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"The People's Paper"

Hottest Styles at Essence Fest 2023

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Ms. Lauryn Hill



Jill Scott



Megan Thee Stallion



WIZKID



Missy Elliott

Celebrating Black Culture

The Essence Music Festival

June 29th - July 3rd, 2023

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Celebrating Black Culture

The Essence Music Festival

June 29th - July 3rd, 2023



This year's Essence Fest is special indeed. The Festival of Culture will take place June 29th thru July 3rd. This year's Essence will celebrate 50 years of Hip-Hop with a star-studded lineup of legendary artist and those who are today's chart toppers.

Dionne Character
Entertainment Columnist

**Celebrating Black Excellence:
A Bold Vision for the Future**

Essence Fest began as a one-time event celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Essence, a magazine aimed at African American women. Almost three decades later it's grown to be one the premiere festivals in America. Bringing in people from around the world, to experience Black Excellence.

"The creation of the Essence Festival remains one of the proudest accomplishments of my administration. It propelled the city into the leading destination

for African American tourism in the nation and provided a showcase for New Orleans culture in an unmatched way," says former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial and present National Urban League CEO and President, whose administration first brought the festival to the city.

Continuing he says, "I am thankful for the many who have been part of the of creating, nurturing, and sustaining this historic event and its celebration of the power of Black women."

Current New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell states that: "For nearly three decades, the ESSENCE Festival of Culture has put Black excellence, in the form of entrepreneurship, entertainment and education on full display for the world to see. As the most Afrocentric

city in America, New Orleans is honored to host this cultural event annually, and we look forward to continuing this partnership for many more years to come. This festival has brought our community together from both near and far, and created a space that is unique and special."

Under the leadership of owner Richelieu Dennis and President and CEO Caroline Wanga, the brand is moving in many bold and new directions. Providing innovative programming but staying true to its core values of empowering Black women, and celebrating their beauty, excellence, and impact.

Essence and New Orleans is a partnership that will continue according to Wanga and the leadership team. For what is usually a slow tour-

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ist weekend, have become an event where Black businesses and consumers come together to support each other. This is important if the community is to create generational wealth. Something that the leadership team at Essence is focused on in its renewed vision.

Making Impact

Last year, the ESSENCE Festival of Culture saw 1.9 million live and virtual attendees, increased revenue, and brought in new and reinvested sponsors – marking the highest revenue and largest audience in its history.

The 2022 festival was also ESSENCE's highest-grossing multi-day event to date. 2022 generating \$48.6 million in federal, local, and state taxes, as well as 189 million in GDP. Last year's festival was also the most fiscally beneficial for New Orleans, with an economic impact of \$327 million.

The 2022 ESSENCE Festival of Culture™ created 3,605 Jobs and produced \$120 million and labor income.

The ESSENCE Festival of Cul-



No Limits Records Legend Mia X, current Superstar Megan Thee Stallion and Legend Missy Elliott and many others will hit the stage for what is promised to be several nights of amazing entertainment.



ture™ attracts 500,000 annual visitors to New Orleans year over year.

This Year Celebrates 50 Years of Hip-Hop and Much More....

Celebrating Black Women, Black-Owned Businesses and Black Culture, The Essence Music Festival of Culture, presented by Coca-Cola returns to New Orleans Thursday, June 29th, through Monday, July 3rd.

This year Essence Music Festival celebrates the 50th Anniversary of Hip-Hop with a line-up of powerful female rappers: Missy Elliott, Rock and Roll Hall of

Famer, Lauryn Hill, celebrating the 25th Anniversary of her debut solo album, and Megan Thee Stallion, one of the biggest pop artists with performances by Ice Cube, Big Boi, Ice-T, KRS-One, Eve, Remy Ma and New Orleans' own Mia X and Juvenile.

Essence Festival Tickets + Admission

The Essence Festival daytime experience takes place at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center with daily, free admission from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with experiences intended to motivate and educate throughout the Convention Center,

showcasing sponsored lounges, events, pop-ups, and more throughout downtown New Orleans.

Concert tickets can be purchased as single day tickets or weekend passes. The purchase of an Essence Fest ticket grants access to all mainstage and super-lounge performances for that evening.

The 2023 Festival Lineup includes:

- Missy Elliott
- Ms. Lauryn Hill
- Megan Thee Stallion
- Jermaine Dupri
- Wizkid

- Monica
- Coco Jones
- Kizz Daniel
- and more!

If you are looking for a soulful weekend to explore, health & wellness, spirituality, beauty & style, food, community & culture, entertainment, entrepreneurship, and much more within the African American community, The Essence Festival of Culture is where you can enjoy your 4th of July weekend, surrounded by some of the most powerful people visiting the Crescent City of New Orleans where good food, community, and culture meets music.

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Louisiana Redistricting Case that Could Boost Power of Black Voters

New Orleans Agenda

The Supreme Court on Monday lifted its hold on a Louisiana case that could force the state to redraw congressional districts to boost Black voting power.

The order follows the court's rejection earlier in June of a Congressional Redistricting Map in Alabama and unfreezes the Louisiana case, which had been on hold pending the decision in Alabama.

In both states, Black voters are a majority in just one congressional district. Lower courts had ruled that the maps raised concerns that Black voting power had been diluted, in violation of the Landmark Federal Voting Rights Act.

The justices put the Louisiana case on hold and allowed the state's



challenged map to be used in last year's elections after they agreed to hear the Alabama case.

The case had separately been appealed to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. The

justices said that the appeal now could go forward in advance of next year's congressional elections.

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Ashe Cultural Arts Center Presents

Chief Adjuah (formerly known as Christian Scott) as Maafa 2023 Grand Griot!

Data News Staff Edited Report

We are thrilled to announce that Chief Adjuah (formerly known as Christian Scott) will be joining us as our Maafa 2023 Grand Griot!

As the embodiment of the griot tradition, Chief Adjuah honors his cultural lineage through music. His innovative work as a musician, composer, and producer is powerful, thought-provoking, and transformative—just like the Maafa Commemoration itself. Witness this incredible honor from this living griot of our community as we journey through history, culture, and memory.

Maafa is on Saturday, July 1st at 7AM in Congo Square! As the community gathers just after sunrise under the shade of historic oak trees, we will honor and carry



on the memories of our ancestors. In a procession from Congo Square to the Mississippi River, we celebrate their lives through performance, drumming, prayers,

and words of healing and wisdom, while taking moments of remembrance at sites of the Transatlantic and domestic slave trades. All white attire is preferred.



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- Gather relevant information, names and titles from assigned events.

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Unveiling the Hottest Styles at Essence Fest 2023



Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

Get ready for a cultural explosion as Essence 2023 returns to the Crescent City. This highly anticipated annual event is a celebration of Black culture, music, art, food, and fashion that always brings some of the boldest, most eccentric, and haute styles to music the festival and the streets of New Orleans.

Data Zone, Continued on page 7.



Chaleur Casual – NOLA Designer Everett Evans



Pink Halter & Pants – Revolve

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Data Zone, Continued from page 6.



Top: Black Kaftan Jumpsuit – West London BTQ

Left: Etro Multicolor Brocade Suit – Neiman Marcus

Here's a look at some of the trends you can expect to see this year: **(Bold)**

Eclectic Bohemian Vibes: Prepare to be swept away by the enchanting allure of bohemian-inspired fashion. Expect to see an array of flowing fabrics, vibrant prints, and free-spirited silhouettes. From maxi dresses with intricate patterns to embroidered jackets and fringe accessories, this trend is all about embracing a carefree and expressive style.

Gender-Inclusive Styles: Breaking away from traditional gender norms, expect to see gender-inclusive fashion that highlights garments that can be worn by individuals of any gender, blurring the lines between masculine and feminine aesthetics. This includes a nod to hip-hop styles with oversized cuts, and versatile pieces that empower self-expression.

Minimalistic Sophistication: Sometimes, less is more. Clean lines, monochromatic palettes, and understated elegance will take center stage at Essence 2023. Trends that present minimalist designs that exude sophistication

Data Zone, Continued on page 8.

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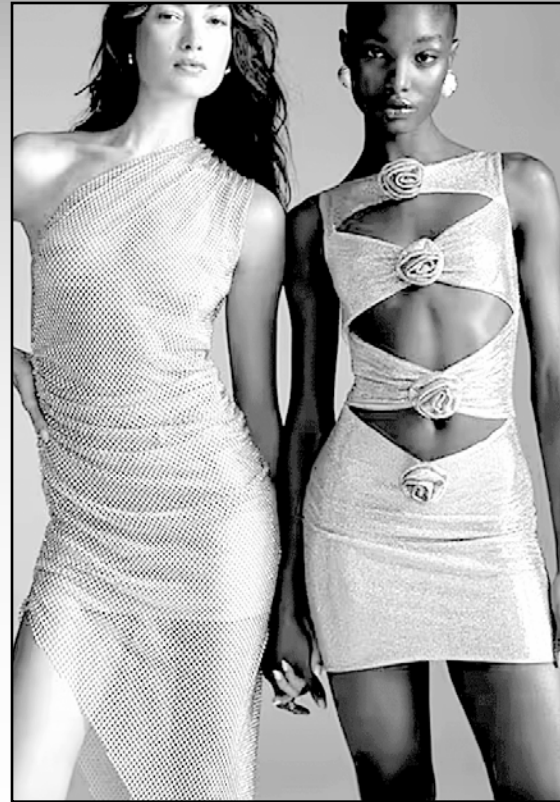
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Purple Rain 2Piece Set – Shein



Purple Trim Mini Dress – Revolve



Concert Ready – Revolve



Starburst Top & White Shorts – West London BTQ

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White-On – Pop Culture NOLA



Goldenrod Top & Cumberbund Belt – Revolve



Floral Print Short Set – Pop Culture NOLA

and timeless appeal have been on the rise. Think sleek tailored suits, refined dresses, and chic accessories that make a statement through simplicity.

Bold Prints and Patterns: (bold) Bold prints and patterns that demand attention are always present at the Essence Fest. Expect an explosion of vibrant and eye-catching designs, from abstract geometric patterns to exotic animal prints. Both featured designers & street styles will be filled with garments that celebrate individuality and express a sense of daring fashion.

Sustainable Chic: (bold) With an increasing focus on eco-consciousness and repurposed fashions; don't be surprised to see upcycled customized outfits made from repurposed and unconventional materials to make a one-of-a-kind fashion statement, while promoting a greener future.

Tracee Dundas Fashion Stylist | @fashionablyyoursnola
Fashion Stylist: Tracee Dundas | @fashionablyyoursnola
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Photos Courtesy of Boutiques

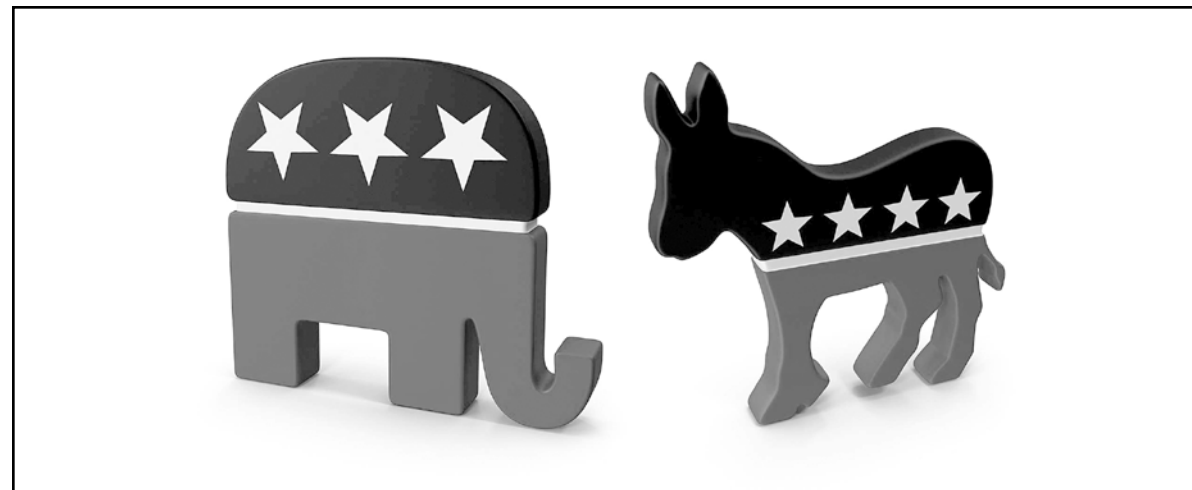
New Orleans Can't Solve its Local Problems Because the State of Louisiana Won't Let it

Jeff Thomas
Think 504

The State of Louisiana continues to stifle the growth of the City of New Orleans. New Orleans legislators' bills to change the city are killed at the state level. The state legislature spurns progressive improvements for issues like gun control, increased minimum wage, police reform, crime reduction and economic development. Meanwhile, the state legislature promotes and passes bills that threaten the financial strength of New Orleans. This continues a decades old tradition that only serves to retard the state. How can this happen and why? And why would the state ranked 50th in nearly every meaningful ranking continue to attack the cash cow of the legislature?

States have the right to create laws that affect every citizen of the state. In fact, the 10th Amendment guarantees states' rights. So, states have the right to local governance. What's legal in Illinois could be illegal in Louisiana. Like abortion. Recreational marijuana use is legal in Nevada, but you will be arrested in Metairie if you have an ounce of weed. The overriding principle is that the federal government should not interfere with the states' rights to govern themselves.

For cities in American states, no such protection exists. In fact, the opposite is the normal practice, especially in the South. The notion that people should have the right to self-governance dies at the city level. Preemption is a legal doctrine. Preemption doctrine refers to the idea that a higher authority of law will displace the law of a lower authority of law when the two authorities come into conflict. States use this doctrine to control cities. In fact, Southern states historically used preemption to control the lives of African Americans. From property ownership in the early 1800's to control of the police department of Jackson, Ms. In



2023, states still regulate Black lives using preemption.

An ugly attempt recently failed in the most recent Louisiana legislative session. Children's privacy protection is a universally sacred right. Every state in the union rigorously protects the identity of children from predators and public scorn. But some Louisiana radicals proposed revealing the identity of some minors who are accused of a crime. Not convicted. Accused. But not all minors. Just the ones in the three Blackest cities in the state. Even though the New Orleans City Charter protects the identity of these minors, state law could have preempted this regulation and exposed our children's identities.

The use of preemption is rooted in racism in Southern states. The 1866 Massacre of New Orleans resulted from hostile Whites seeking control. They rejected seating African Americans in the legislature. And the hostile Whites rejected proposed changes to local laws granting African American men the right to vote. They killed scores of peaceful demonstrators who sought to make these improvements.

Louisiana is a red state. Louisiana also has large urban centers led by Democrats. The attacks on big Democratically led cities happen all over the country. But in the South the attacks are shocking and savage. The Mississippi legislature

took over the capital city police department. Twenty-five states, including Louisiana, bar municipalities from raising the minimum wage. In the South, attacks on the LGBTQ community are pervasive. Florida and Ron DeSantis preempt numerous housing laws. Numerous

states rolled back cities ability to reform and divert funds from their police departments.

State Uses Preemption to Stall Progress

The shift from a practical tool that helps municipalities with con-

flicting laws to a weapon for extremists is troubling. Preemption is weaponized. So, cities have little choice but to creatively maximize control of local regulations. According to the National League of Cities, in this era of extreme preemption cities must have a three-fold approach to combat the issue.

Communicate the Problem Build a Coalition Pursue Litigation

This is why your choice for governor is so important. An extreme governor might ratchet up this state takeover even more. The most ironic thing about the Louisiana situation is that New Orleans is the cash cow of the state. If they ruin what we have down here, that might be a mortal wound to the entire state. But if the state is already 50th anyway....

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Supreme Court Ruling Limits Challenges to Unlawful Convictions for Innocent Federal Prisoners

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court delivered a blow to the rights of federal prisoners, particularly those who may be completely innocent.

This week's ruling in *Jones v. Hendrix* establishes a significant hurdle for prisoners seeking to challenge their convictions in court.

The case revolved around Marcus DeAngelo Jones, a federal prisoner convicted in 2000 of possessing a firearm after a felony conviction.

However, in a 2019 case called *Rehaif v. United States*, the Supreme Court declared that individuals could not be convicted under the felon-in-possession statute unless they were aware of their prior



prisoner's case to hear the habeas suits challenging their confinement.

Although Section 2255 ordinarily restricts prisoners from filing a second habeas challenge if they were previously denied relief, it permits a second challenge if the usual process is "inadequate or ineffective" to test the legality of their detention.

However, Thomas characterized previous decisions allowing prisoners to file second challenges as an "end-run" around the limits set by federal law for habeas petitions.

He interpreted the "inadequate or ineffective" provision so narrowly that very few cases would meet its requirements, leaving prisoners fighting unlawful convictions with limited recourse.

In response, Justice Jackson argued in her dissent that Thomas's reading of Section 2255 is completely unsupported by the text.

Both justices agreed on the historical purpose of Section 2255, which aimed to relieve the burden on district courts near federal prisons.

However, the statute contains no language that aligned with Thomas's interpretation of the "inadequate or ineffective" provision.

Jackson asserted that Congress reenacted this exception in 1996, using identical language, and intended it to preserve prisoners' ability to bring postconviction claims, including those based on statutory innocence, that might have been inadvertently barred by the language adopted in the amendment.

Experts said the outcome of the Jones case revealed not only the complexity of federal habeas law and the procedural challenges prisoners face but also a longstanding philosophical divide within the Supreme Court.

Liberal-leaning justices argued that the Criminal Justice System should primarily focus on determining a defendant's actual guilt and provide adequate safeguards for challenging wrongful convictions.

On the other hand, conservative justices, including Thomas, emphasized finality in criminal judgments, even if it meant potentially denying the innocence claims of prisoners.

felony conviction at the time of possessing the gun.

Jones argued that he mistakenly believed his previous felony conviction had been expunged when he acquired the firearm, rendering his conviction invalid under *Rehaif*.

He said because he was unaware of his felony status, federal law did not make his possession of the firearm illegal.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court's ruling, as outlined in Justice Thomas's opinion, prevents Jones from challenging his conviction altogether.

The outcome is because of a federal law known as Section 2255, which generally bars federal prisoners from making multiple challenges to their convictions or sentences.

Jones had previously succeeded in petitioning a federal court to vacate a portion of his sentence before the *Rehaif* decision, which Thomas argued extinguished his sole opportunity to challenge his conviction, even though Jones had no way of knowing that his claim of innocence would become potentially valid after *Rehaif*.

Although Section 2255 does include exceptions that allow for a second challenge under certain circumstances, Thomas narrowly interprets the provision, stating that the usual process is "inad-

equate or ineffective" to test the legality of a prisoner's detention.

In her dissenting opinion, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson criticized Thomas's restrictive construction and even mocks it by claiming that only a fire or mudslide could provide relief.

Thomas's majority opinion extends the consequences beyond individuals like Jones, who hope to overturn their convictions due to developments like the *Rehaif* decision.

Many other individuals who are entirely innocent and wrongfully convicted will also be denied the opportunity for second appeals and remain unjustly imprisoned.

Before Section 2255's enactment in 1948, federal prisoners had to challenge their convictions in the judicial district where they were incarcerated.

However, the system was impractical and burdensome for federal trial courts near prisons, as they often needed easier access to necessary records, evidence, and witnesses.

Section 2255 addressed this issue by requiring prisoners to bring challenges to the court that initially tried and convicted them, ensuring a more equitable distribution of cases among federal district courts, and providing the court most familiar with the pris-

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National and Local Urban League Leaders Respond to Report on Minneapolis Police

Data News Staff Edited Report

National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial and Urban League of the Twin Cities Interim President and CEO Marquita Stephens issued the following statement in response to the U.S. Justice Department's scathing report on the Minneapolis Police Department:

"The Justice Department's report on the racism, violent abuse, and habitual misconduct that pervades the Minneapolis Police Department is not a revelation. People of color across the country, in communities large and small, have borne this brutality for generations.

"Furthermore, the investigation uncovered violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and 'reasonable cause to believe that MPD discriminated against people with behavioral health disabilities when responding to calls.'

"What the report does represent is a turning point in what the American



Marc Morial, National Urban League President and CEO.

can people expect of those who are sworn to protect and serve. It represents a line in the sand that has long existed but rarely been respected. It is the outcry of the people saying, 'no more.'

"The urgency for comprehensive legislation that reflects this outcry cannot be ignored. Failure to enact the reforms outlined in the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act is an endorsement of the brutality and

lawlessness outlined in the report. Accountability for racial misconduct and illegal violence among law enforcement, and accountability for the lawmakers who endorse it, is long overdue."

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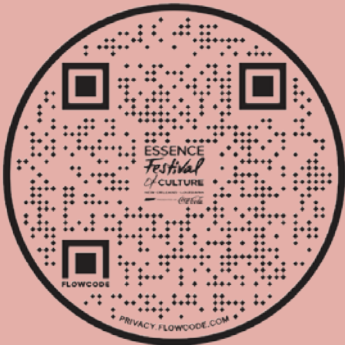
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