

5,318 weeks, since the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre

SAMUEL CASSIUS was 27 days old when his family’s home was destroyed by the white mob.

It’s long overdue for the criminals who destroyed the Greenwood community in 1921 to be held accountable. Each week we remember a departed member of our community.

Proposals WOULD RESTRICT SCHOOL LIBRARY CONTENT AND LIMIT STUDENT PRIVACY AT SCHOOL

By JENNIFER PALMER, OKLAHOMA WATCH

The Education Department is considering new rules restricting school library content and requiring school staff to inform parents of major changes to a student’s identity at school. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters announced the proposals as one of his first major actions after taking office in January.

Some parents and advocates are concerned the rules, if implemented, would be harmful to LGBTQ students and undermine trust in school staff, especially librarians and counselors. Districts already have policies in place to review and reevaluate library materials, and most of the targeted library materials center LGBTQ characters or themes.

SCHOOL LIBRARY CONTENT On A2



PHOTO ADOBE STOCK

STATE

WHY OKLAHOMA IS STILL SITTING ON COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS

By PAUL MONIES, OKLAHOMA WATCH

Six months after a special legislative session ended to allocate almost \$1.7 billion, just a fraction of those federal coronavirus relief funds have been sent from state coffers to agencies or other entities.

COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS On A3

STATE

STONECIPHER DISCUSSES CONTROVERSIAL OKC HOMELESSNESS ORDINANCES

By JOE TOMLINSON, NonDoc

At a Nichols Hills country club this morning, OKC Ward 8 Councilman Mark Stonecipher led a discussion on homelessness in Oklahoma City, referencing his own previously proposed ordinances that would have allowed police to cite and

OKC HOMELESSNESS On A5

STATE

OKLAHOMANS LANGUISH IN JAIL AWAITING MENTAL HEALTH CARE, FED LAWSUIT CLAIMS

By ASHLYND HUFFMAN AND WHITNEY BRYEN, OKLAHOMA WATCH

More than 100 Oklahomans are languishing in county jails while awaiting court-ordered mental health treatment, according to a federal class-action lawsuit filed Wednesday against two state mental health officials.

JAIL MENTAL HEALTH CARE On A6



PHOTO WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH

STATE

WHEN ARE VOTING RIGHTS RESTORED IN OKLAHOMA? LEGISLATURE CONSIDERS CLEARING UP CONFUSION

By KEATON ROSS, OKLAHOMA WATCH

Oklahoma law has been consistent for decades: A person convicted of a felony loses their voting rights for their entire court-mandated sentence.

But what if that felony is later changed to a misdemeanor?

Oklahoma voters and the Legislature have embraced some criminal justice reform efforts. The state’s prison population has declined by

VOTING RIGHTS On A8

STATE

AFTER SQ 820 LOSS, MARIJUANA-RELATED JUSTICE REFORM SHIFTS TO LEGISLATURE



PHOTO ADOBE STOCK

By PAUL MONIES AND KEATON ROSS, OKLAHOMA WATCH

With Oklahoma voters deciding against full marijuana legalization on State Question 820, the focus turns to the Legislature to address criminal justice reforms related to low-level marijuana convictions

SQ 820 LOSS On A7

NATION

This Program Encourages Students to Read Black Authors

By MAYA POTTIGER, WORD IN BLACK

Dr. Michelle Rankins has hosted African American Read-Ins for 23 years.

Sometimes they’re held at her church or library, and, one time, in her own home. They can come in the form of a poetry reading or open mic. Another time, everyone brought a book by their favorite Black author and discussed why they liked it.

“The whole idea is to utilize Black History Month as a vehicle in which we bring forth the celebration of Black authors,” says Rankins, an assistant

BLACK AUTHORS On A13



RYAN WALTERS, in his first major move as state superintendent, proposed new rules for how schools handle library materials and LGBTQ students. A public hearing on the rules is slated for Friday. PHOTO WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH

SCHOOL LIBRARY CONTENT *from AI*

The parental rights proposal would require public school staff, including school counselors, to report when a student uses a different name, pronouns or other aspects of social transition to their parents, regardless of the potential harm they face at home. Public hearings on the rules will be held Friday, and comments can also be submitted to the department in writing. After the public comment period, the rules will be considered by the state Board of Education and, if adopted, would move to the Legislature for final approval.

“As this rule is written, to force school educators and staff to potentially ‘out’ students based on any presumption about their gender identity, (it) could be really dangerous for a lot of vulnerable young people, whether or not they are transgender,” said Nicole McAfee, executive director of Freedom Oklahoma, an Oklahoma City-based organization that advocates for people who are 2SLGBTQ+.

Walters, in a Feb. 15 press release, said the parent’s rights rule proposal is meant to reinforce the Oklahoma Parents’ Bill of Rights, a law passed by the Legislature in 2014.

“Questions of sex, morality, or religion will only be decided by Oklahoma parents – not the government,” Walters said in a written statement. Walters did not respond to an Oklahoma Watch interview request made Tuesday through his press secretary.

Walters’ rule proposal requires a school district to disclose to a child’s parent or guardian material changes regarding their child’s health, social or psychological development, including name or pronoun changes at school or other aspects of social transitioning.

But that goes beyond the Parents’ Bill of Rights. And bills containing similar language have failed in the Legislature. A

“This seems like an attempt to move this really harmful proposal through a different body with less scrutiny than it received at the legislature.”

Nicole McAfee, executive director of Freedom Oklahoma

2021 bill sponsored by Rep. Danny Williams, R-Seminole, would have banned teaching “gender and sexual diversity” in schools, was amended to include a provision that would require teachers to notify parents or guardians if they believe a student is gay or transgender. The bill failed to advance to the House floor.

“This seems like an attempt to move this really harmful proposal through a different body with less scrutiny than it received at the legislature,” McAfee said.

Administrative rules carry the effect of law but are written by state agencies. The rulemaking process, outlined in state law, usually attracts little public comment. These proposals have drawn at least 900 public comments, according to counts by Freedom Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Parent Legislative Action Committee, a volunteer group that advocates for policies that support public schools.

Sherri Brown, legislative chair for Oklahoma Parent Legislative Action Committee, said she has a lot of concerns about the proposals, but especially the lack of due process. Under the rules, school districts that do not comply with the rules could have their accreditation downgraded, but there’s not a way for them to respond to allegations.

Brown, and others, also say the proposals

expand beyond the department’s authority.

“This seems, to me, to be a total overreach of this agency in establishing rules that are really more like laws,” Brown said. “That pattern really concerns me that our current superintendent thinks that’s his role.”

The department is considering four separate proposals.

- A rule that would ban from schools pornographic and sexualized content (defined as not pornographic but containing excessive sexual material in light of the youngest age of students with access to the material.) It would also require schools to submit a complete list of library materials annually by Oct. 1 and have a written policy for reviewing library material.
- A rule requiring schools to notify parents of any sex education material and affirm the parent’s right to inspect the material. Parents can object to all or part of the material and schools must honor partial objections to “the extent reasonably feasible.” (Sex education is not mandatory in Oklahoma, but is taught in many public schools.) The rule would prohibit school staff from “encouraging, coercing or attempting to encourage or coerce a student” from withholding information

from their parents and require schools to disclose to parents “material changes reasonably expected to be important to parents regarding their child’s health, social or psychological development, including identity information” which includes names or pronouns used at school or other aspects of gender transition.

- A handful of miscellaneous changes, mostly due to new laws, to driver’s education, state testing for immigrant students, adjunct teachers, and concurrent enrollment.
- A rule making permanent the emergency rules in place to govern school bathroom use. It requires schools to designate multi-person restrooms as exclusively for male or female students and provide access to a single-stall restroom for those who don’t want to use the shared restroom.

The full text of the rules is available on the department’s website.

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GREG TREAT, R-OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA SEN. PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE, answers questions from reporters at the Capitol in Oklahoma City on March 13, 2023. PHOTO PAUL MONIES/OKLAHOMA WATCH

Oklahoma has until the end of 2024 to allocate the American Rescue Plan Act funds

COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS *from AI*

Meanwhile, the state has earned more than \$21.6 million in interest from the \$1.87 billion it received from the federal government under the American Rescue Plan Act.

Some lawmakers are concerned the delays along with rising inflation and ongoing supply-chain issues for basic materials will translate to higher-than-expected costs for many of the projects.

“My frustration is that these dollars get caught up in government bureaucracy,” Sen. Chuck Hall, R-Perry, chairman of a new Senate subcommittee overseeing the implementation of relief funds, said in a January hearing.

The Office of Management and Enterprise Services and its grant management office is responsible for coordinating the projects with various agencies and boards. Its latest snapshot shows just 2.58% of funds disbursed to relief projects.

Senate Pro Tem Greg Treat, R-Oklahoma City, said he shared his colleagues’ frustration with the pace of funds disbursed.

“Although I’m frustrated up to this point, I do have hope after seeing money is starting to flow now,” Treat said in a March 13 press conference. “Some of these projects have seen increased costs just because of supply-chain issues and costs from inflation.”

To be fair, almost half of the state’s coronavirus relief funding is going to two major infrastructure needs in water and sewer projects (\$436.6

million) and broadband expansion (\$382 million). The state Broadband Office and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board are overseeing competitive grant programs for those upgrades.

Hall said last week OMES has made progress since the Senate subcommittee first met in January. It has grant agreements in place with state agencies, but some of the sub-recipients have yet to request the money.

“They might not have project engineering complete or reporting processes adopted internally, or they are evaluating inflation-related costs,” Hall said.

John Laws, the state’s chief financial officer, said earlier this year the federal government would prefer relief funds be expended first by an agency or sub-recipient and get reimbursed later. That led to some confusion among agencies that don’t have the ready cash flow to spend on large projects. OMES sent a clarifying email this month to grantees that it could also advance the money for projects.

“When the Legislature appropriated funds to these projects, the expectation was that funds would be put toward the projects as expediently as practicable,” said the March 3 email from state Chief Operating Officer John Suter. “Recently, there has been some concern expressed to OMES by the Legislature related to the pace of the project execution and funds disbursement.”

Hall said OMES had sent nearly \$42 million in relief funds for projects so far, up from \$5.4 million in January.

“I still remain hopeful that money will start to flow very quickly over the next couple of months.”

Sen. Chuck Hall, R-Perry, chairman of a new Senate subcommittee overseeing the implementation of relief funds

“I still remain hopeful that money will start to flow very quickly over the next couple of months,” Hall said.

Expanding the nursing workforce was one of the top priorities for coronavirus relief funding. Among the projects approved by lawmakers last year was \$64.4 million to go to regional universities, community colleges and CareerTechs to expand nursing programs. The money flows through the Healthcare Workforce Training Commission, formerly the Physicians Manpower Training Commission.

The appropriations bills for that funding became effective in September, but it took some time for the commission to add staff and get grant agreements in place to be ready to send out the money. Administering grants for nurse training is a new role for the commission, which historically has approved loan repayments for physicians, residents and nurses in under-served parts of the state.

Janie Thompson, the commission’s executive director, said it has begun reimbursements to projects that have submitted requests. The commission is meeting monthly to approve submissions in excess of \$50,000.

In their special session last year, lawmakers approved dozens of bills to fund relief projects in water infrastructure, broadband, mental health and workforce development. They punted on a \$95.2 million spending bill for the Department of Human Services to expand childcare services, food programs and relief for the effects of domestic violence.

The House and Senate advanced

a pared-down, \$65 million version of that DHS bill last week in appropriations committees. The full House later passed House Bill 2884 on Tuesday by a vote of 77-5. It now awaits a vote in the Senate.

HB 2884 does not include the \$30 million proposed initially for Oasis Food Market in Tulsa which was to support wrap-around social services for communities with a lack of grocery stores. NonDoc earlier reported some issues with Oasis’ governance board and oversight. Lawmakers said they were withholding funding for that project until more could be shared about Oasis’ oversight.

“I think some additional vetting is warranted,” Hall said in a March 13 Senate appropriations committee meeting. “I think the project and the program is fantastic. I would just like to get some more information related to how they would be able to handle the money.”

Oklahoma has until the end of 2024 to allocate the American Rescue Plan Act funds and until the end of 2026 to spend the money. The federal government gave states a combined \$198 billion under the law to combat the effects of the pandemic. Additional funds went to large cities, counties and tribal governments.

PAUL MONIES has been a reporter with Oklahoma Watch since 2017 and covers state agencies and public health. Contact him at (571) 319-3289 or pmonies@oklahomawatch.org. Follow him on Twitter @pmonies.

Billy Ray Sims

By JEFF LONG, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND CULTURE

Born on September 18, 1955, in St. Louis, Missouri, Billy Ray Sims spent the early years of his life in a rough St. Louis neighborhood.



When he finished the eighth grade, he left St. Louis and moved to Hooks, Texas, to live with his grandmother. By the end of his senior year in high school he was one of the most heavily recruited athletes in the nation. After graduation he enrolled at the University of Oklahoma.

Sims received playing time as a freshman in 1975. However, ankle injuries slowed his progress and ultimately resulted in a medical redshirt for the 1976 season. By the 1978 season he was physically ready to play football. His athletic accomplishments that year gained him national attention and made him the leading candidate for

the Heisman Trophy. In the sixth game he carried the football thirty times for 192 yards; he followed this with three straight two-hundred-yard games. He finished the season with 1,762 rushing yards and the Heisman Trophy. He was selected as a football All-American and won the Walter Camp Trophy and the Davy O’Brien Award, both of which honor collegiate football’s player of the year.

At the beginning of the 1979 football season he was the favorite to win a second Heisman Trophy. While Sims started the season slowly, Charles White of the University of Southern California was having a banner year.

Sims rushed for 1,506 yards in 1979, but 529 of them came in the last two regular-season games against Missouri and Nebraska. By this late in the season most of the ballots for the Heisman were cast, and White collected the trophy. Sims finished his career at Oklahoma as a two-time All-American; the Sooners finished season with a 24 to 7 Orange Bowl victory over Florida State.

With the first selection in the 1980 National Football League (NFL) draft, the Detroit Lions selected Sims, making him the second Heisman Trophy-winning running back from Oklahoma to join their organization. In the NFL he

became an immediate success, rushing for 1,303 yards in his first season. This performance led to his unanimous selection as 1980 Rookie of the Year. Moreover, his performance transformed the Lions from the worst team in the NFL (two wins and fourteen losses) in 1979 to a playoff team in 1980. His professional football career was cut short in the eighth week of the 1984 season when he sustained a serious knee injury. In four and a half seasons of professional football, Billy Sims gained 5,106 yards. He was elected to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1994 and to the College Football Hall of Fame in 1995.

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.

BILL SIMS., 2012.201.B1177.0016, Photo by B. Albright, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS

Featured Last Week



Estimated 300K Oklahomans to Lose Medicaid Coverage



House Republicans Censure Rep. Mauree Turner



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MARK STONECIPHER, WARD 8 OKC COUNCILMAN AND OKCPD LT. DAVID DALE speak homelessness Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club in Nichols Hills. PHOTO JOE TOMLINSON

“I believe strongly we can end homelessness in our lifetime”

- Lt. David Dale, Oklahoma City Police Department’s homeless outreach team supervisor

OKC HOMELESSNESS from AI

arrest homeless people on public or private property.

Stonecipher noted the controversy surrounding those ordinances, which were struck after four hours of public comment at a November OKC council meeting.

“Some said that I just wanted to criminalize homelessness. That’s the furthest from the truth,” Stonecipher said. “I want to help people that have problems. I want to help people that have mental health problems, and I want to get them to the services as fast as we can to help them.”

One ordinance Stonecipher proposed would have required homeless people on private property to provide documentation to police that shows they are allowed to be on the property.

“If you are a trespasser,” Stonecipher said, “and it’s hostile conditions like that, the police will come up and they can say, ‘You need to give us some verification that says you’re allowed to be here — your lease, your license, something that shows you’re entitled to be on that property. If not, we can move you.’”

The other ordinance Stonecipher proposed related to homeless people who are routinely encountered in public spaces. On first encounter, Stonecipher said, police would issue a warning and provide a list of available resources. But if that person did not leave the area after being encountered on multiple occasions, police could issue a ticket or even put them in jail.

“When I presented this to the City Council at City Hall, there were numerous people that spoke out against me and said it was wrong to criminalize the homeless people,” Stonecipher said.

Stonecipher claimed that a “large portion” of people who spoke against his ordinances were from outside Oklahoma City, a statement that exacerbated the irony of Tuesday’s discussion being held outside

Oklahoma City boundaries in Nichols Hills.

“I was kind of taken aback by that, especially since a large portion of them — in my mind, when they introduced themselves — weren’t even from Oklahoma City,” Stonecipher said. “We had people from as far away as Norman trying to tell us what to do with our homeless population.”

Lt. David Dale, Oklahoma City Police Department’s homeless outreach team supervisor, led the forum alongside Stonecipher. Dale told attendees that it is legal for homeless people to solicit on the side of the road and in roadway medians.

“That’s all a misconception with the public,” Dale said. “So we get those calls about panhandlers in the median, and again, we can’t force them to leave.”

“I believe strongly we can end homelessness in our lifetime”

OKC Ward 2 Councilman James Cooper attended Tuesday’s forum — hosted by the Oklahoma City Republican Women’s Club — sitting among about 60 people who gathered at the Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club for the event. A vocal affordable housing advocate, Cooper stood and spoke briefly near the end of the discussion after Stonecipher noted his presence earlier in the forum.

“I believe strongly we can work together to end this, and here’s how we do it,” Cooper said referencing the discussion. “There are solutions and we’re really close. But it’s going to take your advocacy.”

After the forum, Cooper said there are two components to addressing the issue: street outreach teams and housing. Both fall under the “housing-first umbrella,” he added.

Oklahoma City recently hired its first street outreach teams. In December 2019, OKC Mayor David Holt and city leaders successfully advocated for the passage of the MAPS 4 sales tax extension, which included \$55.7 million for the city to implement a “housing-first”

“When I presented this to the City Council at City Hall, there were numerous people that spoke out against me and said it was wrong to criminalize the homeless people.”

Mark Stonecipher, OKC Ward 8 Councilmember

strategy.

“MAPS 4, while I think that’s great with housing, that housing is not going to come online until later,” Cooper said. “I’d like to see the city this year and next year commit to rapid rehousing — building housing on city-owned land — and I’d like to see them do everything they can to incentivize case managers to come here.”

Cooper criticized Stonecipher’s event rehashing his previously failed ordinances.

“That is frustrating. It’s nonsensical. It’s ridiculous. It’s a waste of everyone’s time,” Cooper said.

“How many of our homeless came from the border?”

After Stonecipher and Dale’s opening comments, microphones were passed to attendees who had general questions on services and solutions.

In response to a question on why homeless people sometimes refuse services, one woman said, “You can’t just convince somebody to go and leave where they feel safe.”

“We have a lot of people who have a lot of empty buildings. We have a lot of nonprofit organizations,” she added. “I think that we oughta have some kind of tax credit for the people who own the building and for other nonprofits to kind of take that over and let us do what we need to do to take care of people.”

Another attendee asked how many people experiencing homelessness in Oklahoma City may be undocumented immigrants or may have been bussed in from other states. The question provoked applause from one section of the room and snide laughter from another.

In response, Dan Straughan, executive director of the Homeless Alliance in OKC, said that during the city’s annual point-in-time count — a snapshot census of homelessness in the community — unhoused people are asked what ZIP code they lived in prior to losing housing.

Straughan said 75 percent of the homeless surveyed during OKC’s

annual count name Oklahoma City ZIP codes, 20 percent give ZIP codes from other areas across the state, and 5 percent give ZIP codes from outside of the state.

“Almost all of those, when you drill down a little deeper, they came here for the reason everybody comes here — a family or a job, and that didn’t pan out,” Straughan said. “So this trope that people are being bussed in from other states — it’s not happening and never has happened.”

Stonecipher said his ordinances were modeled after similar ordinances in Houston and San Diego, but Straughan said after the meeting that Houston put significant funding towards services, which “made the difference.”

“Simultaneous to the ordinance, the city of Houston put up \$50 million, Harris County and the other counties that Houston sprawls into matched that with \$50 million, and then HUD matched that total with \$100 million. So in addition to the ordinance, they had \$200 million for street outreach, for housing, for mental health services, for substance-use treatment services,” Straughan said. “That’s what made the difference — not that ordinance, that investment.”

Straughan said that he disagrees with Stonecipher’s proposed ordinances. But he said he found the event to be engaging.

“Everybody wants to solve the problem and has different ideas about how to go about that. The only way we’re going to hammer that out is if we sit down and talk,” Straughan said. “The ordinance is not something that I think is going to make a difference, and that’s just something we’re going to disagree on, but we have the same ultimate goal in mind.”

In February, the city celebrated a partnership with the Mental Health Association of Oklahoma to reopen an apartment complex aimed at providing affordable housing.



AMONG OKLAHOMA'S 77 COUNTIES, only Tulsa County has a jail equipped with mental health units, shown in this file photo. A federal class-action lawsuit filed Wednesday alleges more than 100 Oklahomans are languishing in jails while waiting for court-ordered mental health treatment. Without it, their health is deteriorating, according to the lawsuit, and their criminal cases cannot proceed. (Whitney Bryen/Oklahoma Watch)jr. PHOTO **WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH**



The lawsuit alleges the state mental health department and forensic center are denying plaintiffs timely and appropriate treatment.

JAIL MENTAL HEALTH CARE from AI

Courts found the four plaintiffs described in the lawsuit incompetent to stand trial and ordered their transfer to the Oklahoma Forensic Center in Vinita, where they were to receive mental health treatment before their criminal cases could proceed. The lawsuit alleges all remain in county jails “for prolonged periods that far exceed constitutional limits.”

That treatment, known as competency restorative care, includes counseling, education, medication and therapy. Though jails are intended as short-term detention centers, the plaintiffs’ waits for treatment range from three months to nearly one year, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit names as defendants Carrie Slatton-Hodges, commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and Crystal Hernandez, executive director of the Oklahoma Forensic Center in Vinita. The state mental health department is responsible for providing restoration treatment within a reasonable time and operates the forensic center, the state’s largest in-patient treatment hospital and the only facility providing those services for defendants in 77 counties.

The lawsuit alleges the state mental health department and forensic center are denying plaintiffs timely and appropriate treatment, violating their 14th Amendment rights to due process and violating the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“I think the most pressing concern is there doesn’t seem to be enough resources devoted to providing the restoration services to these folks,” said Paul DeMuro, lead counsel for the plaintiffs who seek no monetary damages. “And as a result, they’re being punished effectively simply because they’re mentally ill. And one must remember that these are people that are legally presumed innocent.

And in many of these cases, the crimes are low-level crimes.”

According to a statement emailed to Oklahoma Watch by a department of mental health spokesman Thursday, the department disagrees with the premise of the lawsuit and has begun work to provide competency restoration services “in the jail setting,” which would end the wait for treatment.

“Most often this means prescribing medication to treat the individual’s mental illness,” according to the statement. “Through medication, most individuals are able to gain competency. More complex cases may still be scheduled for transport to the Oklahoma Forensic Center for additional treatment and training.”

The department has explored options such as jail diversions or outpatient treatment as alternatives to reduce the number of people in jail due to behavioral mental health issues, according to the statement.

In November, the U.S. Department of Justice launched an investigation to determine whether Oklahoma fails to provide community-based mental health services to people in Oklahoma County, leading to unnecessary admissions to psychiatric facilities and police contact. Investigators will also examine Oklahoma City and its police department’s response to people in crisis.

“Jails have become the state’s de-facto mental health hospitals,” Tulsa County Sheriff Vic Regalado said in a Feb. 8 interview with Oklahoma Watch.

The lawsuit describes the plaintiffs as:

- A 42-year-old woman identified only as T.W., who was jailed last March after Tulsa police were dispatched to an IHOP restaurant where she was believed to be trespassing. Charged with obstruction and assaulting the officer while seated

In November, the U.S. Department of Justice launched an investigation to determine whether Oklahoma failsto provide community-based mental healthservices to people in Oklahoma County.

and handcuffed in a patrol car, she has spent 239 days in jail since Tulsa County District Court found her incompetent to stand trial, according to the lawsuit. The court ordered that she be provided competency restoration services within 14 days. She was No. 16 on the Oklahoma Forensic Center’s competency wait list as of Feb. 1, according to the lawsuit.

- A 42-year-old Tulsa man with a history of schizophrenia and auditory hallucinations. Identified only as B.S., he remains in Tulsa County jail on a \$5,000 bond and has waited 348 days since the court ordered him to be transported to Vinita when a bed becomes available. The lawsuit states B.S. was arrested in August 2021 for allegedly kicking a security officer at a local hospital.
- A 46-year-old Comanche County man with a history of depression and anxiety. Identified as C.R., he faces 2021 charges that include destruction of property, breaking and entering and defacing a house of worship by breaking three windows. Found incompetent to stand trial in 2022, he has waited 182 days for competency restorative services.
- A 22-year-old man jailed in Oklahoma County with a history of delusional and paranoid thinking and a prior diagnosis of psychotic disorder. Identified as A.M., he was charged with second-degree burglary and grand larceny in July for the theft of a guitar and damaging plumbing fixtures and a window while attempting to enter a neighboring apartment unit “to pray.” His wait for restorative services stands at 86 days.

“They’re spending more time languishing in jail, waiting for

restoration services than they would if they could plead guilty and get the cases over with or go to trial,” said DeMuro, whose Tulsa law firm Frederic Dorwart, Lawyers PLLC is handling the case with the Oklahoma Disability Law Center. “And that’s the thing. They’re in this really horrifying purgatory where their cases are on hold because they’re not competent to even go to trial or enter a plea.”

In 2017, the Tulsa County jail opened two mental health units with a combined capacity of 100. It is the only county in the state with a mental health unit.

“Preferably, we’d like to treat our mentally ill outside of the jail but the state of Oklahoma has dropped the ball on that,” Regalado said. “People who commit crimes have to be held accountable, but if they’re suffering from SMI (severe mental illness), we have an obligation to treat them.”

Three plaintiffs were detained in county jails where medical and mental health services are provided by Turn Key Heath Clinics, an Oklahoma City-based company facing lawsuits in Arkansas, Colorado and Oklahoma filed on behalf of detainees who died in Turn Key’s care. Turn Key does not service Comanche County but is the medical and mental health contractor for Cleveland County, where two women died in December while waiting for mental health evaluations in jail.

ASHLYND HUFFMAN is covers criminal justice for Oklahoma Watch. Contact her at ahuffman@oklahomawatch.org and 405-240-6359. Follow her at @AshlyndHuffman.

WHITNEY BRYEN is an investigative reporter at Oklahoma Watch covering vulnerable populations. Her recent investigations focus on mental health and substance abuse, domestic violence, nonprofits and nursing homes. Contact her at (405) 201-6057 or wbryen@oklahomawatch.org. Follow her on Twitter @SoonerReporter.



PHOTO ADOBE STOCK

A Proposal in the U.S. House *would relax strict banking regulations around cannabis businesses*

SQ 820 LOSS from AI

and the continued fallout from almost five years of medical marijuana sales.

SQ 820 drew opposition from almost the entirety of the state apart from the Oklahoma City and Tulsa areas, underscoring a continuing divide between the largest cities and the rest of Oklahoma. Despite support from the biggest cities, both Oklahoma and Tulsa counties narrowly defeated the measure. Unofficial results late Tuesday had the opposition at 62%, with backers at 38%. More than 566,000 voters showed up for a March special election where marijuana legalization was the only item on the ballot statewide.

Rep. Kevin McDugle, R-Broken Arrow, attended the Yes on 820 watch party on Tuesday night in Oklahoma City and said lawmakers should now address the problems with the illicit cannabis market.

“The Legislature is going to have to get off their tail and pass some legislation,” McDugle said. “We’ve got to get rid of the black market. The only way to do that honestly is to regulate the whole thing.”

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt and Attorney General Gentner Drummond, who were against the initiative, praised the result in separate statements on Tuesday evening. Both said they remain focused on enforcement against illicit grow operations across the state.

Backers of SQ 820 said they were disappointed but hopeful the election spurred a broader conversation about the urgency of addressing past convictions of low-level marijuana crimes.

“This wasn’t about legalizing marijuana, this was about keeping Oklahomans out of the criminal justice system,” said Ryan Kiesel, a former state representative and advisor to the campaign.

Campaign director Michelle Tilley said despite the defeat, Oklahoma is one step closer to ending a two-tier criminal justice system that treats cannabis users differently.

“This is just a matter of when,” Tilley said. “Change is coming. We know that 80% of people under the age of 40 believe legalization needs to happen. It’s just a matter of when. And so we all have to stay banded together and keep fighting this fight and keep pushing forward.”

“The Legislature is going to have to get off their tail and pass some legislation.”

- Rep. Kevin McDugle, R-Broken Arrow

The No campaign, which brought together a coalition of law enforcement groups, some Christian denominations and business associations, said the defeat sends a clear message and underscores the need for more mental health funding to tackle drug abuse.

“Oklahomans oppose the unfettered access to marijuana we have experienced under our so-called medical program,” said Pat McFerron with Protect Our Kids No 820.

How did having a March special election on SQ 820 affect the final vote?

Just over one-fourth of the state’s registered voters participated in the special election, according to unofficial results from the Oklahoma State Election Board. That stands in contrast to last November’s general election, when just over half of the voters cast a ballot.

Voter turnout was a question mark leading up to the special election. The last time an initiative made a non-primary or general election ballot was September 2005.

When State Question 788 appeared on the June 2018 primary ballot, approximately 43% of registered voters weighed in on the initiative to legalize medical marijuana. But that year’s primary, held less than three months after the statewide teacher walkout ended, also featured dozens of competitive races for statewide offices and legislative seats.

A series of delays last August and September, including snags in implementing a new signature verification system, compounded to keep State Question 820 off the November ballot. With the option to set a special election date in 2023 or place the question before voters in 2024, Gov. Kevin Stitt settled on the closer date.

Why is there so much marijuana available in Oklahoma, and will that change now?

A low cost of entry for commercial license fees in the medical marijuana program led to thousands of businesses entering the market since the passage of State Question 788 in June 2018. That market saturation has led to a glut of product, lowering prices for consumers but making it an extremely competitive cannabis market for business owners. Delays and lawsuits over implementing seed-to-sale tracking technology have contributed to some of the glut in cannabis production and possibly its diversion to the illicit market.

There likely will always be illegal marijuana growing operations in Oklahoma, but there’s an existing moratorium on new commercial licenses for growing, processing, transporting and dispensaries under the state’s medical marijuana program. That moratorium ends in August 2024.

How much money was spent on State Question 820 campaigns?

About \$5.1 million through Tuesday, according to campaign finance disclosures filed with the Oklahoma Ethics Commission. Unlike candidate campaigns, there are no limits on contributions and expenditures for campaigns on state questions.

The Yes on 820 Oklahomans for Sensible Marijuana Laws campaign raised about \$3.2 million by the end of 2022, spending almost all of it on gathering petitions and putting the initiative on the ballot. In the final two weeks leading up to the election, the Yes campaign reported spending of \$1.68 million.

The Protect our Kids No on 820 campaign formed in January and has yet to file a

contribution report. The campaign reported spending almost \$220,000 in the final two weeks of the campaign.

What’s the latest on the federal level with cannabis?

Since 1970, has been a Schedule 1 drug under federal law, which means it has the highest prohibitions on use, along with heroin, LSD and ecstasy. President Joe Biden and some in Congress have called for cannabis to be rescheduled under federal law, which would allow more federally supported research into the drug.

A proposal in the U.S. House would relax strict banking regulations around cannabis businesses. A version of that bill, the SAFE Banking Act, has been introduced each session since 2019. The latest version, voted on in April 2021, passed the House but didn’t make it through the Senate. Oklahoma’s all-Republican delegation at the time was split on the bank bill, with Reps. Stephanie Bice, Tom Cole and Kevin Hern voting for it. Reps. Frank Lucas and Markwayne Mullin (now a U.S. Senator) voted against it.

PAUL MONIES has been a reporter with Oklahoma Watch since 2017 and covers state agencies and public health. Contact him at (571) 319-3289 or pmonies@oklahomawatch.org. Follow him on Twitter @pmonies.

KEATON ROSS is a Report for America corps member who covers democracy for Oklahoma Watch. Contact him at (405) 831-9753 or Kross@Oklahomawatch.org. Follow him on Twitter at @_KeatonRoss.



JESSICA NORTON, of Mustang, was released nearly 17 months into her 2-year sentence at Kate Barnard Correctional Center in Oklahoma City on Nov. 4, 2019. Norton, who was convicted of possession of a controlled substance, was one of more than 500 inmates whose sentences were commuted in one of the largest commutations in U.S. history. PHOTO WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH

More Than 400 OKLAHOMA PRISONERS ... CONVICTED OF DRUG AND PROPERTY OFFENSES *were released on time served in Nov. 2019*

VOTING RIGHTS *from AI*

20% since 2019. And yet questions remain about whether some commutation recipients immediately have their voting rights restored.

More than 400 Oklahoma prisoners convicted of drug and property offenses were released on time served in November 2019 as part of the largest mass commutation in U.S. history. Legislation approved in 2019 making State Question 780 retroactive cleared the way for the early releases.

A January 2022 opinion by former Attorney General John O'Connor established that a person whose felony sentence is commuted to time may register to vote and participation in a drug court program does not affect a person's voting eligibility. State officials are generally required to follow an attorney general's opinion unless it is overruled in court.

But clarifying the matter in state law would help squash misinformation among the public and state officials, said Rep. Regina Goodwin, D-Tulsa.

Goodwin's House Bill 1629 would clarify that anyone who receives a sentence commutation to time served or is granted a pardon is eligible to vote. It also adds language that a person may register to vote if their sentence has been discharged, terminology the Department of Corrections uses to indicate that a sentence has been completed

with no further obligations to the state.

Goodwin said the bill simply seeks to align what the Department of Corrections and State Election Board view as a completed sentence.

"Folks will feel comfortable being able to instruct folks on what they can and cannot do, and I absolutely think that's important," Goodwin said. "If people are misinterpreting the law, which has happened with senators and representatives getting it confused, that's why we need to do our level best to make the language as simple as possible."

The bill cleared the House Ethics and Elections Committee without objection and is eligible for consideration on the House floor. The deadline for bills to pass out of their chamber of origin is Thursday, March 23.

As the House committee considered the bill, State Election Board Secretary Paul Ziriaux said its passage would allow state and county election officials to offer better guidance to people with felony convictions.

"I think spelling it out in black and white in the statute will make it much, much clearer not just for election officials, but also for prospective voters," Ziriaux said.

Donna Thompson, director of the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention Prison Ministry, said she regularly interacts with people who believe they are disenfranchised forever because they have a felony conviction. She said clarifying state law

could spur more formerly incarcerated people to become civically engaged.

Last year, the widely-publicized arrests of Florida residents with felony convictions who registered to vote prompted confusion and fear nationwide. States often fall short in their duty to notify newly eligible voters of their rights and sometimes spread false information, according to an investigation from The Marshall Project published last November.

"People are leery about registering to vote because they don't know what is true," Thompson, who also leads prison ministry efforts for the Fairview Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, said. "If we had an opportunity to tell them that if you've discharged your sentence you can vote, it's really the best way for me to communicate with people as little as possible. I don't want to have a conversation with people who've been to prison about parole, probation and all of that. Have you discharged? They know what that means."

The Legislature in recent years has approved several measures aimed at helping formerly incarcerated people reintegrate into society, including bills requiring the corrections department to assist prisoners in obtaining state-issued identification before their release date and removing barriers to professional licensing for people with certain felony convictions.

Communicating to the formerly incarcerated that they will regain their voting rights could also aid in their re-entry. A 2019 study by University of Pittsburgh political science professor Victoria Shineman found a correlation between voter participation and lower recidivism rates.

"You start to view yourself not as a criminal anymore, but as a citizen," Shineman told Oklahoma Watch in 2020. "You have confidence in your abilities, having trust in other people and institutions. All of those are characteristics and attitudes that make it easier for a person to reintegrate and build positive social networks."

Despite having the backing of the Attorney General's office and State Election Board, the House Elections and Ethics Committee shot down a similar proposal from Goodwin last year. She said she hopes the strong backing in committee this year is a sign the proposal will be well-received in the full House.

State Sen. George Young, D-Oklahoma City, is the bill's Senate author.

"It's reasonable and needed," Goodwin said. "It's just one of those bills that's not controversial. We're going to hope it passes."

KEATON ROSS is a Report for America corps member who covers democracy for Oklahoma Watch. Contact him at (405) 831-9753 or Kross@Oklahomawatch.org. Follow him on Twitter at [@_KeatonRoss](https://twitter.com/_KeatonRoss).



PHOTO ADOBE STOCK

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soon becomes
later becomes
someday becomes
...when?



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NOTICE

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

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
PROJECT NO. TD-2020-B1A

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 31st 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. TD-2020-B1A ARTERIAL BRIDGE REHABILITATION FOR BRIDGE 167 – CHARLES PAGE BLVD. BRIDGE 261A – WB 21ST STEET BRIDGE 261B – EB 21ST STREET BRIDGE 359 – S. ELWOOD AVE.

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 2037B0261A. Bridges.bridgMR.4281.42813122-541107 2037B0167Z.Bridges.bridg-MR.4281.42813122-541107 2037B0261B.Bridges.bridg-MR.4281.42813122-541107 2037B0167Z.Bridges.bridg-MR.4282.42823122-541107 2037B0261A.Bridges.bridg-MR.4282.42823122-541107 2037B0261B.Bridges.bridg-MR.4282.42823122-541107 2037B0359Z.Bridges.bridg-MR.4282.42823122-541107

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, 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.

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 31st day of March 2023.

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

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk

NOTICE

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

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
PROJECT NO. 147520-3

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 14th day of April, 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. 147520-3 WHITESIDE PARK
The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 14752031.6014.4054111-541101

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Monday, March 20, 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, B or S.

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 14th day of April 2023.

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

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk

NOTICE

Published in The Oklahoma Eagle:
March 10 and 17, 2023.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
PROJECT NO. 2036N8057Z

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 14th day of April, 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. 2036N8057Z NON-ARTERIAL STREET REHABILITATION/ MAINTENANCE MAINTENANCE ZONE 8057

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 2036N8057Z.Streets.NARtRh.4283.42833122-541106

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Tuesday March 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.

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 14th day of April 2023.

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

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk

NOTICE

Published in The Oklahoma Eagle:
March 10 and 17, 2023.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
SEALED BIDS FOR
PROJECT NO. SP 21-4

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 14th day of April, 2023 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

PROJECT NO. SP 21-4 LACY PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The entire cost of the improvement shall be paid from Account No. 7239000-541101-21D05; 7239000-541101-21D09; 7239000-541101-21D06; 7239000-541101-21D07

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Monday March 20, 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, C or S

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.

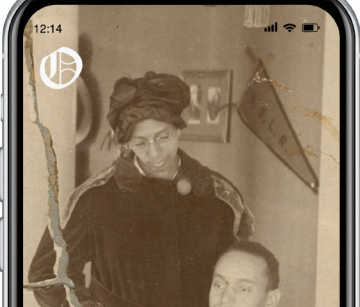
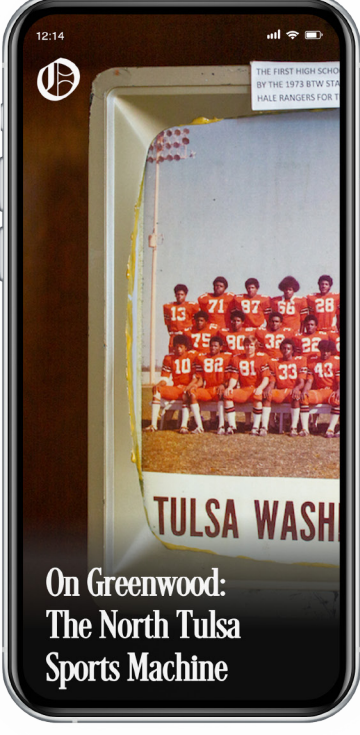
A Certified or Cashier's Check or Bidders Surety Bond, in the sum of 5% of the amount of the bid will be required from each bidder to be retained as liquidated damages in the event the successful bidder fails, neglects or refuses to enter into said contract for the construction of said public improvements 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 14th day of April 2023.

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

(SEAL)
Christina Chappell
City Clerk



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INSPECTION: THURS. MARCH 16TH, FRI. MARCH 17TH AND MON. MAR. 20TH FROM 8:00 AM TO 5:00 PM
AND STARTING AT 8:00 AM DAY OF AUCTION

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THURS. MARCH 16TH AT 10:00 AM


ITEMS LOCATED AT: 14000 PARKWAY COMMONS DR, OKLA. CITY

INSPECTION: WED. MARCH 15TH FROM 8:00 AM TO 5:00 PM
AND STARTING AT 8:00 AM DAY OF AUCTION

AUCTION HELD AT: DAKIL AUCTIONEERS, INC.
200 NW 114TH ST, OKLA. CITY, OKLA.
(W. Side Service Rd of the Bdwy Ext. between 122nd & Hefner)

CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE AUCTION, BID LIVE ON-LINE AT WWW.DAKIL.COM

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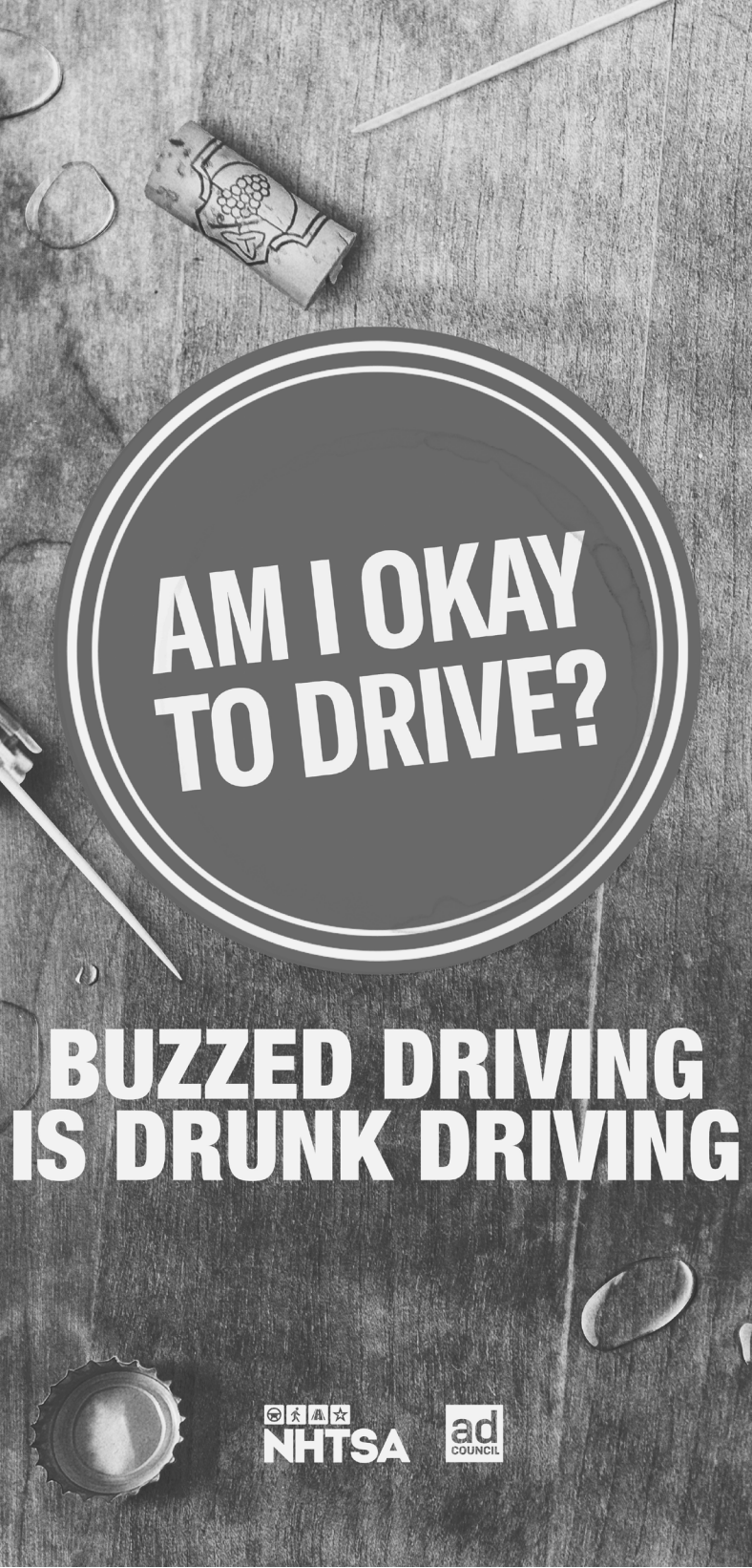
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The Oklahoma Eagle

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Thu 3/16 & Thu 3/23
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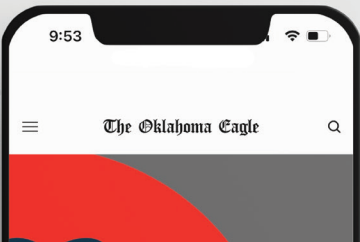


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The Oklahoma Eagle

Our Mission

To amplify our core value of equity, through journalism and editorial" is the cornerstone of our continued success.



THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE CHURCH DIRECTORY



The Oklahoma Eagle publishes news and announcements for churches currently listed in *The Oklahoma Eagle's* Church Directory. For information, please call our office at (918) 582-7124

Church Of The Living God

1559 E Reading St. Tulsa OK
(918) 584-3206

Minister RJ Smith

Sunday school - 9:30am
Sunday Worship - 10:45am
Monday Worship - 6:00pm
Wednesday Bible Study - 5:00pm

CAPERNAUM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
1962 N. Sheridan Rd.
(918) 834-4747

Pastor Ruthie I. Howard

Sunday School
10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship
11:00 a.m.

Bible Study & Prayer Wednesday 7:00 p.m.
For Transportation (918) 402-6027

Words of Wisdom Ministries FC

Temporarily meeting at the Courtyard Marriott 3340 S 79th E Ave Tulsa OK
(918) 230-3022

Pastors Wesley & Alfie Gray would like to invite you to come and experience the Word of God in action this Sunday! God has a word for you, He Guarantee's it! You'll be glad you did!!!

The Oklahoma Eagle Church Directory

List your church in one of the largest church directories in Oklahoma.

Participation in the directory allows free church announcements/ church news.

Post events and celebrations. Priority over non-listed churches for news.

GTOMi

Gospel Tabernacle Outreach Ministries, Inc.
Traveling Outreach Ministries

609 E. Zion Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Elder Julius W. Bland
Sr., Pastor
918-810-3882

ALL ARE WELCOME



MOHAWK FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

3329 E. 30th St. North • 834-0391

Sunday School
9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning
Worship 11 a.m.

Bible Study
Wednesday
7 p.m.



Rev. Emanuel L. Collier, Sr.
Pastor

Gethsemane Baptist Church

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

Dr. W. T. Lauderdale

Sunday School
9:00 a.m.

Church Services
11:00 a.m.

Zoe' Life Church of Tulsa

Rudisill Regional Library
1520 N Hartford Ave.
Tulsa OK 74106
(918) 409-4899

Pastor Richard and Cher Lyons

Sunday Worship: 1pm
Wed- Healing School: 6:30p - 8p

"The Righteous Are As Bold As A Lion." - Prov.28:1a

SOLID ROCK 7th DAY BAPTIST CHURCH

123 E. 59th St. North
Ph: (918) 425-2077

Pastor Rick Bruner

Sabbath School (Saturday)
9:30-10:45 a.m.
Praise & Worship 11:00 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday 6:00 p.m.

"The Seventh Day Is Still God's Sabbath"

Northside Christ Gospel Church

3101 N. M.L King Jr. Blvd.
Tulsa OK
(918) 625-2374

Sunday School - 10 am

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

VERNON AME CHURCH

307-311 N. Greenwood Ave.

P: 918-587-1428
F: 918-587-0642

vernonamechurch@sbcglobal.net

Sunday
Church School
8:30 am

Worship Service
10:00 am

Wednesday
Bible Study
6:00 pm



Rev. Dr. Robert R. Allen Turner

Place your church directory with us today! Advertising your church in *The Oklahoma Eagle* will get you results! Call (918) 582-7124

The Oklahoma Eagle Church Directory

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BOSTON AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1301 S. Boston
(918) 583-5181
Rev. David Wiggs
Senior Minister

Sunday Worship
8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School
9:40 a.m.

Sunday TV
Worship
11:00 a.m.

KTUL Channel 8



TIMOTHY BAPTIST CHURCH

821 E. 46th St. N. • 425-8021

REV. TWAN T. JONES

Sunday School
9:45 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship
11:00 a.m.

"We've come this far by faith"

NORTH PEORIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

2247 N. Peoria
Tulsa, Okla. 74106
(918) 425-1071

Warren Blakney, Minister

Sunday Bible School.....9:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

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19364 S. S. Mingo Road.
Bixby, 74008
Phone: (918) 366-8870

Rev. Robert Givens

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

"Where Peaceful Waters Flow"

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH NORTH TULSA

THE CHURCH WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS US



Pastor Anthony L. & Mrs. Kelly Scott

Sunday
Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship - 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday
Prayer Meeting - 6:30 p.m.
Bible Study - Noon & 7:00 p.m.

1414 N. Greenwood Ave.

Tulsa, OK 74103
918-582-5129

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Changing Hearts

Touching the World



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Tulsa, OK 74106 - (918) 835-1525

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Wednesday Bible Study - 6:30 p.m.

Church Ministries:

Children's Church, CIP Praise Dancers, and CIP Praise Tem.

For Further Information call (918) 835-1525.

"Have Faith In God." Mark 11:22



Pastor Bukky and Wunmi Alabi

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Mount Zion Baptist Church
419 N Elgin Tulsa, Oklahoma

Office:

918-584-0510

Fax:

918-584-1958

Prayer Line:

918-584-PRAY

Sunday School

9:30 a.m.

Morning

Worship 10:45

Wednesday

Bible Study

Noon and 7:00



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In The Spirit Christian Church

"Come And Experience The Spirit"

1020 South Garnett
Tulsa, Okla., 74128
Phone: (918) 836-6823
Fax: (918) 836-6833

Eclectic Praise, Extraordinary
Worship, And Spirited Preaching.

Wednesday Services
10:00 a.m. Spirit Seniors
5:30 p.m. Support Groups
6:30 p.m. Community Dinner
7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Sunday Worship
Church School
9:45 a.m.
Worship
11:00 a.m.

Ministries: Administration, Children's Church, Children's Choir, Spirited Kids, Guest Services, Intercessors, Men's Fellowship, Outreach and much more...



Rev. Sharyn Cosby-Willis,



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BLACK LITERARY TRADITIONS PIVOTAL *In Our* COMMUNITY

BLACK AUTHORS *from AI*

professor of English at Cuyahoga Community College. “As long as you are celebrating African-American authors — it could be traditional authors, new authors, it’s really up to you.”

Rankins brought the Read-In to her campus in 2015 to improve student engagement. Since it started, she has seen more students get involved, share their stories, and ensure their voices are heard.

Down in Atlanta, Dr. Charity Gordon organizes a Read-In at Georgia State University, where she is a clinical professor and serves as the director of the Urban Literacy Collaborative and Clinic.

Gordon’s Read-In features events throughout the day, with a live band, giveaways, breakout sessions, trivia, and readings by local authors.

“It’s centered around all the Black literary traditions that are pivotal in our community, that are important in our community, that make us who we are,” Gordon says.

The Beginning

The AARI was established in 1990 by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English, of which Rankins and Gordon are both members. The goal was to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month.

Since its inaugural year, the program has reached over six million participants worldwide.

“It has grown to be this global initiative that people have taken up and are excited about,” Gordon says.

In 2022, about 213,000 people participated in the African American Read-In around the country. Over half of all U.S. states participated, with Maryland in the lead, hosting a whopping 83 Read-Ins.

But, even though the event is growing, it isn’t being met without resistance.

Keep Telling Stories

As the history of Black Americans in this country continues to experience erasure in school curriculums across the nation, the African American Read-In is more important than ever this year.

“We’re seeing the censorship, not just in K-12, but also filtering into [university] spaces. The restrictions of not wanting to tell African-American stories, or stories of Black Americans, or what have you,” Rankins says. “That’s why programs like the Read-In are so important because we’re celebrating in public spaces: We are celebrating the works of African-American authors and poets and other creatives.”

The University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Cooperative Children’s Book Center has been tracking books published by diverse authors since 2018. Since then, the

number of children’s books by and about Black people has steadily risen, from 17% in 2018 to 22% in 2021, according to the most recent data available.

Though her first event had public support from Georgia State, and excitement surrounding it, Gordon says the university isn’t as supportive as it once was.

“We are having to do a lot of things on our own,” Gordon says.

In April 2022, Georgia joined other Republican-led states in banning schools from teaching “divisive” concepts about race and racism — namely critical race theory. This means that, though Georgia State is supporting the event on paper, it seems like the university would rather not attach its likeness to the literacy event this year.

Although some educators feel the administration’s stance puts pressure on them to be quiet, Gordon says, she feels the opposite. Instead, she feels more driven and values the importance of the Read-In even more.

“We have to keep telling the stories where we have the opportunity, and understanding that when we are telling stories, we are participating in a centuries-old tradition of the oral tradition,” Rankins says. “Books themselves are critical and important, and I don’t think they will ever go away.”

Full Circle Moments

One of Rankins’ favorite things about the Read-Ins is that you never know what will happen or what special moment you’ll take away from it.

For her, a standout memory is from her 2016 Read-In that gave Black men a space to read and discuss Black authors. She said, after discussing the literature, the men began reflecting on their relationships with their sons and how it felt to be a Black man in America at the time.

“It just became this really wonderful storytelling session,” Rankins remembers.

But what truly stuck out to her was that, after the event, one of her students asked to check those same books out of the library.

“Moments like that, where your students are really engaged and ask for a book afterwards — I mean, it doesn’t get any better than that,” Rankins says.

When Gordon was a Ph.D. student studying language and literacy education, she said she was still learning so much about her own culture

BLACK AUTHORS *continued on AI*

that she’d often leave class and feel like the world looked new. It compelled her to make sure the generation behind her was not only aware of their culture’s literary traditions and histories but proud of them — something that didn’t happen for Gordon until she was a Ph.D. student.

“We wanted to create a space where the children in our community felt affirmed, or they understood their worth or value, or they



understood where they came from,” Gordon says.

“They understood that these literary traditions that we are always engaged in are worthy and are valuable.”

The full circle moment came for her in 2016 after a Black third-grader read “I’m a Pretty Little Black Girl” at an event. Her mother reached out to Gordon later to say that her daughter was being bullied at school over her appearance. And when her mom asked what she thought at that moment, her daughter replied, “I don’t care because I’m a pretty little Black girl” — a reference to the book she read at Gordon’s

event.

“That was exactly the goal that I wanted. I wanted them to feel affirmed and feel confident in their own skin and who they are,” Gordon says. “So that was the goal. And that’s one of the outcomes.”

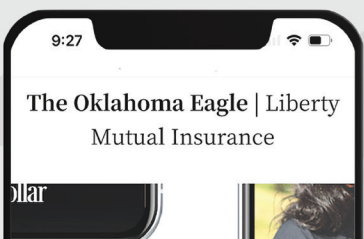
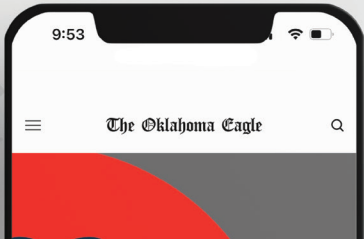
2023 AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN at Cuyahoga Community College. PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. MICHELLE RANKINS

URBAN LITERACY COLLABORATIVE AND CLINIC’S 2023 AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN. PHOTO COURTESY THAIS COUNCIL

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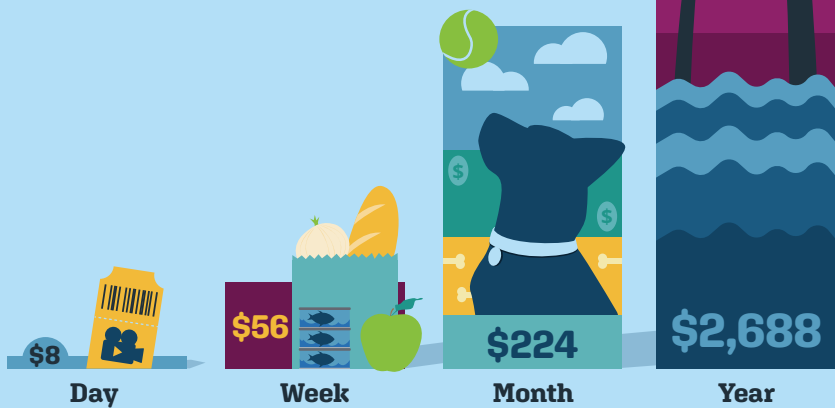
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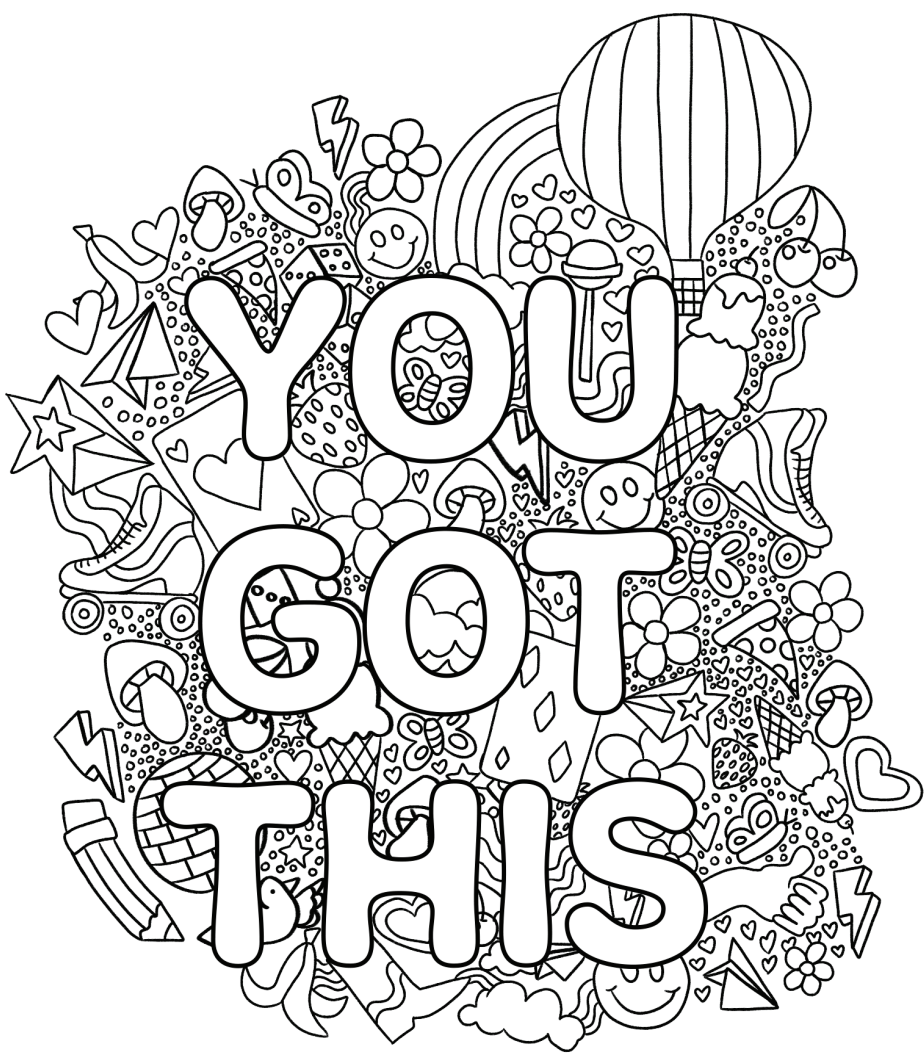
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