

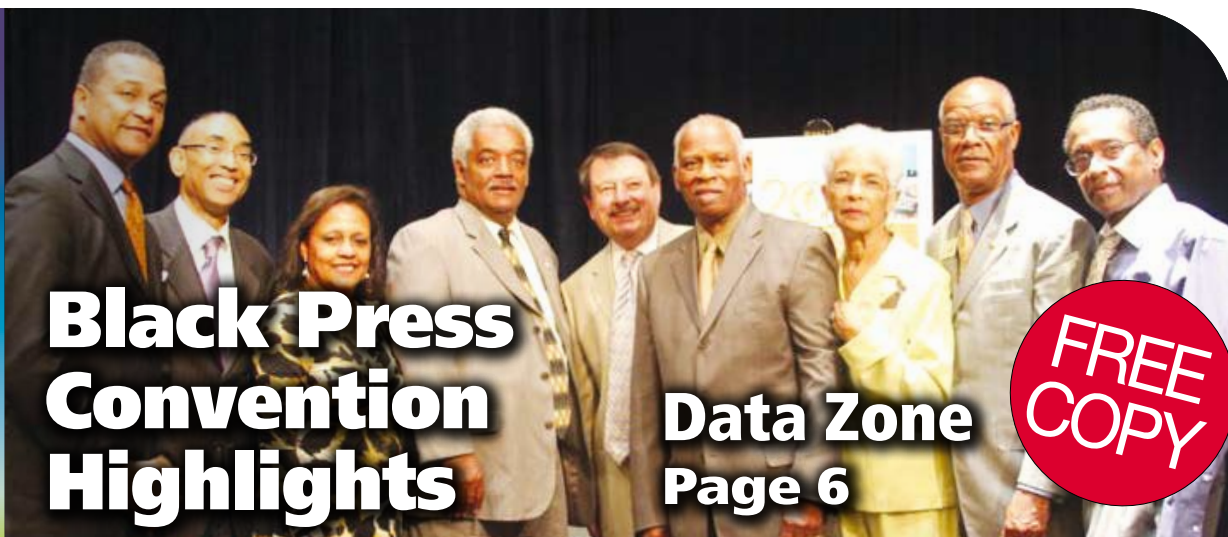
Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

**Data**

**News Weekly**

"The People's Paper"



**Black Press  
Convention  
Highlights**

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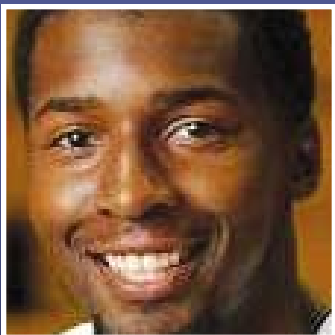
June 30 - July 6, 2012 47th Year Volume 9 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

# 2012 Essence Music Festival

Brings the "Power" to New Orleans



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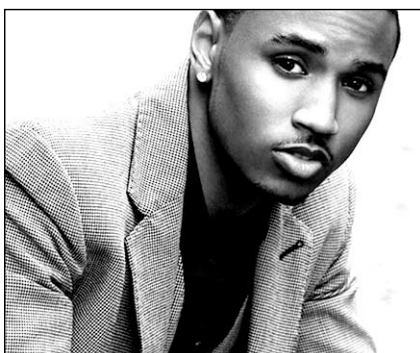


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# The 2012 ESSENCE Music Festival Presented By Coca-Cola Brings The "Power" To New Orleans



Mary J. Blige



Trey Songz



**R&B Crooner Anthony Hamilton Added To Essence Music Festival Line-Up And Joins Powerhouse Performers Aretha Franklin, D'angelo, Charlie Wilson, Kevin Hart And Mary J. Blige As Well As Popular Acts Trey Songz And Ledisi**

NEWLY EXPANDED FOUR DAY FESTIVAL KICKS OFF WITH YOUTH Empowerment Day and the First Ever New and Next Stage Concert Hosted by Rosci Diaz with Coco Jones and Katlyn Nichol added to the Lineup featuring Diggy Simmons the OMG Girlz and the Roots of Music

Every year over 400,000 people from around the world descend upon New Orleans for the only music festival that offers show-stopping performances from top entertainers, free inspiring and empowering conversations and messages from the world's leading innovators, leaders, and thinkers, plus four days of family and cultural experiences: the

Cover Story, Continued on next page.

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## DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.  
Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.



Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Chaka Kahn



Aretha Franklin

ESSENCE Music Festival. This year, in its 18th year anniversary, the 2012 ESSENCE Musical Festival presents a newly expanded four day weekend celebrating the "Power of Our Voice" on July 5, 6, 7 and 8 with compelling programming featuring the biggest names in entertainment and the nation's most influential speakers, artists, authors and educators.

The 2012 ESSENCE Music Festival will once again offer a world class musical line up which includes the legendary Aretha Franklin, Mary J. Blige, Charlie Wilson, Trey Songz, Kevin Hart, Ledisi, Eve, Marsha Ambrosius and more. The line-up also includes the return of Grammy-Award winning Singer D'Angelo to the Festival; the newly added Anthony Hamilton, who will thrill his fans from The Superdome's main stage for the first time; R&B and soul music king and ESSENCE Music Festival staple Charlie Wilson who will close out the main stage on Friday night; popular gospel duo Mary Mary who will perform on Saturday (changed from Friday); and Leah LaBelle who has been announced to perform at the SuperLounge. The official host each night will be Nephew Tommy, Comedian and Co-host of the Steve Harvey Morning Show. As an added bonus, celebrated media personality Steve Harvey himself will take the stage on Sunday for a special tribute to the one and only Aretha Franklin.

Other highlights include:

The Festival kicks off July 5th with a full day youth empowerment experience at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, culminating with the first ever youth empowerment concert on



Charlie Wilson

the New & Next stage that night at the Superdome.

Actress Roci Diaz will host the first New & Next Concert featuring a roster of today's hottest young artists, including the newly added Katlyn Nichol and Coco Jones, hip-hop royalty Diggy Simmons, R&B pop group The OMG Girlz and New Orleans' marching band The Roots of Music. Sponsored by Verizon Wireless and community partner Capital One, tickets for the New and Next Stage Concert are available at [essencemusicfestival.com](http://essencemusicfestival.com).

Doug E. Fresh kicks off the first free and daily ESSENCE Music Festival Block Party before each of the nightly concerts that will take place in Champions Square July 6-8 from 3-6pm. Hosted by newly added broadcast personalities Amanda Seales and Carla Ferrell, Festival attendees will be able to enjoy lively DJ sets from Beverly Bond, MC Lyte and DJ Spinderella with Captain Charles added to the lineup that includes Kourtney Heart, Dee 1, and F. Stokes.

The 2012 ESSENCE Musical Festival theme of the "Power of



The Stylistics

Our Voice" will be celebrated throughout the three day free and open to the public ESSENCE Empowerment Experience, featuring Steve Harvey, Soledad O'Brien, Fredricka Whitfield, Dr. Steve Perry, Rev. Al Sharpton, Melissa Harris Perry, Rep. Maxine Waters, Roland Martin, Iyanla Vanzant, Terrence J, Lisa Raye McCoy, Tamar Braxton, Trina Braxton, Kobie Brown and an "All-Star Gospel Salute to Mary Mary and Fred Hammond" with Yolanda Adams, Kim Burrell, Tramaine Hawkins, Pastor Marvin Winans, Byron Cage, Israel Houghton and more.

Now in its 18th year, the ultimate destination for entertainment and inspiration hosted over 422,000 attendees last year. What began in 1995 as a one-time event to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of ESSENCE Magazine has now grown into one of the country's "Top 10 Leading Brand Events" by Advertising Age. The ESSENCE Music Festival is the nation's largest annual gathering of African-American music and culture. Throughout its history, the Festival has featured an array of performers including Aretha

Franklin, Alicia Keys, Al Green, Beyoncé, Chaka Khan, Destiny's Child, Earth, Wind & Fire, Gladys Knight, LL Cool J, Jamie Foxx, John Legend, The Isley Brothers, Lionel Richie, Luther Vandross, Maxwell, The O'Jays, Prince, Rihanna, Stevie Wonder,

Toni Braxton, Patti LaBelle and Yolanda Adams and more.

For information about ticket sales and the latest news about the ESSENCE Music Festival, visit ESSENCE Music Festival [www.essencemusicfestival.com](http://www.essencemusicfestival.com).



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# Xavier has Five Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars in 2011-12



Patrice Hightower



Javon Mead



Angelica Alexander



Jolie Bellow



Jamaan Kenner

Xavier University of Louisiana, led by three-time recipient Jamaan Kenner, has five student-athletes recognized as Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars for 2011-12.

Kenner (men's basketball) and Javon Mead (track and field/cross country) are first-team representatives from Xavier. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, a magazine based in Fairfax, Va., sponsors the awards.

Also recognized from Xavier

were Patrice Hightower in women's volleyball and Angelica Alexander and Jolie Bellow in women's basketball. Hightower was honored for the second consecutive year.

Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars are student-athletes of color who maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.2 and are active on their campuses or in their communities.

Kenner, a May XU graduate from LaPlace, La., and an alumnus

of East St. John High School, is the fourth from Xavier to earn the Ashe honor three times. Alexandra Broussard (women's tennis), Kelechi Okoroha (men's basketball) and Terry Richardson (men's tennis) were the others.

Hightower, a May XU graduate from New Orleans and a McGehee School alum, was an All-Gulf Coast Athletic Conference setter. Mead, a sophomore from Baton Rouge, La., and a graduate of Baton Rouge

Magnet High School, was named third-team Capital One Academic All-America® on Monday. He's a two-time All-GCAC distance runner.

Alexander is a sophomore from Shreveport, La., and a graduate of Byrd High School. Bellow is a sophomore from Natchitoches, La., and a graduate of Natchitoches Central High School. They helped the Gold Nuggets win GCAC Tournament championships and reach the sec-

ond round of the NAIA Division I National Championship each of the past two seasons.

Mead is an accounting major; the other four are biology/pre-medical majors. Kenner — a two-time Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athlete and a Pattison Champions of Character Scholarship recipient his senior year — will attend LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans this fall.

*Members, fans, and friends of the Essence Music Festival, we welcome YOU to New Orleans for the 18th Anniversary of the Essence Music Festival.*

*We wish you a safe, fun-filled and enlightening stay.*



Sheriff Marlin N. Gusman



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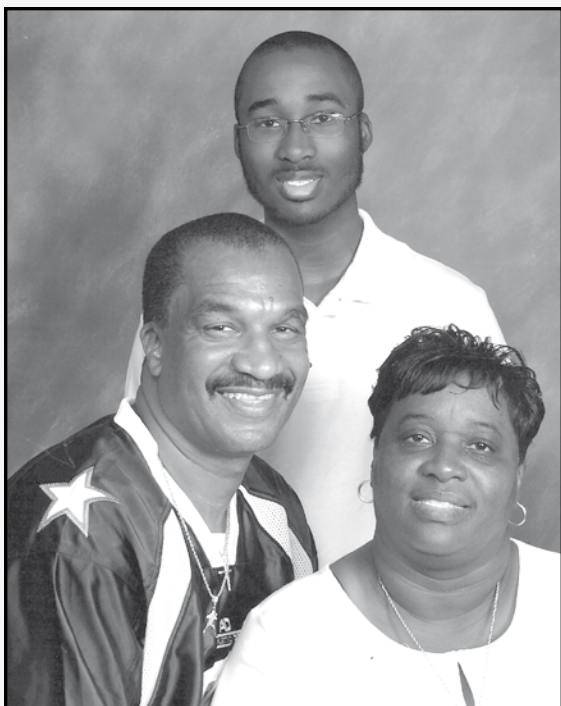
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# Al "Brother" Mims

## *It Takes a Village*

by: Edwin Buggage



He is a man who is well-known all over the City of New Orleans. Al "Brother" Mims one who is always beaming with positive energy and talking about his life passion, the salvation of young people. He is tirelessly committed to putting a stop to the senseless violence that is permeating throughout the Black community. His journey from champion kick boxer to civic activist was spawned by a tragic event that changed his life and its purpose and meaning. Recalling this moment he says, "My father was murdered in 1987 and my whole life changed, at that time I was a champion kick boxer and when I lost my father, I also lost my trainer, mentor and friend," continuing with passion ringing in his voice he says, although there were witnesses no one came forward and his murder went unsolved and this is a problem that continues in our community where people do not take a stand and these people continue to prey upon our community and this has to stop."

When talking to Brother Mims you cannot help but to get caught up in the fervor that is in his voice as he is committed to change. As even Stevie Wonder can see the threat of violence is something that plagues our City. Where daily people are murdered, and for Brother Mims it is sometimes an uphill battle and the odds seemingly insurmountable, as peo-

ple are dying unnecessarily in the streets of New Orleans, "Since my father was murdered I have been to 2000 funerals," remarks Mims on this startling number, but he remains optimistic, "While we are losing so many young people to the streets we are still saving lives all the time and giving people hope that they do not have to resort to some of the things that may cost them their lives, and what I am focused on is helping people make better choices in life."

As Brother Mims for over two decades has been on a mission helping to save many lives having helped and inspired his community to be better, he says his biggest success story is his son Cameron, speaking with his voice resonating with pride "My son Cameron, to begin with was a miracle child and he is my legacy and is what I live for, when I think of the young men on the streets I think of my son as being an example of what a young man can be if he has parents that instill in him the proper values and things that build their character. He is on his way to being a better man than I can ever be and I am saying that because I remember my father telling me that if you do not grow to be a better man than me then I have failed as a father, and that is what inspires me every day to put the best of me into my son."

Brother Mims is a man who lives for God and his family and says these things are what keeps him focused. He cites Pastor Emmanuel Smith Jr. of the Israelite Baptist Church, located in Central City as his spiritual advisor. Recently, his son spoke at the church and is becoming a youth leader in his own right serving as a mentor to other youth. Talking about his parents Cameron says they have given him the building blocks to be a success, "My parents pushed me to be the man that I am, they led by example and they started doing this when I was

young and didn't wait until I became older and I feel that this has made all the difference."

Giving back and serving is a way of life for the entire Mims family. His wife Antoinette works in their church helping young people and feels that many of the youth she encounters have the ability to become successful in life, but too often they are in environments where their potential is stunted by low or no expectations and a lack of accountability, "We do all we can do to help, and we are fully invested in helping young people be better because one day they will be running the country and they have to be given the skills to know how to do that effectively and successfully." And of raising her son she says proudly of Cameron, "I have taught him to have integrity and to have a work ethic. I feel these are important qualities you should have. We have always stressed education." Of their joint efforts to transform lives she says, "Right now we are working with the kids in our church, and there are so many young people that could do amazing things if they had the nurturing they need and we are working to help guide them in a new direction."

Al Mims, has been a member of the Louisiana State Parole Board, and has been recognized for his work in the community as a Quiet Hero on WWL-TV and by WDSU-TV Making a Difference. "Although I am humbled by these honors, it is about the work of saving people's lives and making this City a better and safer place for our citizens," says Mims. Al Mims and his family are an example of a family that lives to give. They are committed to serving and for their efforts Al "Brother" Mims and his family are being honored as Trailblazers for the month of June 2012. For they are the true embodiment of the old adage "that a family that prays together, stays together" and they are an inspiration for families everywhere.

**JMJ**  
Joseph M. Jones  
Continuing Education Fund



at&t



# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Black Publishers Convene in Atlanta

The members of the National Newspaper Publishers' Association (NNPA) also known as the Black Press of America, held their Annual National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia last week. New Orleans local papers Data News Weekly, The Louisiana Weekly and the Louisiana Tribune are all members of the prestigious organization. Below are some highlights of the events which featured R&B Legend Peabo Bryson, and of course, Data was there!!!



If you have photos of parties or events you would like to run in DATA, please send to [datanewsad@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewsad@bellsouth.net) for inclusion.



# Newly eligible for Medicare?

Eddie Conrad,  
Peoples Health  
plan member

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The benefit information provided herein is a brief summary, not a comprehensive description of benefits. For more information, contact the plan. Individuals must have both Part A and Part B to enroll. You must continue to pay your Medicare Part B premium and live in the plan service area. Members may enroll in the plan only during specific times of the year. Contact Peoples Health for more information. Benefits, formulary, pharmacy network, premium and/or co-payments/co-insurance may change on January 1, 2013. Peoples Health is a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract. H1961\_12N2MPA\_CMSApproved12182011



# Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

## *Economic and Property Damages Settlement*

### Providing Money to Individuals and Businesses

If you have economic loss or property damage because of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, you could get money from a class action settlement with BP Exploration & Production Inc. and BP America Production Company (“BP”). Go to [DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com](http://DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com) for more information, including information on how to file a claim.

#### **WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE ECONOMIC & PROPERTY DAMAGES SETTLEMENT?**

The Economic and Property Damages (“E&PD”) Settlement Class includes people, businesses, and other entities in the states of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, and certain counties in Texas and Florida, that were harmed by the oil spill. The website [DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com](http://DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com) has detailed descriptions and maps to help you determine whether a geographic location may be included in the E&PD Settlement. Additionally, you can call 1-866-992-6174 or e-mail [questions@DeepwaterHorizonEconomicSettlement.com](mailto:questions@DeepwaterHorizonEconomicSettlement.com) to find out if a geographic location is included.

#### **WHAT DOES THE ECONOMIC & PROPERTY DAMAGES SETTLEMENT PROVIDE?**

The E&PD Settlement makes payments for the following types of claims: (1) Seafood Compensation, (2) Economic Damage, (3) Loss of Subsistence, (4) Vessel Physical Damage, (5) Vessels of Opportunity Charter Payment, (6) Coastal Real Property Damage, (7) Wetlands Real Property Damage, and (8) Real Property Sales Damage. There is no limit on the total dollar amount of the E&PD Settlement; all qualified claims will be paid.

#### **HOW TO GET BENEFITS FROM THE ECONOMIC & PROPERTY DAMAGES SETTLEMENT**

You need to submit a Claim Form to request a payment. You can get a copy of the various Claim Forms by visiting the website or by calling 1-866-992-6174. Claims can be submitted online or by mail. If you have questions

about how to file your claim, you should call the toll-free number for assistance.

The deadline to submit most E&PD claims will be April 22, 2014 or six months after the E&PD Settlement becomes effective (that is, after the Court grants “final approval” and any appeals are resolved), whichever is later. There will be an earlier deadline to submit E&PD Seafood Compensation claims. The earlier deadline to submit Seafood Compensation claims will be 30 days after final approval of the Settlement by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana (regardless of appeals). Actual claim filing deadlines will be posted on the website as they become available. Valid claims will be paid as they are approved, beginning shortly after the Court-Supervised Settlement Program commences. It is highly recommended that E&PD Settlement Class Members complete and submit their claim forms promptly. Please read the Medical Benefits Settlement notice because you may also be eligible for benefits from that settlement.

#### **YOUR OTHER OPTIONS**

If you do not want to be legally bound by the E&PD Settlement, you must Opt Out or exclude yourself by **October 1, 2012** or you won’t be able to sue BP over certain economic and property damage claims. If you stay in the E&PD Settlement, you may object to it by **August 31, 2012**. The Detailed Notice explains how to exclude yourself or object.

The Court will hold a hearing on **November 8, 2012** to consider whether to approve the E&PD Settlement. You or your own lawyer may ask to appear and speak at the hearing at your own cost. The Court will also consider Class Counsel fees, costs, and expenses including an interim payment of \$75 million and additional awards equal to 6% of class claims and benefits paid. Class Counsel fees, costs and expenses under the Economic and Property Damages Settlement Agreement and the Medical Benefits Settlement Agreement jointly cannot exceed \$600 million. Class members’ payments will not be reduced if the Court approves the payment of Class Counsel fees, costs, and expenses because BP will separately pay these attorney fees, costs, and expenses.

**DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com • 1-866-992-6174**



# Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

## *Medical Benefits Settlement*

### Providing Benefits to Clean-Up Workers and Certain Gulf Coast Residents

If you have a medical claim related to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, you could get benefits from a class action settlement with BP Exploration & Production Inc. and BP America Production Company (“BP”). Go to [DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com](http://DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com) for more information, including information on how to file a claim.

#### **WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE MEDICAL BENEFITS SETTLEMENT?**

The Medical Class includes (1) clean-up workers and (2) certain people who resided in specific geographic areas in coastal and wetlands areas along the Gulf Coast during specific periods in 2010. The website [DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com](http://DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com) has detailed descriptions and maps to help you determine whether a geographic location may be included in one of these zones. Additionally, you can call 1-866-992-6174 or e-mail [info@DeepwaterHorizonMedicalSettlement.com](mailto:info@DeepwaterHorizonMedicalSettlement.com) to find out if a geographic location is included.

#### **WHAT DOES THE MEDICAL BENEFITS SETTLEMENT PROVIDE?**

The benefits of the Medical Benefits Settlement include: (1) payments to qualifying people for certain acute (short-term) and chronic (ongoing) medical conditions occurring after exposure to oil or chemical dispersants; (2) provision of periodic medical examinations to qualifying people; and (3) creation of a Gulf Region Health Outreach Program, consisting of projects to strengthen the healthcare system. Benefits (1) and (2) will be provided only after the Court grants final approval and any appeals are resolved.

#### **HOW TO GET BENEFITS FROM THE MEDICAL BENEFITS SETTLEMENT**

You need to submit a Claim Form to request benefits. You can get a copy of the Claim Form by visiting the website or by calling 1-866-992-6174. Claims can

be submitted by mail. If you have questions about how to file your claim, you should call the toll-free number for assistance.

The deadline for filing a Claim Form is one year after the Medical Benefits Settlement becomes effective (that is, after the Court grants “final approval” and any appeals are resolved). The exact date of the claim filing deadline will be posted on the website. It is highly recommended that Medical Class Members complete and submit their claim forms promptly. Please read the Economic and Property Damages Settlement notice because you may also be eligible for a payment from that settlement.

#### **YOUR OTHER OPTIONS**

If you do not want to be legally bound by the Medical Benefits Settlement, you must Opt Out or exclude yourself by **October 1, 2012** or you won’t be able to sue BP over certain medical claims. If you stay in the Medical Benefits Settlement, you may object to it by **August 31, 2012**. The Detailed Notice explains how to exclude yourself or object.

The Court will hold a hearing on **November 8, 2012** to consider whether to approve the Medical Benefits Settlement. You or your own lawyer may ask to appear and speak at the hearing at your own cost. Class Counsel will ask the Court to consider an award of fees, costs, and expenses of 6% of the value of the benefits actually provided under the Medical Benefits Settlement Agreement. Class Counsel fees, costs, and expenses under the Medical Benefits Settlement Agreement and the Economic and Property Damages Settlement Agreement jointly cannot exceed \$600 million. Class members’ payments will not be reduced if the Court approves the payment of Class Counsel fees, costs, and expenses because BP will separately pay these attorney fees, costs, and expenses.

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# Recovery School District Creates DBE Program to Encourage opportunities for local businesses.

In an effort to maximize the number of local businesses and employees working on the next round of school construction and renovation projects, today the Recovery School District (RSD), along with supporters from the local business community, announced the creation of its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program. The announcement fulfills Commitment 12 as outlined in the What Will It Take? report, which details the RSD's commitments to the city of New Orleans.

"As we build great facilities for the children of our community, the RSD also endeavors to provide great opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged business concerns of our community" said RSD Superintendent Patrick Dobard.

The RSD is establishing the DBE Office as a strong, fair, and viable program that encourages the participation of local DBE

contractors in building and renovating schools throughout the city.

To create the DBE program, the RSD cooperated with community organizations, including the Urban League of Greater New Orleans, to study aspects of DBE inclusion in expanding outreach to contractors, contractor associations, and the minority contracting community.

Additionally, the RSD restructured the contract language for all District construction contracts, requiring that construction contractors make every effort to ensure that 25 percent of all construction work is provided by DBEs. The contract language also specifies the 'good faith' efforts that each contractor must put forth to achieve these new DBE goals.

Sombra Williams has been named director of the DBE Program for the RSD and will lead the program implementation. Through the new DBE Office,



Williams will provide tracking and oversight to ensure compliance among contractors. Williams' work will include mandating that contractors report clearly how well they hit Disadvantaged Business Enterprise goals and will require that they employ in-state residents, per the laws of the State of Louisiana.

The DBE Office will:

Establish and maintain 'entrance points' for qualified DBEs

seeking participation in RSD construction projects.

Provide information on general contractors for capital rebuilding projects.

Keep general contractors informed of interested, qualified DBEs and DBE outreach opportunities.

ties/mechanisms.

Keep interested, qualified DBEs informed of RSD opportunities and related events.

Engage RSD contractors, providing assistance in addressing barriers to meeting compliance goals and with identifying/articulating 'good faith' efforts.

Track and review actual contractor compliance/compliance efforts.

George Washington Carver

High School and Phyllis Wheatly Elementary School are set to go out for bid later this summer. Other school construction projects set to go to bid within the next 12 to 18 months are: Sophie B. Wright Charter School, Dwight Eisenhower Elementary School, Gentilly Terrace Elementary School, and Samuel J. Green Charter School. A complete list of upcoming projects will be available on the RSD website in the near future.

Disadvantaged businesses interested in RSD construction contracting opportunities can visit the RSD website to download a copy of the DBE vendor form. The information submitted by vendors will be used to build a viable database of qualified interested DBEs to share with RSD contractors.

For additional information about the RSD Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program, visit the RSD website at [www.rs-dla.net](http://www.rs-dla.net) or call (504) 373-6200 ext 20082.



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# Mitt Romney Gets a Free Pass



George C. Curry  
NNPA Columnist

One of the most remarkable things about Mitt Romney's run for the White House is that the presumptive Republican nominee is allowed to attack President Obama on everything from saving the automobile industry to immigration. Yet, the news media rarely point out that Romney is against many things, especially if proposed by President Obama, but is usually evasive on what he is for.

In a departure from the business-as-usual coverage, Politico published a story Sunday under the headline: "Mitt Romney's no-policy problem." It stated, "Vague, general or downright evasive policy prescriptions on some of the most important issues facing the country are becoming the rule for Romney. Hoping to make the campaign strictly a referendum on the incumbent, the hyper-cautious challenger is open about his determination to not give any fodder to Obama aides hungry to make the race as much about Romney as the president."

The most recent example involves President Obama's position on the Dream Act, an acronym for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors. After Congress failed to pass a bill

sponsored by Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) Orrin Hatch [R-Utah], President Obama issued an executive order that incorporated many of the provisions of the bill.

Under the executive order, people younger than 30 who came to the United States before they were 6 years old, pose no criminal or security threat, and were successful students or served in the military can get a two-year deferral from deportation.

"This is not amnesty. This is not immunity. This is not a path to citizenship. It's not a permanent fix," Obama said upon signing the executive order. "This is a temporary stopgap measure."

Speaking to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), Obama said, "When I meet these young people, all throughout communities, I see myself. Who knows what they might achieve. I see my daughters, and my nieces, and my nephews. That's the promise that draws so many talented, driven people to these shores. That's the promise that drew my own father here," said Obama, whose father was from Kenya.

Appearing before the same group a day earlier, Romney said, "I will put in place my own long-term solution that will replace and supersede the president's temporary measure."

And what is Romney's long-term solution? We don't know because he isn't saying.

Romney, with the media acting as a willing accomplice, has also lambasted Obama on gasoline prices.

In an interview on FOX News, Romney said there is "no ques-

tion" that Obama was responsible for high gas prices.

But everyone knows that a sitting president has about as much control over gasoline prices as a meteorologist has over the weather.

The federal Energy Information Center breaks down the cost of a gallon of regular gasoline this way: the cost of crude oil accounts for 76 percent, refining expenditures and profits are responsible for another 6 percent; distribution marketing and retail costs add 6 percent and taxes contribute 12 percent.

That reality notwithstanding, Romney was able to gain media coverage by pretending that President Obama, not market factors, dictates the price of gasoline.

The price of a gallon of regular gasoline peaked at \$3.97 in April. But that figure has since fallen to \$3.41, a decline of 56 cents per gallon, according to the AAA.

If Obama was at fault for the steep increase in gasoline prices, shouldn't he now get credit for tumbling prices? Romney can't have it both ways.

Finally, I don't think a candidate's religion should be fair game in most instances. That's why I objected to the media trying to Velcro the outspoken Rev. Jeremiah Wright to candidate Barack Obama. Similarly, I have advised against focusing on Romney's Mormonism during this presidential election – he has so many positions that make him vulnerable in November. The Obama camp should focus on his position – when Romney takes them – not his religion.

But if the media is going to hold Obama responsible for the

statements of Rev. Wright, then in the interest of fairness, Romney should be asked what he did to repudiate the church's former teachings.

Although there were two Black priests under Mormon founder Joseph Smith, his successor, Brigham Young, instituted a policy of excluding males of African descent from the priesthood. In 1949, he said, "What chance is there for the redemption of the Negro? The Lord had cursed Cain's seed with blackness and prohibited them the Priesthood." That policy remained in place until 1978.

Although religion is a deeply personal matter, you can bet your 2008 "Barack Obama for President" campaign button that Republicans will resurrect Jeremiah Wright's comments this fall. And they will do it close to Election Day.

Political maneuvering aside, journalists have a responsibility to press Romney to move past his carefully studied talking points. And they can do that by forcing him to share what he plans to do beyond criticizing President Obama.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of *Emergence* magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA) and editorial director of *Heart & Soul* magazine. He is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. Curry can be reached through his Web site, [www.georgecurry.com](http://www.georgecurry.com). You can also follow him at [www.twitter.com/currygeorge](http://www.twitter.com/currygeorge).

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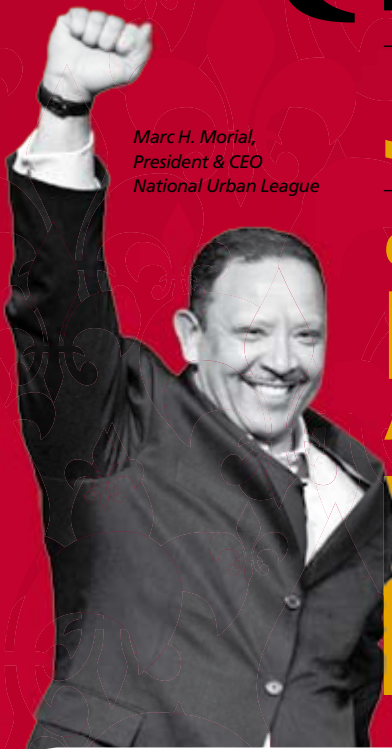


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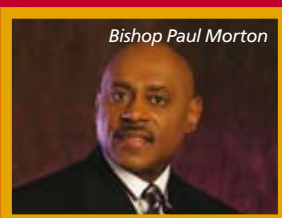
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