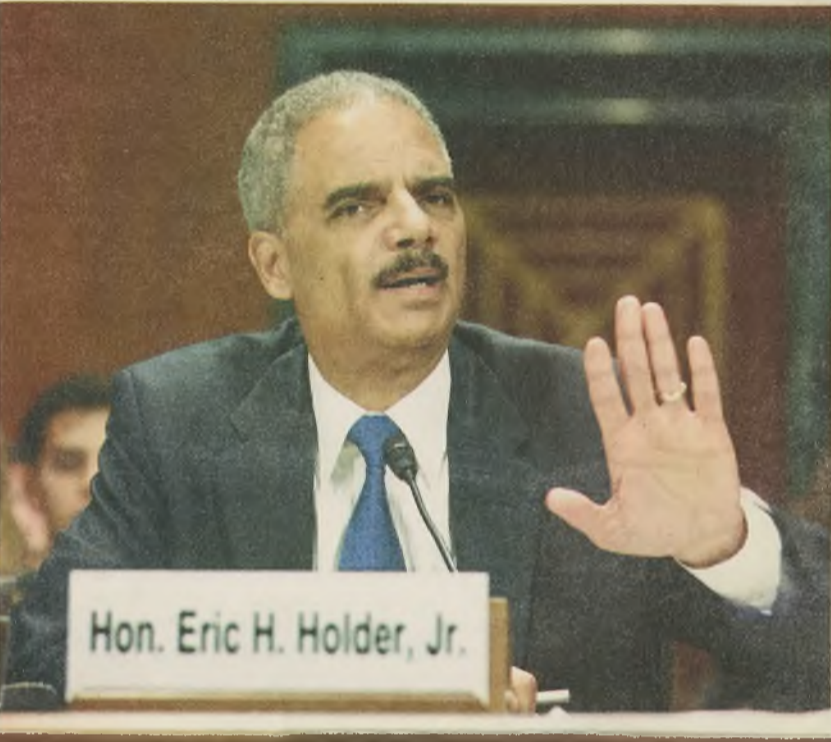


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Attorney General Eric Holder testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, June 12, 2012, before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing looking into national security leaks. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Emergency Challenge to RJA Repeal Bill Issued By NC NAACP and Coalition Partners

The NC House of Representatives will consider another attempt to repeal the Racial Justice Act later today. The NC NAACP is issuing five critical reasons to vote against the bill, which can be found below. They are also calling on all branches and HKONJ partners to flood legislators with calls and emails immediately today encouraging them to reject Senate Bill 416, with the five critical reasons for doing so.

- Five Reasons Legislators Should Reject New Efforts to Repeal the Racial Justice Act
- 1) The Racial Justice Act was passed with the support of proponents and opponents of the death penalty. All agreed that racial bias has no place in the application of the ultimate punishment of death.
 - 2) Support for the Racial Justice Act is not an endorsement of violence or a sign that anyone is "soft on crime." Criminal justice enforcement is only strengthened when the system confronts racial bias directly and attempts to rid it from its practices.
 - 3) Two Superior Court judges in North Carolina examined the law and evidence. The first found the RJA constitutional. And the second, the Cumberland County Superior Court, examined the comprehensive evidence presented to it by both sides for several months and found that race played a significant role in the death sentence of the first RJA petitioner, Marcus Robinson, and changed his death sentence to life in prison without parole. The Court found what virtually every researcher who has studied the death penalty process has shown: racism infects much of this system and its ultimate punishment--the death penalty.
 - 4) We live in a state where seven men have been exonerated from death row, who would have been murdered by the state if the system had only worked faster. Five are black, one is Latino and one is white. ALL were charged with the murders of white victims.
 - 5) All the evidence shows that the death penalty system is flawed with racial bias. It is bizarre and unthinkable that legislators are striving to maintain the status quo of racism in the application of the death penalty and steal a tool from the courts to address this abomination.

Post offices, Ellis Island join endangered list

By Brett Zongker
WASHINGTON (AP) - Hundreds of historic U.S. post offices nationwide face uncertain futures as the U.S. Postal Service downsizes, so preservationists on June 6 added these American institutions to the list of the country's most endangered historic places.

Post offices will join the list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places as a group for the first time. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is citing the bureaucratic process for disposing of thousands of post offices, saying developers and community groups interested in rehabilitating the historic buildings end up walking away when they don't get timely or clear answers from the Postal Service.

The group also said New York's Ellis Island hospital complex is threatened, even though it's a popular historic destination, because the facility where thousands of immigrants received medical treatment upon their arrival has been left open to the elements.

Princeton Battlefield, the site of a pivotal American Revolution episode in New Jersey, also is facing imminent danger from housing development that would change the landscape, preservationists said.

This is the 25th anniversary of the listing of endangered places. Over that time 242 historic sites have been added to the listing. Only 10 sites of those have been lost, while others are still endangered, officials said.

The nation's post offices represent the largest number of sites that could be lost in towns and cities both large and small. Preservationists began getting calls more than a year ago about individual post offices, so they want to work with the Postal Service to help foster a process for adapting and reusing the historic buildings, said Stephanie Meeks, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"This isn't about taking on the post office," she said. "Of course we don't quibble with the post office having to do what they have to do to manage their business, but we do want to make sure there's a thoughtful process in place for managing the historic resources."

One developer in Geneva, Ill., walked away from negotiations with the Postal Service after

months of work, citing a lack of clear answers from the agency.

The Postal Service on June 6 said its plans have changed for many post offices since a study last summer. As of May 2012, the agency plans to consolidate about 460 mail processing centers in phases.

Of more than 31,500 post offices nationwide, only 55 are officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places, agency spokeswoman Sue Brennan said. If the Postal Service seeks to sell any historic property, Brennan said the agency follows State Historic Preservation Office guidelines to identify historic elements that must be saved.

Another large group of sites being added to the endangered list includes the courthouses of Texas, with support from former first lady Laura Bush. The state's courthouses were first listed in

1998, but at least 70 of them still need critical repairs. Most are still in use.

Other sites are facing even more imminent threats.

President Theodore Roosevelt's Elkhorn Ranch in North Dakota's Badlands, which inspired his views on conservation, is facing development of a road and bridge project that would "mar" the landscape and "stain Roosevelt's legacy of conservation," the group said.

Three sites from black history also are being added to the list: Joe Frazier's gym in Philadelphia where he trained to take on Muhammad Ali, the boyhood home of Malcolm X in Boston and Atlanta's Sweet Auburn Historic District, where Martin Luther King Jr. was born and later preached.

This is the second time that Sweet Auburn has been among the most endangered sites.

Former SCLC head says he was fired without warning

By Ashley Hopkinson
ATLANTA (AP) - The recently dismissed president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference said June 11 he was removed by the civil rights group's board without warning or a chance to rebut the reasons for his ouster.

Isaac Farris called for the board to unify and fulfill the mission of the civil rights organization co-founded in 1957 by his uncle, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The news conference represented his first public comments since he was fired in April from the organization.

A group of current and former chapter presidents and members is calling for Farris to be reinstated. They say the SCLC board dismissed Farris without any input from the chapters.

With a dozen supporters seated behind him, Farris held back tears as he spoke of his life mission to serve God and the less fortunate. Farris said he wasn't given a chance to respond to the board's reasons for firing him.

"Let me be clear, I never received a letter of termination, yet it was told to the media that I resigned," he said.

He also confirmed that the locks on the building were changed. "I found myself pushed out and literally locked out," he said.

Farris said had planned to leave quietly, but supporters implored him to speak publicly. He said his public comments weren't just about trying to get his job back.

"This is about the future of SCLC and its potential to serve mankind and whether it can live up to that potential."

Farris said he would return if the board and the greater SCLC body agreed to it.

In the meantime, Farris said he wants the organization to work toward meaningful goals like equality in education and helping the poor.

He called for the board to return to the founding principles of SCLC, which are rooted in service to the community.

The coalition stated that their next step is to ask a judge to intervene. They are also demanding the resignation of two of the board's leaders.

Civil rights veteran C.T. Vivian is serving as the group's interim president.

Pastor Creflo Dollar denies attacking daughter

By Kate Brumback
COLLEGE PARK, Ga. (AP) - Megachurch pastor Creflo Dollar has taken to his pulpit to deny punching and choking his 15-year-old daughter, telling his congregation the allegations made in a police report are nothing but "exaggeration and sensationalism."



DOLLAR

"I will say this emphatically: I should have never been arrested," Dollar said June 10 in his first public appearance two days after police charged him with misdemeanor counts of simple battery and cruelty to children.

The pastor got an enthusiastic ovation from the packed church as he took the pulpit at the World Changers Church International in the Atlanta suburb of College Park. He addressed the criminal charges head-on for several minutes before moving on to his sermon.

"I want you all to hear personally from me that all is well in the Dollar household," Dollar said.

The 50-year-old Dollar is one of the most prominent African-American preachers based around Atlanta, with 30,000 members in the Atlanta area and a ministry of satellite churches across the U.S.

He was arrested after his 15-year-old daughter called 911 at about 1 a.m. Friday and told a Fayette County sheriff's deputy that she and her father argued when he said she couldn't go to a party. A police report says the girl told a deputy her father charged at her, put his hands around her throat, began to punch her and started hitting her with his shoe. The deputy noted a scratch on her neck.

The report said the deputy also interviewed Dollar's 19-year-old daughter, who said her father grabbed her sister's shoulders and slapped her in the face and choked her for about five seconds. She said her sister tried to break free, but did not fight back. When her father threw the 15-year-old on the floor, the older girl ran to get her mother. Dollar's wife, Taffi, told the deputy she did not see the fight.

Dollar launched into a lengthy denial of the allegations from the pulpit.

"The truth is that a family conversation with our youngest daughter got emotional," he said. "And emotions got involved and things escalated from there."

He said the mark on his

daughter's neck had been there for about 10 years and was caused by a skin condition, eczema.

"The truth is she was not choked, she was not punched. There were not any scratches on her neck," Dollar said. "But the only thing on her neck was a prior skin abrasion from eczema. Anything else is exaggeration and sensationalism."

Dollar didn't publicly display any anger toward his children.

"I will never put any fault on my children, as Jesus would never put any fault on me," he said.

Dollar's wife is a co-pastor at the church. She addressed the congregation before her husband but did not touch on the allegations.

Dollar's congregation appeared supportive June 10, giving him sustained applause as he took the stage. As he spoke, people in the sanctuary yelled encouragement: "We love you!" and "We've got your back!" As he talked about the difficulty dealing with teenage children in a "culture of disrespect," many in the crowd nodded in agreement.

Members of the church seemed to close ranks around Dollar even before he addressed them. Dozens of people approached by The Associated Press as they arrived for the service declined to comment, and the few who did expressed support. After the service, many were still reluctant to comment, but those who did said they were

satisfied with their pastor's comments.

"When I first heard what he was accused of, I didn't believe it. I knew there had to be more to the story," said Phyllissa Wolley, 23, a daycare worker who has attended the church for about five years. "I felt like he addressed the accusations today, and I believe what he said. To hear from him personally, I really appreciated that. I was glad to hear his side of the story."

Others said the media blew the accusations out of proportion without having all the facts and they felt vindicated after hearing Dollar speak.

"I think you're looking at a bunch of sensationalism," said George Blake of Ellenwood, adding that he thought the media rushed to tell the story without knowing the full story. The 49-year-old said he never questioned his pastor of eight years.

"It's not up to me to be satisfied with what he had to say," Blake said. "This is a man of God spreading the word of God."

Dollar, who has five children, is a native of College Park and says he received a vision for the church in 1986. He held the first service in front of eight people in an elementary school cafeteria. His ministry grew quickly and the church moved into its present location, an 8,500-seat sanctuary, on Dec. 24, 1995.

Along with Bishop Eddie Long, Dollar is one of the most prominent