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Deazhia Williams Builds Cleveland's Next Generation of Cheerleaders

Deazhia's Ultimate Cheer Camp has provided young cheerleaders a chance to improve their skills and leadership development, all while creating bonds that last after the camp.

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“Engage ... Educate ... Empower.”

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Community Calls for Action Following Lee-Harvard Shooting



Scan to Listen

By Staff Reporter

A surveillance video showing dozens of gunshots and panicked crowds fleeing Lee-Harvard Plaza has intensified community demands for stronger public safety measures, proactive policing and youth-focused violence prevention in Cleveland's East Side.

Seven teens wounded amid reports of drag racing

In the early morning hours of Sunday, June 8, Cleveland police responded to multiple 911 calls reporting drag racing near Lee Road and Harvard Avenue. Before they could arrive, reports of gunfire followed. Officers found seven teenagers suffering from gunshot wounds — three 18-year-old women, two 18-year-old men, a 19-year-old woman and a 19-year-old man.

Three victims were driven to area hospitals by private vehicle. EMS transported the other four. According to police, none sustained life-threatening injuries. **Firearms recovered, suspect detained**



The Shaker Heights Police Department stopped a vehicle connected to the scene and recovered three firearms. The 21-year-old driver was arrested and charged with improperly handling firearms in a motor vehicle. A second car, used to transport two injured teens to the hospital, was later towed; two more firearms were recovered, bringing the total to five.

Though one suspect is in custody for a weapons offense, Cleveland police have not yet identified who discharged the

weapons that night. Surveillance footage from a nearby gas station and plaza businesses captured the chaos — people running for cover, cars speeding away, and what Deputy Chief Jarod Schlacht estimated to be more than 70 rounds fired.

Police emphasized that the event was not a “street takeover,” noting that emergency access routes remained clear. The incident remains under active investigation. **Community leaders demand action**

In the days following the shooting, local leaders have voiced concern about recurring violence at Lee-Harvard Plaza and called for stronger intervention. Cleveland City Councilman Joe Jones urged police to intervene early when large gatherings form:

“Police officers coming around on a consistent basis when they see activity start — they need to tell them to disperse.”

Neighborhood resident
Continue on page 5

A Life Well Lived: Virginia Bynum Turns 100



Scan to Listen

By Lajeane Ray

When Virginia Bynum was born on April 29, 1925, in Wilson, North Carolina, the world was a very different place. Across 100 years of remarkable change, Virginia's deep love for family, commitment to community and quiet strength have remained constant.

The youngest of nine children, Virginia grew up in a lively household. She played checkers, pick-up sticks and hopscotch and helped her brother sell fishing worms to earn extra spending money. Early on, she developed the work ethic that would guide her life for decades.

After graduating from Garden High School in Fayetteville, North

Carolina, she began her career as a cashier at a restaurant inside the Old Gold Tobacco Company. In 1950, she married William Bynum, and together they raised two daughters.

Her passion for learning led her to a 25-year career as a reading tutor at the Diagnostic Reading Center, where she helped countless young students develop their reading skills and academic confidence.

Following her husband's passing, Virginia moved to Cleveland to be closer to her daughters.

She quickly became part of the local community, joining Fatima Family Center's Silver Threads program and Antioch Baptist Church. Even at 100, she remains active and engaged, spending her days reading, watching television, solving jigsaw puzzles, gardening, bowling and reflecting on a lifetime



Virginia Bynum (seated) Evelyn Wright (center) and Shelly Brooks. Credit TCO

of travel across the country and abroad.

Do you know another community member celebrating 100 years? We would love to help share their story. Contact us to nominate a centenarian for a future feature!

Scan this code:



Pitch Your Story

Who Will Lead? Neighborhood Programs Open Doors for 2025



By Sandra Kluk

Neighborhood Leadership Development Program & Community Development Corporation Leadership Program seek 2025 applicants Two no-cost leadership development programs are now accepting applications for their 2025 cohorts. If you're passionate about improving your community and ready to take an active role, the Neighborhood Leadership Development Program (NLDP) and the Community Development Corporation Leadership Program (CDCLP) both supported by the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation may be the right fit for you.

For 18 years, the Neighborhood Leadership Development Program (NLDP) has equipped Cleveland residents and those in the city's inner-ring suburbs with the tools to lead community-driven change. The program is designed for individuals actively working on projects within the City of Cleveland and committed to making a lasting impact in their neighborhoods.

The Community Development Corporation Leadership Program (CDCLP), now entering its fifth year, recently graduated its fourth cohort. It remains the region's only leadership program specifically tailored for executive-level leaders of Community Development Corporations.

NLDP and CDCLP are designed to help emerging neighborhood leaders reach their



NLDP and CDCLP combination of education, one-on-one coaching, and peer-to-peer engagement.

full potential through a combination of education, one-on-one coaching, and peer-to-peer engagement. Each participant — and every graduate — has ongoing access to a dedicated Program Coach who offers personalized support tailored to their unique goals and challenges.

Program sessions cover a wide range of topics, including organizational and program planning, marketing and communications, fundraising, board governance and conflict resolution. Participants in both programs come from diverse backgrounds and work on a variety of issues that strengthen Cleveland's neighborhoods.

Sessions for both programs

are held in person at Trinity Commons, 2230 Euclid Ave. NLDP meets on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., while CDCLP sessions are held on Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The application period is now open.

The deadline to apply for NLDP is Aug. 14. To learn more, review the curriculum, or complete the online application, visit www.nldpcleveland.com or call 216-776-6167.

The deadline to apply for CDCLP is July 31. For details and to access the application, visit www.cdclp.org or call 216-776-6172.

Think you have what it takes? Apply now — and be the change your community needs.

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PUBLISHER
Ron Calhoun

EDITORS
Marva B. White
Lisa O'Brien

PARTNERS
The Cleveland Foundation
Euclid/Collinwood Observer

ADVERTISING
sales@cleobserver.com

ADVISORY BOARD
Sheila Ferguson,
Ron Harris, Devon Jones,
Mark Silverberg

PRINT LAYOUT / GRAPHICS
Ron Calhoun

info@cleobserver.com
11459 Mayfield Road #302
Cleveland, Ohio 44106
(216) 236-8081

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Trust exercise during NDL programming. Credit NLDP



The Cleveland Observer is dedicated to informing residents about legislative activities under review. By reporting on ordinances and resolutions during their initial stages, the Observer enables community members to engage with their Council members, providing feedback or expressing support before final decisions are made.

This is a ChatGPT-generate summary report from the “City Recorder” published weekly on www.clevelandcitycouncil.org

How Your Tax Dollars Are Being Spent

First Reading Emergency Ordinances Referred
As read on May 23, 2025

Ord. No. 657-2025 (Sale of City-owned property to Cleveland City Forge, LLC)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the sale of City-owned property located at East 49th Street and Morgan Avenue to Cleveland City Forge, LLC, for expansion and job creation.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0 (revenue-generating sale)

Ord. No. 658-2025 (Sale of City-owned property to Highland Holdings, LLC)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the sale of property on Nottingham Road to Highland Holdings, LLC, for site development.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0 (revenue-generating sale)

Ord. No. 659-2025 (Amending Section 1 of Ord. No. 1206-2023 related to tax increment financing)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Updates the terms of tax increment financing authorized under prior legislation to reflect revised project details.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0 (no new appropriation)

Ord. No. 664-2025 (Lease agreement for Cleveland Water Department warehouse space)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Approves a lease for warehouse storage and operations in support of the Water Department’s supply chain needs.
- **Funding Amount:** \$275,000 annually

Ord. No. 665-2025 (Agreement with NOACA for regional transportation planning services)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)



- **Summary:** Authorizes an agreement with the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency to support coordinated transportation planning and data services.
- **Funding Amount:** \$125,000

Ord. No. 666-2025 (Contract for energy retrofit projects in City facilities)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes entering into contracts for implementation of energy conservation measures under House Bill 7 authority.
- **Funding Amount:** \$1,100,000

Ord. No. 667-2025 (Contract for installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the City to contract for EV charging stations and related electrical upgrades.
- **Funding Amount:** \$800,000

Ord. No. 671-2025 (Capital improvement grant to MidTown Cleveland, Inc.)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes a grant to MidTown Cleveland, Inc. to support infrastructure improvements in the Innovation District.
- **Funding Amount:** \$250,000

Ord. No. 672-2025 (Agreement for consulting services related to East Side Market redevelopment)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes an agreement with a consultant to plan redevelopment of the East Side Market site.
- **Funding Amount:** \$125,000

Ord. No. 673-2025 (Contract to upgrade fire station HVAC systems)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes contracts for HVAC replacements in multiple fire stations to improve energy efficiency and air quality.
- **Funding Amount:** \$600,000

Ord. No. 674-2025 (Contract to support West Side Market structural repairs)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes entering into a contract for engineering and structural upgrades at the historic West Side Market.
- **Funding Amount:** \$750,000

Ord. No. 675-2025 (Capital project funding for recreation centers)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Provides capital funding to renovate and modernize equipment at City recreation centers.
- **Funding Amount:** \$950,000

Ord. No. 676-2025 (Contract for tree canopy restoration and urban forestry plan)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes a contract to implement the Cleveland Tree Plan and expand the urban tree canopy.
- **Funding Amount:** \$500,000

Ord. No. 677-2025 (Agreement with community development corporation for neighborhood planning)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes an agreement with a local CDC to support neighborhood-level planning in underserved areas.
- **Funding Amount:** \$300,000

Ord. No. 678-2025 (Grant to Downtown Cleveland Alliance for public space activation)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Approves a grant to Downtown Cleveland Alliance to fund programs and activities in public spaces downtown.
- **Funding Amount:** \$200,000

Ord. No. 679-2025 (Contract for pedestrian safety infrastructure improvements)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes contracts for safety upgrades including traffic-calming devices and ADA-compliant crossings.
- **Funding Amount:** \$1,200,000

First Reading Ordinances Referred (non-emergency)
As read on May 23, 2025

Ord. No. 665-2025 (Sale of City-owned property at 2310 E. 71st Street)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the sale of City-owned property located at 2310 East 71st Street to an adjacent property owner for yard expansion and maintenance purposes.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 666-2025 (Sale of land to Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Approves the sale of land to GCRTA for transit infrastructure improvements related to the Red Line expansion.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 667-2025 (Authorization to vacate portion of public right-of-way on Colgate Avenue)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes vacation of a portion of Colgate Avenue to support adjacent commercial redevelopment.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0
- **First Reading Emergency Ordinances Referred**
- As read on May 30, 2025

Ord. No. 680-2025 (Acquisition of temporary and permanent easements for major road rehabilitation – East 140th Street)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the Director of Public Works to acquire easements necessary for road reconstruction and pedestrian safety improvements along East 140th Street, from St. Clair Avenue to Lakeshore Boulevard.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 681-2025 (Contract for design-build services – Gordon Park trail and lakefront improvements)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the Director of Capital Projects to enter into one or more design-build contracts for improvements to trails and public access infrastructure in Gordon Park.
- **Funding Amount:** \$2,750,000

Ord. No. 682-2025 (Contract for consultant services – green infrastructure and flooding mitigation, Wards 1 and 5)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes contract(s) for stormwater infrastructure planning and green engineering consulting in flood-prone areas of southeast Cleveland.
- **Funding Amount:** \$350,000

Ord. No. 683-2025 (Contract for the purchase of modular public restrooms and supporting equipment)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the purchase and deployment of prefabricated restroom units to support public use in select high-traffic public parks and corridors.

Continue on page 4

From page 3

- **Funding Amount:** \$1,200,000

First Reading Ordinances Referred

As read on May 30, 2025

Ord. No. 684-2025 (Sale of City-owned property – East 71st Street)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the sale of property located at East 71st Street (Permanent Parcel No. 123-45-678) no longer needed for municipal purposes.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 685-2025 (Authorization to apply for and accept FY2025 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Permits the Director of Public Safety to apply for and accept grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice to support local law enforcement programs.
- **Funding Amount:** \$725,000

Ord. No. 686-2025 (Lease agreement – use of City-owned space for community-based health care clinic)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the Director of Public Health to lease City-owned property to a nonprofit partner for operation of a neighborhood health clinic.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 687-2025 (Amending Section 191.0503 of the Codified Ordinances relating to income tax credit)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Modifies the local income tax credit formula to adjust for remote workers and out-of-city employment scenarios.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

First Reading Emergency Ordinances Referred

As read on June 2, 2025

Ord. No. 703-2025 (Amending Sections of Chapter 667 – Park Rangers)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Amends various sections of Chapter 667 of the Codified Ordinances related to the duties, authority, and classification of park rangers within the Division of Police.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 704-2025 (Contract amendment – Medical Examiner toxicology equipment)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes amendments to an existing contract to provide additional funds and extend the term for equipment maintenance and supply for the Medical

Examiner’s Office.

- **Funding Amount:** \$275,000

Ord. No. 706-2025 (Agreement with GCRTA – ADA curb ramps)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes an agreement with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to share costs for ADA-compliant curb ramp installations at bus stop locations.
- **Funding Amount:** \$150,000

Ord. No. 707-2025 (Amending Section 143.03 – EMS Supervisory classifications)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Updates the classification and salary ordinance to reflect revised supervisory positions within Emergency Medical Services.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 709-2025 (2025 Capital Improvement contracts – Police HQ renovation)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes contracts for renovation and modernization of Cleveland Police Headquarters, including HVAC, electrical, and structural upgrades.
- **Funding Amount:** \$3,500,000

Ord. No. 710-2025 (Amending codified ordinance – lead-safe housing updates)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Revises requirements and inspection protocols for lead-safe certifications, clarifying deadlines and penalty structures.
- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 711-2025 (Authorizing bonds – recreational facilities and neighborhood parks)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the issuance of bonds to finance improvements to City recreational facilities, parks, and athletic fields.
- **Funding Amount:** \$12,000,000

Ord. No. 712-2025 (CDBG reallocation for senior programs)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Reallocates Community Development Block Grant funds to expand senior citizen service programs including meal delivery and wellness checks.
- **Funding Amount:** \$300,000

Ord. No. 713-2025 (Amending salary ordinance – Office of Equal Opportunity staffing)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Creates new positions and adjusts salaries in the Office of Equal

Opportunity to support compliance monitoring and outreach.

- **Funding Amount:** \$200,000

Ord. No. 714-2025 (Contract – Economic Development marketing services)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes a contract with a marketing agency to promote City economic development programs and incentives.
- **Funding Amount:** \$350,000

Ord. No. 715-2025 (Amending ordinance – HOME-ARP funding allocations)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Updates HOME Investment Partnerships Program – American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) funding allocations for housing services and nonprofit partners.
- **Funding Amount:** \$1,000,000

Ord. No. 716-2025 (CDBG contract – neighborhood storefront renovation)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Awards CDBG funds for a commercial storefront renovation grant program in underserved neighborhoods.
- **Funding Amount:** \$500,000

Ord. No. 717-2025 (Agreement with Cleveland Metroparks – trail access improvements)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Establishes a cost-sharing agreement with Cleveland Metroparks to improve urban trail connectivity and signage.
- **Funding Amount:** \$400,000

Ord. No. 718-2025 (Demolition contracts – health hazard mitigation)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes emergency demolition contracts for properties posing imminent public health and safety risks.
- **Funding Amount:** \$1,750,000

Ord. No. 719-2025 (Contract – data management software for Building & Housing)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes purchase and implementation of case management software for the Department of Building & Housing.
- **Funding Amount:** \$625,000

Ord. No. 720-2025 (Amending Ordinance No. 402-2024 – NOACA transportation projects)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Updates project descriptions and funding authorizations related to the Northeast Ohio Areawide

Coordinating Agency (NOACA) grant-supported initiatives.

- **Funding Amount:** \$0

Ord. No. 721-2025 (Contract – translation services for City communications)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Permits the City to enter into contracts for multilingual translation and interpretation services across departments.
- **Funding Amount:** \$100,000

Ord. No. 722-2025 (Contract amendment – Harbor lighting upgrade)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Adds funds and extends the term of a contract for lighting modernization along the North Coast Harbor district.
- **Funding Amount:** \$275,000

Ord. No. 723-2025 (Supplemental appropriations – fire equipment purchases)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Appropriates additional capital funds for replacement fire apparatus and safety gear.
- **Funding Amount:** \$4,200,000

Ord. No. 724-2025 (Contract – West Side Market refrigeration upgrade)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes contracts for refrigeration system improvements and energy efficiency at the West Side Market.
- **Funding Amount:** \$1,100,000

Ord. No. 725-2025 (Contract with United Survey, Inc. for sanitary and storm sewer condition assessment)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the Director of Public Utilities to employ United Survey, Inc. to perform condition assessments of sanitary and storm sewers in various neighborhoods. This work supports ongoing sewer maintenance and capital improvement planning.
- **Funding Amount:** \$2,250,000

Ord. No. 745-2025 (Accepting grant from Ohio Emergency Management Agency)

- **Sponsors:** Griffin (by departmental request)
- **Summary:** Authorizes the Mayor and the Director of Public Safety to accept a \$151,282.86 grant from the Ohio Emergency Management Agency through the FY2023 Emergency Management Performance Grant program for emergency preparedness activities.
- **Funding Amount:** \$151,282.86

Leading with Spirit: Deazhia Williams Builds Cleveland’s Next Generation of Cheerleaders



By Michael Patterson

From June 9 to June 13, former Euclid High School cheerleading captain Deazhia Williams’s cheer camp provided middle school and high school cheerleaders with insights on leadership and improving their skills.

While dancing for Virginia State University, Williams earned ALL CIA 23’-’24 and Best Female Athlete of the Year 23’-’24. She was also a part of a cheer camp collaboration between Euclid High School and Virginia State University.

Williams on inspiring Through Mentorship

While running Deazhia’s Ultimate Cheer Camp, she realized the inspiration that she is to the girls participating. While reflecting on her past, she emphasized the importance of mentorship.

Williams said, “We were all young at one point. We know [that] growing up, sometimes you need that mentor, somebody to look up to in your life. So I want to be able to be that for the younger generation, someone to always inspire them and just let them know to put their best foot forward at all times.”

Instilling a leadership mindset

Furthermore, one aspect



Mentor Deazhia Williams stands with young cheerleaders during her Ultimate Cheer Camp. The program helps middle and high school students build skills and leadership, with routines visible on the posters behind them. Credit: Courtesy of Deazhia Williams

of her mentoring was instilling leadership into the cheerleaders. She carries that mindset from her family.

“I’m building them to be performers, but also training them to be leaders. My Auntie Amani, shoutout to her. My auntie has also been that big sister that I never had. She’s always been that role model in my life. She’s taught me to be a leader, be a powerful young woman.” Williams said.

A Support System Driving Passion

In addition to building leaders, the camp has allowed the girls to hone their craft. She has been helping them with techniques, jumps and finishing their routine. At the end of camp, they performed in a showcase

for family and friends to see their routine. Without her support system, she feels she wouldn’t make an impact.

“My support system is really

well... my high school peers, my middle school peers, my college peers... My support means everything. So, that really keeps me going just to know that people are out there watching me, waiting to see what’s next, and me being able to still come back and make a big impact where it all started.” Williams said.

Deazhia’s Ultimate Cheer Camp has provided young cheerleaders a chance to improve their skills and leadership development, all while creating bonds that last after the camp. Williams said that she could host something like this again, though she doesn’t know when. Individual registration costs \$85 for every athlete, with approximately 22 athletes participating this year.

In a public post on her Instagram on June 13, she said, “The bond we built in just a few days is something I’ll always carry with me.”

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Lee-Harvard Shooting From front page

Evelyn Slaughter-Jackson, who has lived in the community for 16 years, said the neighborhood needs more visible policing:

“We need more cops in this area.”

Myesha Watkins, director of the Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance, said her group is supporting one of the teenage victims. She emphasized the need for trauma-informed outreach to reduce retaliation.

“We often see victims return as suspects if they don’t receive proper care,” Watkins said.

Meanwhile, Cuyahoga County Sheriff Harold Pretel urged gun owners to secure weapons safely at home, noting that his department has begun distributing free gun lock boxes in partnership with neighborhood associations.

Safety infrastructure and Response Efforts

The Real-Time Crime Center continues to monitor

camera feeds from Lee-Harvard Plaza. Mayor Justin Bibb called on residents to come forward with information:

“Our community is safer when we work together and uplift one another.”

Police are urging anyone with footage, tips or details to call 216-621-1234 or submit an anonymous tip to Crimestoppers.

What Comes Next

- Investigators are analyzing video evidence and interviewing all seven victims.
- A total of five firearms have been recovered; ballistics tests are pending.
- A civilian safety substation at Lee-Harvard Plaza, promised in previous council discussions, remains under review.

Community organizers are planning youth engagement events and have requested



Cleveland City Council members hold a press conference after shooting incident in the Lee-Harvard neighborhood. Councilmember Richard Starr is at the podium. Credit: Cleveland City council

additional summer funding to expand violence interruption and wellness programs.

Ohio Property Tax in Transition: The 2025 Reform Battles



Staff Reporter

Lawmakers, auditors, activists and voters are clashing over sweeping changes to Ohio's property tax system as the 2025 election approaches.

Ohioans face a growing property tax problem as rising home values drive up tax bills, putting pressure on homeowners statewide. In response, lawmakers, county officials and grassroots activists are proposing major reforms to overhaul the system.

One of the most significant efforts comes from House Republicans, who have introduced the Property Tax Relief Now Act. The bill promises \$3.5 billion in tax relief by capping the amount school districts can collect when property values rise, preventing automatic increases without voter approval.

It would also create a new tax credit for homeowners living in districts already at the 20-mill floor and expand homestead exemptions for low-income seniors, disabled veterans and surviving spouses of first responders. The plan also calls for tighter oversight of county tax budgets to ensure tax authorities don't build excessive reserves, according to the Ohio House of Representatives.

Rep. David Thomas, R-Jefferson, one of the bill's co-sponsors, emphasized the urgency of reform: "Ohio's property taxpayers need relief now. They have seen outlandish spikes in their property taxes while they have not seen their incomes grow and while they have seen their expenses rise," he said.

Rep. Bill Roemer, R-Richfield, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, called it "bold legislation that will have a significant impact on property tax reform," according to an official news release from the Ohio House of Representatives.

Auditors' Proposals and Grassroots Efforts

County auditors across Ohio are also advocating for reforms. One proposal suggests modifying how the tax commissioner conducts property tax sales assessment ratio studies.

Specifically, the bill would require the commissioner to work alongside local elected officials and average the past three years of a county's property values, rather than using only one year to calculate property taxes.

Grassroots organizations



are mobilizing to support these changes. The Ohio Coalition for Equitable Taxation is organizing community forums to educate homeowners about the proposed reforms and gather public input. They argue that the current system disproportionately affects low-income residents and seniors on fixed incomes.

State Rep. Jennifer Gross, R-West Chester, has expressed support for these initiatives, emphasizing the need for transparency and fairness in the property tax system. In a recent statement, she highlighted the importance of community involvement in shaping tax policies that directly impact residents, according to the Ohio House of Representatives.

Bipartisan Proposals and Concerns About Elimination

While Republicans lead the charge on property tax reform, bipartisan efforts are also underway. The 70 Under 70 plan would freeze property taxes for homeowners over 70 with annual incomes below \$70,000. The proposal, co-sponsored by Reps. Dani Isaacsohn, D-Cincinnati, and Thomas Hall, R-Madison Twp., aims to help seniors on fixed incomes remain in their homes.

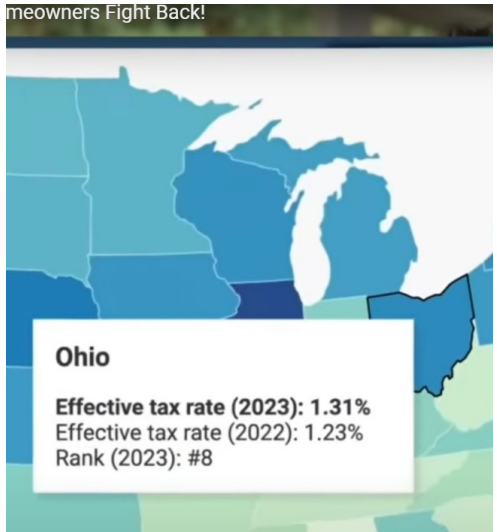
At the same time, a grassroots movement led by Citizens for Property Tax Reform is pushing for a constitutional amendment to eliminate property taxes statewide. The group is gathering signatures in hopes of placing the measure on the November 2025 ballot. Critics warn that eliminating property taxes could significantly impact public services, especially education.

Legislative Criticism and Future Outlook

The Ohio House has introduced multiple bills aimed at property tax reform, including the Property Tax Relief Now Act, which proposes \$3.5 billion in tax relief by capping school district collections and expanding homestead exemptions.

Additionally, the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform has released 21 recommendations, including expanding homestead exemptions, implementing a property tax deferral program and allowing counties to use a three-year average for property valuations.

However, some lawmakers express concerns about the potential impact of these reforms on local services. State Rep. Terrence Upchurch, D-Cleveland, warned that eliminating property taxes without alternative funding mechanisms could defund critical



services like schools and safety forces.

As debates continue, the future of property tax reform in Ohio remains uncertain, with various proposals under consideration and stakeholders voicing differing opinions on the best path forward.

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Cleveland Confronts a Surge in Shootings

Ohio Violent Crime Reduction Grant Program

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Staff Reporter
Can Community Solutions Break the Cycle of Violence?

Gunmen opened fire in at least six incidents across Cleveland over four weeks, killing five people and injuring more than a dozen. The violence has rattled neighborhoods, shaken families and galvanized a growing movement of residents, outreach workers and city officials who say enough is enough.

The victims include Thomas Overall, a 68-year-old man shot while mowing his lawn, seven teenagers wounded in a single night in Lee-Harvard and Kiara Jackson, a 25-year-old mother killed before dawn in a closed city park. While motives varied, the pattern is clear: public spaces are becoming flashpoints, and young people are increasingly the ones caught in the crossfire.

The shootings spanned West Park, Harvard Avenue, Glenville and Mill Creek Falls. Cleveland's Black residents — particularly males ages 15 to 34 — continue to face the highest risk, accounting for more than 85 percent of gun violence victims, according to the Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance.

"This isn't just about crime scenes — it's about broken systems and lives," Myesha Watkins, director of youth services at the Peacemakers Alliance, said. "We're not going to arrest our way out of this. These young people need support, not just surveillance."

City Responds with Expanded intervention

Cleveland leaders have ramped up investment in street outreach and violence prevention. The Office of Prevention, Intervention and Opportunity

joined forces with the Community Relations Board to deploy violence interrupters — trained residents who mediate conflicts and steer people away from retaliation.

Organizations like New Era Cleveland offer mentorship, community patrols and trauma support in neighborhoods struggling with poverty and systemic neglect. The Peacemakers Alliance now stations staff inside hospitals to reach shooting victims and their families within hours of an incident.

Mayor Justin Bibb's administration committed \$10 million over 15 years to a neighborhood safety fund in partnership with Everytown for Gun Safety. Last year, the city awarded \$300,000 in grants to frontline community violence intervention groups working in Cleveland's hardest-hit neighborhoods.

"We're investing in people — those closest to the pain who are also closest to the solution," Bibb said during the March 2025 regional gun violence summit.

National Models Point to Solutions

Cleveland's strategy draws inspiration from other cities that have seen success treating gun violence as a public health crisis.

In Baltimore, the Safe Streets initiative, modeled on Cure Violence, reduced shootings by 69 percent in target areas. Sacramento's Advance Peace program combines stipends, therapy and life coaching to interrupt cycles of violence and has saved the city millions in emergency costs.

Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) in Oakland and Baltimore have cut repeat injuries by providing wraparound services before patients return to high-risk environments. In cities like New York and Philadelphia, community-led public health interventions have worked alongside law enforcement to reduce homicides.

"Violence is preventable,"

said Thomas Abt, author of *Bleeding Out* and a leading national expert on urban violence. "When we treat it like a virus — identify, isolate and intervene — we save lives."

Credible Messengers Shift the Narrative

Cleveland outreach workers say the most effective messengers are those who have lived it. Formerly incarcerated residents or people once involved in street violence now lead mediation efforts, provide guidance and show up where police can't.

"People listen to those they know," said Joshua Hicks of New Era Cleveland. "We're from these neighborhoods. We're not outsiders. We're here to interrupt the cycle."

These credible messengers work nights and weekends, responding to conflicts in real time. They de-escalate disputes, connect youth to social services and help prevent retaliatory violence before it erupts.

Addressing the Roots

While outreach teams respond on the ground, city agencies are also focusing on prevention. Cleveland Thrive — a city-backed initiative — connects high-risk youth to housing, education and employment pathways. This summer, city departments are expanding job programs for teens and keeping recreation centers open longer to provide safe alternatives.

"Our goal is to build a pipeline to safety," said Michelle Taylor, director of Cleveland Thrive. "It doesn't start with a badge. It starts with a ride to a job interview or a mentoring relationship that lasts."

The Impact 25 coalition is coordinating these efforts by tracking performance, identifying service gaps and ensuring resources reach the neighborhoods with the greatest need. Even so, nonprofit leaders warn that funding shortfalls, staff burnout and rising community trauma remain major

About four-in-ten U.S. adults say they live in a gun-owning household

% of all adults saying they ...

Category	Percentage
Currently own a gun	30%
Live in a household with NO guns	57%
Don't currently own a gun but live with someone who does	11%

% who ...

Category	Percentage
Grew up in a household with guns	48%
Say at least some of their friends own guns	59%
Have shot a gun	72%

Note: In pie chart, share of respondents who didn't offer an answer shown but not labeled. Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 13-27 and April 4-18, 2017.
"America's Complex Relationship With Guns"
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

challenges.

Community-led Momentum Builds

With summer approaching and schools letting out, residents fear the violence could intensify. But many also believe Cleveland stands at a turning point.

"I think folks are tired of sitting around waiting for the city to come up with a solution," said Antoine Tolbert of New Era Cleveland. "Instead, we've come up with our solutions from within the community."

Tolbert and others say long-term safety must grow from within — through trust, opportunity and consistent support for those most impacted. They're calling for not just investment but accountability: clear goals, ongoing funding and deep collaboration.

Cleveland now has the tools — a network of outreach workers, committed partners and proven national models. What remains is the resolve to sustain the work and elevate the voices closest to the crisis.

"Safety isn't just about the absence of gunfire," Watkins said. "It's about the presence of community."

Get engaged. Call the Cleveland Police at 216-623-1234

How Antisemitism and Anti-Blackness Fuel American Extremism



By Morgan Grady

Across the U.S. and in Cleveland in particular, rising antisemitism and anti-Black racism are not separate phenomena. They are interconnected expressions of extremist ideology. The far right imagines America as a white Christian nation, and both forms of hate fuel this vision.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, antisemitism acts as “connective tissue” among extremist groups. The 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville made this connection plain, with chants of “Jews will not replace us” revealing how antisemitic ideology threads through white supremacist violence.

The Great Replacement Theory and interlocking Hatreds

White nationalists often invoke the “Great Replacement Theory,” a conspiracy rooted in early 20th-century European nationalism. It claims that Jewish elites promote immigration by nonwhite populations to weaken white dominance. In this framing, Jews are seen as manipulative conspirators, while Black people are cast as visible threats to white order. This dynamic has motivated mass shootings in Charlottesville, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo.

This racialized distinction of threat and covert influence versus visible presence reinforces how white supremacists cast Jews as conspirators and Black people as contaminants.

Historical Friction and Contemporary Misunderstandings

Historically, Jewish and Black communities in the U.S. have often stood in solidarity, especially during the civil rights era. Yet that alliance has also experienced tension. In his 1967 essay “Negroes Are Anti-Semitic Because They’re Anti-White,” James Baldwin argued that Black resentment toward



Black Panthers demonstration London 1970 against racism. Credit: Birkbeck Institute for the Study of Antisemitism

Jews stemmed not from religious difference, but from Jewish proximity to white privilege.

Scholar Eddie S. Glaude Jr. expands on this in *Democracy in Black*, noting that antisemitic rhetoric among some Black thinkers reflects alienation from systems of power, not “pure bigotry.” The Nation of Islam’s writings often stoke these tensions, sparking fear while also revealing deeper frustrations with inequality.

Cultural Frustration in the Entertainment industry

These tensions surfaced again in 2022 when Kanye West made antisemitic remarks, accusing Jewish executives of profiting from Black suffering. In an interview with Lex Fridman, he claimed the industry promoted “genocide and population control” through Black music. Others have voiced similar concerns without resorting to hate. In a 2020 *Advocate* op-ed, Cardi B criticized the male-dominated industry for commodifying her sexuality: “The songwriters are men. The producers are men. The video director is a man. The record label is run by men.”

Megan Thee Stallion echoed this in *Rolling Stone* in 2021, saying labels “package our pain and our struggle for clicks and streams.”

Philosopher Theodor W. Adorno warned that scapegoating Jews as symbols of capitalism evades meaningful critique of structural power. Symbolic blame,

he argued, obscures the real machinery of inequality.

Rising Hate in Ohio

In Ohio, these dangers have become urgent. The Anti-Defamation League recorded 233 antisemitic incidents in 2024, including swastika graffiti at Sherwin-Williams, threats to synagogues, and neo-Nazi marches in Columbus.

A tragic reminder came with the murders of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim in Washington,

D.C. a targeted antisemitic attack that reverberated in Northeast Ohio. In response, Clevelanders gathered in a unity rally holding signs reading “Cleveland is Stronger Than Hate,” with Rep. Shontel Brown reminding attendees: “The rise in antisemitism is not a Jewish problem alone. It is a reflection of our society’s failure to root out hate wherever it lives.”

Resisting Division, Embracing Solidarity

Antisemitism and anti-Blackness must not be understood in competition, but in relation — as distinct yet connected tools of racial capitalism and cultural domination. Any meaningful response to extremism must reject the urge to rank oppressions, and instead dismantle the systems that make both hatreds thrive.

Call to Action

Our communities are strongest when we face difficult truths together. We welcome your voices, your experiences, and your stories as we continue reporting on issues of race, equity, and justice. Contact us to contribute to this ongoing conversation.

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WHERE THE JEWISH PEOPLE BEGIN

IT WAS NEVER ANTI-RACISM TO
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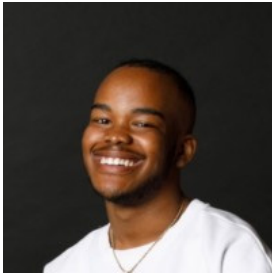
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Job Corps Faces Nationwide Suspension



By Konner Hines
Implications for Cleveland's youth workforce development

Thousands of young adults, including many in Cleveland, are now left without vocational training after the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the suspension of Job Corps centers nationwide.

What Is Job Corps?
Established in 1964 under President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society initiatives, Job Corps is a free, residential career training and education program for young adults aged 16 to 24. It provides vocational training, academic education, and support services to help individuals enter or advance in their careers.

Participant Demographics
According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), nearly half of Job Corps students identify as Black or African American (47%). White students make up 27%, Hispanic or Latino 18%, Asian 2%, and 6% identify as other or unreported. These numbers underscore the program's focus on underserved communities.

Why was Job Corps Created?
Job Corps was developed during the 1960s in response to high youth unemployment rates. As part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the program aimed to disrupt cycles of poverty by offering training and education paired with health care, housing and meals.

Reasons behind the suspension
On May 29, 2025, the Department of Labor announced



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TikTok
Job Corps Shutting Down Detroit...



TikTok members respnding to Job Vorps announcement Credit TIKTOK

a phased suspension of all 99 contractor-operated centers. A \$140 million deficit in 2024, a projected \$213 million shortfall for 2025, alongside a 38.6 percent graduation rate and more than 14,900 serious incident reports in 2023, drove the decision. Since the average cost per student exceeded \$80,000 annually, the program faced growing scrutiny.

Legal Action and National Response

The National Job Corps Association and several contractors filed lawsuits, arguing that proper legal procedures were not followed. A federal judge issued a temporary block on the closures,



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TikTok
Impact of Job Corps Closures o...



TikTok
Impact of Job Corps Closures o...



TikTok
Urgent Job Corps Update: Safe ...

offering a window for legal review and continued support for current students.

Local impact in Cleveland
The Cleveland Job Corps Center remains open until June 30, but many students have already left. "Where do you actually house that many young people and teach them at the same time? So, when we lose a resource like the Job Corps, it affects us all," said Gregory Jones, founder of A 2nd Home For You Foundation.

Takeaways
Job Corps' suspension highlights a pivotal moment in youth workforce policy. Despite its challenges, the absence of a replacement strategy leaves tens of thousands in limbo. In Cleveland, the impact is personal and profound as stakeholders await the court's decision on the program's fat.

Konner Hines is a Marketing and International Business student at Baldwin Wallace University and a member of the Honors College. He explores global issues, social justice, and pop culture through in-depth reporting.



Secretary of Labor Lori ChavezDeRemer looks as Job Corps members stand behind her during a House Education and Workforce hearing, Thursday, June 5, on Capitol Hill in Washington. (AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson)

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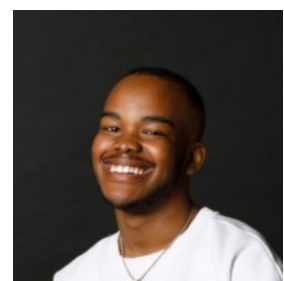
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A GREAT WAY TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY

The DEI Rollback: How Companies Are Reacting to Cuts in Diversity Programs



By Konner Hines

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) once stood at the center of corporate commitments to fairness and representation. Today, many organizations are scaling back these efforts amid political pressure, budget cuts, and public debate. The question is no longer whether DEI is important, it's whether it can survive.

Why DEI Mattered

DEI emerged as more than a moral obligation; it became a strategic business asset. Research consistently showed that diverse teams drive innovation, improve decision-making, and build resilient workplace culture. Inclusive organizations also reported lower turnover, higher engagement, and increased trust from both consumers and employees.

As awareness of systemic inequality grew, DEI offered a framework for businesses to align with shifting values. These programs also helped attract talent and meet the expectations of younger, more diverse workforces.

Who Benefited

The primary beneficiaries of DEI programs have been racial and ethnic minorities, women, veterans, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ employees. For instance, Hispanic Americans now account for roughly 25% of the younger workforce. Another 14% identify as Black, 6% as Asian, and 5% as multiracial or other according



to the Pew Research Center. DEI programs ensured accessible hiring pipelines, implemented anti-discrimination policies, and mandated supportive environments. According to national labor surveys, over 60% of workers said their employer enforces fairness in hiring, pay, or promotions. More than half reported participation in DEI-related initiatives.

Why the Backlash?

Several federal policy changes, including executive orders under President Trump, began targeting DEI programs across government and education. Opponents claimed such programs promoted division or created reverse discrimination by prioritizing race or gender over performance.

Critics also raised concerns about effectiveness and oversight. Many initiatives lacked clear metrics, and businesses struggled to measure tangible outcomes. As a result, some companies quietly removed DEI language from public materials, while others dissolved

departments entirely.

At the same time, leaders in some sectors advocated for a return to so-called merit-based systems focusing on individual performance rather than demographic identity.

How Companies Are Responding

Responses vary. Some companies, such as Target and Gannett, have eliminated internal DEI teams and cut supplier programs. In the tech industry, firms have laid off DEI staff, often under the guise of budget restructuring.

Other companies have chosen to rebrand their efforts under safer terms like "inclusive leadership" or "belonging". In states that passed anti-DEI legislation, businesses have adapted by continuing equity work under new labels to avoid legal conflicts.

Many organizations have also reduced their public visibility, maintaining internal DEI programs with little promotion.

Companies Scaling Back

Forbes reported major corporations that have pulled back DEI initiatives include:

- Meta, Amazon, McDonald's, Walmart, Toyota, and IBM
- Media outlets like Gannett and Paramount
- Public agencies such as the FBI and PBS, following federal guidance

These decisions often followed lawsuits, public criticism, or internal pressure to focus on profitability.

Who's Staying the Course?

Despite the climate, some companies have doubled down on DEI.

- Apple continues its public commitment to inclusion.
- Microsoft maintains inclusive hiring and leadership development efforts.
- Patagonia remains outspoken on both equity and environmental justice.
- Costco shareholders rejected proposals to dismantle diversity initiatives.
- Brands like Coca-Cola, e.l.f. Cosmetics, and Nordstrom continue to invest in inclusive marketing and supplier diversity.

According to the Axios Harris Poll 100, companies that stayed aligned with DEI principles saw higher public trust and brand strength.

The national DEI rollback reflects a complex mix of political pressure, legal risk, cultural backlash, and economic calculation. While some companies retreat or rebrand, others stay the course quietly—or with renewed purpose.

The future of workplace equity now rests on whether companies can balance compliance with conviction. Will inclusion continue to shape corporate values, or fall away under pressure?

Konner Hines is a Marketing and International Business student at Baldwin Wallace University and a member of the Honors College. He explores pop culture, business, and social policy through accessible, fact-based reporting.



Credit People Of Color In Tech POCIT

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Summer Fun In A Rising Economy



By Marissa Valentine
A Season of Sunshine and Spending

Summer in Ohio brings sunshine, celebration, and endless opportunities for outdoor fun. While the season doesn’t officially begin until June 21, the “Summer Solstice,” many families have already jumped into warm-weather adventures. But this year, enjoying summer may come with a higher price tag.

Family favorites like Great Wolf Lodge, Kalahari, and Cedar



Point offer excitement and memories, but at a significant cost. With rising prices, even a day trip can strain a family’s budget. What are the options for families looking to stay active without overspending?

Discovering Local Treasures

Consider local options. The Cleveland Metroparks offers affordable or free activities perfect for individuals, families, and groups. And yes, there’s much more to explore than the Cleveland Zoo.

Whether you’re a nature lover, a beginner looking for something new, or a parent trying to keep your kids engaged this summer, the Metroparks have something for you.

Target Fun: Try Archery



MetroParks offers Archery Youth Day Camp. Credit: MetroParks

Located at the Brecksville Reservation near York Road, the Crooked River Archers Club maintains a public archery range free and open to all.

Want more guidance? Enroll your child in the Archery Youth Day Camp. For just \$25, they’ll receive instruction from experienced coaches, and all necessary equipment is provided.

Looking to make it a family affair? Family archery sessions are scheduled in mid-July for only \$5.50 per participant. It’s a fun and accessible way to try something new together.

Paddles & Peace: Free Kayaking Demos

If archery isn’t your thing, consider hitting the water. The Cleveland Metroparks hosts

free kayaking demonstrations throughout the summer, led by certified instructors.

Euclid Creek, known for its calm, flat waters, is recommended for beginners. Two demo sessions are planned this summer — an ideal entry point into a relaxing and scenic sport.

Summer Doesn’t Have to Break the Bank

In a time of rising costs, affordable options like these can make all the difference. The Cleveland Metroparks prove that family fun doesn’t have to mean family stress. With so many accessible options, adventure is just minutes from home.

Plan Your Summer

To view program dates, register for camps, or explore more affordable outdoor fun, visit: www.clevelandmetroparks.com



Cleveland Metroparks hosts free kayaking demonstrations at the Euclid Creek location throughout the summer, led by certified instructors. Credit: MetroParks

Elon vs. Trump: Billionaire Feud Erupts Over Budget Bill



By Konner Hines

Donald Trump’s sweeping budget bill has ignited a high-profile feud with Elon Musk, once a key ally and mega-donor. The clash signals deeper fractures in the conservative movement — and may derail Trump’s signature legislation before it even reaches the floor

What’s in Trump’s Budget Proposal?

Trump’s “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” combines tax cuts,



President Donald Trump and Elon Musk Credit BBC News



military funding, and immigration enforcement into a single legislative package. Key components include

- Permanent tax relief for individual filers, including the elimination of taxes on tips and overtime wages
- \$150 billion increase in military spending
- \$50 billion allocated to border security
- \$4 trillion debt ceiling hike to cover projected costs

Supporters frame it as a populist reset of the federal budget. But early estimates show it could add \$3.7 trillion to the national debt over 10 years — not including interest costs, according to a report from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

Why Musk Turned Against Trump

In 2024, Elon Musk donated more than \$290 million to Trump’s reelection campaign and served as an informal adviser on federal tech and efficiency initiatives. Together, they helped launch the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), an effort to streamline federal operations.

But the alliance fractured when Musk publicly criticized the new budget bill, warning it would explode the deficit and hurt clean energy incentives, including federal subsidies for electric vehicles.

Tensions escalated on June 5, when Trump — standing beside German Chancellor Friedrich Merz — dismissed Musk’s objections as “self-interested whining.”

A Public Fallout

The feud burst into full view when Musk took to social media, accusing Trump of ingratitude and claiming, “Trump would’ve lost 2024 without me.” Within hours, Trump responded at a rally in Tampa, threatening to terminate federal contracts with Musk’s companies and calling him “a technocrat who forgot who built the road he drives on.”

Musk later deleted a post linking Trump to the Jeffrey Epstein scandal. Then, according to a report from CNN, Musk expressed regret, posting on X: “I regret some of my posts about President @realDonaldTrump last week. They went too far.” Days later, he told Reuters he “did not intend to

escalate the situation further,” acknowledging how heated the exchanges had become.

Trump’s proposed budget bill has become a flashpoint — not just in policy circles but in the billionaire class itself. Elon Musk’s high-profile defection from Trump’s camp has fractured an already divided Republican coalition.

While some in the GOP rally behind Trump’s populist spending and tax cuts, others warn that the plan could destabilize the economy and weaken investor confidence. Musk’s criticism, coupled with Trump’s retaliation, has turned a legislative debate into a personal showdown with national implications.

As the Senate prepares to deliberate the bill, both its future — and the future of Trump’s political alliances — remain in question.

Konner Hines is a Marketing and International Business student at Baldwin Wallace University and a member of the Honors College. He explores global issues, social justice, and pop culture through in-depth reporting.

From Shadows to Light: Healing Generational Trauma in the Black Community



By Jennifer Bailey, LCSW and RDT

What lessons do we inherit from those who came before us? We hope to receive wisdom, knowledge and resilience. Yet for many Black Americans, the inheritance includes unspoken pain rooted in centuries of oppression. Generational trauma, passed down through families, shapes how individuals experience the world today and how they will shape it for their children.

Understanding Generational Trauma

Sandstone Care defines generational trauma as “the psychological effects of trauma that are passed down from one generation to the next.”

For Black Americans, this trauma did not end with emancipation. Freed slaves carried the scars of beatings, family separations and dehumanization. Even after freedom, they worked, raised families and built communities while still carrying the weight of that trauma.

The Historical Roots of Black Generational Trauma

According to History.com, the first enslaved Africans arrived in America in August 1619. Families were torn apart and forced on brutal journeys across the Atlantic. Freedom came in 1865, but healing did not follow.

After emancipation, Black Americans faced new systems of oppression. Jim Crow laws, which legalized racial segregation, began in 1877 and lasted until 1964, according to the Jim Crow Museum. Discriminatory practices reached beyond the South. By the 1930s, cities such as Cleveland implemented redlining policies,

Start to Heal Your Generational Trauma

Build Trust with Your Therapist

Find a therapist you can be honest with and feel comfortable sharing your thoughts

Explore Trauma Roots

Discuss your family history to uncover connections to your current experiences

Process Negative Emotions

Create a safe space to express and manage strong emotions with coping tools

Challenge Negative Patterns

Confront inherited beliefs and behaviors that impact your relationships



blocking Black families from homeownership. Today, these areas still experience high poverty levels, according to United Way of Greater Cleveland.

How Generational Trauma Manifests Survival Behaviors

Dr. Joy DeGruy, who developed the concept of Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome, explains how behaviors once necessary for survival persist today. For example, enslaved mothers downplayed their children’s talents to avoid drawing attention from slave owners. This pattern can still appear when Black parents minimize their children’s accomplishments out of habit, even while feeling proud.

The Body

Trauma affects not only emotional well-being but also physical health. The Cleveland Clinic explains how environmental factors, such as stress, impact DNA expression. Prolonged stress triggers cortisol, leading to health problems like high blood sugar, weakened bones and mood

swings. The National Library of Medicine links chronic stress to long-term health risks.

Family Dynamics

Strict discipline and emphasis on obedience remain common in Black families. Historically, these practices protected children from dangers during slavery and Jim Crow. While the external threats have changed, some of these parenting patterns persist as protective instincts.

Distrust of Medical and Government Institutions

The Black community’s mistrust of health care and government stems from historical abuses, including the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. In this unethical study, Black men were denied treatment so researchers could observe the disease’s progression. Incidents like this contribute to skepticism toward medical care that continues today.

Identity and Code-Switching

Navigating predominantly white spaces has long been a challenge for Black Americans. Historic figures such as Ruby

Bridges and Jackie Robinson faced these realities early on. Today, many Black Americans engage in code-switching, adjusting speech, appearance and behavior to fit dominant cultural norms. According to Jessica Guynn, this ongoing need to adapt can lead to identity struggles and emotional fatigue.

Healing Generational Wounds

Healing generational trauma requires both personal and collective efforts:

- Community: Black spaces like churches, barbershops and salons offer affirmation and support.
- Creativity: Art, music and creative expression provide outlets for healing.
- Therapy: Culturally competent therapists help individuals process trauma safely.
- Body-based healing: Practices like mindfulness, dance and yoga release stored trauma.
- Systemic change: Financial literacy and honest education about slavery and systemic racism equip future generations.
- Education: Books, documentaries and podcasts help individuals better understand generational trauma and paths forward.

Key Takeaways

Generational trauma is real and inherited.

- The legacy of slavery and systemic racism still affects Black communities.
- Trauma shows up in many parts of daily life.
- Healing is possible through awareness, support and action.
- Education plays a critical role in breaking these cycles.

Jennifer Bailey is a wife, mother of three and therapist. She is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) and Registered Drama Therapist (RDT).

