R-Moore, authored a bill that would ban engaging, organizing or authorizing an “adult cabaret performance,” which includes drag. The bill also bans organizing a drag queen story hour in public spaces or in areas where a minor could see. West said he was motivated to author the bill after seeing an influx in videos of drag shows and drag queen story hours that he felt were overly sexual and had minors present. He also said that most of the videos were recorded out of state and he thought many of them likely highlighted extreme cases.

“It’s absolutely happening nationwide, and it’s only a matter of time before somebody goes ahead and does that here in Oklahoma,” West said. “And it’s better to be on the front side than trying to correct it after the fact.”

West said he defines “public property” as state-owned property, adding that that piece of the bill

wouldn’t apply to private businesses. He said if it becomes law, he envisions it being enforced through reports from families who feel their child shouldn’t have been exposed to a performance.

Bullard filed a bill assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee that would allow the legislature to review executive orders related to the regulation of marriage issued by the president, Congress or a federal agency to decide whether they’re constitutional. The legislature or the attorney general can then seek an exemption, or ask a court to review the action.

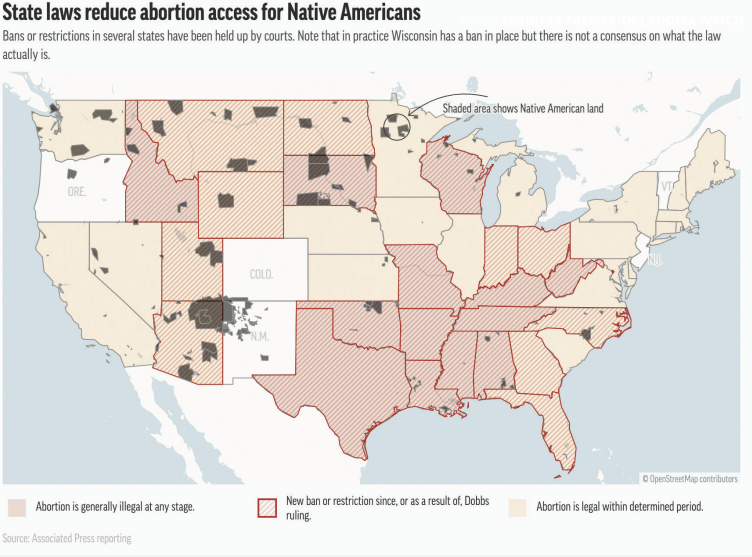
Weeks after President Joe Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act into effect, federally recognizing same-sex marriages, House Speaker Charles McCall, Rep. Justin Humphrey and Rep. Toni Hasenbeck also filed six bills with little substantial information other than the fact that they relate to “marriage and families.”

McAfee said shell bills like these are sometimes filed because the authors don’t want other legislators to organize opposition, or because they’re still waiting on specific language from a national organization. But they said it’s also difficult for members of the public to know what the bills might do.

“It’s certainly an unfortunate part of Oklahoma’s legislative process that so much of it is designed to keep people out of the loop and to remove legislators from accountability, and shell bills are certainly a part of that effort,” McAfee said.

ARI FIFE is a Report for America corps member who covers race and equity issues for Oklahoma Watch. Contact her at (405) 517-2847 or afife@oklahomawatch.org. Follow her on Twitter at [@ariifife](https://twitter.com/ariifife).

New, restrictive state laws add to existing hurdles and a decades-old ban on most abortions at clinics



POST-ROE NATIVE AMERICANS from AI

extremely difficult for Native Americans like Matson. It has become even tougher since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

New, restrictive state laws add to existing hurdles: a decades-old ban on most abortions at clinics and hospitals run by the federal Indian Health Service, fewer nearby health centers offering abortions, vast rural expanses for many to travel, and poverty afflicting more than a quarter of the Native population.

“That’s a lot of barriers,” said Matson, who lives in Sioux Falls and

is Sicangu Lakota. “We’re already an oppressed community, and then we have this oppression on top of that oppression.”

Among the six states with the highest proportion of Native American and Alaska Native residents, four – South Dakota, Oklahoma, Montana and North Dakota – have moved or are poised to further restrict abortion. South Dakota and Oklahoma ban it with few exceptions.

In some communities, the distance to the nearest abortion provider has increased by hundreds of miles, said Lauren van Schilfgaarde, a member of Cochiti Pueblo in New

Mexico who directs the tribal legal development clinic at the University of California-Los Angeles.

“Native people are having to cross massive, massive distances and absorb all of the travel costs and childcare,” she said.

Experts say the issue should be seen within the larger context of the tortured history between Indigenous people and white society that began with the taking of Native lands and includes coerced sterilization of Native women lasting into the 1970s. Native Americans on both sides of the abortion debate invoke this history — some arguing the procedure reduces the number of potential citizens in a population that has been threatened for centuries, and others saying new restrictions are another attack on Native women’s rights.

Many advocates worry that reduced abortion access will make things even worse for women already facing maternal death rates twice as high as their white peers, teen birth rates more than twice as high as whites, and the worst rates of sexual violence.

“Indigenous women don’t have access to reproductive justice in any form, and that includes abortion,” said Natalie Stites Means, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe who serves on the board of the Justice Empowerment Network, an abortion fund. “Any limitation on our health care and any limitation on abortion is going to impact our health

and well-being.”

Decades of Restrictions

For centuries, experts said, Indigenous people had their own systems of health care, which in some cases included natural abortive practices.

Today, the main source of care for many is the Indian Health Service, which serves 2.6 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to 574 federally recognized tribes in 37 states. Its clinics and hospitals operate under the Hyde Amendment, which bars them from using federal funds for abortions except in cases of rape, incest or threats to a mother’s life.

Even when an IHS patient falls under one of those exceptions, many facilities “don’t have the materials or staff or the expertise to provide that abortion care,” van Schilfgaarde said.

Matson uses the pronoun they and is two-spirit, a term used to describe those who combine traits of both men and women. Matson, who lived in Rapid City at the time, said IHS staff didn’t discuss abortion as an option for their unplanned pregnancy. After getting the procedure at 13 weeks in Colorado, they felt uncomfortable returning to IHS despite ongoing bleeding.

While IHS staff can refer people to places that provide abortions, federal

POST-ROE NATIVE AMERICANS
Continued On A10



PHOTO RODNAE PRODUCTIONS, PEXELS.COM

Jerry Moore, Oklahoma CIO

“An Investigation Last Year HAS GIVEN HIS OFFICE SERIOUS CONCERNS”

VETERANS INFORMATION *from AI*

the state network, in violation of the law and at an expense paid by the personal credit card of a Department of Veterans Affairs employee.

Jerry Moore, Oklahoma’s CIO since 2020, said an investigation last year has given his office serious concerns about an ODVA system housing six datasets on a third-party server, something he told commissioners could put the security of Oklahoma veterans’ personal information at risk.

“We believe at this time that these databases contain transaction information between federal and state veterans agencies, including past and current veterans’ personal identifiable information,” Moore said.

Moore said the types of veteran information located on the unidentified server include names, addresses, Social Security numbers, driver’s license numbers, phone numbers, disability percentages and business details.

He named six datasets or databases:

- Veteran-owned business systems database
- Veterans employment opportunity database
- Technical assistance systems database
- State approving agency activity reporting database
- Check it meta-system database
- Program review system database

Moore said he has been unable to investigate the situation further without certain approvals from embattled ODVA director Joel Kintsel, who has clashed with his agency’s governing board and refused to attend Wednesday’s meeting and a prior Feb. 3 meeting.

“[I] put director Kintsel on notice that we feel like we have discovered this and we need action taken,” Moore said.

At this time, Moore said he does not know where the servers housing the ODVA program databases are located, but he does know that hosting services are being paid for by an ODVA employee’s personal credit card. Moore said he could not answer whether a private company or an individual possesses the servers.

“We have no ability to continue our investigation because it is privately managed,” Moore told commissioners. “The state has no rights. We don’t have admin rights to it. We see it. We know it exists. We see traffic going to and

“We have no ability to continue our investigation because it is privately managed, The state has no rights. We don’t have admin rights to it”

JERRY MOORE, Oklahoma CIO

from it, but we have no ability to get into it to determine if it has been compromised.”

Reached Wednesday afternoon by phone, Kintsel said the database issue raised by Moore is “a red herring.” He provided NonDoc with his 12-page response to the Office of Management and Enterprise Services inquiry, which listed 15 alleged instances “where ODVA systems are not in compliance with state standards”

The OMES allegation regarding the datasets claims that Brint Montgomery, ODVA’s state approving agency administrator, manages the datasets in question:

An Amazon author profile for a book edited by Montgomery regarding “relational theology” states that he “has been teaching logic and philosophy at Southern Nazarene University since 1995. He has interests in open theology and, more generally, in metaphysical matters concerning mind and free will.”

The response provided by Kintsel says “OMES is misinformed” about the hosting of the datasets

“The Oklahoma Veteran Owned Business System data was indeed transferred successfully to the state hub system,” the response states. “Other data tables are used as [State Approving Agency] transitional data and are duly transferred to stipulated federal VA systems via the approved Citrix environment upon completion of approvals, compliance reviews, and quarterly reports per the standards outlined in the SAA Annual Cooperative Agreement.”

The answer concludes: “OMES possesses no organic expertise with these systems and there is no need for OMES to be involved in this process.”

Moore said his office is “culling through” Kintsel’s Feb. 3 response.

“A lot of it is that ‘there’s nothing here,’” Moore said. “We’re going through his barrage of information that isn’t associated with, really, the issue at hand. Most of it is that there’s kind of nothing to see here and there’s no issue.”

OSBI: No request to investigate yet

Moore told commissioners that the use of a private credit card to purchase state information technology services “actually violates state statute.” However, Moore said his office has not taken steps to shut down the database system.

“The reason we haven’t done that is that we

believe — because we see ODVA employees interacting with the system — that it is an integral part of current business operations for ODVA and therefore crucial to delivering services,” Moore said.

After his presentation, Moore declined to say whether the database matter had been referred to law enforcement.

But Brook Arbeitman, public information officer for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, said Wednesday afternoon that OSBI had not received a request for engagement on the ODVA database matter.

During Wednesday’s meeting, Commissioner Scott Sweeney questioned how the situation could be ameliorated, but Moore called it an employment matter to address with Kintsel, ODVA’s director. After the meeting — which featured no action on Kintsel’s employment — Sweeney expressed frustration with the CIO’s answer.

“I don’t think that we got a satisfactory answer other than it’s a personnel decision at that point, and we tabled any potential personnel action,” Sweeney said.

Commissioner Daniel Orr asked whether the unauthorized and external database poses potential problems for the state’s relationship with the federal government, which administers veteran benefits.

“I would expect that it puts your accreditation at jeopardy if we were to find indication of compromise or if there were audit findings that were not being remediated,” Moore said. “Most federal entities would consider that as part of their accreditation.”

Veterans Commission Chairman Robert Allen called the situation “very disturbing.”

“Right now, it seems that [the agency’s] mission has been compromised and could be further compromised were we to be in jeopardy of losing our accreditation,” Allen said.

Allen said commissioners have a meeting with State Auditor and Inspector Cindy Byrd later this month to discuss a potential audit of ODVA’s finances.

Orr, who was appointed to the commission by Gov. Kevin Stitt in January, said commissioners need additional information as it becomes available. “I would like to see a report of this cyber breach — the entire report — at some point in time

VETERANS INFORMATION *Continued On A10*

“OPENING A CLINIC ON TRIBAL LAND *would be legally challenging”, experts said*”

POST-ROE NATIVE AMERICANS from A8

funds can only be used for “Hyde-permitted” procedures and related patient travel, agency officials said in a statement. And a federal report shows nearly 1 in 5 American Indians and Alaska Natives are uninsured.

Also, there are often no abortion providers nearby. One reason? The proportion of Catholic health systems, which generally prohibit abortion, has grown significantly. A 2020 report by Community Catalyst, a nonprofit health advocacy organization, found that 1 in 6 acute care hospital beds in the U.S. is in a Catholic system. The share is 40% in South Dakota and 32% in Oklahoma.

Seeking Solutions

After Roe fell, restrictive “trigger” laws took effect in more than a dozen states, including South Dakota and Oklahoma, which already had stopped providing most abortions. North Dakota’s abortion ban has been blocked in court.

Some Native women were inspired to organize.

Cherokee women in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, gathered over the summer to discuss a possible amendment to the tribe’s constitution protecting reproductive health access for its citizens. They were frustrated that leaders of this tribe with around 450,000 citizens hadn’t addressed the issue.

“Fear was just kind of palpable,” said group leader Alissa Baker, who teaches psychology at Northeastern State University. “We felt a need to protect our community ... and really in some ways reclaim some of those traditional roles of a Cherokee woman, which is effectively being the voice of the community.”



But the effort stalled as the school year approached, with members spread across a rural area, busy with jobs and children.

Other activist efforts panned out. D’Arlyn Bell, a doctoral student at the University of Kansas and another member of the Cherokee Nation, joined with other Native activists to help defeat a proposed amendment to the Kansas state constitution that would have cleared the way for tougher abortion restrictions.

“We were doing it not only for the Native women in our own states but Native women from our own home territories, especially Oklahoma,” she said.

Experts stress that abortion views vary among tribal leaders and members – something echoed in a statement from the Cherokee Nation, the only one of the five largest tribes in South Dakota and Oklahoma to respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Opening a clinic on tribal land would be legally challenging, experts said. The Cherokee Nation said it wouldn’t set one up, and there have been no announcements from other tribes since Roe was overturned. History shows the issue is fraught: The first woman president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota was impeached in 2006 after publicly

proposing an abortion clinic on the reservation.

Post-Roe, Native Americans on both sides of the issue are taking personal and collective action.

Elizabeth Terrill, a board member for the anti-abortion Native American nonprofit Life is Sacred, said she’s a foster parent, does post-abortion counseling and supports moms. She said extended families on tribal lands historically have banded together when there is an unplanned pregnancy, and most women choose to continue them.

“I think there’s just a different cultural understanding of what life is and when life begins and why life

is so sacred,” said Terrill, a mental health therapist near the Navajo Nation in New Mexico and member of the Osage Nation of Oklahoma.

Matson, executive director of the summer camp “Rock the Rez,” said they share their experience, donate money to those in need and tell others about resources like the Justice Empowerment Network, which covered most of their friend’s abortion and travel costs.

“Every time someone is going through this, I offer support,” said Matson, 32. “I’ve helped, I hope, in every way that I can.”

APRIL MATSON stands for a portrait in Sioux Falls, S.D., on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023. A few months after South Dakota banned abortion in 2022, Matson drove more than nine hours to take a friend to a Colorado clinic to get the procedure. The trip brought back difficult memories of Matson’s own abortion at the same clinic in 2016. The former grocery store worker and parent of two couldn’t afford a hotel and slept in a tent near a horse pasture — bleeding and in pain.

PHOTO AP PHOTO/JOSH JURGENS



PHOTO RODNAE PRODUCTIONS, PEXELS.COM

VETERANS INFORMATION from A9

because this is still open,” Orr said. “Veterans’ information is still compromised and continues to be potentially compromised. We would like to end this as soon as possible.”

Secretary of Veteran Affairs and Military John Nash said “commissioners asked difficult questions and have received no answers.”

“The information we learned from the state CIO regarding ODVA’s use of a third-party website and its handling of veteran [personal identifiable information] is concerning,” Nash

said in a statement following the meeting. “I plan to reach out to attempt to resolve this issue and to request that the administrator of this site immediately cooperate with state cybersecurity professionals to bring this practice to a halt until the site can be brought within state security protections and protocols.

“We want all veteran information to be protected in accordance with state statutes and guidelines. I am sure all veterans and Oklahomans would agree.”

Commission avoids executive session on Kintsel’s employment

Although Wednesday’s agenda featured a proposed executive

session to discuss “the employee performance and conduct of Joel Kintsel related to the current workplace environment,” commissioners did not enter into executive session, and they took no action on Kintsel’s employment.

Asked at what point Kintsel’s refusal to attend the current commission’s meetings jeopardizes his employment at the agency, Allen said an inflection point is “imminent.”

“I think that the writing is on the wall. I think it is imminent. I think it needs to happen immediately,” Allen said. “I don’t think any of you would think I was honest if I said otherwise.

He needs to come on board and comply and subject himself to the oversight of his governing body immediately.”

Allen’s appointment to the commission by Stitt has been challenged in court by the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Kintsel has said he views the commission as illegitimate owing to the statutory question.

But Allen said Kintsel could be terminated if he continues to refuse engagement.

“I think that would be the logical consequence of an employee that is denying their supervisory board the ability to supervise them,” Allen

said. “What other logical outcome would there be? I’m not saying that is what we are wanting or desiring, I’m saying that would have to be the logical step.”

WILLIAM W. SAVAGE III (TRES) has served as the editor in chief of NonDoc since the publication launched in September 2015. He holds a journalism degree from the University of Oklahoma and covered two sessions of the Oklahoma Legislature for eCapitol.net before working in health care for six years. He is a nationally certified Mental Health First Aid instructor.

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Monday Worship - 6:00pm
Wednesday Bible Study - 5:00pm

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Rev. Emanuel L. Collier, Sr.
Pastor

Gethsemane Baptist Church

727 East 56th St. North
(918) 425-6613

Dr. W. T. Lauderdale

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Church Services
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Tulsa OK
(918) 625-2374

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Sunday Morning Worship - 10:45

Sunday Evening Prayer - 7 pm
Sunday Worship - 7:30 pm
Wednesday Prayer - 7:30 pm
Wednesday worship - 8pm

Rev. John W. Anderson

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P: 918-587-1428
F: 918-587-0642
vernonamechurch@sbcglobal.net

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Worship Service
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Wednesday Bible Study
6:00 pm

Rev. Dr. Robert R. Allen Turner

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918-584-1958

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Inside
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Cont. On

A13

WHY WE NEED DIVERSE BOOKS IN SCHOOLS

Books banned nationwide are most likely to have LGBTQ+ content, characters of color, and themes of race, racism, rights, or activism.



ANGELA BANKS poses for a photograph in front of the house she used to rent, Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023, in Baltimore. In 2018, Banks was told by her landlord that Baltimore officials were buying her family's home of four decades, planning to demolish the three-story brick rowhouse to make room for an urban renewal project aimed at transforming their historically.

By MAYA POTTIGER, WORD IN BLACK

Ever since he was young, Marchánt Davis has always loved children's media and the power it possesses. Though his favorites were "Sesame Street" and "Reading Rainbow" — especially seeing himself represented on screen through LeVar Burton — he says he was "strangely" inspired by "Snow White."

"It was always playing on TV," says Davis, an actor, director, writer, and now author of "A Boy and His Mirror." And it was this story that he wanted to repurpose for his own children's book geared toward the current generation.

Thinking about the relationship kids have with their phones and what identity means, Davis wanted to create a story that spoke to people coming up in a world with Tik Tok, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat.

But, mostly, Davis wrote the book hoping young Black boys would read it. Though he doesn't believe any one thing will cure problems, he wants the book to be a step toward boys acknowledging their feelings and countering some of the toxic masculinity in the Black community.

Davis called back to what Sheryl Lee Ralph said in her acceptance speech at the Critics Choice Awards.

"When you look in the mirror, you gotta love what you see," Davis quoted. "And so I wrote a book in an effort to help kids look in the mirror and love what they see."

Though he hopes the book empowers young Black boys, they aren't the sole audience Davis has in mind.

"It's a book for anybody who feels 'other' by the way they look, or anybody who has self-doubt," Davis says. "It's a book that I want kids to read and feel empowered, feel like they have agency."

The problem is that, around the country, books like Davis' are being removed from the shelves of classrooms and school libraries. Books that feature Black protagonists or talk about Black history.

And that's a problem.

'I Grew Up Thinking We Wanted to Learn History So We Wouldn't Repeat it'

Between books being banned, challenged, and removed from school shelves — and the College Board giving in to bullying and altering its AP African American Studies course — there's a lot of talk about what should be taught in classrooms, how it should be done, and who should have a say.

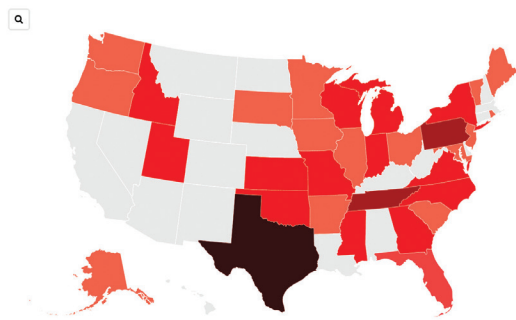
We shouldn't be hiding history from students because they need to learn the truth, says Kathy Lester, a middle school librarian and president of the American Association of School Librarians. Plus, when students find books they're interested in, they read more, and it creates conversation and opens up topics for discussion.

"I always grew up thinking that we wanted to learn our history so we wouldn't repeat it," Lester says. "We can learn from it and grow from it."

We can't understand our current politics and culture without understanding the treatment of African Americans in the United States, as well as the integral role they've played in shaping the country, says Caroline Richmond,

While most states logged fewer than 50 book bans, some reached several hundreds.

0 1-10 501-750 11-25 26-50 251-500 751-1000



Source: PEN America • Numbers reflect July 1, 2021 — June 30, 2022

the executive director of the nonprofit We Need Diverse Books.

"In order for us to be the nation that we claim to be — a land where all people are created and treated as equals — we have to teach our children how this has not been and still is not the case today," Richmond says. "And so, if we're not teaching Black history in our schools, then our students — of all races and backgrounds — are not receiving a holistic education."

In its "Banned in the USA" report, PEN America collected book bans in states around the country between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. The analysis found that bans occurred in 138 school districts across 32 states, and these districts represent 5,049 schools with a combined enrollment of nearly 4 million students.

While the majority of states with reported bans saw less than 50, some states racked up over 100, with Texas topping the list at 801 bans.

But it's not just about history books. For Black and Brown kids, it's about seeing yourself represented in history, in a book, but also in the daily experiences that children face.

"We want our kids — and we want every kid — to be able to see the experiences of Black children in the books that they read because it makes every person more relatable," says Derrick Ramsey, co-founder of the nonprofit Young, Black & Lit. "If you can see that person, a Black student, doing a science project through a book, then that's exciting to any student who wants to get into science."

Davis says there's more power in variety than singularity because there is so much more to learn.

"It's a very dangerous act to not allow children and people the experience of reading a variety of different texts because that's what informs us about the world. That's what helps us build our ideas and thoughts around what we believe," Davis says. "If we are showing kids a singular thing, then I think we're alienating them and we're manipulating them."

The Message a Book Ban Sends

Banning these books sends a message — both to Black students and their non-Black peers.

"It sends a message to Black students that their history doesn't matter, that it's not important," Lester says. "Then, for white students, that it's not important for them to learn about it or that their history is more important — which are not good messages to be sent."

And their non-Black peers are also harmed because they end up learning a lopsided view of history that ignores huge swaths of the American narrative, Richmond says.

"They won't have the opportunity to really grapple with our shared past," Richmond says, "to read primary sources, to ask probing questions, and to engage in thoughtful discussion and build empathy. Acknowledging past harm and our current inequitable society is the first step in creating real, long-term, sustainable change."

Of the banned books studied by PEN America, they were most likely to have LGBTQ+ content (41%) or characters of color (40%). Among the top reasons for book bans were titles having to do with race or racism (21%), and titles with themes of rights or activism (10%).

When thinking about these book bans, Davis thinks there are some important questions to ask those doing the banning: What do you want? What do you want Black children to feel by removing those books? What does removing them actually do?

"I'm just like, 'Why?'" Davis says. "What's your intention? What are you saying to the kids about that book, specifically?"

For Ramsey, the message is clear: "Your history doesn't matter. Your experiences don't matter. Who you are doesn't matter." It's a challenging space for a child who is already trying to find their path in the country and in the world.

Plus, it's not just talking about Black history or Asian history, Ramsey says, it's American history.

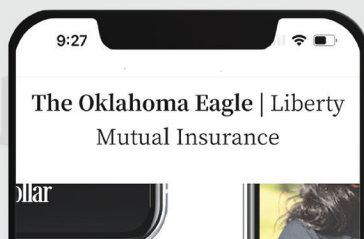
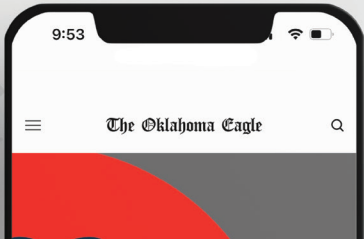
"Education should be the space where you can learn about everything and anything that you want. There should be no limits to the creativity of the ideas and the dreams that you inspire into every child," Ramsey says. "This really takes away a lot of that opportunity to see what you could be, even if you hadn't thought about it before."

MAYA POTTIGER is a data journalist for Word in Black. She was previously a data journalist for the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland, where she earned both her BA and Master of Journalism. Her work has been featured in publications across the country..

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PART OF DILLARD UNIVERSITY from Gentilly Boulevard, New Orleans. Photographed by Infrogmation of New Orleans, January 2006; at the time still closed due to the flooding from the levee failures during Hurricane Katrina.

“I THINK A LOT OF *Black Students Will Learn A History That Will Be Very Informative*

SCHOLAR RELATIONS *from AI*

campus. She was instantly fascinated by the work being done back then.

Then she started seeing manifestations of that work pop up across campus and in the greater New Orleans area.

“As I got to know more leaders in town, I met a Jewish American family that used to do Dillard’s general counsel and external counsel work,” Ford said. “I talked to another person whose relative helped desegregate New Orleans. Then I learned about the architect who helped design the landscape and architecture of our buildings.”

Dillard, she realized, had always been involved in forging pathways to understanding between Black and Jewish communities, and she knew what she had to do. On Jan. 17, the university announced the reopening of the National Center for Black-Jewish Relations.

“If Dillard played this role in the past, it’s needed now more than ever,” Ford said. “Part of our remit is to cultivate leaders who act courageously to make the world a better place. That’s who we say we are, and we need to cultivate leaders on this issue.”

By revitalizing the center, Ford and Dillard are also honoring the tradition of a special, mutually beneficial relationship between Jewish scholars and HBCUs that was established nearly a century ago.

Finding a Home in Black Academia

In 1933, shortly after Hitler tightened his grip on power in Germany, he issued a Nazi mandate abolishing “non-Aryans” from civil service and academia, forcing scores of Jewish intellectuals to seek refuge in the U.S. Most were unable to leverage their reputations back home with predominantly white American colleges and universities—

many of which still harbored the same antisemitism that informed the policies making it difficult for them to enter the country in the first place, although Princeton University welcomed Nobel laureate Albert Einstein into its Institute for Advanced Study with open arms.

Others found academic homes in HBCUs, whose leaders empathized with the discrimination they faced and invited intellectuals like Ernst Borinski, Ernst Manasse, and Viktor Lowenfeld to teach at Tougaloo College, North Carolina Central University, and Hampton Institute (now Hampton College), respectively. Just as the Black academics could identify with the antisemitism that kept them locked out of other schools, the Jewish professors gained a deep understanding of the racist landscape of the country through their experiences of working at HBCUs.

According to Aaron Bloch, who heads the Center for Jewish-Multicultural Affairs at the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans and is part of the seven-person planning committee for the center at Dillard, part of the reason his organization was founded was to carry on the work started at the National Center for Black-Jewish Relations. He is thrilled to now combine forces with the university at such a critical moment.

“The Jewish community as a whole is focused on the rise of antisemitism, but in every breath, we’re talking about racism and hate in all their forms,” Bloch said. “We’re all the targets of the same people.”

Building New Bridges

Bloch will be joined by Khalida Lloyd, founder of the religious nonprofit Mission Reconcile in New Orleans. Lloyd facilitates religious reconciliation programs through the lens of race. Her organization works

primarily with Christian churches, but Lloyd was inspired by a partnership to revisit working across religions in her previous job between a Black young professional network in Washington, D.C. and the American Jewish Committee. She seized the opportunity to do more of that work with Dillard.

“We talk about the history of Black-Jewish relations and how it was so pivotal, but I just don’t think that relationship is present, whether it’s DC, or NOLA, or another city,” Lloyd said. “This institute that is reforming and re-catalyzing at Dillard I think is going to invite that.”

She added that while the committee doesn’t yet have specifics for the plans for the National Center for Black-Jewish Relations (the group will meet after Mardi Gras ends), she envisions a meeting center that addresses intergenerational needs along with racial and religious ones, and that there will be equal representation among the groups that show up.

“I think a lot of young Black students will learn a history that will be very formative and foundational to what they do in the world—learning what that relationship could look like,” Lloyd said. “And I hope it [also] brings a young group of Jewish community [members] so that there’s not this imbalance of knowledge sharing.”

Just down the street from Dillard at Xavier University of Louisiana, another HBCU, a group of Black scholars has been hard at work turning their education into action to address the rise of misinformation and intolerance against Jews.

Jamya Davis, Aarinii Parms-Green, and two other students in the university’s honors program are conducting field research to better understand root causes and gauge the public’s understanding of antisemitism and teach them about the history of Black-Jewish relations in America. Their research is part

of a larger initiative in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security to target and prevent domestic terrorism.

Davis said that as a political science major, she was surprised by how much she had to learn about the longstanding cooperation between Black and Jewish scholars and civil rights leaders—or the contentious moments they shared. Once she did, she understood it was that much more important to eradicate antisemitic rhetoric from the Black community.

Their group has also harnessed social media to share their research with their community in engaging ways. They post “Tiny Mics” to the school’s TikTok page, short videos showing their members approaching people on the street and quizzing them about the history of Black-Jewish relations, such as the fact that Louis Armstrong wore a Star of David to honor the Jewish families who supported him throughout his career.

Davis and Green said people tended to answer their trivia questions incorrectly, which didn’t surprise them. Part of what they hope to achieve with their project is to normalize this knowledge.

“The fact that this is not being taught as heavily as it was is really concerning to me, which makes the importance of this project heightened because we have to catch what isn’t being taught,” Davis said. “The thing we don’t know can lead to us assuming there’s nothing to know.”

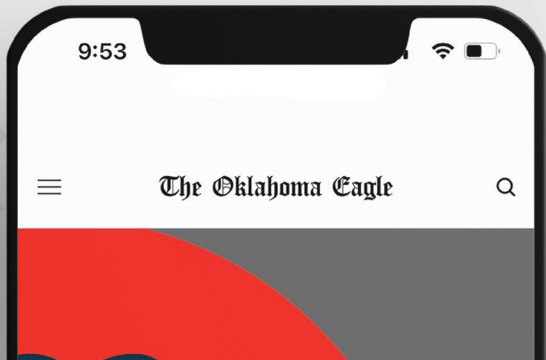
Parms-Green added, “You can’t really understand someone until you know their history and they know yours.”

THIS ARTICLE was made possible by a grant from Shine A Light, a national initiative dedicated to raising awareness of modern-day antisemitism and encouraging societal change through a shared sense of communal allyship.

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