

News**NAACP Names Derrick Johnson as Interim President**

By *Lauren Victoria Burke*
 NNPA Newswire Contributor

The NAACP has named Derrick Johnson, the vice chairman of their board of directors, the organization's interim president.

The unanimous decision was made by the executive committee of the board of directors during the Association's 108th annual convention in Baltimore. The NAACP is the largest and oldest civil rights organization in the U.S. The executive committee of the board is comprised of 14 people.

On May 19, the NAACP board announced that the contract of Cornell William Brooks, the outgoing president, would not be renewed. Brooks' contract ended on June 30. Brooks began his tenure as NAACP President in May of 2014.

"I am thrilled to announce that my friend and colleague Derrick Johnson has been appointed to interim president and CEO. I could not think of a better, more battle-tested or more qualified individual to guide the NAACP through this transition period," said Leon Russell, the chairman of the board of the NAACP.

"Derrick's longtime service with the Association will allow him to take decisive action to deal with daily challenges. He will also serve as the primary spokesman for the NAACP. I have every confidence in Derrick and will support him in this new endeavor every step of the way."

In a statement released on July 22, Johnson said that it is truly an honor and a privilege to be named the interim president and CEO of an organization that he's served for decades.

"There's a lot of work that needs to be done and we won't waste any time getting to it. We are facing unprecedented threats to our democracy and



Derrick Johnson formerly served as vice chairman of the NAACP National Board of Directors as well as state president for the Mississippi State Conference NAACP.

we will not be sidelined while our rights are being eroded every day," said Johnson. "We remain steadfast and immovable, and stand ready on the front lines of the fight for justice."

The NAACP is about to embark on a nationwide listening tour to hear advice on what their focus should be moving forward. NAACP leadership has acknowledged that younger civil rights organizations are getting more traction and attention in a world of social media and faster communications.

The first stop on the NAACP listening tour is Detroit on August 24. The second stop will be San Antonio, Texas in September. The organization's leadership will "visit a total of seven major cities across the country over the next few months," according to a press release about the tour.

Johnson will serve as interim president and CEO until a new president is named. Johnson formerly served as vice chairman of the NAACP National Board of Directors as well as state president for the Mississippi State Conference NAACP.

Lauren Victoria Burke is the White House Correspondent for NNPA Newswire and a writer and political analyst.

Vote Shows GOP's Problems in Replacing Obama Health Law

WASHINGTON (AP) — Where the Senate Republican effort to demolish the Obama health care law ends up is anyone's guess, but early indications are the GOP will have a hard time replacing that statute with any sweeping changes.

Senators planned to vote Wednesday on a Republican amendment repealing much of President Barack Obama's law and giving Congress two years to concoct a replacement. A combination of solid Democratic opposition and Republicans unwilling to tear down the law without a replacement in hand were expected to defeat that plan.

Late Tuesday night, the Senate voted 57-43 to block a wide-ranging proposal by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell replacing Obama's statute with a far more restrictive GOP substitute. Those voting no included nine Republicans, ranging from conservative Mike Lee of Utah to Maine moderate Susan Collins, in a roll call that raised questions about what if any reshaping of Obama's law splintered Republicans can muster votes to achieve.

The rejected amendment — the first offered to the bill — was centered on language by McConnell, R-Ky., erasing Obama's tax penalties on people not buying insurance, cutting Medicaid and trimming its subsidies for con-



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., smiles as he talks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington Tuesday after Vice President Mike Pence broke a 50-50 tie to start debating Republican legislation to tear down much of the Obama health care law.

sumers. It included a provision by Ted Cruz, R-Texas, letting insurers sell cut-rate policies with skimpy coverage plus an additional \$100 billion — sought by Midwestern moderates including Rob Portman, R-Ohio — to help states ease out-of-pocket costs for people losing Medicaid.

GOP defectors also included Sens. Dean Heller of Nevada, who faces a tough re-election fight next year, and usually steady McConnell allies Bob Corker of Tennessee, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Kansas' Jerry Moran.

Seniors

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stressors.

The National Institute on Aging recently awarded \$39 million in new grants to better explore racial disparities in Alzheimer's, and one focus is on social and cultural factors, including stress.

"There's so much for us to learn in terms of how cultural factors link to behavior, how upstream factors like residential segregation could shape culture" that in turn influences biological changes, said Dr. Carl Hill, who directs NIA's Office of Special Populations.

He is closely watching the Portland SHARP study to see if through a culture of storytelling, Croff has found a way to engage a hard-to-study community.

Croff deliberately chose "culturally celebratory" historical photos. During one recent walk, the seniors were thrilled to recognize some faces in a photo of a 1961 debutante ball. In photos of that 1963 NAACP march, participants have recognized pastors and switched the conversation to the vitality of church life.

Croff, an anthropologist by training, said some participants see the study as social activism.

"There is something very powerful about saying, 'I'm still here, I'm still part of this community and you're going to see me.'"


The walks can spark some melancholy, too, said Edna White, 70, who participated in a pilot SHARP study and signed up again.

"There was just so much hustle-bustle and activity and bright lights, and now there are just old buildings. All those places are gone," she said. "Except for in our memory, it's like it never happened."

Associated Press writer Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Oregon, contributed to this story.

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