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News Weekly

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive



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# Is New Orleans Winning the Battle Against COVID-19?



People in New Orleans are getting vaccinated, as the number of cases is decreasing. Recently, the city changed its indoor mandate. If cases continue to decrease the city plans to lift requirements to enter bars restaurants and other venues on March 21, 2022.

**Eric Connerly**  
**Data News Weekly Contributor**

Recently, the City of New Orleans lifted its indoor mask mandate. Also, the city just celebrated its first full Carnival Season in two years, and some are speculating that hopefully in the coming months, life

in New Orleans can be back to normal. But that is still not a certainty, as new COVID-19 numbers come in after Mardi Gras. If COVID-19 cases are down and hospitalizations are stable, the requirement to show proof to enter bars, restaurants and other venues will end on March 21, 2022. The City of New Orleans, that once had the most infec-

tions in the nation, have experienced a sharp decline in new infections after a recent surge that was attributed to the Omicron Variant. Across the state hospital numbers continue to fall. Most importantly, in New Orleans, more than 96% of the city's adult population is at least partially vaccinated and nearly 85% of adults are fully vaccinated, according to the city's figures.

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### DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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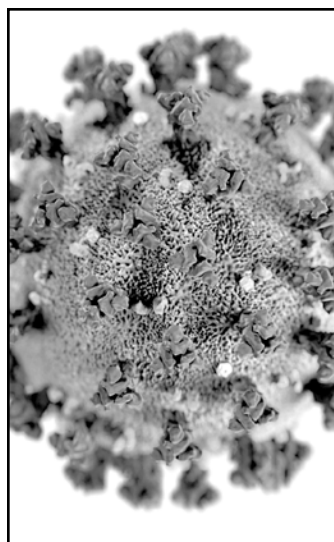
New Orleans Health Director, Dr. Jennifer Avegno, strongly supports individuals' decisions to continue businesses to continue masking requirements.



COVID-19 continues to be a problem that affects people's lives. Even in spite of vaccination numbers decreasing, it is important to proceed with caution.



Jamie Jones pictured with his son Jamie Jones Jr. Jones, who is an educator believes a gradual approach to relaxing mask mandates in New Orleans.



While it may be soon that restrictions are lifted New Orleans Health Director Dr. Jennifer Avegno, strongly supports individuals' decisions to continue masking and the rights of businesses to continue masking requirements.

Jamie Jones is a local educator and parent who feels a gradual approach is needed and proceeding with caution is the best course of action in the fight against COVID-19. "We should not let our guard down and continue to wear our masks.

COVID is still a problem for our city. We are not through; it and people are still getting sick. Even if mandates are lifted masking up should for some may be their best option. I say this because, it can impact people differently. We should still be careful."

The battle against COVID-19 is far from over, but new vaccinations, boosters and other therapies are available to help in the fight against COVID-19. According to the Louisiana's Department of Health, the state has received its most recent federal allotment of COVID-19 therapeutics, including 7,594 doses of drugs recently receiving Food and Drug Administration emergency use authorization to treat the virus. The shipments dated Feb 21st-27th include the long-acting antibody combination Evusheld, monoclonal antibody treatments bebtelovimab and sotrovimab, as well as antiviral

pill molnupiravir and paxlovid. In addition, other treatments are available to people as young as 12 years old.

"None of these are a silver bullet," said Dr. Joseph Kanter, Louisiana's State Health Officer in a recent statement. "Like any medicines there are tradeoffs. They do treat COVID very well, but for some people that might be on certain medicines it might not be worth the risk - altering those medicines or going down on those doses. That's why it's always best to talk to your doctor."

Kantor added paxlovid has proven most effective at keeping COVID-19 symptoms from getting worse and keeping 70 - 90% of patients out of the hospital. But he said it could interact with other medicines a person is already taking.

Also speaking on the new developments in the fight against COVID-19 is Dr. Katherine Baumgar-

ten, Medical Director of Infection Control and Prevention at Ochsner Health said the other pill, molnupiravir, is not recommended for pregnant women, or men or women who are trying to conceive.

While many are now getting vaccinated, both doctors agree the COVID-19 Vaccine followed by a booster shot five months later is the best defense against the virus. But they also said the new treatments carry the promise of much-needed relief.

"All of these things help to prevent that stress on our hospitals, on our community, on our economy," says Dr. Baumgarten. "We all want to participate in Mardi Gras, which we just had, Jazz Fest is coming up, and the French Quarter Fest, so we want to make sure all of us can do that safely. These are ways we can help to be sure that the virus is well controlled, and we have the ability to treat it as soon as we possibly can."

## Special

# AHA on Black Women and the Mental Health Crisis

**Mary Fein**  
Communications Director –  
New Orleans & Baton Rouge  
American Heart Association



Black women are facing an overwhelming mental health crisis which impacts their heart health, mental health, and overall well-being. The Global Health Pandemic and the calls for racial and social justice emerging from the murder of George Floyd and other Black Americans laid

bare to the rest of society the health disparities the Black community has long endured. While Black Americans are suffering through a cycle of grief and emotional distress, Black women, who are also at high risk for heart disease, are suffering a mental health battle that isn't widely discussed.

Additionally, Black adults in the U.S. are at higher risk for heart attack, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases compared to White Americans according to preliminary research recently presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2022. However, the risk of

death from stroke and other types of cardiovascular disease, as well as all causes of death, may vary among Black adults born in the U.S. versus those who are born elsewhere.

"Previous reports have suggested that despite having low socio-economic status and limited access to health care, immigrants around the world are generally healthier, a benefit that tends to dissipate the longer they live in the host country," said Study Author Alain Lekoubou Looti, M.D., M.S., an Assistant Professor of Neurology and Public Health Sciences at Penn State College of

Medicine at Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

For too long, Black women in particular have existed in a cycle of trauma, from racial injustices to the Global Pandemic, which impacts their physical and mental health. Black women are at a high risk for heart disease and cardiovascular disease, and we know mental health is tied to physical health. And one out of two Black and Hispanic adults have some form of cardiovascular disease.

We can define a new way forward for ourselves. Like taking a familiar song and adding, re-

moving, or changing pieces of it, Black women have been empowered with greater knowledge and determination to heal and protect their physical and mental health and well-being – a remix. A way to Reclaim Your Rhythm. Not just this month, but every day moving forward.

Through additional small lifestyle adjustments such as getting enough exercise, eating healthfully, maintaining a healthy weight, and not smoking – which can go a long way to reduce these statistics and lead to longer, healthier lives for our loved ones. Learn more at [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)



# Designer X Designer Exchange



**Tracee Dundas**  
Fashion Stylist

It was an international connection of like-minded creatives as visiting student designers from École Duperré Paris network with New Orleans fashion community from designers, models, and the beauty industry. Duperré School trains young designers in the sectors of fashion, textile design, ceramics, as well as environmental and graphic design.

The Très Chic Reception was made possible through a collaboration between New Orleans Fashion Week, The Mayor's Office of Culture Economy and Attaché de coopération et d'action culturelle / Cultural Attaché; Consulate General of France in New Orleans. The artistic synergy could be felt across the picturesque backdrop of the City of New Orleans provided hosting venue, NOPSI's Above the Grid.

There is a long history and relationship between France and New Orleans that continues to flourish to this day. The similarities between the two is reflective in the architecture, language, and the love of fashion and the arts. This French designer exchange was an opportunity to introduce and connect the visiting up-and-coming designers with the New Orleans fashion culture and community.

Guest, dignitaries and fashion influencers attending the event included Lisa Alexis, Director of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, Alana Harris, Deputy Director of Arts and Culture, Natacha Lallemand, Relations Internationales for Ecole Duperré, Gabi Grenier, Cultural Projects Officer with Consulate General of France in New Orleans, Dr. Lisa McRoberts, former LSU Fashion Design Professor, John Orgon with Material Institute, Erin Burgett and Maddy Plaisance with Paul Mitchell School of Cosmetology, Samantha Diane, PR and Brand Strategist, Rowena Kay, CEO Chic Nouvelle Model Management, Brylon Batiste with ABOUTFACES MTM and New Orleans Fashion Week Team.

This collaboration culminates with "Parade of Fashions" which will showcase the designs of the Parisian Designers as well as highlighting the talents of New Orleans designers in a fashion presentation.



Fashion Editor – Tracee Dundas | @fashionablyyoursnola Photographer: John Merrit | @johnmerritphotos  
Location: Above the Grid at NOPSI Hotel | @abovethegridnopsi

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



# Ebony Magazine Publishing Launches new Podcast Network: Ebony Covering Black America

**Stacy M. Brown**  
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

Much like the book, the Podcast Network covers all aspects of Black culture, creating a collective universe for authors and content creators.

America's most recognizable African American brand introduces a New Wave of Original Podcast. The Ebony Covering Black America Podcast Network is inspired by the stunningly designed coffee table book of the same name by Lavaille Lavette, President and Publisher of Ebony Publishing and the Ebony Podcast Network.

Much like the book, the Podcast Network covers all aspects of Black culture, creating a collective universe for authors and content creators.

The new wave of shows include a broad spectrum of podcasters from established figures such as civil rights leader, Dr. Ben Chavis, radio host and entrepreneur, Angela Yee and daytime talk show host, Erica Cobb to new emerging voices such as former Major League baseball player Patrick Mahomes, Ron Dawson, Carla Black, Marita Thomas, Trina Blair, Tad Prescott and Elizabeth Leiba.

Twenty plus shows on the network cover the areas of entertainment, literature, sports, media, politics, lifestyle, pop culture, finance, wellness, and science.

Erica Cobb of Comeback with Erica Cobb podcast states, "I'm beyond excited to partner my podcast with a legacy media brand like Ebony that historically has meant so much to the culture.



Ebony cover with Michelle Obama

As a Chicago native, Ebony symbolized Black excellence to me. I see this as an opportunity to be a part of something new and fresh and look forward to reaching new audiences together."

This sentiment is echoed by Ron Dawson:

"I feel honored to bring the Dungeons and Durags Podcast to the Ebony Covering Black America Podcast

Network. To be associated with such an iconic brand is humbling. But for this particular podcast to be on Ebony, is also comically ironic (you'll understand once you listen). I would be remiss if I did not end by saying "Ya dig. Sho 'nuff. And peace out."

Media veterans Carla Black, Marita Thomas, Trina Blair write:

"Ebony has long had a history of telling our stories in rich and authentic ways, especially those of Black women.

"Through The Petty'ish Suite, we are honored to continue the legacy of bringing fresh, Black voices and perspectives to the broader conversation. As three Black women executives who are also close friends, we look forward bringing our honest, lively and engaging chats to the EBONY Podcast Network."

"I am thrilled to present the Big Mahomes Show on the Ebony Covering Black America podcast network, where I can contribute to the Ebony brand legacy by featuring top figures in the world of sports to a new generation," stated retired major league baseball player, Pat Mahomes.

For a complete list of podcasts, please visit: <https://ebonypodcastnetwork.com>

About Ebony Podcast Network

The Ebony Covering Black America Podcast Network (EPN) is a thoughtfully curated group of Black centric weekly and bi-weekly podcasts covering a broad spectrum of demographics, featuring entertaining, informative, inspirational, socially relevant, and educational topics. On all major podcast platforms (Apple, Google, Spotify, Stitcher, Deezer, iHeart, etc.)

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**BUZZED DRIVING**

**IS DRUNK DRIVING**

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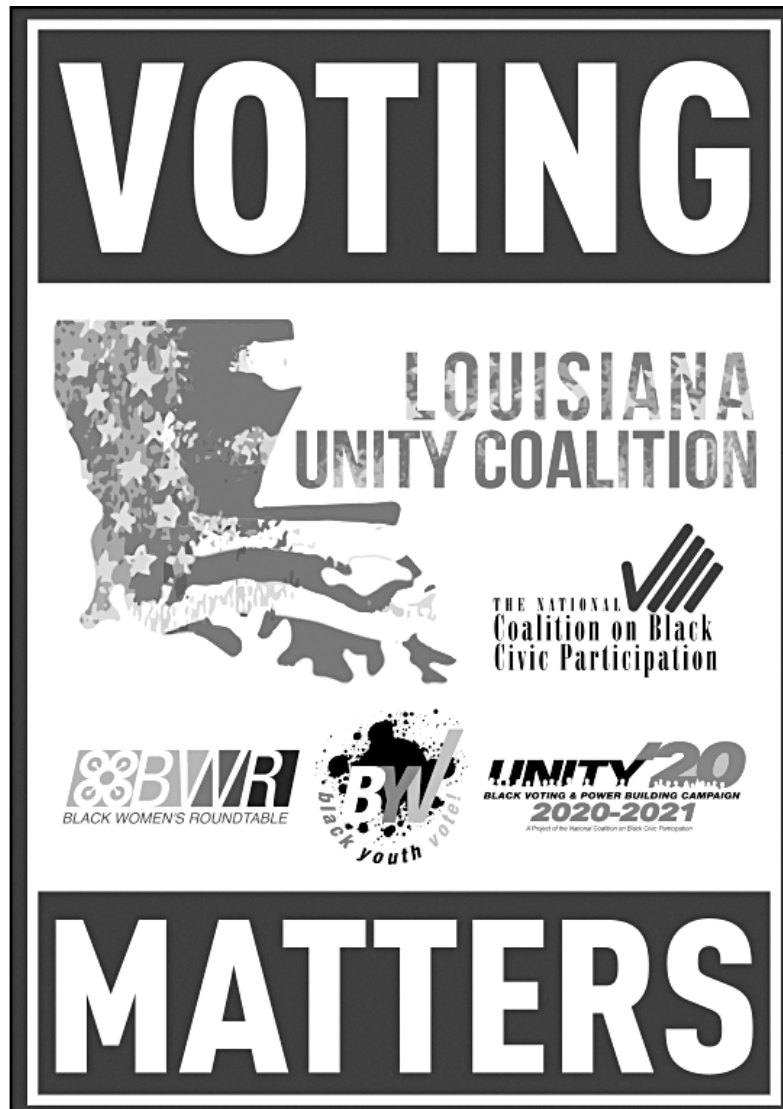
# The Governor of Louisiana must Veto the Proposed Redistricting Maps

**Louisiana Legislators are further diluting the power of Black Voters, rather than correcting this long-standing problem.**

By A'niya Robinson ,  
Advocacy Strategist, ACLU  
of Louisiana Samantha Osaki  
, Equal Justice Works Fellow,  
Voting Rights Project, ACLU

The Governor of Louisiana has a unique chance to ensure that Black Louisianians have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice to Congress. That's why the ACLU and our coalition partners in the region are calling on Gov. Jon Bel Edwards to veto the proposed Congressional and State Legislative Districting Plans, submitted to his office by the Louisiana State Legislature.

HB 1 and SB 5, the proposed Congressional Districting Plans passed by the Louisiana State Legislature, as well as HB 14 and SB 1, the proposed State Legislative Plans, violate Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The new maps fail to provide Black voters in Louisiana an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice. The failures of the maps are



particularly concerning because of the population growth and shifts in Louisiana over the last 10 years.

According to the new Census

data, the number of Black people in Louisiana increased by 3.78 percent between 2010 and 2020. And the total number of Black Louisiana resi-

dents over the age of 18 — the Black Voting Age Population (BVAP) — increased by 7.21 percent. Furthermore, Louisiana's total population growth since 2010 was driven by growth in minority populations. For example, per the 2020 Census Data, in the Shreveport area (including Bossier, Caddo, and De Soto Parishes), the overall population decreased by 1.3 percent, but the region's Black population grew by 2.14 percent.

Under the current Congressional District Maps, Black Louisianians are severely underrepresented. Louisiana's voting-age population is nearly one-third Black; however, Black voters in Louisiana only have an opportunity to elect candidates of their choice in one of the six congressional districts (i.e., 16.7 percent of the districts).

Under the current State Legislative District Maps, just thirty-seven out of the 144 (25.69 percent) members of the Louisiana Legislature are Black, even though Black residents comprise 33.1 percent of the state's population. Of these Black Legislative Members, all but one was elected from single-member majority-minority districts. And that single outlying district has a BVAP close to 50 percent, which is high enough to make it possible for Black voters to elect their candidate of choice. This is a direct consequence of the configuration of Louisiana's Legislative Districts.

The 2020 Congressional Election results reflect the state's racially polarized voting patterns. In the five districts comprised of a majority of White voters, there were three elections in which voters had a choice between Black and White Congressional Candidates. In each, the White majority elected White candidates, defeating the Black-preferred candidates, and underscoring the importance of enacting more majority-minority districts.

Under the current congressional and state legislative maps, Black voters in Louisiana have less opportunity to elect candidates of their choice than White voters. Instead of using the redistricting process as an opportunity to correct the long-standing dilution of Black voting strength in Louisiana, the State Legislature introduced HB 1, SB 5, HB 14, and SB 1, all of which would further entrench and exacerbate the dilution of Black voting strength in the state over the next 10 years.

In all fifty states, especially Louisiana, representation is important. It not only promotes the trust needed for the successful relationship between governors and the governed in any democratic society, but also promotes fairness. To live up to the tenets of a representative democracy, the Louisiana State Legislature must reflect the richly diverse population it serves.

## State & Local News

# Mayor Cantrell Returns from U.S. Conference of Mayors' Winter Leadership Meeting

## Data News Staff Edited Report

NEW ORLEANS — Mayor LaToya Cantrell returned on Sunday, March 6, 2022, from a four-day trip to the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) Winter Leadership Meeting in Miami, Florida. During the meeting, Mayor Cantrell engaged with fellow mayors and federal partners on key initiatives while advocating for additional funding for New Orleans.



Mayor LaToya Cantrell

"The work we do with the U.S. Conference of Mayors is vital to our relationships on the national and the global level," said Mayor Cantrell. "Working in collaboration with mayors from across the nation and key Biden Administration staff, to protect and expand access to resources through federal infrastructure funding is critical to improve and move our cities forward post COVID-19. This collaboration can and will yield the best results possible."

During the conference, Mayor Cantrell was appointed Co-Chair of the Infrastructure Law Implementation Task Force for USCM, alongside Mayor Jim Ross of Arlington, Texas. In that capacity, the Mayor led a discussion with Senior Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator Mitchell J. Landrieu, to examine the use and implementation of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding. Attendees were advised of additional guidance likely forthcoming from the

United States Department of The Treasury, designed to make the use of ARPA funds more flexible — enabling cities to leverage them beyond traditional infrastructure projects.

As mayors at the conference were cautioned regarding the possible "claw-back" of the second tranche of funding by lawmakers at the federal level, they committed to working with their Congressional

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# Nikole Hannah-Jones Wins Social Justice Award at NAACP Image Awards, Speaks on CRT

**Lauren Victoria Burke**  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

The 53rd Annual NAACP Image Awards, which were held in person this year on February 26th at the Pasadena Civic Center, honor African Americans in entertainment and culture.

Established in 1909, the NAACP is the oldest civil rights organization in the U.S. and was formed by W. E. B. Du Bois, Mary White Ovington, Moorfield Storey and Ida B. Wells.

Jennifer Hudson won for Entertainer of the Year and outstanding actress for her portrayal of legendary singer Aretha Franklin in "Respect." Outstanding Actor was won by Will Smith in "King Richard" and Daniel Kaluuya of "Judas and the Black Messiah," who won for outstanding supporting actor.

The President's Award, given in recognition of special achievement in public service, was awarded to Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex.

But a special moment arrived in the ceremony as Pulitzer Prize-winning Journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones of The New York Times Magazine was awarded the Social Justice Impact Award.

Hannah-Jones, creator of "The



At the NAACP Image Awards, Nikole Hannah-Jones condemned the States' whitewashing history.

1619 Project," told the audience, "As a student of history, I know that the work that I do and the life I live would not be possible without the decades-long efforts of the NAACP to force this country to live

up to its highest ideals. I decided to use my pen as my weapon to fight. I'm grateful for the community that built me... But this award is not really about me. I'm being recognized for The 1619 Project."

"As of now, some 36 states have passed or are considering bills to make it harder to teach about racism and inequality. Politicians are using the power of the state to whitewash an already whitewashed history. Books and ideas about the Black experience, about the LG-BTQ community, are being banned. These anti-history laws go hand in hand with regressive policies that aim to restrict our civil and voting rights. A healthy society does not ban ideas, and attacks on books are an attack on democracy," Hannah-Jones added.

Hannah-Jones was referring to the recent Republican focus on stopping programs that attempt to promote "equity" and/or discussions on the historic impact of 400 years of anti-Black policies has gripped the GOP in many red states.

Hannah-Jones's book "The 1619 Project" has been on the New York Times bestseller list for 14 weeks.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist and the host of the podcast BURKEFILE. She is a political analyst who appears regularly on #RolandMartinUnfiltered. She may be contacted at LVBurke007@gmail.com and on twitter at @LVBurke

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from page 6.

and Senate partners to fight for that funding.

Mayor Cantrell was joined by the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) Superintendent Shaun Ferguson for a Presentation to the Conference on police reform and gun violence prevention initiatives, and ways in which New Orleans is responding to the nationwide

uptick in violent crime during the Pandemic.

The New Orleans leadership team also showcased the City's efforts to expand green infrastructure and improve resilience, highlighting the Pontilly Neighborhood Stormwater Network and the Gentilly Resilience District.

Mayor Cantrell is also a member of USCM's Board of Trustees.

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Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: [terrybjones@bellsouth.net](mailto:terrybjones@bellsouth.net) and [datanewseditor@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewseditor@bellsouth.net).

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# LOUISIANA, LET'S GIVE COVID THE BOOT!

Louisianans come from all different walks of life. Whether you work in an office or on a farm. Put out traps or put out fires. Dribble a ball or walk the mall. It's time we all stepped up and gave **COVID the boot**.

If you're vaccinated, **get the booster** for maximum protection. If you're not, **get vaccinated** so you don't get sick or pass the virus on to someone who is vulnerable like a tiny baby or an older adult.

**Whatever shoes you wear,  
step up Louisiana and  
give COVID the boot.**

To book your free vaccine or booster, visit **vaccines.gov**.  
or call **855-453-0774** to speak with a trusted medical professional.

BRING BACK  
LOUISIANA

LOUISIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
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