



This Week in African American History

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Complimentary

NAACP Opposes TN Redistricting Proposals



Gloria Sweet-Love, President of the Tennessee NAACP

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee State Conference of the NAACP (also referred to as the Tennessee NAACP) is opposed to the redistricting plans approved by the House Select Committee on Redistricting. The Select Committee’s plans harm Black voters and communities.

The House redistricting plan for the 99 districts approved on December 17 intentionally targets and seeks to remove Black incumbent lawmakers in Memphis, Nashville, and Knoxville. The adopted plan for congressional districts approved on January 12 is the most extreme of the proposals. It removes the eastern part of Shelby County from the 9th congressional district and puts this area in a district that stretches 140 miles east to Henry County. The most offensive part of the plan splits Nashville-Davidson County into three congressional districts and gives rural counties undue influence in who will represent Tennessee’s largest and most economically-thriving city.

This congressional plan has the distinct feature of harming Black voters in Nashville-Davidson County:

It significantly dilutes the Black vote in the county. It creates three districts covering parts of Nashville-Davidson County with Black voting-age-populations of only 11.8% (5th district), 8.6% (6th district), and 15.5% (7th district). These percentages are significantly lower than the make-up of Blacks in the current congressional district.

The district (7th) with the highest percentage of voting-age Blacks (15.5%) has several correctional institutions/prisons that inflate the percentage of Blacks.

The Select Committee’s plan dilutes the strongest base of Black urban voters in Middle Tennessee by placing them in lily-White, rural districts that are remote—as far as 103 miles—from Nashville-Davidson County. It takes Black voting neighborhoods in Bordeaux and northern Davidson County and places them in a newly-created district comprising 12 other counties. Eleven of these counties are rural and supermajority with populations ranging from 88-95%. The 12th county (Montgomery County) is 70% White.

The proposed redistricting plan creates an excessively gerrymandered district (the 5th) that stretches from Wilson County to Marshall County. The district cuts into Southeast Nashville-Davidson

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Remembering Martin Luther King Jr: 5 things I’ve learned curating the MLK Collection at Morehouse College



TOP RIGHT: Monument of Martin Luther King Jr. TOP LEFT: Martin Luther King Jr. waves with his children, Yolanda and Martin Luther III, from the 1964 World’s Fair in New York City. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images) BOTTOM LEFT: Martin Luther King Jr.

Vicki Crawford
Professor of Africana Studies,
Morehouse College

For the past 11 years, civil rights historian Vicki Crawford has worked as the director of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection, where she oversees the archive consisting of iconic sermons, speeches, writings and other materials belonging to King.

Few archives of historical papers compare with the importance of the Morehouse King Collection. Aside from King’s life, the collection chronicles many of the major events that occurred during the civil rights movement.

Since joining Morehouse, Crawford says she especially enjoys introducing younger gen-



erations to King and helping them understand the powerful lessons of the struggle for social justice, particularly how everyday people organized and worked for social change.

Of the countless things she has seen, read and learned about King’s theology and civil rights activism, Crawford details five of the countless aspects of his life that stand out.

An avid reader

King read voraciously across a wide range of topics, everything from the “The Diary of Anne Frank” to “Candide.” Of course, he also read about theology and religion and philosophy and politics. But he especially enjoyed literature and the works of Leo Tolstoy.

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US Mint Begins Shipping New Quarters Featuring Maya Angelou

NATIONWIDE -- Americans will soon be seeing the face of Maya Angelou on U.S. quarters.

On Monday, the United States Mint announced it has begun shipping quarters featuring Angelou, the first of five trailblazing American women to be featured on quarters in 2022.

The new quarter, available in local banks starting in late January, depicts Angelou, an award-winning writer and civil rights activist, with her arms uplifted, in front of a bird in flight and a rising sun, images that are “inspired by [Angelou’s] poetry and symbolic of the way she lived,” according to the Mint.

The heads side of the quarter depicts a portrait of George Washington originally composed by Laura Gardin Fraser, described by the Mint as “one of the most prolific female sculptors of the early 20th century.”

U.S. Mint A sample of the new quarter coming out in 2022 that on the tail side will show images of poet Maya Angelou.

Gardin Fraser’s portrait was a recommended design for the quarter in 1932, but was not chosen by the then-treasury secretary.

“Laura Gardin Fraser was the first woman to design a U.S. commemorative coin, and her work is lauded in both numismatic and artistic circles,” Mint

Deputy Director Ventris C. Gibson said in a statement. “Ninety years after she intended for it to do so, her obverse design will fittingly take its place on the quarter.”

The designs are part of the American Women Quarters Program, a four year program featuring coins with reverse (tails) designs of women who have made their mark in American history.

For each year until 2025, the Mint will issue five quarters honoring individuals with a wide range of accomplishments and fields, including suffrage, civil rights, abolition, government, humanities, science, space and the arts.

In addition to Angelou, the women being featured this year include Anna May Wong, the first Chinese American film star in Hollywood; Dr. Sally Ride, the first American woman to soar into space; Wilma Mankiller, the first woman elected principal chief of the Cherokee Nation and an activist for Native American and women’s rights; and Nina Otero-Warren, a leader in New Mexico’s suffrage movement and the



Maya Angelou, award-winning writer and civil rights activist, will be featured on the U.S. quarter in 2022

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