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## NAACP, NC lawyers oppose GOP attempt to restore voter ID now

RALEIGH (AP) - It's too late to restore a photo identification requirement to vote in North Carolina for the March primary, attorneys for the state and the NAACP wrote separately on Jan. 31, opposing efforts by Republicans to suspend a judge's order blocking the requirement.

The State Board of Elections - a defendant in a lawsuit challenging the 2018 voter ID law - is already appealing U.S. District Judge Loretta Biggs' order on Dec. 31 halting the use of photo ID for the time being. But the state Department of Justice, which represents the board, didn't try to overturn her preliminary injunction before the March 3 primary because it said restoring voter ID now would cause confusion.

That prompted North Carolina Republican legislative leaders to file a motion Jan. 10 seeking to officially enter the lawsuit and ask the voter ID law to be enforced in the primary. Attorney General Josh Stein's lawyers pointed out that House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger aren't parties

in the lawsuit. Biggs has twice rejected their requests to join the case.

The election is already underway, with more than 8,000 absentee ballots requested so far and hundreds of ballots already returned, Friday's (Jan. 31) brief says. The voter ID law requires absentee ballot filers to comply with the photo ID mandate, too. Early in-person voting begins Feb. 13.

"The state board has taken a number of specific measures to comply with the court's order, and it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, and confusing to the public, to unwind many of these actions in an orderly way if the order were stayed," the state's lawyers wrote.

The state NAACP and local NAACP chapters sued over the law in December 2018. Biggs ruled about a year later that the voter ID rules appeared to contain the racially discriminatory taint of several sections of a 2013 voting law that a federal appeals court declared unconstitutional in 2016. That 2013 l

aw required photo ID but also scaled back early in-person voting. Republican legislators, who had approved both laws, disagree with Biggs.

The NAACP's lawyers agreed any reversal would cause confusion, but also wrote the Republicans are unlikely to be able to overturn Biggs' order. The civil rights groups say there's good reason to believe provisions in the new law - which GOP lawmakers say make it easier for voters to comply - would still disproportionately harm African American voters.

"Staying the preliminary injunction at this point would lead to a dysfunctional enforcement of an unconstitutional law that would undoubtedly undermine the integrity of that election and disenfranchise North Carolina voters," the NAACP brief read.



NCCU and VGCC Link Programs to Careers in Pharmaceutical Research and Development Enhanced programs prepare students to fill skill gaps in the pharmaceutical workforce. See story on page 2). NCCU Photo

## \$20,000 raised to help man who survived 1952 lynching attempt

APEX (AP) - A North Carolina man who survived an attempted lynching in 1952 has been helped by hundreds of people to move to a new home Jan. 28 so a highway can be expanded.

Lynn Council, 87, plans to move into a new house in Apex after living in his current home for more than 60 years, news outlets reported.

Council was accused decades ago of a robbery he didn't commit. Two deputies hanged him from a tree to try to get him to confess. When he didn't, the deputies took him down.

Council later settled into a home just outside of Apex. About 20 years ago, he took out a \$20,000 federal home repair loan. One condition of the loan was that the full amount must be paid if he moved out or died.

The state recently bought Council's home so the Department of Transportation can expand the NC-540 highway. That meant he needed to pay back the \$20,000 loan.

Garrett Raczek learned about Council's story and launched an online fundraiser to help pay off the debt. By early Tuesday (Jan. 28) morning, the fundraiser had exceeded \$21,000.

"I sure thank the Lord for the gifts. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you, Lord," Council said at a news conference.

As for the attempted lynching, the Wake County Sheriff's Office and Apex police apologized last year. A bench in Council's honor was also placed outside the police department.

## Raleigh-Durham airport staffer charged with 'secret peeping'

MORRISVILLE (AP) - A Raleigh-Durham International Airport employee has been charged with secret peeping after authorities were tipped off about "potential illegal activity" that happened at the airport, according to a statement from airport officials.

Brennan Stevenson, 30, was arrested Jan. 29 by Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority law enforcement, news outlets reported. He has since been removed from his position and is not allowed on airport property, officials told WRAL-TV. Stevenson's LinkedIn account says he's been a contract compliance officer at the airport.

Stevenson is charged with felony secret peeping, felony disseminating image obtained from secret peeping and felony possessing photographic image from secret peeping, police said.

It's unclear whether Stevenson has an attorney who can comment on his behalf. No additional details have been released.

## Evacuated public housing tenants miss the 'essence of home'

By Virginia Bridges AND Martha Quillin

(AP) - Samantha Crowder faced another week with her five children spread over two hotel rooms.

At 6:10 a.m. on a Monday, she dressed, left the room she shared with her 9-year-old and 5-month-old, and knocked on the door of the room around the corner where her three other children, ages 12 to 20, slept.

It was time to wake 12-year-old Jayden for school. "Like, open the door. Get up," she called out. "So I'm sure you are up before I walk away."

About 280 families from the McDougald Terrace public housing community have now been living in a dozen local hotels and motels for nearly one month. The Durham Housing Authority started evacuating them over carbon monoxide concerns Jan. 3 and announced this week they could remain in the hotels until mid-February.

The hotel is safe, Crowder said, and residents don't have to worry about the shootings that frequent the McDougald Terrace area east of downtown.

But they have had to deal with uncertain transportation, not knowing where their next meal will come from and their kids not having a place to play.

They miss the comforts of home: everyone in the same apartment, personal space, a full kitchen, a trusted neighbor to watch the children while they run to the store. And they worry about returning to the 1950s housing complex without DHA fully fixing the gas leaks and other problems like mold, water spots in ceilings and roaches.

"I miss the essence of a home," Crowder said. "I don't miss McDougald Terrace. The conditions are horrible."

### AMENITIES

Some hotel rooms have kitchenettes with stoves and full-size refrigerators, and some have microwaves.

Crowder and her children have neither.

They're among 80 families at the Millennium Hotel, off Morreene Road near Duke University. The rooms have mini-fridges, with microwaves in a couple of community rooms downstairs.

DHA is providing stipends based on hotel room amenities. Those with kitchenettes get \$30 per adult and \$15 per child per day. Families without kitchenettes get double that.

The housing authority isn't charging any McDougald Terrace residents rent for January and February, and it has put evictions on hold. Crowder, 35, said that is the right thing to do.

Her unit had mold, water leaks and lead paint, which she reported. "They would just come in and put a little duct tape on it and keep it going," she said.

Still, at home, Crowder could offer her children a sausage biscuit or eggs before school.

At the hotel, she has them eat gummy vitamins. Other options include a NutriGrain bar, apple or banana.

The hotel has a restaurant, but a \$12.99 breakfast is too expensive for a big family, she said.

### CROWDED ROOM

Crowder's hotel room reflects the chaos of temporary living.

Laundry baskets line one wall. Pizza boxes and to-go containers, which don't fit into the small hotel garbage cans, are stacked on the desk and fill one large clear garbage bag. Baby food, wipes and other items for her youngest cover the nightstand between the beds.

It's 6:46 a.m. almost past time for the bus to take her 9-year-old son, Cody Hayes, to Bethesda Elementary, which starts at 7:45 a.m.

Cody, however, can't find his jacket. Crowder combs through two baskets of freshly washed laundry and pulls clothes from a pile in the corner.

She sends Cody to the other room to look. And then she goes and looks herself, starting to worry about Cody missing the bus that has come as early as 6:30 and as late as 7:10 a.m.

Cody said he feels mad about the whole situation.

"I don't have my own room," he said. He can't play with his friends or walk around.

Cody and Crowder, pushing her 5-month old daughter in her stroller, navigate the long hotel halls to the front lobby where a handful of families are waiting for school buses.

McDougald Terrace resident Laura Betye, 60, is worried about



The Friends of Stanford L. Warren Library hosted for Black History Month on Monday, February 3, a Conversation between Dr. Karla FC Holloway (and Andre Vann, who will discuss Holloway's latest work and signing of her new mystery, "A Death in Harlem." Holloway is the James B. Duke Professor Emerita of English and Law at Duke University, where her research and teaching have included African American literary and cultural studies, bioethics, gender, and law.

two girls who have been waiting since 5:40 a.m. for a bus to Neal Middle School.

She called the shuttle service contracted to help provide rides, but it didn't answer.

One of the girls says she is going back to her room. The other has started to cry.

### HOTEL CAPTAINS

Each hotel has a resident captain to help coordinate services and share concerns.

Betye is the resident captain for the Millennium Hotel but calls it being the "lead."

"I am egalitarian," said Betye who came to the U.S. from Romania when she was a child and still has a slight accent. "I am nobody's captain."

Earlier in the day, Betye woke up around 5 a.m. and put out danishes in the community room the hotel designated for McDougald Terrace residents. The community room is typically filled with a variety of supplies, such as diapers, paper towels and detergent.

In the afternoon children can go to the community room to get homework help and snacks. A couple of times a week, Alliance Healthcare will offer counseling in an adjacent room. Emergency Management Services and the Durham County Department of Social Services are also checking in on some elderly residents.

The Neal Middle bus never came, Betye said. A hotel security guard ended up taking the two girls to school.

Meanwhile, Betye had arranged for the shuttle service, TMAC to pick her up at 7:15 a.m. to take her to Measurement Inc, where she works. The Durham Housing Authority hired TMAC to take residents to doctor appointments, work and to housing authority meetings.

When she started dealing with the two Neal students, she called and canceled the shuttle but it still came. She tried to get the driver to take the students, but he refused and left.

She ended up paying to take a hotel shuttle, but no one responded when she called TMAC to get a ride home that day, or a ride back to work the next day.

Her daughter had to pick her up.

"They are supposed to be encouraging us to go to work," she said.

### EXTENDED STAY

Rateakka Johnson and Danasha Williamson consider themselves fortunate. Both landed with their children at one of several local Extended Stay America hotels. Both said their kids grow restless within the confines of their hotel rooms, but they're trying to find ways to occupy their time.

Johnson's family was in the first wave of residents told to evacuate from McDougald Terrace on Jan. 3, because one of her two daughters is under the age of 2. She was summoned to the office at the complex that day, she said, and told to pack a few things.

(Continued On Page 2)



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