

News

NAACP Set to Change Tax Status to Engage Politically

By Lauren Victoria Burke (NNPA Newswire)

After being eclipsed in recent years by Color of Change, Black Lives Matter and other younger, more tech savvy and politically-pointed groups, the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization will change its tax status.

The group's leaders said that the new tax status would allow them to be more aggressive politically.

NAACP officials announced that the civil rights group will transition from a 501(c)(3) to a 501(c)(4) designation. The change will allow the organization to be more partisan and politically focused. However, the tax designation does not allow political work to be the "primary activity" of the organization.

Even though the NAACP is 108 years-old, the organization is struggling to modernize and stay relevant in a rapidly-evolving, social media-driven landscape that requires speed and strategic communications skills.

In October, the NAACP named Derrick Johnson as its president; Johnson was elected by the



PHOTO COURTESY OF NAACP
The NAACP announced plans to change their tax status, shortly after announcing that Derrick Johnson would become the group's new president.

NAACP's board to serve for three years.

In a statement announcing Johnson as the new president, Leon Russell, the board chairman of the NAACP said, "As both a longtime member of the NAACP,

“The organization is struggling to modernize and stay relevant

and a veteran activist in his own right—having worked on the ground to advocate for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, along with championing countless other issues—Derrick also intimately understands the strengths of the Association, our challenges and the many obstacles facing Black Americans of all generations, today. I

look forward to continuing to work with him in this new role.”

Russell continued: "In his time serving as our interim president and CEO, Derrick has proven himself as the strong, decisive leader we need to guide us through both our internal transition, as well as a crucial moment in our nation's history. With new threats to communities of color emerging daily and attacks on our democracy, the NAACP must be more steadfast than ever before."

Johnson is a native of Detroit, Michigan who lives in Jackson, Mississippi. He is a long-time member of the NAACP, who was elected Vice Chair earlier this year and served as the inter-

im president after Cornell Brooks was forced out. Johnson attended Tougaloo College before earning a juris doctor degree from South Texas College of Law in Houston.

The NAACP ousted Brooks in the spring of this year, a few months before the group's annual convention in Baltimore.

World News Briefs

Zimbabwe Army has Mugabe, Wife in Custody, Controls Capital

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe's army said Wednesday it has President Robert Mugabe and his wife in custody and is securing government offices and patrolling the capital's streets following a night of unrest that included a military takeover of the state broadcaster.

The night's action triggered speculation of a coup, but the military's supporters praised it as a "bloodless correction."

For the first time, this southern African nation is seeing the military oppose Mugabe, the world's oldest head of state and one of the longest-serving authoritarian rulers. Mugabe has been in power since Zimbabwe's independence from white minority rule in 1980.

Armed soldiers in armored personnel carriers stationed themselves at key points in Harare, while Zimbabweans formed long lines at banks in order to draw the limited cash available, a routine chore in the country's ongoing financial crisis. People looked at their phones to read about the army takeover and others went to work or to shops.

In an address to the nation after taking control of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, Major General Sibusiso Moyo said early Wednesday the military is targeting "criminals" around Mugabe, and sought to reassure the country that order will be restored.

Trump Returns, Faces Alabama Senate Scandal

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump spent five days in Asia largely keeping the Alabama Senate



AP PHOTO/BRYNN ANDERSON
Alabama Democrat Senate candidate Doug Jones walks across the street to speak to the media Nov. 14 in Birmingham, Ala. Jones runs against former judge Roy Moore.

scandal at bay. He won't be so lucky on U.S. soil.

The president returned to Washington on Tuesday night and walked straight into a party panic over the sexual misconduct accusations dogging GOP Senate candidate Roy Moore. Having pushed publicly and privately for Moore to get out of the race, Republicans believe their last best shot is Trump, who they hope can persuade his fellow political rebel to fall in line.

Trump has given little indication of whether he's interested in playing the role of party heavy. Press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders has echoed other Republican leaders, saying last Friday that Moore should step aside if the allegations are true. But as other Republicans began to call for Moore to quit the race, Trump was notably silent in public. On Tuesday, he didn't address the issue when he spoke with reporters aboard Air Force One as he flew back to Washington, nor did he respond to shouted questions about Moore as he entered the White House that night.

For Trump and Republicans, there are no good options. If Moore wins, they can either spend an already harrowing midterm election cycle defending their new colleague, or overturn the will of Alabama voters by casting him out of the Senate. If Moore loses and the seat flips to Democratic control, the party loses a critical vote in its razor-thin Senate majority, with issues like tax reform and immigration set to be considered in

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