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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# Questions Surround 2014 City Budget

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# Questions Surround 2014 City Budget

*Mayor Landrieu Submits \$504 Million Budget Proposal to City Council*



The City of New Orleans Annual Budget hearings began last month and will continue through this month until the New Orleans City Council approves the 2014 municipal budget. One of the most contentious items is the Consent Decree and the new OPSO Jail facility.

By Edwin Buggage

Annual Budget hearings began in October, and will continue through this month until the New Orleans City Council approves the 2014 municipal budget. The deadline for approving a balanced budget is Dec. 1. Again, there has been a vigorous debate surrounding the City budget. This year's budget

proposal submitted by New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu comes in at the tune of \$504 Million for the General Fund.

## Shrinking Population Foots Higher Bill for City Services

Funding the City and its services since Hurricane Katrina many questions have been mounted sur-

rounding how does a City with a smaller population pay for the services it needs for the City to operate effectively and efficiently. Some believe that the City has a problematic history of raising revenues. Given much of the monies that funds the City comes from property taxes and some feel this puts an extra burden on citizens of the City that now has a smaller tax base, but a larger bill to pay.

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## DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Sheriff Marlin Gusman

In the City Council chambers many concerned citizens and citizens groups have pointed this out. Another critic of this method of raising revenues is Councilwoman-at-Large Stacy Head. Saying the City's budget relies too much on property taxes. Saying that since the Landrieu administration came into office assessments have risen at alarmingly high rates in recent years. Speaking to Data News she said, "I think the budget submitted is a good budget, but I am concerned that the City does not do a good enough job in collecting revenues from other sources that would bring millions of dollars into play and I feel moving forward we must look at those options and not always look to raise property taxes on our citizens."

#### City Budget Grows, but Who Benefits?

According to an October 23, 2013 article in The Lens, it states, "Though the City has about 70,000 fewer people than it did pre-Katrina, property tax collections in the budget proposal are up 38 percent, from \$83 million in 2005. The increase in property tax collections accounts for nearly all of the increase in the general fund budget, which has gone up from about \$466 million in 2005 to next year's proposed \$504 million."

A critic of the budget process is activist Donald Chopin, who refers to himself as a community

builder and is a regular at meetings of the City Council. "When I think of the budget I am always concerned that the monies never get to the people who need the services the most, and secondly, there is a lack of concern about the poorest and most indigent people getting what they need. It seems that during the budget hearings our voices and our priorities often times go unheard."

#### Funds for Consent Decree for Orleans Parish Prison Not Included in Mayor's 2014 Budget Proposal.

There are many issues that are of concern during the budget hearing process, but one that has gotten a lot of attention is the consent decree calling for more resources poured into the New Orleans Police Department and the Orleans Parish Jail. In his budget Landrieu has proposed six million dollars for NOPD Consent Decree Reforms. But as he has been in a protracted battle with Sheriff Marlin Gusman over how funds are used, the mayor in his budget funds the jail at the same spending levels as this year and has not added new funds to comply with reforms for Orleans Parish Prison. "I would have like to see Mayor Landrieu include the full cost of the consent decree, so we could really look at real numbers and then work from there as a starting point to see what we were looking at as we deal with



Mayor Mitch Landrieu



Community Activist Donald Chopin



City Councilwoman-at-Large Stacy Head



### The 40<sup>th</sup> Annual BAYOU CLASSIC



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## New Orleans Chapter of the Links to Host Jazz, Champagne and Fashion Extravaganza Saturday, November 16, 2013

The New Orleans (LA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated will host a Jazz, Champagne and Fashion Extravaganza on Saturday, November 16, 2013 at Saks Fifth Avenue in Canal Place Shopping Center, 365 Canal Street, New Orleans, La, 70130 from 8:30 am - 10:30 am. Guests will enjoy early admission to Saks Fifth Avenue, a designer fashion show, continental breakfast including champagne, access to special sales and validated parking. Each guest will also receive a gift bag at the end of the program.

The event will serve as a fundraiser for the chapter to support its community service programs



which include programs targeted to the five National Program Facets of Services to Youth; International Trends and Services; National Trends and Services; Health and Human Services; and the Arts.

Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased in advance. For more information and to purchase tickets, contact Edna Moore at 917-817-7074 or ednamoore47@yahoo.com.

## Guard Your Identity: City to Host Free Paper Shredding Event

On Saturday, November 9, 2013, the City's Department of Sanitation will host another free paper shredding event from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the City's Recycling Drop-Off Center, 2829 Elysian Fields Avenue.

During "Shred Day," residents can bring up to 50 pounds of personal or sensitive documents to be shredded safely and securely by Iron Mountain, a storage and information management company. Iron Mountain will provide an on-site mobile unit to shred mixed office paper, light cardboard and similar materials. They will not shred plastic, compact disks, DVDs or other metal (other than paper clips or staples).

"Shred Day" is offered in conjunction with the City's ongoing

recycling and e-waste disposal services, held on the second Saturday of each month at the Recycling Drop-Off Center.

On November 9 and other recycling days, residents can drop off paper products (newspapers, junk mail, phone books, catalogs, office paper, color inserts), plastics #1 through #7 (water, soda, juice, detergent, plastic pots from nurseries, plastic bags, etc.), metals (aluminum, tin and steel cans), cardboard, boxboard (cereal boxes), Mardi Gras beads and electronics such as computers, laptops, cell phones and televisions.

For more information about the City's recycling program, please visit <http://recycle.nola.gov> or call the Department of Sanitation at (504) 658-3800.

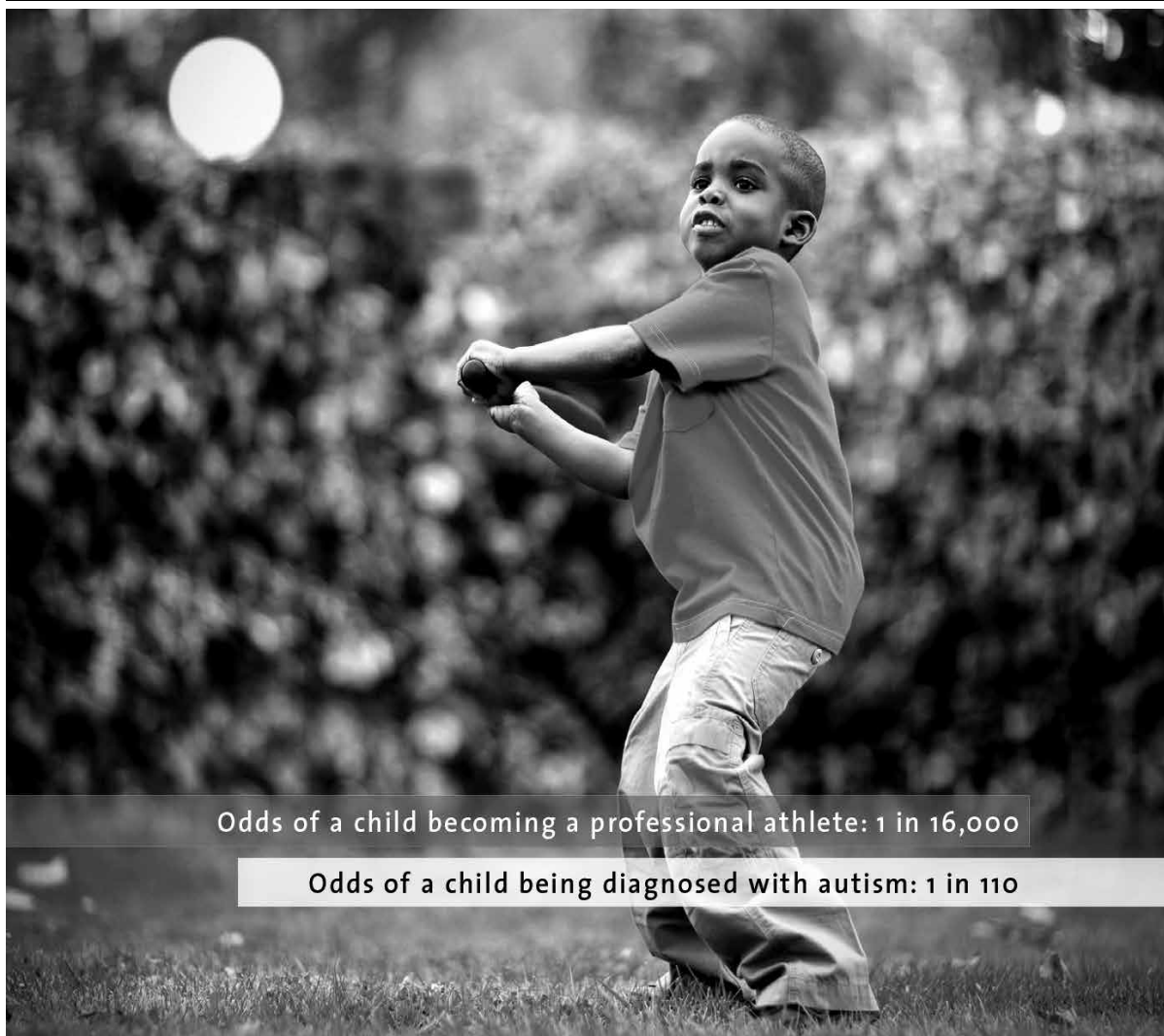
## 1st Annual "Gathering of the Jags" Pre-Bayou Classic Pep Rally

On Thursday November 7th, the SU Alumni Federation New Orleans Chapter, SUNO Alumni Association and the SU Metropolitan Area Quarterback club will be holding the 1st Annual "Gathering of the Jags"!

The location is Joe Brown Park on 5601 Read Boulevard, New

Orleans, Louisiana 70127 at 6:00 p.m. in the Victory Field stadium. There will be food, fun and games for the kids. This will also be our pre-Bayou Classic pep rally.

Spread the word to all area alums and bring one or two along with you. You don't want to miss this event.



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# 2013 Treme Creole Gumbo Festival

The Prince of Treme, Glen David Andrews, and suave singer John Boutte will be among the New Orleans music heroes performing at the sixth annual Treme Creole Gumbo Festival, Nov. 9-10 in Louis Armstrong Park. Also appearing will be the brassy funk band Bonerama,

sultry singer Robin Barnes, and a special meeting of the Lagniappe Brass Band with Rapper Keedy Black.

The event will also feature the Original Pinettes Brass Band - the world's only all-female brass band and newly-crowned winner of the New Orleans Street Kings

(Queens?) competition. There will be lots more brass band music, including the Hot 8, the Baby Boyz and the Treme. We'll also present a special performance by the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra's brass band.

New this year: A vegan gumbo contest with celebrity judges

(there will be plenty of regular gumbo, too, and lots of other tasty dishes), a special appearance by the LadyFest YeMaYa parade and a "shake your tail feather" dance contest of female dance groups.

All that plus a huge arts market - and admission is free.

## FREE PARKING

There are no events at the Mahalia Jackson Theater of the Performing Arts this weekend, so parking is free and plentiful in the large parking lot in Amrstrong Park. Enter via the Basin Street gate.



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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Voodoo Fest 2013 Highlights

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

Voodoo Fest 2013 celebrated it's 15th Anniversary last weekend. The three-day festival was held for the first time on City Park's new festival grounds and featured some of the best in the music world New Orleans has to offer. Pictured below are just a few of the musicians who entertained the audiences and Data was there too!



Tim Green



Alfred Uganda Roberts



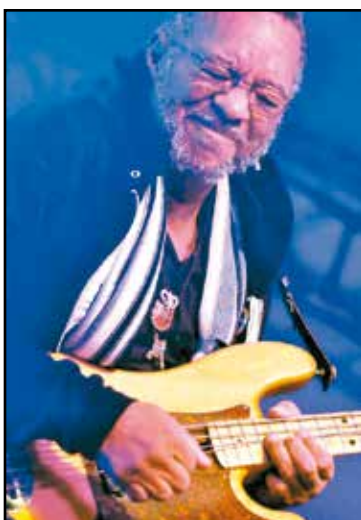
Leslie Blackshear Smith and George Porter Jr.



Nicholas Payton



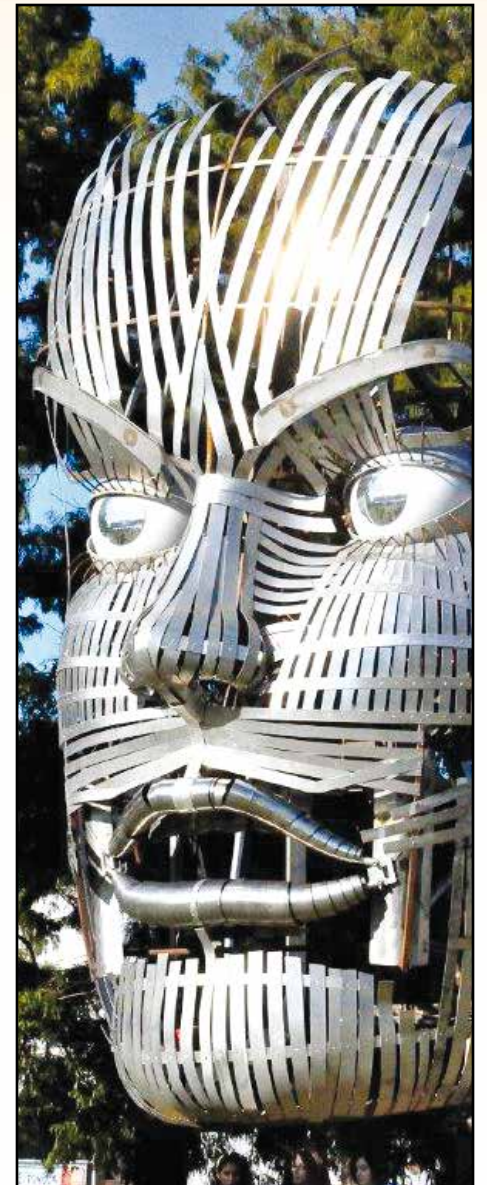
Ruby Amanfu



George Porter Jr



Dr John



Festival Interactive Art

Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events

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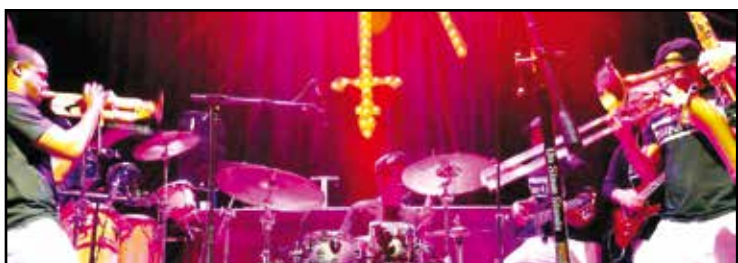


# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Brass-A-Holics Album Release Party

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

The BAH Nation came out last week for the #IAMABRASSAHOLIC Album Release Party... it was EPIC!!! BAH brought the funk, and the crowd went wild. Of course, Data was there!



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To be Equal

# Race and Income Affect Parent Engagement and Student Achievement



**Marc Morial**  
President and CEO  
National Urban League

"Every parent wants their child to achieve, thrive and succeed. Too often though, negative perceptions of children of color and their parents can influence the ability of parents and children to get the supports they need." Chanelle P. Hardy, Executive Director, National Urban League Washington Bureau

In recent years, the debate about ways to close the achievement gap and adequately prepare primary and secondary African American students for success has focused on such remedies as ensuring resource equity, expand-

ing pre-school opportunities, and raising teacher quality. While all of these are necessary, one area that is often overlooked is the importance of parental involvement. No one disputes the fact that children are more likely to perform better, graduate from high school and be better prepared for college and the world of work when their parents are actively involved, both at home and at school, in their education. But for many low-income African American parents who may be single and struggling to make ends meet, finding the time and energy to help with homework, volunteer at school and communicate regularly with teachers, can be especially challenging. They need help. And schools and districts that serve low-income students and students of color must do more to overcome greater barriers to effectively engaging parents. These and other findings are revealed in a new National Urban League survey, "Engaged to Achieve: A

Community Perspective on How Parents are Engaged in Their Children's Education."

The survey solicited the views and opinions of K-12 teachers, school administrators and volunteers in communities across the country about their perceived differences in parental awareness, parental involvement and opportunities for student achievement and success based on race and economic background. A joint effort of the National Urban League Washington Bureau and the National Voices Project with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the study shows that when there was a difference in how parents were perceived, African-American parents were more commonly perceived as being less aware and less involved in their children's education than white parents. Report authors suggest that when these perceived disparities are not addressed constructively, they may affect the type and depth of par-

ent engagement efforts directed to low-income parents and parents of color. Other key findings include:

African American parents' engagement in their children's education was felt to be more reactive than proactive, i.e. confronting perceived racial bias or addressing discipline issues.

Parents who resided in communities where efforts were made to address racial disparities were nearly twice as likely (45 percent vs. 82 percent) to report they felt more aware of their child's academic progress than parents in communities where no such efforts were made.

Though most respondents felt that students and parents typically understand the connection between education and economic opportunity, they felt that race and income played a significant role in students' access to the experiences that help to promote success. The survey suggests ways to bridge

some of the gaps in parent engagement, including:

Educational requirements should be clear and easy to understand for all parents, regardless of their educational background.

Parents must be regularly updated about their children's academic performance in a manner that provides clarity about how students are meeting, or not meeting, specific requirements.

Efforts to engage parents must take into account practical barriers to entry that parents may face and tailor such efforts accordingly.

In communities where racial and ethnic disparities are pervasive, there must be targeted investments and customized approaches to improving parent engagement.

For more information on **Engage to Achieve**, visit:

<http://nulwb.iamempowered.com/newsroom/press-releases/washington-bureau-releases-report-showing-race-and-income-plays-significant>

## Unmasking White Racism



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

In 1896, Lyrics of Lowly Life, a collection of Paul Laurence Dunbar's poetry, was published. Although his poem was specifically focused on African American people, in this 21st Century, it is apropos to many. He recognizes the pain many feel about their inability to be "themselves" and if we fast-forward to today, he addresses the masks they wear because they want to hide from themselves.

The poem reads: "We wear the mask that grins and lies; That hides our cheeks and shades our

eyes; This debt we pay to human guile; With torn and bleeding hearts we smile; And mouth with myriad subtleties.

"Why should the world be over-wise; In counting all our tears and sighs? Nay, let them only see us, while; We wear the mask. We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries; To thee from tortured souls arise. We sing, but oh the clay is vile; Beneath our feet, and long the mile; But let the world dream otherwise. We wear the mask!"

Whenever I read this poem I am struck by its poignancy. It recognizes the Black folks who tap danced when they'd rather do ballet, who hid their true feelings to get ahead, who are perceived as happy while "the clay is vile." It doesn't take a historian to evaluate the masks that people of African descent have been forced to wear in these United States.

In the early 20th Century, you could be lynched for looking a White person in the eye. No mat-

ter what your status, you were expected to clear the sidewalk when a White person walked by. You weren't supposed to scowl or protest, just to wear the mask.

When Senator Barack Obama ran for president of the United States, few chose to acknowledge that he stood on the shoulders of the great civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson. Senator Harry Reid (D-Nevada), now an Obama ally, had the condescending temerity to describe a Harvard-educated Black man as "well-spoken." Many of us who earned advanced degrees from our nation's best institutions are stunned when we are described as "articulate." Some of us choose to wear the mask and silently absorb the nonsense. Others are plain spoken enough to pay the price of stunted career advancement, or a reputation for being "edgy."

People wear masks daily, sometimes to reveal who they are, and sometimes to hide their

true identity. What does this imply, then, about the White people who think that a blackface mask is appropriate? Too many people, including the obscure and minimally talented actress Julianne Hough, decided to don blackface for a Halloween party, excusing herself by claiming she was simply going as a character in the show Orange is the New Black. When criticized, she said she was "sorry," but she should have said she was ignorantly sorry, because her historical knowledge is most deficient.

Did she go to anybody's school? Like Hough, those who think that blackface is funny, ignore the demeaning history of blackface caricatures. If these people are wearing a mask, it is a mask that allowed them to hide their racism until they had an excuse to let it show. Then their response is that "it is all in good fun, we meant no harm," or "I never meant to offend." That's the mask

of arrogance. The mask of "I'm White, I'm going to do whatever I choose to do," a mask that allows them to ignore common decency.

In 2011, Ohio University started a campaign that suggested that student be mindful of the Halloween costumes they chose. The "we're a culture not a costume" has spread to several universities, but apparently it has not spread widely enough.

Two White men in Florida declared "anything for a laugh" when one, with a "Stand Your Ground" t-shirt (posing as George Zimmerman) seems to be shooting his black faced, hoodie clad White friend who is supposed to be Trayvon Martin. Why is this appropriate or amusing? The arrogance of White people suggests that they can make a joke, and suggests that all people of color are their jokes. The massacre of a young Black man, for them, is not tragedy but an occasion for mockery.



# Subtle Racism Damages Health

By Jazelle Hunt  
NNPA Washington  
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — “My office says my name, Rachel, on the door. I am the only one who sits in it. People constantly walk in, see me, and say, ‘Oh, I’m sorry...I’m looking for Rachel.’ I’m half black.”

“Upon hearing that I had secured an internship for the summer, my roommate said ‘I would have on[e] too if I was a minority. I have everything but that minority ‘it’ factor.’”

“‘Sometimes I forget that you’re black.’ Pissed off, how dare she! I love how she has no idea what the hell she said by that. I[t] just—it kills me. This kills me. These little jabs at my blackness”

WARNING: What might seem little jabs, can have a major impact on Black longevity. There’s a term for this death-by-a-thousand-cuts phenomenon: Microaggressions. It might not be in most Whites’ everyday vocabulary, but Black and Brown people in the United States know the meaning intimately. It’s in the way they’re passed up for well-deserved promotions. In the way a teacher refuses to remember or pronounce their names correctly. And it’s in being the token in your group of White friends.

The italicized quotes above are real. In fact, they were submitted to the Tumblr blog, Microaggressions (microaggressions.tumblr.com). Co-creator David Zhou explains, “Microaggressions are the subtle interactions that convey hostile language. Or, subtle expressions of what some would call bigotry or prejudice that express power in a social setting.”

Scrolling through Microaggressions yields more than 1,000 similar anecdotes from marginalized people across the nation and in other Western countries. According to its “about” section, the project began in 2010 and aims to [show] how these comments create and enforce uncomfortable, violent and unsafe realities onto people.

“I think this is important because...there are still so few ways to talk about types of racism other than overt forms of discrimination,” Zhou explains. “Without the ability to talk about that, people think, well, if we just get rid of



Patrice Yursik, writer and founder of award-winning blog, Afrobella, does not appreciate common microaggression (Photo courtesy of Patrice Grell Yursik/Afrobella.com).

hate crimes and slurs we’ll have an equitable society. That’s not actually the case. There’s a hostile society climate that creates huge ramifications.”

An emerging body of research supports Zhou’s assertion. Over time, these racialized slights incubate and fester into alarming health ramifications, ranging from higher rates of depression, more severe cases of high blood pressure, and even mortality rate disparities.

David Williams, a professor of public health, sociology, and African and African American studies at Harvard University, has been studying these links for the past few decades. Three statistical instruments he crafted—the Major Experiences of Discrimination, Everyday Discrimination, and Heightened Vigilance scales—are making it possible to quantify discrimination for the first time, which is helping drive more rigorous research on the topic. He recounts an incident 10 years ago, when he submitted a paper on discrimination for peer review and one of his colleagues commented, “The word ‘racism’ doesn’t belong in a scientific paper because it’s just a social term that can’t be measured.”

Williams recounted, “From a scientific point of view, researchers were very worried [about discrimination measures] that people were just saying how they felt. But now we have actual dis-

crimination predicting incidence of disease. Evidence today is overwhelmingly finding that this type of stress is greatly and adversely affecting our physiological functions.”

Professor Williams’ and other studies are finding that those who report higher levels of discrimination also report high levels of inflammation in the blood and visceral fat inside organs — both of which increase risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

One study in the February 2013 issue

of Sociological Inquiry finds that physical or emotional stress stemming from discrimination predicts an increase in poor mental and physical health days. A study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology in 2007 found that in African American women, breast cancer risk increased 20 percent for those who reported discrimination at work. Another from 2006 asserted that chronic discrimination might increase risk of early artery plaque build-up in African American women.

Camara Jules P. Harrell, a psychology professor at Howard University, has studied stress, psychophysiology, and how discrimination intersects the two.

“Just being in this environment has physiological reactions, often outside of awareness,” he says. “I take the extreme position, but

**Health, Continued on page 10.**

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## Sunny Hostin, CNN Legal Analyst and ABC News Anchor to Give Ortique Law Lecture at Dillard on Nov. 19

NEW ORLEANS - Sunny Hostin, CNN legal analyst and anchor for ABC News will give the fourth annual Justice Revius O. Ortique Jr. Lecture on Law and Society at Dillard University on Tuesday, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m. in the Lawless Memorial Chapel. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Hostin is an attorney and multi-platform journalist. She is co-producer and creator of "Sunny's Law," a weekly segment in which she answers viewers' questions on a variety of legal topics such as foreclosures, homeowner's rights, handling police encounters and more. As legal analyst for CNN's American Morning, she is known for her detailed analysis of high-profile trials and legal issues. Hostin has covered a number of major legal and political stories, including the Casey Anthony, Conrad Murray trials, Bernie Madoff, Michael Vick's dog fighting ring, O.J. Simpson's civil trial, and the Duke rape scandal,



CNN legal analyst, Sunny Hostin

to name a few. During the Ortique Law Lecture at Dillard, Hostin will engage the audience on the topic: "Where do we go after the Trayvon Martin Incident?"

Hostin is the author of numerous scholarly articles and has written a column for CNN.com entitled "Sunny's Law." She has a blog on Huffington Post and

contributes to Essence.com. She has been featured in publications such as Forbes Women, Uptown Magazine, The New York Post, WSJ.com, Latina, and Ebony. Hostin earned an undergraduate degree in Communications from Binghamton University and her juris doctorate from Notre Dame Law School

### Health/ Continued from page 9.

I emphatically believe in how so much of [microaggressions]—well over 60 percent—is processed outside awareness."

Harrell and Williams agree that it is the small indignities that have the biggest impact.

"What we're finding with discrimination is that chronic, ongoing stress has a bigger effect than big, one-time stress events," Wil-

liams says. He likens it to the effect of dripping water on concrete; each drip on its own doesn't matter much. But over time, the damage is considerable.

Not only does the constant barrage of negative feedback erode a sense of safety and belonging, it also creates an underlying hyper-awareness, or vigilance.

A study published in the

May 2012 American Journal of Public Health finds: "...merely anticipating prejudice leads to both psychological and cardiovascular stress responses. These results are consistent with the conceptualization of anticipated discrimination as a stressor and suggest that vigilance for prejudice may be a contributing factor to racial/ethnic health disparities in the United States."

Williams says, "People who report higher levels of vigilance also report poorer sleep. It's as if you can never fully relax; you're always on alert to protect yourself."

Although the link between health and the effects of discrimination is now firmly established, Williams says it will take time for these considerations to trickle into health professional training and academic programs, but there are already some signs of progress.

"There's a big demand on therapists to have that [understanding]. I think [health providers] curtsy to it, they say the right things, but they have no idea what this experience means," he says. "It's got to be saturated into every form of health learning. It's tough, but if you want to be effective that's what you got to do."

### Cover Story/ Continued from page 3.

reforming the police and Orleans Parish Prison," says Council Vice-President Head.

Issues surrounding the Criminal Justice System go beyond issues of the jail and the police. While it received 484,000 dollars in 2013, the Vera Institute Pretrial Service Program has not been without its critics as profiled in the 9/28/13 issue of Data News Weekly. "I think the budget for the Vera Institute should be eliminated because the information they provide is already available and only adds another unnecessary layer where monies could be used in more effective ways," says Donald Chopin. Continuing he says, "I would like to see the police and the jail consent decree funded, we cannot afford not to pay for both of them. Many of the dollars can be used to fund programs and initiatives to help make the Criminal Justice System more just, fair and humane for the people who are usually on the receiving end of injustice who are usually poor and minority."

### Can New Orleans Find Balance in Meeting its Budget Priorities, But Not at the Expense of Taxpayers, While Ensuring Effectiveness and Efficient City Services?

While there are many more issues such as proposed changes in Sewerage and Water

Board, changes in garbage collection, issues surrounding the New Orleans Fire Department, proposed cuts in Safety and Permits, Juvenile Court and with some City Departments being reduced by as much as thirty percent. The mounting question for New Orleans moving forward is how does a City with a smaller population find a way to cover its operating cost and keep the City safe and do things in an efficient, effective way without the quality of services suffering and without further burdening the cash strapped taxpayers who are still trying to rebuild and repair their lives in post-Katrina?

Councilwoman Stacy Head feels it can be done, but the way the City Government does business has to change, "We can look at other models in cities across this country that are doing things in a more effective ways and adopt some of those things in New Orleans. We must move away from doing things the same way if they are not working and embrace change. And most importantly, we cannot continue to overburden our citizens especially our elderly and those on fixed incomes and ask them to pay more when there is money there that is not being collected by the City, we need to do a better job in fixing our broken system and hopefully we are on our way."

### Malveaux/ Continued from page 8.

"We wear the mask that grins and lies, that hides our cheeks and shades our eyes." For some, masks are concealing, for others revealing. Those who choose to mute their reaction to a racist world are adapting. Those who think that blackface is appropriate are attacking. It is tragic that at Halloween, a day conceived for children to have fun, has become an occasion for masks that attack, and for those who make excuses for them.

Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and writer. She is President Emerita of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, N.C.

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# Unemployment for Black Women at 4-Year Low

By Freddie Allen  
NNPA Washington  
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – As job prospects for Whites and Black men have slowed or stalled completely, Black women continue to gain ground in a weak labor market, according to the latest jobs report.

“Over the last few months, Black women have seen the greatest decline in their unemployment rate, so there is a continual improvement taking place,” said Valerie R. Wilson, chief economist for the National Urban League. That improvement doesn’t seem to be the result of people dropping out of the labor force.

Wilson continued: “It looks like there were actual gains in employment for Black women.”

In fact, compared to the other adult groups over 20 years old, Black women have experienced the greatest decline in their unemployment rate since September 2012.

The unemployment rate for Black women over 20 years old was 10 percent in September 2013, a 1.2 percent decrease since September 2012 and the lowest mark for Black women since March 2009.

The unemployment rate for White women was 5.5 percent in September 2013, a 0.8 percent improvement over the 6.3 percent rate recorded in September 2012. The jobless rate for White men was 6.1 percent in September 2013, down slightly from 6.6 percent in September 2012. The unemployment rate for Black men over 20 years old has barely changed since last September when it was 14.1 percent. A year later the unemployment rate for Black men is 14 percent.

Even as some economists such as Wilson recognize the September unemployment rate for Black women was the lowest mark in more than four years, they acknowledged that those gains came at a price; many of the jobs available to Black women were in industries that traditionally pay low wages.

Wilson said that a lot of the job growth has been in the leisure and hospitality sector and professional and business services.

According to the Labor Depart-



National Urban League's Valerie R. Wilson says Black women are still stuck in low-paying jobs.

ment, leisure and hospitality services added an average of 28,000 jobs per month over the previous 12 months, but the sector was relatively flat in September. The professional and business services sector added 52,000 jobs in the past 12 months and 32,000 jobs in September. Twenty thousand workers found jobs in temporary help services in September.

“When you look at the kinds of jobs that are being created, those gains are not necessarily in high-paying jobs,” said Wilson. “Uncertainty in the housing market has made it harder for Black men to find work, because the manufacturing and construction industries haven’t rebounded in the same ways that retail or hospitality have. That’s one of the reasons why the African American male unemployment rate is so high.”

The economy added 148,000 jobs total in September and the national unemployment rate edged down to 7.2 percent in September.

Wilson said that as the unemployment rate ticks down, it masks some of the other weaknesses that exist in the labor force, including the “missing worker” phenomenon and those workers wading through long-term unemployment.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, non-partisan think tank focused on the needs of low- and middle-income workers, the unemployment rate “continues to drastically understate the weakness of job opportunities” because people who were turned off by an anemic job market and stopped looking for work entirely are not being counted.

In a post on EPI’s website about the September jobs report, Elise Gould, director of health policy research at EPI, wrote: “There were over 5 million missing workers in September, and if the unemployment rate included missing workers, it would be 10.2 percent, not the 7.2 percent cited in today’s report.”

Chad Stone, chief economist for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities said that the report shows that the labor market recovery remains disappointingly slow with employment still well

below normal levels and long-term unemployment still near historic highs.

Stone recommended that lawmakers extend federal unemployment insurance for the long-term unemployed to prevent the already sluggish recovery from causing additional hardship for workers who are still looking for jobs.

On November 1, lawmakers let the temporary increase in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps, expire despite studies showing how the program provides significant benefit to the American economy.

According to Feeding America, a domestic hunger-relief charity, one in 4 Black households live with food insecurity issues compared to 1 in 10 White households and 32 percent of Black children don’t have enough food compared to 16 percent of White children.

The November 1 benefit cut will be substantial. A household of three, such as a mother with two children, will lose \$29 a month – a total of \$319 for November 2013 through September 2014, the remaining 11 months of fiscal year 2014,” stated a recent report by the Center for Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

The CBPP report continued: “The cut is equivalent to about 16 meals a month for a family of three based on the cost of the U.S. Agriculture Department’s Thrifty Food Plan.”

Families that use both the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program and SNAP benefits will find it much harder to put food on the table, if both safety nets are slashed.

Stone said, “Low-income working families with an unemployed breadwinner will suffer a cruel double-whammy if EUC benefits disappear in January as well.”

National Urban League's Valerie R. Wilson says Black women are still stuck in low-paying jobs.



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