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FOUNDED 1857
VOL. 312, NO. 163



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\$3.00



THE SACRAMENTO BEE

SACBEE.COM

Black homeless numbers rise in PIT report

BY THERESA CLIFT AND DARRELL SMITH
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The percentage of Black people in Sacramento's homeless population, already vastly overrepresented, has again increased.

Although only 9% of Sacramento's general population is Black, Black residents now comprises a whopping 35% of Sacramento's homeless population, the report found. That number jumped from 31% in 2022, the last time the federally-mandated homeless census count was performed.

Almost 60% of homeless people living in households with children were Black. Twenty percent of the homeless who died last year in Sacramento are Black.

"This is devastating, year after year, the numbers of Black Californians who are falling into homelessness," said Dr. Kara

Young Ponder, director of community engagement and racial justice at University of California, San Francisco Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative, on hearing the Sacramento figures Friday. "It's devastating to see these numbers rising."

The Sacramento figure surpasses the percentage of Black people experiencing homelessness statewide by nearly 10%. In California, 26% of the homeless population is Black, nearly four times the state's Black population of 7%.

Ponder laid out the systemic causes that have left so many unhoused in her February report, "Toward Equity: Understanding Black Californians' Experiences of Homelessness."

Historic barriers to housing, employment, credit and health care, long the products of systemic racial bias, also

SEE HOMELESS, 6A

Native Americans 6 times more likely to be homeless, report says

BY THERESA CLIFT AND EMMA HALL
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Native Americans and Alaska Natives are five to six times more likely to find themselves homeless in Sacramento, a new report found.

That statistic, determined as part of a federally-mandated homeless count performed in January, mirrors national and state trends.

While Native Americans and Alaska Natives make up only 1.5% of the United States population, they experience a homeless rate of 10%, the second highest out of any ethnic group nationwide, according to the National League of Cities.

The policy-driven historic displacement of Native people from tribal lands still contributes to the high homelessness rate, a report from University of Southern California stated. These policies include the Indian Removal Act, the Indian Relocation Act of 1956 and the Boarding School era, which was when Native children were forcibly

abducted by the United States government agencies and sent to boarding schools from 1819 to 1969.

The Indian Relocation Act of 1956 encouraged and forced Native people to leave reservations and assimilate into urban areas. It wasn't uncommon for Native people to leave their tribal communities with no financial support, and to be placed in overcrowded housing units with unsanitary living conditions. Today, Native communities still struggle with disproportionate rates of health disparities and socio-economic inequities because of these policies, according to the USC report.

Claradina Soto, an associate professor of population and public health sciences at USC's Keck School of Medicine, said the new Sacramento statistic was very concerning.

Native communities face systematic bias and discrimination when looking for housing, or even employment opportunities, which is prevalent in many urban areas in California, Soto said.

About 88% of Native

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RAPHAEL LAFARGUE Sipa USA

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken attends a news conference for President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron following a bilateral meeting Saturday at the Presidential Elysee Palace in Paris.

Blinken arrives in Mideast as US pushes for cease-fire vote

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY
NYT News Service

Secretary of State Antony Blinken returned to the Middle East on Monday and was set to meet with top Israeli officials, as the United States asked the U.N. Security Council to vote on its latest resolution for a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

Blinken held talks in Cairo with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, whose government has helped mediate negotiations between Israel and Hamas over a proposed cease-fire deal offered by

Israel and backed by the United States. Later Monday, Blinken was scheduled to meet in Israel with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

Tensions have grown between President Joe Biden and Netanyahu over the number of Palestinian civilians killed by Israel's military during the war in Gaza. Biden said last month that he had paused the delivery to Israel of some larger bombs to ensure that they were not used in an assault on the Gaza city of Rafah.

Blinken will also be

stepping into fresh tumult in Israel, following the move by Benny Gantz, a rival of Netanyahu, and his centrist National Unity party to leave the emergency wartime government in protest of Netanyahu's handling of the war.

An official schedule released by the State Department showed that Blinken planned to meet in the evening Monday with Netanyahu in Jerusalem and with Gallant in Tel Aviv. The schedule did not show a meeting with Gantz.

Pressing for a cease-fire deal will be one of Blinken's top priorities during his trip.

Two weeks have passed since Israel presented the deal to Hamas, and even Netanyahu's government has not formally embraced it. The Israeli prime minister, under pressure from far-right members of his government, has said the war in Gaza should continue until Hamas' military and governing capabilities are destroyed.

There has also been no official response to the proposal from Hamas. Some Hamas officials

SEE BLINKEN, 6A



KEN CEDENO UPI

Hunter Biden departs the J. Caleb Boggs Federal Building on Thursday with his wife, Melissa Cohen Biden, on the fourth day of his trial on criminal gun charges in Wilmington, Delaware.

Closing arguments delivered in Hunter Biden's gun trial

BY CHRIS BENSON
UPI.com

Closing arguments in Hunter Biden's gun trial were delivered Monday

afternoon in Delaware amid a crowd of Biden family and friends, including the family's pastor.

"People sitting in the gallery are not evidence,"

prosecutor Leo Wise told jurors. "You may recognize them from the news," he said, "but respectfully, none of that matters."

"Your decision can only

be made on evidence," he said.

The defense rested their case Monday on the sixth day of the trial at J. Caleb Boggs Federal Building in Wilmington, Del., just south of Philadelphia, as the trial of the president's son neared its end without any new witnesses being called to the stand to testify. The president's brother, James Biden, had been expected on Friday to take the stand, but the defense pulled him.

Wise said Hunter Biden "knew he used crack and was addicted to crack at the relevant time period" as he called the evidence presented as "personal, ugly and overwhelming."

Defense attorney Abbe Lowell indicated earlier that Hunter Biden would not testify after lingering questions Friday after court let out about whether he would take the stand in his defense.

However, prosecutors on Monday called back FBI agent Erika Jensen, a past witness, for brief rebuttal.

Lowell compared the prosecution's case to a "magician's trick" as he

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