

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Source: The History Channel

Addressing the Crisis: Gun Violence and Its Disproportionate Impact on Black Americans

Gun violence is seizing the United States with one in seven Americans living within a quarter mile of a recent fatal shooting, according to a New York Times analysis of Gun Violence Archive data. While gun violence affects every community and racial group across the country, gun violence hits much closer to home for Black Americans who are disproportionately impacted by firearms.

In fact, Black Americans were the only racial group for which homicide was a top ten cause of death in 2021, and they continue to die from gun violence at nearly 2.4 times the rate of white Americans. Alarming, nearly all forms of gun violence have been rising among Black Americans, including firearm suicide, unintentional shooting and police shooting deaths.

Whether you look at statistics from the Giffords Law Center or those from the bipartisan group Brady and Johns Hopkins University, the data are equally daunting as they are haunting. America's racist past and present continues to perpetuate inequities and negative stereotypes that fuel gun violence, making Black people the forever target.

In May, Maryland became the first state to heed the call from the Biden Administration to create an office aimed at fostering a statewide partnership with federal and local agencies to reduce gun violence. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention will be part of the state health department to implement a public health approach to the problem.

While scientists use data-driven solutions to address nearly every other public health issue, America's gun violence epidemic is proving more difficult to eradicate. NBCSL has long recognized symptoms of gun violence and the disparities that exist in Black communities. Through resolutions that target improving mental health services, police reform, repealing Stand Your Ground laws, and calling for gun control in the wake of mass shootings, NBCSL has worked—and will continue working—to address the root cause of gun violence.

June is National Gun Violence Awareness Month, and NBCSL recommits to championing life for every Black American. State legislators are encouraged to support programs like Community Violence Intervention (CVI) and others that are making a positive impact, ensure funding is being put to good use, and work to codify laws that aim to prevent gun violence.



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Representative Laura Hall (AL)*

I am delighted to invite you to explore our June newsletter, filled with timely and impactful stories.

This month, we spotlight Gun Violence Awareness Month, discussing the alarming rise in gun violence across our nation and highlighting crucial efforts to curb this national crisis.

This month we are also addressing health disparities among our black men and a look at a national project that's helping to change the mindset of health maintenance versus health repair.

As we honor Juneteenth, we take a look at number of states who have yet to recognize this important day in history as a holiday as communities, and our legislators, across the country celebrate freedom and the the enduring fight for equality.

We value your engagement and support of NBCSL. Enjoy the read!



LEGISLATION IN PROGRESS

The flow of unserialized firearms, or ghost guns, is rapidly spreading across America, “climbing from about 1,600 crime scenes in 2017 to nearly 20,000 in 2021,” according to a New York Times analysis of a report by the ATF. Ghost guns are difficult to trace due to a lack of serial numbers and home assembly from parts bought online or made by 3D printers.

Everytown Research & Policy tracks data related to ghost gun shootings and recoveries, and the data is alarming. Now, New York is advancing its Ghost Guns and Untraceable Firearms Act of 2023 to the Judiciary Committee for review to combat the growing problem impacting the Empire State.

New York had previously enacted the Scott J. Beigel Unfinished Receiver Act and the Jose Webster Untraceable Firearms Act in 2021, which together prohibit ghost guns and the unserialized parts used to make them. Together, these two Acts helped create the Ghost Guns and Untraceable Firearms Act of 2023.

States are encouraged to enact strong, smart legislation, which can make it easier to takedown and prosecute gun traffickers.

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FEATURE STORY

For the Love of Man: A Focus on Men’s Health

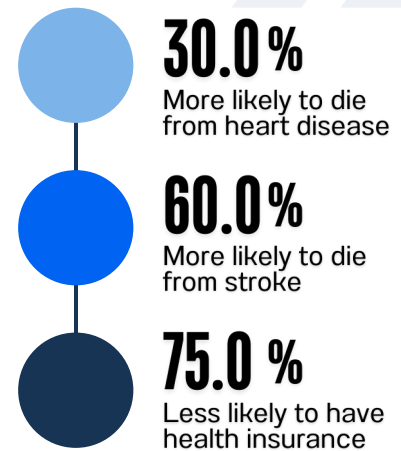
Every June, America encourages men to take charge of their health during [Men’s Health Month](#). For Black men, who already have the [shortest lifespan of any American](#), a heightened awareness of health and well-being can mean the difference between a longer life and an early death.

Dr. Roland J. Thorpe, Jr., founding director of the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health Program for Research on Men’s Health at the [Center for Health Disparities Solutions](#), lost both of his grandfathers when they were in their 60s and believes Black men could live a lot longer if they were more proactive about taking care of themselves.

“Many Black men believe in health repair instead of health maintenance,” said Dr. Thorpe in [an interview](#) about his research for the [Black Men’s Health Project](#). “You show up at the ER with a condition that often times could have been prevented through checkups.”

The Black Men’s Health Project is a collaboration of Black male researchers who represent Johns Hopkins University, George Washington University and Michigan State University. [According to their research](#), Black men are 30% more likely to die from heart disease, 60% more likely to die from stroke than non-Hispanic white men, 75% less likely to have health insurance than white men and nine times more likely to die from AIDS.

Reasons for the poor state of Black men’s health are numerous and complex. In addition to having [much higher rates](#) of hypertension, obesity, diabetes, strokes and some cancers (such as [prostate cancer](#)) than white people, research shows that Black people develop those chronic



conditions up to 10 years earlier. It turns out ongoing stress related to pervasive, systemic racism can impact the body, mind and soul by altering its normal functioning until it starts to wear down. This phenomenon is often referred to as the [John Henryism theory](#).

Because the odds are unnecessarily stacked against them, Black men need support—now more than ever before—to focus on their physical, mental and socio-emotional health. NBCSL encourages members to continue addressing health disparities in your communities, demystifying the perceived stigma around mental health, and creating opportunities for Black men to safely gather and access critical health services to improve their lives. And, don’t forget to check in with the men in your life.



FEATURE STORY

Adding to the Numbers -- Juneteenth!

Governor Andy Beshear has declared Juneteenth an Executive Branch holiday in Kentucky, following multiple unsuccessful attempts by the state legislature to pass similar legislation.

"After years of inaction, I've decided I can no longer wait for others to do what is right," Beshear announced at the Capitol Rotunda. He signed an executive order officially recognizing Juneteenth, commemorating the end of slavery in the United States, and establishing it as a holiday for the Executive Branch in Kentucky.

Currently, at least 28 states and the District of Columbia legally recognize Juneteenth as a public holiday allowing state workers a paid day off.

In celebration of this historic day, NBCSL members traveled to Washington DC for the Juneteenth celebration at the White House on Monday, June 10, 2024.



LEGISLATOR SPOTLIGHT Rep. Christopher M. Rabb (PA)

With a background in public policy and a deep understanding of the 200th Legislative District/Philadelphia County, Representative Chris Rabb has championed social justice, economic development, and educational equity.

He has passed key legislation with lasting community impact, including strong measures to address gun violence. He is committed to implementing common-sense gun laws, supporting community-based violence prevention programs, and advocating for comprehensive background checks to ensure the safety of all residents.

Representative Rabb is currently a board member of Friends of the Wissahickon and Race Forward and has been on the faculty of the Institute for Strategic Leadership at Drexel University's Bennett S. LeBow College of Business.

He is a graduate of Yale College and the University of Pennsylvania, an avid family historian and genealogist.

Representative Chris Rabb - we salute you!





FEATURE STORY

Celebrating African American Music Appreciation Month. [Take our interactive poll!](#)

This June is the 45th anniversary of Black Music Month, which was first designated by President Jimmy Carter in 1979 and made official through presidential proclamation in 2000. President Barak Obama renamed it [African American Music Appreciation Month](#) in 2009.

Though the country has only been celebrating Black music since the '70s, Americans have been moved and inspired by Black music for more than 400 years when enslaved people ["used music to strategically and creatively voice their most deeply held feelings."](#)

Whether it's faith-based, born out of oppression and racial struggles, or embracing rebellion, African American musical traditions make up the soundtrack of all of our lives. Often grounded in African rhythms, the [sounds of Black music](#) include spiritual, gospel, the blues, R&B, rock and roll, jazz, pop, rap, and hip-hop, among others. Black music—the lyrics and the sound—have undeniably shaped society and cultural conversations not just in the U.S. but around the globe.

This past year, [America celebrated 50 years of hip-hop music](#) and it also marked Beyoncé's country crossover with "Cowboy Carter." Regardless of industry, a superstar's genre crossover can be controversial. [Beyoncé's experience](#) was [no different](#).

This African American Music Appreciation Month, let us celebrate the rich history of Black music, and let us also celebrate great music made by Black people. [What is your favorite genre of music? Click here to take our poll by June 30, 2024.](#)



B.B. King

BLUES – 1860s

Influenced by work songs and spirituals from slaves in the deep South, Blues began in the 1860s after the Civil War. Mississippi is considered the birthplace of the Blues. Blues music described sad situations, such as woes and troubles. Guitar, upright bass, and piano were popular instruments.



Scott Joplin

RAGTIME – 1890s

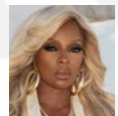
Ragtime began in the 1890s and was popular until about 1918. Piano was the most common instrument.



Ella Fitzgerald

JAZZ – 1900s

Jazz music has roots in blues, ragtime, and spirituals. Trumpet, saxophone, and trombone were featured instruments in jazz music along with piano, drums, and bass.



Mary J. Blige

R&B/SOUL – 1940s

Defined by its soulful singing and the strong bass and rhythm track behind the music, the genre was first established in the 1940s and continues to be a popular form of music to this day.



Chuck Berry

ROCK AND ROLL – 1950s

Emerging in the mid 20th century, Rock was inspired by blues, boogie woogie, gospel, and rhythm music. The most popular instrument in rock and roll music is the guitar.



Michael Jackson

POP – 1950s

Short for "popular" music, this genre has been front-and-center since the 1950s.



James Brown

FUNK/SOUL – 1960s

Funk was inspired by soul music, jazz, and African grooves. Soul music helped originate funk music by adding strong rhythm to it, and disco was later influenced by funk.



Diana Ross

MOTOWN – 1960s

Motown was inspired by blues music, but with more rhythm added in. This style was named after Motown Records, whose goal was to feature African American musicians.



HIP HOP/RAP – 1970s

Born in New York City in the 1970s, hip hop was created by African Americans who lived in the poverty-stricken neighborhoods of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, and became a cultural movement. Influences came from blues, R&B, and funk.

Source: National Museum of African American History & Culture



FROM THE CHAIR

*LaKeitha Anderson
Greenberg Traurig, LLP*

With great enthusiasm, I am thrilled to extend to you an invitation to actively participate in shaping the future of our community.

Featuring 13 committees spanning various crucial areas such as Agriculture, Business, Financial Services, and Insurance, Education, Emergency Preparedness/Homeland Security, Energy, Transportation, and Environment, Health and Human Services, Gaming, Sports and Entertainment, Housing, International Affairs, Labor, Military, and Veteran Affairs, Law, Justice, and Ethics, Telecommunications, Science, and Technology and Youth. NBCSL offers a comprehensive platform tackling issues impacting our community.

Your participation in these committees is instrumental to the effectiveness of NBCSL and the developing of important policies and discussions around best practices and pathways to better our community. We ask that you be ready to engage in high-impact discussions, collaborate on policy initiatives, and shape legislative agendas that resonate with your organization's values. Your expertise holds the key to driving meaningful change within our communities.

I invite you to join us in these important discussions. [Click here](#) to explore further details about each committee and choose one that aligns with your interests and expertise. Let's work together to make a difference.



To become a member, please call:
LaKimba DeSadier, CEO
(202) 624-5457

MEMBER PROFILE



HEAL Collaborative African American Lung Cancer Summit with current and former NBCSL state legislators.

The incidence and prevalence of unequal health conditions and health status between groups not only experience worse health but also tend to have less access to the social determinants or conditions (e.g., healthy food, good housing, good education, safe neighborhoods, freedom from racism and other forms of discrimination) that support health. HEAL Collaborative seeks to promote health equity; that is when everyone has the opportunity to “attain their full health potential” and no one is “disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of their social position or other socially determined circumstance.”

HEAL Collaborative engages local, respected leaders of African American faith community who minister on “Congregational Health” in their congregations. While the church fulfills the spiritual needs, our organization complements their works by meeting congregants’ physical and behavioral health needs.

HEAL Collaborative conducts programs aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding about disease prevalence, chronic disease management and available treatment options (including clinical trials), raising awareness about the range of healthcare services available both within and outside the community, engaging policymakers on access barriers to healthcare, effectively navigating the local health care system, and accessing new health information technologies.

At the core of our community engagement is the facilitation and convening of local influencers and partners who are invested in long term improved health outcomes for underserved and underrepresented people of color. Our proposal includes community-based engagement with local faith institutions, patient advocacy organizations, policy makers, and community leaders. Our programs are uniquely designed to “look like the community.”

The objectives of our community engagement programs are to increase participants knowledge and understanding of chronic diseases including breast, prostate and lung cancer; cardiovascular metabolic disease, CKD, sickle cell disease and autoimmune diseases, while communicating the benefits of participation in the research of new innovative therapies and treatments. Communities of color have limited engagement on health-related public policies, therefore HEAL Collaborative utilizes its programs to educate communities of color on state and federal public policy issues and effectively advocate for their healthcare needs.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Negro League Stats Entered Into Major League Baseball Record ... and the New Record Holder Is?

Any fan of Moneyball knows that baseball is a numbers game. Beyond playing and watching the sport, the statistics of baseball is a beloved pastime for fans across the country. For decades, Black baseball players could play only in the Negro Leagues, which were a product of segregated America. As such, Major League Baseball (MLB) statistics did not include any statistics from Negro League players—until now. On May 29, 2024, Negro League statistics were officially entered into the Major League Baseball record.

The four-year process began in 2020 when MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred announced that Negro League stats would be integrated into MLB's American League and National League stats and thus recognized as Major Leaguers, reflecting a "[long overdue recognition](#)" due to "[evolved attitudes toward and respect for the Negro Leagues](#)."

"All of us who love baseball have long known that the Negro Leagues produced many of our game's best players, innovations and triumphs against a backdrop of injustice," [Manfred said in a statement](#). "We are now grateful to count the players of the Negro Leagues where they belong: as Major Leaguers within the official historical record."

Though history generally refers to Jackie Robinson's integration onto the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 as the end of the Negro League, there are more than 2,300 players from seven Negro Leagues that operated between 1920 and 1948 who are now included in the official record. Those interested in the data and the methodology of incorporating the statistics should read [MLB's FAQ](#).

In addition, this update also revises stats for American and National League players who played in the Negro Leagues such as Willie Mays. As a result of the new data, several Major League records are now held by Negro Leaguers. Key changes to single-season records and career records include Hall of Famer Josh Gibson. Gibson played for the Homestead Grays and is now the leader in Career Batting Average (.372), Career Slugging (.718), and Career OPS (1.177), taking over spots long-held by Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth, respectively. To hear an account of this historical significance, [listen to Josh Gibson's great-grandson, Sean Gibson \(6:30 minutes\)](#).

According to [2022-2023 data](#), the MLB has the lowest share of African American athletes among selected professional sports in North America at only 6.3%. When compared with the NBA (70.4%) and the NFL (56.4%), there is definitely room for improvement. Now, with more Black baseball players listed as leaders and incorporated into the data, hopefully more young Black boys and men will be inspired to take the field and play ball.



Source: Major League Baseball Statistics

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Brown vs. Board of Education Live Talkback



On May 17th, we celebrated the 70th Anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education with a virtual Talk Back. **You can still catch Rep. Laura Hall, Rep. Felecia Robinson, and Brandon Mitchell from American Federation of Teachers** as they discussed the journey of education, Black history in schools, the future of DEI programs, and more.

Don't miss this important Talk Back discussion!

NBCSL SURVEYS

Legislator Contact Form

To be completed by NBCSL Legislator Members Only

To better serve and support you, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) is implementing a new contact form to ensure seamless communication channels both during and outside of session. We ask that you fill out the form below to ensure that you receive all pertinent NBCSL information and updates promptly and without interruptions. We thank you for your continued partnership! [Legislator Contact Form](#)

NBCSL Media Survey

To be completed by NBCSL Legislator Members Only

Your feedback will help us tailor our communication strategies and initiatives to better serve your needs and enhance the visibility and impact of NBCSL in the public sphere. This survey provides us with valuable insights into how we can effectively leverage media and social media to advance our mission and goals. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

[NBCSL Media Survey](#)

Corporate Round Table Surveys

To be completed by NBCSL Corporate Round Table Partners Only

As a member-centric organization, we want to hear from you about how we are doing and how we can improve to ensure we continue to deliver on our promise to our corporate partners and assist NBCSL members in fostering productive partnerships with the private sector. Click here to access the [Corporate Roundtable Partner Survey](#).

NBCSL has 13 policy committees composed of NBCSL members and legislative staff. These committees meet to exchange ideas, network, and find solutions to issues facing all Americans. The policy committees also serve an important function in the policy resolution process. Legislators deliberate and vote on resolutions, which must pass out of policy committees before they can be ratified by the full membership body at the Annual Legislative Conference. Committees are also responsible for submitting model legislation for NBCSL members. [Corporate Roundtable Policy Committees](#)

EVENTS CALENDAR



AUGUST 4

Louisville, Kentucky

- Sunday, August 4 @ 5:30p
QUAD Caucus Reception
Location: TBD
- Sunday, August 4
Kentucky Legislative Black Caucus Reception
Time/Location: TBD



AUGUST 5-7

NCSL Legislative Summit

Louisville, Kentucky

- Tuesday, August 6 @ 8a-9a
NBCSL Legislative Business Meeting
Marriott Convention Center, Louisville, KY
- Tuesday, August 6 @ 5p-6p
NBCSL Corporate Round Table Meeting
Marriott Convention Center, Louisville, KY



AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 1

NBCSL Regional Meeting (TBD)



SEPTEMBER 11-15

NBCSL Executive Committee and CRT Quarterly Meeting

@ CBCF 53rd ALC
Washington, D.C.



December 2-7

48th Annual Legislative Conference

Capital Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.