

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 9 JUNE 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

[Austin Says Qualified Patriots, Including LGBTQ+, Bolster Defense](#) [David Vergun, DOD News Service, 7 June 2023]

This 12th annual Pride Month, the Defense Department honors the service, commitment and sacrifice of the LGBTQ+ service members and personnel who volunteered to defend America, stated Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III in a [June 1 news release](#). “Their proud service adds to America’s strength. Their contributions to our national security are powerful. Members of this community have deployed to combat zones around the globe, held high-ranking positions in the Pentagon, and fought and died alongside their teammates,” Austin stated. To win its wars, the ranks of the U.S. military must remain open to all qualified personnel who seek to serve, he said. On May 31, President Joe Biden [issued a proclamation](#) celebrating June as Pride Month.

[Military service key factor in 3 decades of extremist attacks](#) [Nikki Wentling, Military Times, 7 June 2023]

Domestic extremists who plot or commit mass killings often share characteristics, like mental health problems and criminal histories. But the most common thread is a record of military service, [according to new analysis](#) of three decades of attacks inside the U.S. The [National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism](#), known as START, analyzed thousands of cases of extremist-driven crimes from 1990 through 2022, and found that a military background is the single strongest predictor of whether a perpetrator committed or planned a mass casualty attack – and their military training made them twice as deadly, according to research first made available to Military Times.

[On D-Day Anniversary, Austin, Milley Call on All to Defend Democracy](#) [Jim Garamone, DOD News Service, 6 June 2023]

The men who stormed Normandy 79 years ago saved democracy “and it is all of our duty to defend with undimmed vigor the principles for which the Allies fought,” Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III said today. Austin and Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke at the service at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France. More than 9,000 service members are buried at the cemetery located just above Omaha Beach. The secretary and general spoke directly to some of the veterans who stormed the beach on June 6, 1944—now in their late 90s or over 100 years old. “To the veterans of World War II: We salute you,” Austin said. “You saved the world. We must merely defend it.”

[\[SECDEF FULL REMARKS\]](#)

[U.S. Supreme Court preserves civil rights lawsuits under 19th century law](#) [Reuters, 8 June 2023]

The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday preserved the ability of people to sue for civil rights violations under an 1871 law as it rejected a bid to prevent an Indiana nursing home resident’s family from suing over his care at a government-run facility. The lawsuit was filed under a measure known as Section 1983 that was enacted as part of the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, a law passed in the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era to protect the rights of Black Americans. Section 1983 gives people the power to sue in federal court when state officials violate their constitutional or statutory rights.

CULTURE

[Did the Navy remove a Pride Month post from its Instagram account?](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, 2 June 2023]

An Instagram user, whose bio states she is a naval officer, pointed out that the Navy's account appeared to have removed a Pride Month post in the past 24 hours. Asked Friday whether the Navy had indeed removed the Pride Month post from its IG, a Navy official released the following statement that did not answer the question: "The U.S. Navy posted graphics in support of the start of Pride month to honor the service, commitment and sacrifice of the LGBTQ+ Service members and personnel who volunteer to defend our country. As we do with all Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) observance months, we will look for additional opportunities to celebrate the diversity and strength of our Sailors. Members of the LGBTQ+ community serve their country, fully contribute to the DOD mission, and deserve a welcoming environment which enables them to reach their full potential."

[Edith Kanaka'ole is the first Hawaiian woman to grace a U.S. quarter](#) [Heidi Chang, *NPR*, 2 June 2023]

For the first time, the U.S. Mint is featuring a Native Hawaiian woman on a quarter. Edith Kanaka'ole was a Hawaiian cultural icon, teacher and composer. The Edith Kanaka'ole Quarter is the seventh coin in the [American Women Quarters Program](#), honoring pioneering women who've helped shape our nation's history and pave the way for others. During the Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance of the 1970s, Kanaka'ole was a dynamic force in reviving the Hawaiian language, hula and chant. Fondly known as "Aunty Edith," she was born in 1913, on the Island of Hawai'i. She died in 1979, at the age of 65.

[LGBTQ+ pride flags at VA facilities in Mississippi draw GOP criticism, protests](#) [Emily Wagster Pettus, *The Associated Press*, 6 June 2023]

*Several people protested Monday outside the Biloxi VA Medical Center, where a rainbow flag has been flying along with several U.S. flags. The rainbow flag was added Thursday to mark June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month. VA Press Secretary Terrence Hayes said in a statement to *The Associated Press* on Tuesday: "Protest is a fundamental part of our democracy, and we respect anyone's right to protest VA for any reason." McDonough has authorized flying of the pride flag at all VA facilities throughout Pride Month, as he has done in previous years, "as a symbol of VA's commitment to inclusion and as a tribute to the service and sacrifice of LGBTQ+ Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors," Hayes said.*

[More recruits eligible for Army pre-boot camp study, fitness courses](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 2 June 2023]

A wider range of hopeful soldiers can now enlist into the Army's basic training preparatory course, service officials announced Friday. The move expands eligibility for the Future Soldier Preparatory Course, the Army's ambitious experiment to improve recruit fitness and test scores before they go to basic training. Now applicants who need to improve in both areas may enroll, and a new pilot program will admit a limited number of applicants with lower test scores than those previously required for the course.

[A Proclamation on Flag Day and National Flag Week, 2023](#) [Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *White House Press Office*, 9 June 2023]

On Flag Day and during National Flag Week, we celebrate the enduring strength and promise that the stars and stripes on our flag have always embodied as they fly proudly across our country and around

the world. Old Glory stands for hope, pride, and progress. It is stamped on our exports, hung from booming factories, and painted on spacecraft that travel high above our skies—a symbol of the American spirit that keeps innovating, building, and breaking boundaries. It waves for justice and equality. It adorns courtrooms and classrooms. And it presides over free and fair elections at polling places across the Nation, reinforcing the promise of our democracy.

[Ranger vets group objects to removal of some Confederate-linked names from Fort Moore memorial](#) [Corey Dickstein, *Stars and Stripes*, 6 June 2023]

The National Ranger Memorial Foundation wrote it was “deeply troubled” by the removal of three names from the memorial, describing it as “the defacement and desecration” of the monument in a May 23 letter to House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. The Ranger memorial was established in 1992 at Fort Benning, which became Fort Moore last month, to honor past and present Rangers and includes thousands of names on the monument and on brick pavers around it. The foundation asked the House leaders to step in, accusing Fort Moore leaders of taking a heavy-handed approach to stripping the installation of links to the Confederacy, which Congress ordered in 2020.

[Utah district’s Bible ban spurs protest by parents, Republicans](#) [Sam Metz, *The Associated Press*, 7 June 2023]

Republican lawmakers rallied with more than one hundred Bible-toting parents and children at Utah’s Capitol on Wednesday to protest a school district’s decision to remove the Bible from middle and elementary school libraries in the wake of a GOP-backed “sensitive materials” law passed two years ago. The Bible removal is the highest-profile effort to remove a book from a school in Utah since the Legislature passed a law requiring school districts to create new pathways for residents to challenge “sensitive materials” and used a statute-based definition on pornography to define them. The pushback has also emboldened book-banning critics, who argue anger at removing the Bible illustrates arbitrary and political double standards and the issues inherent to removing books that have certain content.

DISCRIMINATION

[Black Florida students are suing the state over less funding for their HBCU](#) [Char Adams, *NBC News*, 5 June 2023]

A Florida judge, for now, is allowing a class-action lawsuit to go forward that accuses the state of discriminating against a historically Black university while prioritizing its largest public university, which is predominantly White. Judge Robert L. Hinkle of the Northern District of Florida heard oral arguments Thursday in the first court test for a class-action lawsuit filed in September. He dismissed the state’s request to dismiss the suit, but did ask for revisions. The six students at Florida A&M who filed the suit claim that the University of Florida receives a larger state appropriation per student than A&M. The complaint says that over 33 years, from 1987 to 2020, that shortfall amounted to approximately \$1.3 billion, though the two schools share the distinction of being the state’s only two public land-grant colleges.

[Chinese citizens sue Florida over ban from buying homes that they say “casts suspicion over anyone of Chinese descent”](#) [Erik Larson, *Fortune Magazine*, 22 May 2023]

The American Civil Liberties Union sued Florida over a law championed by Governor Ron DeSantis that bars most Chinese citizens from buying homes in the state. The law, set to take effect July 1, violates

the equal protection and due process guarantees under the Constitution by prohibiting landownership based on “race, ethnicity, color, alienage, and national origin,” according to the suit filed Monday in federal court in Tallahassee. The ACLU sued on behalf of four Chinese citizens, claiming the law “stigmatizes them and their communities, and casts a cloud of suspicion over anyone of Chinese descent who seeks to buy property in Florida.”

[Colleagues want a 95-year-old judge to retire. She’s suing them instead](#) [Rachel Warner, *The Washington Post*, 6 June 2023]

Pauline Newman specializes in dissent. In her 40-year career as a federal judge, she has written more than 300 dissenting opinions. So when the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit said she thought it was high time for the 95-year-old to retire, Newman offered a differing view: Nope. The oldest active federal judge in the nation has instead [sued her colleagues](#) and accused them of violating the Constitution, which says nothing about mandated retirement for lifetime appointees. Those colleagues have accused her of misconduct, saying she can no longer do the job she is guaranteed for life.

[LGBTQ+ Americans are under attack, Human Rights Campaign declares in state of emergency warning](#) [Hannah Schoenbaum, *The Associated Press*, 6 June 2023]

The Human Rights Campaign declared a state of emergency for LGBTQ+ people in the U.S. on Tuesday and [released a guidebook pointing to laws it deems discriminatory in each state](#), along with “know your rights” information and resources to help people relocate to states with stronger LGBTQ+ protections. Sounding the alarm about the current political climate, the nation’s largest organization devoted to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Americans said travel advisories aren’t enough to help people already living in states where lawmakers have targeted LGBTQ+ people.

[Supreme Court rules in favor of Black voters in Alabama redistricting case](#) [Mark Sherman, *The Associated Press*, 8 June 2023]

The Supreme Court on Thursday issued a surprising 5-4 ruling in favor of Black voters in a congressional redistricting case, ordering the creation of a second district with a large Black population. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Brett Kavanaugh joined with the court’s liberals in affirming a lower-court ruling that found a [likely violation of the Voting Rights Act in an Alabama congressional map](#) with one majority Black seat out of seven congressional districts in a state where more than one in four residents is Black. The case had been closely watched for its potential to weaken the landmark voting rights law.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

DIVERSITY

[Armed Services Integration Act: Honoring Women in Service](#) [Lauren Warner, *Coffee or Die Magazine*, 9 May 2023]

Integration Act, but let’s face it, women were finding ways to serve in the armed forces long before then. In fact, it took Congress two years of legislative debate to pass the act that leadership within the military had been requesting for years. You might think you know the history of women in the armed forces, but it’s not as simple as an act getting passed. There is generally more resistance to change during peacetime, but traditions break down during war—which is how women assumed more influential roles in the military.

[Military college's chief of diversity quits amid debate over DEI](#) [Ben Finley, *The Associated Press*, 2 June 2023]

The chief diversity officer of the nation's oldest state-supported military college, Virginia Military Institute, has turned in her resignation amid a debate among alumni over the school's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. Jamica Love took on the new role in July 2021—a month after a state-sanctioned report found VMI failed to address institutional racism and sexism and must be held accountable for making changes. The school's Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion will continue to exist despite Love's departure, VMI's spokesman Bill Wyatt said in an email Friday.

[Only five percent of lawyers are Black. This attorney wants to change that.](#) [Sydney Page, *The Washington Post*, 7 June 2023]

According to the American Bar Association, [about five percent of all lawyers are Black](#)—and that number has been stagnant over the past decade—even though about 14 percent of the U.S. population is Black. There are also racial disparities in bar exam scores. In 2022, the [first-time pass rate for White examinees](#) was 26 percent higher than Black test takers. “The lack of diversity in the legal field has dire implications for the legitimacy of the legal system,” said Verna Williams, the CEO of Equal Justice Works, a D.C.-based nonprofit aimed at supporting public service lawyers and promoting equality and justice in the legal system. “Law touches everything in society. It's essential that there be diversity in all its dimensions, including gender, ethnicity, economic status, as well as race.”

EXTREMISM

[New Jersey Oath Keeper who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 pleads guilty to felony charge](#) [Alanna Durkin Richer, *The Associated Press*, 6 June 2023]

A member of the Oath Keepers extremist group from New Jersey who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and bragged about it in text messages pleaded guilty on Tuesday to obstructing Congress. James Breheny, who is also known as Seamus Evers, of Little Ferry, pleaded guilty in Washington's federal court to a felony charge of obstructing Congress' certification of President Joe Biden's electoral victory over former President Donald Trump. Breheny's attorney said his client, a Navy veteran, entered the guilty plea to “make amends for a lack of good judgement on Jan. 6, 2021.”

[To Escape Bullies, Military “Forced to Move” Families with LGBTQ+ Kids](#) [Audrey Decker, *Defense One*, 6 June 2023]

Troops with LGBTQ+ family members have been forced to move to new bases because of harassment at school, a Department of the Air Force official said. “When I'm forced to move families from installations, because their school will do nothing when their LGBT kid is being bullied—that worries me, because that's distracting from the mission, that's detracting from our readiness,” said Alex Wagner, assistant Air Force secretary for manpower and reserve affairs. Conservative lawmakers have also argued that “woke-ism” is causing the military's recruiting woes—despite top military leaders saying there is no evidence that diversity policies have harmed recruiting or readiness. Diversity and inclusion, Wagner said, is “core” to U.S. national security, because diverse groups always outperform “carefully selected teams of homogenous individuals.”

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[What are disinformation and extremism? And why should troops be aware?](#) [Nikki Wentling and Allison P. Erickson, *Military Times*, 5 June 2023]

As part of an 18-month project through a partnership between Military Times and Military Veterans in Journalism, we'll be reporting about disinformation and extremism as the issues relate to veterans and military communities. To start, we've compiled a list of frequently asked questions about extremism and disinformation in the military we will update throughout the year.

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Nearly 20% of the cultural differences between societies boil down to ecological factors – new research](#) [Alexandra Wormley and Michael Varnum, *The Conversation*, 6 June 2023]

In some parts of the world, the rules are strict; [in others they are far more lax](#). In some places, people are [likely to plan for the future](#), while in others people are more likely to live in the moment. In some societies people prefer more personal space; in others they are [comfortable being in close quarters with strangers](#). Why do these kinds of differences exist? In a growing number of cases, researchers have found that human culture can be shaped by key features of the environments in which people live. Just how strong is this ecology-culture connection overall? In a [new study](#), our lab, the Culture and Ecology Lab at Arizona State University, set out to answer this question.

[Platonic co-parenting offers an alternate model for family building](#) [Leanne Italie, *The Associated Press*, 7 June 2023]

Nick Farrow wanted what a lot of people do: a child, and a parenting partner. At 45, after a long-term romance didn't work out, he decided to take matters into his own hands, entering into a platonic open arrangement that has flourished for nine years, since daughter Milly was born. Whether it's with friends, known sperm donors or co-parenting connections made on so-called mating sites, more families are coming together platonically, without the pain of divorce or the added stress and expense of going it alone. Choosing to parent together platonically while living separately or under the same roof is an idea that's been around for years among LGBTQ+ people. It has gained ground more recently among heterosexuals, and interest skyrocketed during the pandemic.

INTERNATIONAL

[Australia plans to ban swastikas and other Nazi symbols in legislation coming next week](#) [Rod McGuirk, *The Associated Press*, 8 June 2023]

Australia's government plans legislation to ban swastikas and other Nazi symbols nationwide due to an increase in far-right activity, Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus said Thursday. While most Australian states already ban such Nazi symbols, the federal law would go further by also banning the trade in such material, Dreyfus said. Displaying symbols for religious, educational or artistic purposes would be among a range of exclusions from the ban. It will not affect the use of the swastika for people observing Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

[Nazi Symbols on Ukraine's Front Lines Highlight Thorny Issues of History](#) [Thomas Gibbons-Neff, *The New York Times*, 5 June 2023]

Ukraine has worked for years through legislation and military restructuring to contain a fringe far-right movement whose members proudly wear symbols steeped in Nazi history and espouse views hostile to leftists, LGBTQ movements and ethnic minorities. But some members of these groups have been fighting

Russia since the Kremlin illegally annexed part of the Crimea region of Ukraine in 2014 and are now part of the broader military structure. Some are regarded as national heroes, even as the far-right remains marginalized politically. The iconography of these groups, including a skull-and-crossbones patch worn by concentration camp guards and a symbol known as the Black Sun, now appears with some regularity on the uniforms of soldiers fighting on the front line, including soldiers who say the imagery symbolizes Ukrainian sovereignty and pride, not Nazism.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Undercover observers track racism, discrimination at European soccer games](#) [James Ellingworth, *The Associated Press*, 5 June 2023]

*Among the thousands of fans in the stands at Europe's biggest soccer games are a few people operating undercover. Trained volunteer observers listen for racist chants and watch for extremist symbols on banners. "You have to be aware of the environment and fit in without standing out. You have to be discreet," one observer, who has worked at games involving some of soccer's best-known clubs and national teams, told *The Associated Press*. Observers work on a volunteer basis, with expenses covered, and are expected to keep tabs on hardcore fan groups' social media to track where incidents may occur. Inside the stadium, an observer watches the stands for signs of racist, homophobic, sexist or other discriminatory chants or banners, while also keeping an eye on the action on the field, which shapes what happens among fans.*

MISCELLANEOUS

[AI in medicine needs to be carefully deployed to counter bias—and not entrench it](#) [Ryan Levi and Dan Gorenstein, *NPR*, 6 June 2023]

Doctors, data scientists and hospital executives believe artificial intelligence may help solve what until now have been intractable problems. AI is already showing promise to help clinicians diagnose breast cancer, read X-rays and predict which patients need more care. But as excitement grows, there's also a risk: These powerful new tools can perpetuate long-standing racial inequities in how care is delivered.

[Biden looks to boost military spouse employment with new order](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 9 June 2023]

White House officials will boost hiring help for military spouses seeking government jobs through a new executive order to be unveiled during a presidential visit Friday to Fort Liberty in North Carolina. The [order from President Joe Biden](#) will increase the number of federal jobs for which spouses receive preferential hiring treatment, speed up new savings accounts for military family child care expenses, and mandate a new government-wide plan for ways to help find work for spouses whose careers have been derailed by military moves and demands.

[ChatGPT's responses to suicide, addiction, sexual assault crises raise questions in new study](#) [Jacqueline Howard, *CNN*, 7 June 2023]

When asked serious public health questions related to abuse, suicide or other medical crises, the online chatbot tool ChatGPT provided critical resources—such as what 1-800 lifeline number to call for help—only about 22% of the time in a new study. The research, published Wednesday in the journal [JAMA Network Open](#), suggests that public health agencies could help AI companies ensure that such resources are incorporated into how an artificial intelligence system like ChatGPT responds to health inquiries. For instance, with the right engineering and inputs, ChatGPT could recognize the signs and symptoms

of addiction or depression within the questions someone asks it, prompting it to provide health resources in its interactions with that person. And regulators could help monitor that such responses offer accurate and reliable information and resources.

[Military life wellness tips from the 2023 Spouse of the Year](#) [Natalie Gross, *Military Times*, 3 June 2023] [PODCAST]

Military spouse wellness and some of the barriers this population faces are the platform for the newest Military Spouse of the Year, Army spouse Evie King. She shares practical wisdom for prioritizing wellness during deployments and military moves as well as underutilized resources all spouses should know about.

[Retired Phoenix police officer in landmark Miranda rights case dies at 87](#) [Anita Snow, *The Associated Press*, 2 June 2023]

Retired Phoenix Police Capt. Carroll Cooley, the arresting officer in the landmark case partially responsible for the Supreme Court’s Miranda rights ruling that requires suspects be read their rights, has died, the department confirmed Friday. He was 87. On March 13, 1963, Cooley arrested Ernesto Miranda in the kidnap and rape of an 18-year-old Phoenix woman. Miranda was eventually convicted based on his handwritten confession and sentenced to 20-30 years in prison. Miranda appealed, and the case eventually went up to the U.S. Supreme Court, which issued a 1966 ruling overturning the conviction, saying that suspects should be advised of their constitutional rights against self-incrimination and to an attorney before questioning.

[Trails of Purpose will expand mental health services for military members at new Virginia Beach location](#) [Caitlyn Burchett, *The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, Va.)*, 30 May 2023]

Trails of Purpose, a Chesapeake-based nonprofit that uses horses to support military members, is preparing to expand its services to a new facility to accommodate a growing need for mental health resources. Located in the heart of one of the nation’s most densely populated military communities, co-founder Kayla Arestivo said expanding services was necessary. “Just look at the news,” said Arestivo, a licensed mental health counselor and military spouse. “Military mental health—Department of Defense mental health—is overrun right now. It is not well supported or billeted.” Trails of Purpose provides therapeutic care for service members suffering mental hardships, using horses for assisted psychotherapy and mental health education.

[REPRINT]

[Veteran who subdued Club Q gunman to be honored at Pride parade](#) [Russell Contreras, *AXIOS*, 8 June 2023]

A Mexican American U.S. Army veteran who helped stop a suspected mass shooter from killing more people at an LGBTQ club will serve as a Pride parade grand marshal in Colorado Springs next week. Richard Fierro has received many honors for his brave actions at the November 2022 Club Q shooting, including the 2023 Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s Citizen Honors Valor Award. Pikes Peak Pride said Fierro will serve as grand marshal during its annual parade on June 11 in Colorado Springs. Organizers called him a “hero to our local community” and invited people to come say thank you.

MISCONDUCT

[Watchdog report finds former Pentagon official created a toxic work environment](#) [Haley Britzky, CNN, 7 June 2023]

A newly released Defense Department inspector general investigation found that a former senior Pentagon leader berated and belittled subordinates, cursed at them, made some employees cry, and generally created a toxic work environment. Michael Cutrone served as the principal deputy and acting assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs from May 2020 to January 2021 when he resigned. The Defense Department inspector general said in the [new report released Wednesday](#) that Cutrone repeatedly harassed subordinates and created an “intimidating, hostile, and offensive work environment.” The IG said in its report that while Cutrone often “did not deny his conduct,” he told investigators he could not recall the specific instances mentioned by witnesses.

RACISM

[As conservatives target schools, LGBTQ+ kids and students of color feel less safe](#) [Annie Ma, Claudia Lauer and Adriana Gomez Lincon, *The Associated Press*, 7 June 2023]

The first encounter with racism that Harmony Kennedy can remember came in elementary school. On a playground, a girl picked up a leaf and said she wanted to “clean the dirt” from Harmony’s skin. In sixth grade, a boy dropped trash on the floor and told her to pick it up, “because you’re a slave.” She was stunned—no one had ever said anything like that to her before. As protests for racial justice broke out in 2020, White students at her Tennessee high school kneeled in the hallways and chanted, “Black lives matter!” in mocking tones. As she saw the students receive light punishments, she grew increasingly frustrated. So when Tennessee began passing legislation that could limit the discussion and teaching of Black history, gender identity and race in the classroom, to Harmony, it felt like a gut punch—as if the adults were signaling this kind of ignorant behavior was acceptable.

[Racist message, dead raccoon left for Oregon mayor, Black city council member](#) [*The Associated Press*, 7 June 2023]

*Someone left a dead raccoon and a sign with “intimidating language” that mentioned a Black city councilor outside the law office of an Oregon mayor, police said. Redmond Mayor Ed Fitch found the raccoon and the sign on Monday, the Redmond Police Department said in a news release. The sign mentioned Fitch and Redmond City Councilor Clifford Evelyn by name, police said. Fitch called the sign’s language “racially hateful.” He declined to elaborate but told *The Bulletin*, “I feel bad for Clifford. It seems there’s some people in town that can’t accept the fact that Clifford is Black and is on the City Council.”*

RELIGION

[Oklahoma OKs First Religious Charter School, Teeing Up Legal War Over Separation of Church and State](#) [Lauren Camera, *U.S. News & World Report*, 6 June 2023]

Oklahoma officials approved what could become the country’s first religious charter school—breaking new ground in the conservative push to expand school choice options while also teeing up what’s expected to become a protracted legal battle over the separation of church and state. Proponents of establishing religious charter schools argue that the process isn’t different than state-run private school voucher programs that allow families to use taxpayer dollars to cover tuition at private schools,

including religious schools. But critics point out that charter schools are not funded by families receiving an individual subsidy, they're funded by the state as public schools.

[Vesak 2023: What is it and how do Buddhists celebrate Buddha Day or Wesak?](#) [BBC News, 5 May 2023]

Vesak is one of the most important Buddhist festivals. It is also known as Wesak or Buddha Day. It is a celebration of Buddha's birthday and, for some Buddhists, marks his enlightenment (when he discovered life's meaning). It is also a time to reflect on his teachings and what it means to be Buddhist. Buddhists do not believe in a single god who created the world and everything in it. In fact, most Buddhists believe in the teachings of a man called Siddhartha Gautama—also known as the Buddha. Siddhartha is believed to have been a prince who was born into a wealthy family in what is now called Nepal in the 5th Century BC.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Why you might notice more religious groups at Pride celebrations this year](#) [Jason DeRose, NPR, 7 June 2023]

At the Pride Fest in Santa Monica, Calif., six houses of worship—five churches and a synagogue—had booths lined up all in a row. More pro-gay God-talk at Pride this year is no accident. It's a national initiative of the progressive Interfaith Alliance, involving Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and others. It's called [Faith for Pride](#), and it's meant, in part, to counter the message of anti-LGBTQ rights legislation in statehouses around the U.S. "We are not going to let this happen to our LGBTQ siblings," said Interfaith Alliance president Paul Raushenbush, who is also a Baptist minister. "Not on our watch."

SEXISM

[Women won't achieve pay parity until 2056: report](#) [Sarah Fortinsky, *The Hill*, 8 June 2023]

Women with full-time, year-round work will not achieve pay parity with men until 2056, if trends continue as they have since 1967, according to a [new report out Thursday](#) from the Center for American Progress (CAP). In anticipation of the 60-year anniversary of the 1963 Equal Pay Act becoming law, CAP—a left-leaning think tank in Washington, D.C.,—published an analysis seeking to measure the law's impact by tracking trends in employment and wages since its passage. The law sought to protect workers from pay discrimination based on sex. In 2021, full-time, year-round working women earned 84 cents to a man's dollar; all working women, regardless of hours or weeks earned, earned 77 cents to a man's dollar, according to the data. The pay disparity is even more acute for Black and Latina women.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Army colonel accused of sexual assault demoted to captain, retired Wednesday](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 2 June 2023]

An Army colonel with 27 years in the service retired Wednesday as a captain, more than two years after his family's former nanny accused him of sexual assault and he was fired from his command.

Christopher Warner, 49, was criminally investigated in 2020 when his family's former live-in nanny accused him of raping her in 2007. The Army removed Warner as the hospital commander at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., in October 2020 and the psychiatrist has spent the past 2½ years moving through the Army's nonjudicial punishment system. Warner, who served as a medical corps officer and

board-certified psychiatrist from May 1996 to May 2023, will retire as a captain because it is the last rank at which the service said he served satisfactorily, said Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Hewitt, an Army spokesman.

[Juilliard fires former chair after sexual misconduct investigation](#) [Anastasia Tsioulcas, NPR, 8 June 2023]

On Thursday, The Juilliard School announced that it fired composer Robert Beaser, the former head of its composition faculty, after an independent law firm investigated allegations of sexual harassment and misconduct against Beaser dating from the late 1990s and 2000s. Beaser had been the chair of the renowned music conservatory's composition department for 25 years, between 1994 and 2018.

[Accusations of sexual harassment and misconduct](#) against the composer were first made public last December in the German-based magazine VAN. In the aftermath of the VAN report, more than 500 musicians and leaders in classical music called for Beaser to be removed from his Juilliard post.

[Prison sexual assault victims can now petition for compassionate release](#) [Carrie Johnson, NPR, 7 June 2023]

For years, Aimee Chavira suffered sexual abuse in a Dublin, Calif., federal prison by the officers responsible for protecting her. Now, thanks to a program known as compassionate release, she is free. And her freedom could help pave a similar path for other people who experienced physical or sexual assault behind bars. Chavira reported her abuse to a psychologist and a warden at the Federal Correctional Institution, Dublin. But they did nothing. The warden later was convicted of sexual abuse and lying to the FBI. Five other officials have been charged with sexually abusing women at the facility, in what became known as a so-called "Rape Club." One of them, John Bellhouse, was convicted this week on charges that include sexual abuse of an incarcerated person.

SUICIDE

[Alaska's army bases see glimmer of hope after "horribly high" suicide rates among soldiers](#) [Tom Vanden Brook, USA TODAY, 8 June 2023]

The 2021 wave of suicides that swept over Alaskan military bases has receded after commanders required troops to get counseling, the Pentagon added therapists and living conditions improved in America's "Last Frontier." But the Pentagon wants to do more to improve soldiers' mental health. Senior defense officials, led by Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks, sought out troops, commanders and counselors during a recent visit as the Defense Department assesses what's worked and what hasn't in combatting despair. The daughter of a Navy submarine officer, Hicks said she understands the challenges military families face. "We have the sacred obligation to take care of our people who are voluntarily taking the oath of office to defend our nation," Hicks said. "And we're going stay focused on that goal."

[Are more mental health resources in store for limited-duty sailors?](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, Navy Times, 8 June 2023]

The Navy would be required to increase mental health care access and screenings for limited-duty sailors under new legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. The measure would require mental health provider billets, including medical officers, chaplains, and civilian mental health providers, for any units with 15 or more limited-duty status sailors. These sailors would also undergo a mental health screening with a certified mental health provider, then receive subsequent screenings

every 60 days while on limited-duty. The Navy would also be required to examine cases like those on the George Washington and at MARMC and establish a standard operating procedure for handling multiple suicides in the span of 30 days.

VETERANS

[Janice Lufkin, retired decorated Navy nurse, former head nurse at Presbyterian Hospital, and award-winning Red Cross volunteer, has died at 81](#) [Gary Miles, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 June 2023]

Janice Lufkin, 81, of Abington, retired decorated Navy nurse, former head nurse of the cardiac-care unit at Presbyterian Hospital, award-winning American Red Cross volunteer, and church elder, died Saturday, May 13, of heart failure at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center. Capt. Lufkin served in the Navy Nurse Corps from 1966 to 1992 and earned a dozen medals, stars, ribbons and citations, including the Meritorious Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. She was the charge nurse of an 18-bed intensive-care unit on the hospital ship USS Repose and spent a year during 1968 and 1969 treating injured soldiers and marines off the coast of South Vietnam. She had later assignments as charge nurse at Philadelphia Naval Hospital and patient care coordinator at Navy medical centers in Portsmouth, Va., and Charleston, S.C.

[Laurent House: A testament to design, accessibility, and the VA Specially Adapted Housing program](#) [Erin Byrum, *VA News Service*, 7 June 2023]

Adapted Housing (SAH) program, which provides grants to Veterans and service members with certain, serious service-connected disabilities to adapt their homes to suit their unique needs while enhancing their ability to live more independently. One of the more fascinating stories involves the Laurent House. Nestled in the picturesque city of Rockford, Illinois, the [Laurent House](#) stands as an architectural gem with a unique history. Designed by the legendary Frank Lloyd Wright, this remarkable residence holds a special place in the hearts of many, not just for its aesthetic brilliance as the only purpose-built accessible home ever designed by Wright, but also for its connection to a disabled WWII Veteran Kenneth Laurent.

[Mental health resources available for women veterans](#) [David Luback, *Military Times*, 7 June 2023]

About 10 years ago, Veterans Administration hospitals started to see a rise in women scheduling mental health appointments – a trend that seemed to catch healthcare workers off guard. “At that time, the VA really didn’t have a huge infrastructure related to women’s health,” said Jena Hedrick-Walker, the director of strategic development for Loyal Source, a veteran-friendly healthcare company. “Women would go to the VA and get asked, ‘Where is your spouse?’ and they’d say, ‘This is my appointment. I’m a veteran.’” Thanks to the efforts of people like Hedrick-Walker, the suicide rates of women in the military have gone down. The decreasing numbers indicate that the VA and other veterans organizations are recognizing the challenges women veterans sometimes struggle with, said Hedrick-Walker.

[V Corps DCG welcomes heroes to 79th anniversary observance](#) [Sgt. Maj. Michael Pintagro, *Army News Service*, 2 June 2023]

Forty-five U.S. veterans of the “D-Day” invasion of Europe received a markedly different reception on their return for 79th anniversary commemorative events than they did when well-positioned Wehrmacht soldiers contested the Allied landing in June of 1944. The veterans received a heroes’ welcome from Maj. Gen. Jeffery Broadwater, V Corps deputy commanding general, civic leaders, diplomats, corporate sponsors, event volunteers and an enthusiastic crowd of well-wishers. Senior French military officers,

the U.S. ambassador to France and local officials as well as airport managers and event organizers participated prominently in the welcome event, held at the Deauville-Normandie Airport.

[WWII veteran leaves legacy of family, heroism](#) [Rick Emert, Army News Service, 1 June 2023]

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Chandler Caldwell earned awards for valor and meritorious service in a military career that started with the U.S. Marine Corps in World War II and ended with the U.S. Army upon his retirement in 1969, just a short time after he did combat tours in Vietnam. Many would say Chandler Caldwell, who passed away in April at the age of 98 and was laid to rest in Trinidad during a private ceremony with full military honors on Memorial Day, May 29, 2023, was a true American hero.