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## Black lawmakers call on FBI to help on missing black girls

By Jesse J. Holland

WASHINGTON (AP) - Black members of Congress are calling for the Justice Department to help police investigate a large number of missing children in Washington, D.C.

The District of Columbia logged 501 cases of missing juveniles, many of them black or Latino, in the first three months of this year, according to the Metropolitan Police Department, the city's police force. Twenty-two were unsolved as of March 22, police said.

The letter, dated March 21 and obtained March 23 by The Associated Press, was sent by Congressional Black Caucus chairman Cedric Richmond, D-La., and Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, who represents the District in Congress. They called on Attorney General Jeff Sessions and FBI Director James Comey to "devote the resources necessary to determine whether these developments are an anomaly or whether they are indicative of an underlying trend that must be addressed."

An email sent to the Justice Department seeking comment was not immediately answered March 25. Richmond said he hopes to meet with Sessions and bring up the issue. No meeting is currently scheduled. But President Donald Trump assured caucus members on March 24 that he would make his Cabinet secretaries available to them.

D.C. police officials said there has been no increase in the numbers of missing persons in their jurisdiction. "We've just been posting them on social media more often," said Metropolitan Police spokeswoman Rachel Reid.

According to local police data, the number of missing child cases in the District dropped from 2,433 in 2015 to 2,242 in 2016. The highest total recently, 2,610, was back in 2001.

But the increased social media attention has caused concern in the U.S. capital area, which has long had a large minority population and is currently about 48 percent black. Hundreds of people packed a town-hall style meeting at a neighborhood school on March 24 to express concern about the missing children cases.

"Ten children of color went missing in our nation's capital in a period of two weeks and at first garnered very little media attention. That's deeply disturbing," Richmond's letter said.

Derrica Wilson, co-founder of the Black and Missing Foundation, said that despite the assurances from police, it was alarming for so many children to go missing around the same time. On March 21 night, she noted, her group had four reports of missing children and only one had been found.

"We can't focus on the numbers. If we have one missing child, that's one too many," Wilson said.

Wilson said she is concerned about whether human trafficking is a factor, citing the case of 8-year-old Relisha Rudd, who has been missing since she vanished from a city homeless shelter in 2014. A janitor who worked at the shelter was found dead of apparent suicide during the search for the girl.

"They prey on the homeless, they prey on low income children, they prey on the runaways, they prey online," Wilson said.

Information from the National Crime Information Center showed there were 170,899 missing black children under 18 in the United States, more than

any other category except for the white/Hispanic combined number of 264,443. Both numbers increased from the year before, which saw 169,655 missing black children and 262,177 missing white/Hispanic children.

"Whether these recent disappearances are an anomaly or

signals of underlying trends, it is essential that the Department of Justice and the FBI use all of the tools at their disposal to help local officials investigate these events, and return these children to their parents as soon as possible," Richmond said.



The African American Quilt Circle presents a new exhibit "Dew Much Life, threads Connecting Lives" at Hayti Heritage Center. See photos from the opening on page 6)

### NAACP leader: GOP lawmakers of-fended public with policies

RALEIGH (AP) - A chief critic of North Carolina Republican policies on everything from voting and LGBT rights to health care and the minimum wage says GOP legislators have offended the public and their laws must be overturned.

State NAACP president the Rev. William Barber led a lobbying effort March 21 at the Legislative Building for his organization and allied groups with the "Forward Together" movement. Clergy and other activists went door-to-door to House and Senate members' offices to push their policy agenda.

A couple of hundred people joined Barber for an afternoon news conference, where he complained about the inaction of GOP legislative leaders, especially after court rulings on voting laws and redistricting.

In 2013, Barber began leading peaceful "Moral Monday" demonstrations at the Legislative Building that ultimately resulted in over 1,000 arrests.

### Teen held on murder charge found dead in Durham jail cell

(AP) - A teen arrested on a murder charge last year has been found dead in her cell at the Durham County jail.

Sheriff's spokeswoman Tamara Gibbs said in a news release that officers were sent to the jail around 3:30 a.m. March 23 where they found 17-year-old Uneice Glenae Fennell unresponsive. Paramedics declared her dead.

Fennell was arrested last July and charged with murder in the

death of 19-year-old Andre Bond of Durham.

The news release said that based on preliminary evidence and statements given to detectives, investigators think Fennell killed herself. The department did not say how she died.

Fennell was also charged with firing a gun into an occupied residence and firing a gun with a pattern of street gang activity.

The State Bureau of Investigation is handling the case.

**Alumna Authors Book About Higher Education - Alumna Tressie McMullan Cottom, Ph.D. authored novel, "Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise for For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy."**

In the narrative, Cottom examines higher education in the for-profit sector. She also explores the benefits, pitfalls, and real costs of a for-profit education. Cottom discussed her new book as the featured guest on "The Daily Show" on March 8.



Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) said that she has considered pursuing impeachment proceedings for President Donald Trump, during a ceremony honoring a Lenora "Doll" Carter, former publisher of the Houston Forward Times. (Freddie Allen/AMG/NNPA)

## Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee To Black Press: Trump Has Endangered America

By Harry Colbert, Jr. (Insight News/NNPA Member)

WASHINGTON, DC—On a day that honored a stalwart of the Black Press and saw a liaison of the Trump Administration walk out on a breakfast with members of the Black Press, it was the words of Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) in a university library that rang the loudest.

Rep. Jackson Lee delivered remarks on March 23 in memory of Lenora "Doll" Carter, long-time publisher of the "Houston Forward Times," who was just enshrined in the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) Gallery of Distinguished Publishers at Howard University's Founders Library. The enshrinement ceremony is one of the signature events of Black Press Week, an annual celebration in Washington, D.C., attended by NNPA members, partners, sponsors and Black Press contributors.

The NNPA is a trade group of more than 200 Black-owned media companies operating in 70 markets in the United States.

During her impromptu talk after the enshrinement ceremony, Jackson Lee dropped a bombshell. In talking about the nation's current president, Jackson Lee minced no words.

"This is not a government, right now," said Jackson Lee in front of nearly 50 members of the Jackson Lee added: "I'm on the route of impeachment."

Jackson Lee said there are a litany of reasons that should disqualify President Donald Trump as president including his potential ties to Russia and its interference in November's election, but she also said America is unsafe under Trump.

"I'm concerned about our nation. I'm concerned about what happens when we get that call about North Korea in the middle of the night," said Jackson Lee. "You have in office an individual that is unread and unlearned."

Jackson Lee's statement rang loud, because she is also a member of the House Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees.

Some have expressed concerns that an impeachment of Trump would leave the nation under the control of Vice President Mike Pence, who is seen as a staunch conservative with far right-wing views. Jackson Lee does not share in those concerns.

"At least he understands government," said the Texas representative. "And I'm focused on getting him (Pence) out in 2020, anyway."

Jackson Lee also remembered "Doll" Carter, fondly.

"Doll was larger than life," remarked Jackson Lee. Carter lived in Jackson Lee's district.

Carter, who died in 2010, also served as the treasurer of the NNPA. She was remembered as a powerful businesswoman and a loving friend.

Colleague and close friend Dorothy Leavell said Carter lived up to her nickname. "I know why they called her "Doll," said Leavell, "She was beautiful on the outside and she was beautiful on the inside, as well."

Insight News is a member publication of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Learn more about becoming a member at [www.nnpa.org](http://www.nnpa.org).

## Death rates up for middle age whites with little education

By Christopher S. Rugaber

WASHINGTON (AP) - A sobering portrait of less-educated middle-age white Americans emerged March 23 with new research showing them dying disproportionately from what one expert calls "deaths of despair" - suicides, drug overdoses and alcohol-related diseases.

The new paper by two Princeton University economists, Anne Case and Angus Deaton, concludes that the trend is driven by the loss of steady middle-income jobs for those with a high school diploma or less.

The economists also argue that dwindling job opportunities have triggered broader problems for this group. They are more likely than their college-educated counterparts, for example, to be unemployed, unmarried or suffering from poor health.

"This is a story of the collapse of the white working class," Deaton said in an interview. "The labor market has very much turned against them."

Those dynamics helped fuel the rise of President Donald Trump, who won widespread support among whites with only a high school diploma. Yet Deaton said his policies are unlikely to reverse these trends, particularly the health care legislation now before the House that Trump is championing. That bill would lead to higher premiums for older Americans, the Congressional Budget Office has found.

"The policies that you see, seem almost perfectly designed to hurt the very people who voted for him," Deaton said.

Case and Deaton's paper, issued by the Brookings Institution, follows up on research they released in 2015 that first documented a sharp increase in mortality among middle-aged whites.

Since 1999, white men and women ages 45 through 54 have endured a sharp increase in "deaths of despair," Case and Deaton found in their earlier work. These include suicides, drug overdoses, and alcohol-related deaths such as liver failure.

In the paper released March 23, Case and Deaton draw a clearer relationship between rising death rates and changes in the job market since the 1970s. They find that men without college degrees are less likely to receive rising incomes over time, a trend "consistent with men moving to lower and lower skilled jobs."

Other research has found that Americans with only high school diplomas are less likely to get married or purchase a home and more likely to get divorced if they do marry.

"It's not just their careers that have gone down the tubes, but their marriage prospects, their ability to raise children," said Deaton, who won the Nobel prize in economics in 2015 for his long-standing work on solutions to poverty. "That's the kind of thing that can lead people to despair."