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SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

January 27 - February 2, 2022

## Retiring U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson looms large in crowded race to replace her

BY ABBY LIVINGSTON

"Retiring U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson looms large in crowded race to replace her" was first published by The Texas Tribune, a non-profit, nonpartisan media

organization that informs Texans — and engages with them — about public policy, politics, government and statewide issues.

A rare occurrence is unfolding this primary season across South Dallas:

Candidates are actually campaigning for Congress.

U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson has been so politically dominant that for decades, few serious Democrats have dared to challenge her. But late last

year, the Dallas powerbroker announced she would retire, unleashing a burst of young political talent who are blitzing the district in their bids to succeed her.

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## Biden has long been preparing for a Supreme Court pick

By JESSICA GRESKO and COLLEEN LONG



**Lenodra Kruger**  
Deputy assistant U.S. attorney general



**Ketanji Brown Jackson**  
nominated to be a U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden has already narrowed the field for his first Supreme Court pick.

Biden said as a presidential candidate that if he were given the chance to nominate someone to the court, he would make history by choosing a Black woman. And word on Wednesday that Justice Stephen Breyer plans to retire should give Biden that opportunity.

"As president, I'd be honored, honored to appoint the first African American woman. Because it should look like the country. It's long past time," Biden said in February 2020 shortly before South Carolina's presidential primary.

The White House has reiterated Biden's campaign pledge since his election.

Almost all recent Supreme Court picks have been federal appeals judges. And since Biden took office in January 2021, he has worked to dramatically expand his options in that potential candidate pool by nominating five Black women who are currently sitting on federal appeals courts, with three

more nominations pending before the Senate.

Selecting a Black woman for the lifetime post on the nation's highest court would be historic. It would mark the first time four women would sit together on the court and the first time two of the court's nine justices would be Black. Justice Clarence Thomas is the court's only Black justice and only the second in history after the man he replaced on the court, Thurgood Marshall.

Biden now has the chance to show Black voters increasingly frustrated with a president they helped to elect that he is serious about their concerns, particularly after he has been unable to push through voting rights legislation.

At the same time, Breyer's replacement by another liberal justice would not change the ideological makeup of the court. Conservatives outnumber liberals by 6-3, and Donald Trump's three nominees made an already conservative court even more conservative.

With the larger push to

Continue **Court** Page 6

## Black Texas farmers were finally on track to get federal aid. The state's agriculture commissioner wants to stop that.



Igalious "Ike" Mills distributes clumps of hay around a pasture on his Nacogdoches farm. Nationally, Black farmers have lost more than 12 million acres of farmland over the past century, due to biased government policies and discriminatory business practices.

Photo Credit: **Meridith Kohut** for The Texas Tribune

Sid Miller is challenging a debt relief program that the U.S. Department of Agriculture saw as a way to correct historic discrimination. An advocate for Black Texas farmers says the challenge "pushes us back even further."

BY JAMES POLLARD

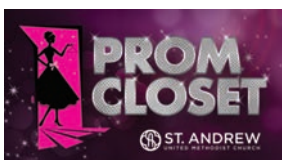
Igalious "Ike" Mills grew up working his family's farm in the Piney Woods town of Nacogdoches. His siblings still keep it running, relying on a lot of the same equipment used by their father and grandfather.

Mills, who is Black, spends much of his energy trying to connect a dwindling

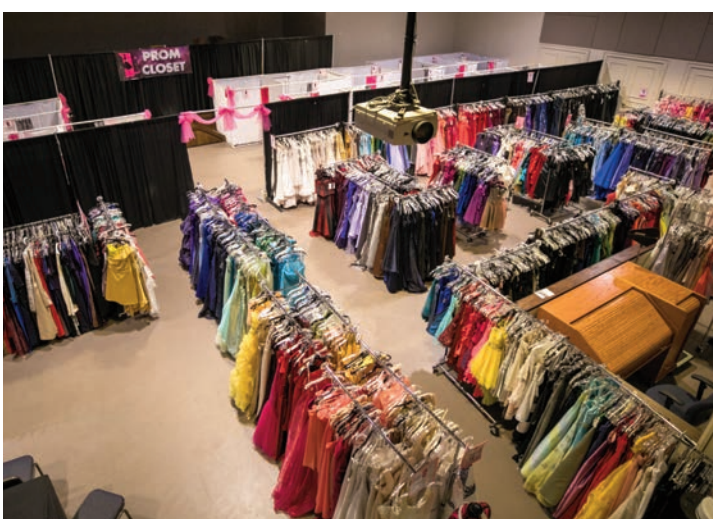
number of Black farmers with state and federal programs that can help them keep their operations running. So it was welcome news last year when Congress passed a law intended to help cover the debts of thousands of "socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers" and

correct the U.S. Department of Agriculture's historic discrimination, long recognized by the agency itself. But Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller stepped in. He is among the many white litigants challenging the law, which a

Continue **Aid** Page 5



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# EDITORIAL PAGE

## The President and Voter Suppression

By Dr. John E. Warren, Publisher, The San Diego Voice & Viewpoint



Dr. John E. Warren

With the failure to overturn the Filibuster Rule in the United States Senate, it would appear that the John Lewis Voting Act and the Voting Rights Act are dead because of two "Dixiecrat Senators" and a Republican blockade in

the Senate that has long forgotten the Oath of Office that each of them took when taking their positions of office.

However, there is hope that the President will start using the power of his office on behalf of the people who put him in the presidency. Without the Black Vote, there would be no Joe Biden presidency. This fact has to become more important than preserving the traditions of the U.S. Senate. The President must now formulate a complete plan of Executive Orders that will prepare to send federal monitors to each state that has enacted Voter

Suppression laws such as the reduction of polling sites, the purging of election rolls so as to reduce the number of persons who can vote, and inserting a federal presence at every point of the electoral process permitted by Federal law. The President must show, through action and not just speeches as if on the campaign trail, that he is serious about using all the powers of his office to protect the electoral process.

This also means that the United States Department of Justice must move forcefully and quickly in responding to the call for investigations which will

follow a more aggressive course of action by the President. Senator Schumer must decide whether he is in control of the U.S. Senate or Mitch McConnell, who appears to still be in charge in spite of the would-be Democratic majority in the Senate. The two Senate Democrats-in-name-only who are now openly voting with the Republicans against their own party's President, should just change their party registration and complete the transition to the other side. It's time for a visible plan, Mr. President. The American people are waiting.

Continued Rep. Page 1

"We've got nine campaigns working in that district right now," said Dallas County Democratic Chair Kristy Noble.

"There are going to be people that are going to be touched numerous times — Democratic voters that haven't been touched before," she said of the campaigns' outreach efforts. "That's going to bring about a high level of excitement and a high level of engagement that we just haven't seen for awhile."

Texas' 30th Congressional District has never known any federal representative except Johnson — after all, she helped draw the district as a state legislator in the early 1990s. Now the dean of the Texas Congressional delegation, the 85-year-old will retire next year and hand over the duties of the district to a new generation.

It is all but certain whoever wins the Democratic nomination either in March or in the May runoff will easily carry this heavily Democratic district in the fall general election. The district is predominantly Black, as are most of the leading Democratic candidates.

Johnson did not make her retirement official until November, setting off an abridged scramble to set up campaigns ahead of the December filing deadline but attracting a packed lineup of experienced candidates who are either well connected, well known or well funded.

The presumptive frontrunner is freshman state Rep. Jasmine Crockett, a Dallas-based attorney who sprang to prominence last summer as a spokesperson on national television for the House Democratic Caucus when the state legislators temporarily relocated to Washington, D.C., to fight the GOP's voting bill. From that experience,

Crockett gained the largest social media presence and political profile, and she said it was then that party elders began to recruit her for a potential Congressional run.

But there are eight other candidates in the Democratic primary race with their own bonafides: former state Rep. Barbara Mallory Caraway, community organizer Arthur Dixon, 2020 Biden Texas state director Jane Hope Hamilton, former Dallas City Council member Vonciel Jones Hill, Cedar Hill School Board Member Keisha Lankford, Navy veteran Jessica Mason, former legislative staffer Abel Mulugheta and former Dallas County Constable Roy Williams Jr.

Among the crowd, Crockett enjoys a key advantage: the coveted Johnson endorsement.

"I sought her out"

Johnson told The Texas Tribune that she recruited Crockett for a run.

"She didn't seek me out," Johnson said. "I sought her out because I was not pleased with the people that were lining up."

The pair of women did not know each other well until last year's round of redistricting, the decennial process in which state lawmakers redraw political maps to reflect census changes.

Johnson is a former state legislator and was intimately involved in the drawing of this district back when she was a state senator in 1991. Last year, Crockett reached out to Johnson as a state legislator who shared parts of Dallas with the congressional-district in order to discuss how to best advocate for the federal district among state lawmakers.

Through that experience, Crockett stayed in close touch with Johnson — often with calls from the state House floor — and Crockett quickly learned that Johnson



State Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Dallas  
 Photo/CrediEvan L'Roy/The Texas Tribune

was avidly monitoring the redraw through livestreams and by keeping up with the political intelligence.

The new 30th District saw few changes from its old version. It encompasses many of the Dallas landmark highlights: downtown, the train station named for Johnson, Love Field, the Cotton Bowl and Fair Park, Deep Ellum, suburbs like Cedar Park and De Soto, plus a new small sliver of Tarrant County to the west.

"You did well, you did really, really well, and I want you to know I'm proud of you," Crockett recalled Johnson telling her.

The day before Johnson announced her retirement, she texted Crockett while en route home from Washington, curious if the state legislator had filed to run for reelection in the state House. Crockett had not, but within days, Crockett was a candidate for Congress.

"She absolutely wanted somebody who's young, female, someone who had actually served in an elected capacity," Crockett recounted of the congresswoman's wishes.

But Crockett's emergent status as a frontrunner has also made her a target among her competitors. A video surfaced earlier this month showing Crockett characterizing Johnson as an entrenched career politician.

"We have a congresswoman here in Texas, a U.S. Congresswoman who has been in that seat for 28

years," Crockett said in a 2020 livestream called Barbershop Conversations. "Ever since they created that seat, she's been in that seat. ... She has been an elected official for 47 years. By education, she is an RN. Somehow, she is a multimillionaire."

Johnson said she suspected the person responsible for drawing attention to the video was an opponent of Crockett's who is "very far behind in the polls."

"I consider it an act of desperation to dig up different statements and mesh them in to make it say what they say what they wanted it to say and to bash me," she said, adding that it did not change her support for Crockett.

Crockett brushed off the incident, explaining she did not initially remember the video and called it "much ado about nothing."

"I'm not a good politician, that's the bottom line," Crockett said of the incident, adding that it showed running for Congress this cycle was "never part of my plan" and that the endorsement competition was not "about who can kiss up" to Johnson the most.

Crockett said the comments came because she was defending President Joe Biden for shepherding the 1994 Crime Bill that has since become anathema in many progressive circles.

Her point, she said, was to

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## Pfizer begins testing omicron-matched COVID shots in adults

By LAURAN NEERGAARD

Pfizer is enrolling healthy adults to test a reformulated COVID-19 vaccine that matches the hugely contagious omicron variant, to see how it compares with the original shots.

Pfizer and its partner BioNTech announced the study on Tuesday.

COVID-19 vaccine-makers have been updating their shots to better match omicron in case global health authorities decide the change is needed.

Omicron is more likely than previous variants to cause infection even in people who've been vaccinated, but it's not yet clear that a change to the vaccine recipe will be ordered. Among the issues regulators are weighing: Some of the first places to face an omicron surge already are seeing the mutant wane — and there's no way to know if the next variant that arises will resemble omicron or be totally different.

The original vaccines still offer good protection against severe illness and death. Studies in the U.S. and elsewhere have made clear that adding a booster dose strengthens that protection and improves the chances of avoiding even a milder infection.

Another wrinkle in deciding whether vaccines need an update: A new U.S. report Tuesday echoes data from Britain and South Africa that omicron infections cause

less severe illness — at least in part because so many people have some protection from vaccination or prior infection. During the omicron surge, 13% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients ended up in intensive care, compared with about 18% during two earlier waves, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Still, "we recognize the need to be prepared in the event this protection wanes over time and to potentially help address omicron and new variants in the future," Kathrin Jansen, Pfizer's vaccine research chief, said in a statement.

The new U.S. study will include up to 1,420 volunteers ages 18 to 55 to test the updated omicron-based shots for use as a booster or for primary vaccinations.

Researchers will examine the tweaked vaccine's safety and how it revs up the immune system in comparison to the original shots.

Full study results will take many months as volunteers receive multiple vaccine doses — and as researchers measure how long virus-fighting antibodies remain at high levels after an omicron-adapted dose versus the regular booster.

Pfizer's CEO told CNBC earlier this month that the company could have some omicron-matched doses ready as early as March. But doing what the company calls "at-risk" manufacturing doesn't mean those doses will be rolled out to the public. Pfizer and other vaccine makers also have brewed and tested experimental doses to match previous variants, changes that ultimately weren't needed but offered valuable practice at tweaking the recipe.

For the new study, one group of about 600 volunteers who received two doses of the current Pfizer vaccine three to six months ago will receive either one or two omicron-based shots as boosters. Another 600 who have already gotten three regular doses of the Pfizer vaccine will be given a fourth dose of either the regular vaccine or the omicron-matched version.

The study also will enroll some unvaccinated volunteers who will receive three doses of the omicron-based vaccine.

Pfizer plans to produce 4 billion vaccine doses in 2022, and said Tuesday the amount isn't expected to change if an omicron-adapted version is needed.



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## Stop the Flu: Flu Myths Busted

During flu season, many myths spread about the flu shot. To help you understand the facts about the flu we've listed the top 5 flu shot myths.

**MYTH 1: You can get the flu from the flu shot.**

**FACT:** The flu shot cannot give you the flu because the virus is not alive. Some people may experience side effects, such as mild soreness or muscle aches, which can be confused with symptoms of the flu. Don't worry. You're not sick. It's just your body reacting to the shot.

**MYTH 2: Waiting until winter will protect me longer.**

**FACT:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting your flu shot by the end of October, if possible. The flu shot takes 2 weeks to start protecting you so the sooner you get the shot, the better. Even if you don't get your shot early, it's never too late for your flu shot.

**MYTH 3: The flu shot doesn't work.**

**FACT:** The flu shot does work. Experts review which strains of the flu are in other areas of the world to predict which will hit the United States. Each year, the flu shot is made to protect you from those strains. Getting the flu shot can help prevent medical problems, decrease the time and how severe the illness is.

**MYTH 4: I never get the flu, so I don't need the vaccine.**

**FACT:** Avoiding the flu in the past does not mean you will not get the flu in the future. Every year a new flu season puts you at risk. You can also have the flu and give it to others by not getting the vaccine.

**MYTH 5: I got a flu shot last year, so I don't need one this year.**

**FACT:** This is false. Unlike some vaccines, the flu shot must be given every year to be effective.

The flu shot is by far the best way to protect yourself against the flu. Stop the flu before it gets to you. Receive your flu vaccine at one of our community-based health centers for Walk-in Wednesdays, 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. No appointment needed.

For more information about the flu, visit [www.parklandhospital.com/flu](http://www.parklandhospital.com/flu).

## California city approves 1st US insurance law for gun owners

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — A California city voted Tuesday night to require gun owners to carry liability insurance in what's believed to be the first measure of its kind in the United States.

The San Jose City Council overwhelmingly approved the measure despite opposition from gun owners who said it would violate their Second Amendment rights and promised to sue.

# Trinity Heights fine arts and more

BY THE HUB

Nestled in the heart of southern Dallas is a school community committed to creating an experience that will develop students into 21st century learners and, ultimately, global leaders. It is what Principal Marquetta Masters calls "The Trinity Heights Experience."

**Trinity Heights Talented & Gifted**, located at 1515 Lynn Haven Ave., recently completed its much anticipated buildout, which now includes instruction for first through eighth grade. The school, currently home to more than 325 scholars,

has cultivated a number of programs that emphasize academic excellence, collaboration, communication, and creativity.

"Creativity" is the word of the day, because Trinity Heights is placing an emphasis on the expansion of its dynamic fine arts department, which will include choir, band, dance, and several forms of art.

"Fine Arts is a great tool to help students connect, mature, and make friends," said Fine Arts teacher Latricia Grayson. "There are few things as rewarding

as watching students light up when they create their own things and pieces."

Band and choir students at Trinity Heights will have the opportunity to explore music from different genres and cultures, and will be challenged to create their own pieces and arrangements and watch them come to life. Students in Art 1, 2, and 3 will be able to take advantage of advanced level art, including art history, digital design, pottery and painting.

Next year, the school is expanding its fine arts

offerings to include dance, an art form that introduces students to the kinesthetic arena of art while helping them develop cognitively.

"Fine arts is all about helping students develop and express their own voice," Grayson said.

Dallas ISD is home to first-class fine arts at Trinity Heights Talented & Gifted.

The Dallas ISD Choice School application deadline is January 31. Students and families can "choose" the best-fit school at [www.dal-lasisd.org/choosedalasisd](http://www.dal-lasisd.org/choosedalasisd).

Continued Rep. Page 2

explain that other politicians these supporters back, like Johnson, also backed the crime bill and have not recanted that vote.

"I was trying to draw out how ridiculous it was," Crockett said.

### A splintered Dallas establishment

Outside of Johnson, the endorsement watch of this race has been a curious development: The Dallas political establishment is splintered.

"It's not that big of a deal," U.S. Rep. Marc Veasey, a Fort Worth-based Democrat, said of the competing rivalries. Veasey is backing Hamilton, who used to be a staffer for him. "We're accustomed, especially with something like this where there was going to be a lot of people running, that there was obviously going to have people who were friends of opinion on who should take this seat."

Mulugheta has the backing of his former boss, state Rep. Rafael M. Anchia, who represents the overlapping 103rd state House district.

"This is going to be a name ID race, and it's important for me to get my name in as many living rooms as possible," Mulugheta said.

Mulugheta, like several other Democratic candidates, said he raised more than six figures in the abridged

fundraising period between Johnson's retirement and the end of the fourth-quarter reporting period.

In addition to Veasey's endorsement, Hamilton has the backing of Annie's List Executive Director Royce Brooks, Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price, Tarrant County Commissioner Roy Brooks, Burleson state Sen. Beverly Powell, former Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk and state Rep. Chris Turner, who is the Democratic leader in the Texas House of Representatives.

"I don't know any other candidate in this race — I'll correct that: There is no other candidate in this race that has such broad support throughout the district," Hamilton said.

Hamilton initially launched her candidacy contingent that Johnson retire. Had Johnson run for a 16th term, Hamilton would not have challenged her.

Hamilton has never been on a Dallas ballot, but she is well known to Texas Democrats. She came up in the powerful circle that grew out of former U.S. Rep. Martin Frost's political team. Hamilton has worked on numerous campaigns in the region, first with Veasey and then she served as Biden's lead staffer both in the 2020 Democratic primary which helped deliver him the nomination and in the general elec-

tion as interest in Texas' competitiveness grew.

"This race is not predetermined," Hamilton said. "It's going to be determined by the candidate who works the hardest and gets out their supporters. And I'm experienced doing just that."

Johnson told the Tribune that Hamilton unsuccessfully courted her endorsement.

"She indicated to people I would probably endorse her," Johnson said. "I never said I would, and I never said I wouldn't, but I told her, I said, 'Now, I am looking for someone who will convince me they will focus on the work that's inside in this position, not just the title.'"

"And I made that clear with everyone I talked with. ... And I didn't find that in anybody I was looking at [before Crockett], and I wanted it to be a woman," she added.

"I sought the counsel of Congresswoman Johnson, along with many other elected officials," Hamilton said in a statement to the Tribune. "In this case, North Texas trusted leaders who often align with her, have instead chosen to endorse me. I look forward to continuing my service in North Texas as the next Member of Congress representing Congressional District 30."

Tactically, this primary election is a ground war.

It is unlikely candidates will have the money necessary

for a robust television campaign. As such, this primary will be fought in the field game and via digital outreach and direct mail.

Veasey said the candidates will win votes "the old-fashioned way, just getting out there, knocking on doors."

Crockett said she's "not the biggest fan" of spending on television and described campaigning in the field as "a happy space for me."

But, she added, "If we've got the money, there's nothing we won't do."

So much so, she told the Tribune she thinks she might be able to avoid a runoff. That is unusual in primaries with this many candidates. If no contender is able to capture a majority of the vote on March 1, the top two candidates would advance to a May 24 runoff.

This district was drawn — and redrawn — to be a safe Democratic stronghold. Given that Johnson regularly cruised to reelection by a 60-point margin, it is unlikely that the Republican and third-party contenders — including Republicans Lizbeth Diaz, Kelvin Goodwin-Castillo, J. Frank Harris, Kinya Jefferson, Angeigh J. Roc'Ellerpitts, James Rodgers; Libertarian Phil Gray, and independent candidates Zachary Manning and Eric Williams, will have much of a shot in the general election.

"It's a good, strong race."

# SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

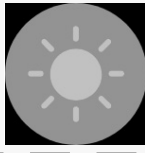
## Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, Jan. 27



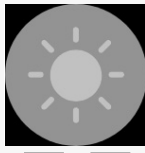
H - 52°  
L - 37°

Friday, Jan. 28



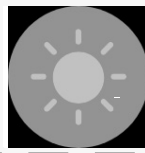
H - 51°  
L - 35°

Saturday, Jan. 29



H - 62°  
L - 42°

Sunday, Jan. 30



H - 64°  
L - 46°

Monday, Jan. 31



H - 63°  
L - 53°

Tuesday, Feb. 1



H - 65°  
L - 54°

Wednesday, Feb. 2



H - 56°  
L - 40°



## Baseball Greatest Player Snubbed for Hall of Fame by Self-Righteous Vengeful Writers

By Stacy M. Brown

*With his fearsome and sweet lefty swing, Bonds also set the single-season home record with 73 in 2001, a year in which he also drew 177 walks.*

Barry Bonds stands as baseball's all-time home run king, with 762 bombs over a career that lasted more than two decades.

With his fearsome and sweet lefty swing, Bonds also set the single-season home record with 73 in 2001, a year in which he also drew 177 walks.

What separated Bonds from sluggers like Babe Ruth and others? he probably had the best hand-eye coordination ever.

Bonds drew a mind-boggling 2,558 walks over his career, including 626 intentional free passes.

So feared was Bonds; pitchers intentionally walked him with the bases loaded.

A league MVP seven times and a gold glove winner eight times, there's little question that Barry Lamar Bonds ranks among the top five players in baseball history.

Some recognize him ahead of Ruth, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, and others as the greatest.

But Barry Bonds will not receive the crown jewel of his sport - entry into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

At least not yet.

Fifteen years after leaving the sport and being snubbed each year, Bonds no longer will have eligibility on the Baseball Writers Association of America's (BBWAA) ballot.

It's the writers who vote

to enshrine players, who must receive 75 percent of the vote for election.

In December 2022, baseball's so-called "Today's Game Committee" will consider Bonds' candidacy. That committee consists of 16 members from the National Baseball Hall of Fame, executives, and veteran media members.

The group forms an electorate that considers players no longer eligible for election by the BBWAA.

Many have lumped Bonds in with others in the shameful Steroid era, where writers have repeatedly snubbed players like Sammy Sosa, Roger Clemens, and Mark McGwire.

Unlike Alex Rodriguez, Manny Ramirez, and Jose Canseco, who have either been caught or admitted to using performance-enhancing drugs, Bonds had always denied usage.

Also, he'd never been disciplined for illegal drug use. However, baseball writers and others point to the year after Bonds' playing days ended when a federal indictment charged him with perjury obstruction of justice for allegedly lying to a grand jury during the federal government's investigation of BALCO, a steroid and performance-enhancing drug laboratory in San Francisco.

Leaked testimony revealed he admitted to unknowingly using "the cream" and "the clear," and a

former girlfriend testified that he used steroids for an injury.

But Bonds' snub appears to run deeper and it cuts with a hint of jealousy and racism.

When Bonds set the all-time home run record, then Commissioner Bud Selig went out of his way to demean the accomplishment citing alleged but unproven steroid use.

However, a few years earlier, Selig and others cheered McGwire and Sosa's steroid-fueled assault on the same record.

Baseball writers - the individuals' task with casting Hall of Fame votes - jeered Bonds at every turn. With typical dog whistles, they often described Bonds as "surly," "aloof," and having "a bad attitude."

Bonds mostly ignored the media and its rhetoric, and during 22 years in two of the most challenging parks for hitters - Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Stadium and San Francisco's Candlestick Park - he excelled.

That he refused to engage media members only served to anger them, and the dog whistles continued at a relentless pace.

Bonds once explained that the pressure he experienced as a young man on the Pittsburgh Pirates led to his combativeness with the media.

He recognized that he could have done more to better the relationship.



**PLANO, TEXAS - January 18, 2022-** St. Andrew United Methodist Church announces Prom Closet 2022 will take place over a two-week period: **February 15, 16, 17 & 19 and 21 - 26** in Smith Worship Center, at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Plano, with **advance registration required.** Each year, Prom Closet provides prom attire to more than 1,000 high school girls from anywhere at no cost and is a service of the United Methodist Women. This year advance registration is required to improve the overall shopping experience and minimize wait times for the shoppers. **To register** for a 1.5-hour time slot, visit [www.standrewumc.org/promcloset](http://www.standrewumc.org/promcloset).

The Prom Closet is accepting donations of dresses (sizes 0-30), jewelry, shoes, handbags, and wraps. All donations may be dropped off at St. Andrew, January 14 - February 25, in Room 121, Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Friday 8:30 - 1 p.m.;

Saturday 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.; and Sunday 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Use North entry door located off north parking lot, 1401 Mira Vista.

"We are overjoyed to announce we will host Prom Closet this year and are excited to try advance registration, eliminating long lines and providing plenty of space for each shopper to select her perfect dress and accessories," said Devra Helffrich, an original organizer of prom closet. "Obviously, we could not do this without the support and donations from the community and our wonderful volunteers. We collect dresses, shoes, jewelry, wraps, handbags, and other accessories year 'round, and we can't thank the community enough for helping so many girls' prom dreams come true. This will be the 13<sup>th</sup> year we have held Prom Closet, which has grown to be an extraordinary way to reach out and help the community."

Area school counselors have been provided information about the annual Prom Closet on their campuses.

Each shopper must be present to select her own dress and accessories and may have one guest, age 16 or older, with them. A personal shopper volunteer will assist each shopper throughout the process. There will be 20 shopping slots per each 1.5-hour time frame.

A link on Amazon is available for anyone that would like to help by purchasing items, which will be shipped directly to the church. To review items available for purchase, <https://tinyurl.com/PromClosetWishList>

The Prom Closet was created to provide a unique shopping experience for young ladies who because of finances would be unable to attend prom. Prom Closet organizers and volunteers confirm that not only is the need great, but the impact the dress makes on the girl and her family is immeasurable.

Visit

[www.standrewumc.org/promcloset](http://www.standrewumc.org/promcloset), email [promcloset@standrewumc.org](mailto:promcloset@standrewumc.org), or call 469-385-1810

Continued **Aid** Page 1

federal judge temporarily blocked as court cases play out. And even though Miller filed the suit in April as a private citizen, Mills says his perch as the state's agriculture commissioner is stoking frustration from farmers of color who already distrust the government.

"They're disappointed, number one," said Mills, who is director of the Texas Agriforestry Small Farmers and Ranchers. "And like some of them are saying, 'Oh, here we go again.' That pushes us back even further in terms of trying to engage Black landowners to participate in USDA programs."

Nationally, Black farmers have lost more than 12 million acres of farmland over the past century, according to the Washington Post, due to biased government policies and discriminatory business practices. In 1920, there were over 925,000 Black farmers in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. But by 1997, their numbers had fallen to just under 18,500.

Recent data suggest the USDA continues to disproportionately reject Black farmers for loans. According to a CNN analysis, 42% of Black farmers were rejected for direct USDA loans in 2021, more than any other demographic group.

Last March, Congress passed a sweeping debt

relief program for farmers of color. The culmination of 20 years of advocacy, the law would have provided \$4 billion worth of debt relief for loans many of them had taken on to stay afloat while being passed over for financial programs and assistance their white counterparts had an easier time obtaining. Black farmers made up about a quarter of those targeted in the bill.

As agriculture commissioner, Miller leads an agency tasked with "advocat[ing] for policies at the federal, state, and local level" beneficial to Texas's agriculture sector and "provid[ing] financial assistance to farmers and ranchers," among other duties. In a statement to The Texas Tribune, Miller called the debt relief program "facially illegal and constitutionally impermissible."

"Such a course will lead only to disunity and discord," Miller said. "Shame on the Biden Administration for authorizing a program it knows was unambiguously illegal, instead of enacting a proper relief bill that complies with the laws and constitution of the United States."

But advocates of the program saw it as an attempt to make Black farmers whole after years of USDA discrimination.

USDA press secretary Kate Waters told the Tribune she couldn't comment on ongoing litigation.

She added the agency is establishing an equity commission of about 30 non-USDA employees to help identify how the USDA can eliminate structural barriers to various programs.

"There is a long history of racism at USDA. It's a lot to unpack," Waters said. "We're on the case and we're here to regain trust."

But Mills said Miller's lawsuit is undermining existing efforts to build trust. A federal judge's halt to the program, thanks in part to Miller's challenge, paused the USDA's plans to start paying the loans in June, with eligible farmers and ranchers expected to receive an additional 20% loan to cover the tax burden associated with the relief.

The lawsuit is "like a slap in the face for Black farmers. That just elevates another level of mistrust that we shouldn't have to deal with," he said. "They have to understand what we're trying to develop here. That's counterproductive."

History of discrimination, mistrust

A red clay road lined with pine and oak trees leads to Mills' family farm in Nacogdoches. While much of the equipment his brother uses to keep the farm going is old and needs replacing, the Mills family instead shares equipment with other Black farmers.

Continue **Aid** 2/3/2022

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Continued **Court** Page 1

diversify the judiciary — Trump largely appointed white men during his time in office — Biden’s team has consulted with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Black caucus members, Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C. and influential Democratic lawyers.

Even with a narrowed field and the court’s majority not to be altered, there’s no guarantee a nominee will sail through the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Wednesday that Biden’s nominee “will receive a prompt hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee and will be considered and confirmed by the full United States Senate with all deliberate speed.”

But Republicans in particular remain upset about Justice Brett Kavanaugh’s contentious 2018 hearing. Still, Democrats have the 50 votes plus a tiebreaker in Vice President Kamala Harris that they need to confirm a nominee.

Republicans who changed the Senate rules during the Trump-era to allow simple majority confirmation of Supreme Court nominees appeared resigned to the outcome. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, the top Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee said in a statement: “If all Democrats hang together — which I expect they will — they have the power to replace Justice Breyer in 2022 without one Republican vote in support.”

Nonetheless, Democrats have also been unable to get all its members on board for Biden’s social and environmental spending agenda or to move forward with a voting rights bill.

Biden is uniquely aware of the challenges that come with a confirmation. As a senator,



**Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit**

he served as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, overseeing six Supreme Court confirmation hearings from 1987 to 1995, including Breyer’s.

And one person who will be central to Biden’s process is chief of staff Ron Klain, a former Supreme Court law clerk and chief counsel on the Senate Judiciary Committee. While serving as an associate White House counsel for President Bill Clinton in 1993, Klain was summoned to breakfast with Justice Byron White, for whom he had clerked, only to be surprised with a resignation letter for Clinton.

Ever since Biden suggested he would choose a Black woman if he had the chance, two names have seemingly topped any list of potential nominees:

—Ketanji Brown Jackson, 51. She attended Harvard as an undergraduate and for law school. President Barack Obama nominated her to be a district court judge, and Biden elevated her to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Early in her career, she was also a law clerk for Breyer.

—Leondra Kruger, 45, a justice on the California Supreme Court. A graduate of Harvard and Yale’s law school, she served as a law

clerk on the high court before arguing a dozen cases before the court as a lawyer for the federal government. But Kruger, whose mother is Jamaican, has also been described as a moderate, which could be a tough sell for some liberal Democratic senators.

Two other Black women Biden appointed to federal appeals courts are also seen as contenders: Holly Thomas, a longtime civil rights lawyer he named to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit and Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, a former public defender he named to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit.

J. Michelle Childs, who has been nominated but not yet confirmed to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, is another option. Childs, currently a federal trial court judge in South Carolina, is a favorite of Clyburn, who made a crucial endorsement of Biden just before that state’s presidential primary.

Biden could also choose someone from outside the judiciary, though that seems less likely. One contender would be the head of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Sherrilyn Ifill, 59. She has headed the fund since 2013 and has announced she is stepping down in the spring.

The court has had three women on it for more than a decade, since 2010, when Obama named Justice Elena Kagan to the court to replace the retiring John Paul Stevens. Kagan joined Obama’s other nominee, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the court’s first Latina justice, and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. When Ginsburg died in September 2020, Trump’s choice of Amy Coney Barrett to fill her seat kept the number of women on the court at three.