

## Politics

## 'If not now, when?'

## Black women eye political spotlight

MARIETTA, Ga, Aug 3, (AP): The little girl ran up to her, wide-eyed and giddy. "Are you Charisse Davis?" the fourth grader asked.

Davis was stunned. A former kindergarten teacher and librarian, she was more accustomed to shuttling her two sons to basketball practice than being seen as a local celebrity. But she had been elected the only Black woman on the Cobb County School Board, gaining office in a once conservative suburban community where people who look like her rarely held positions of power.

Something had changed in this place, and something had changed in her.

"I love your hair — your hair looks like my hair," the girl squealed, calling friends over.



Bass

It was a moment both innocent and revealing: Not just a child seeing herself in an elected leader, but also a reflection of the rapidly building power of Black women. It's a momentous change that could make history on a national ticket and determine the outcome of the presidential race.

Black women have long been the heart of the Democratic Party — among the party's most reliable and loyal voters — but for decades that allegiance didn't translate to their own political rise. There have been zero Black female governors, just two senators, several dozen congresswomen. And the people representing them instead have not met their needs: Disparities, sometimes deadly ones, persist in healthcare, policing, education and economics.

Now Black women are mobilized and demanding an overdue return on their investment. Over the last several years and across America, Black women ran and won elections in historic numbers, from Congress to county school boards.

Just two years ago, five Black women were elected to Congress, four of them in majority-white districts, according to the Higher Heights Black Women in American Politics 2019 survey.

Now Joe Biden has pledged to pick a woman as his running mate, and at least six of the contenders are Black — including California Rep **Karen Bass**, who said, "I think what we're looking for is representation, acknowledgement, inclusion."

This transformation is taking place in once unlikely places, suburban counties in the South. Places like Cobb, a rambling expanse of strip malls and subdivisions just north of Atlanta that doubled in population midway through the last century as white people fled the city. Then, slowly, families of color followed, also seeking bigger yards and better schools.

The year Charisse Davis was born, 1980, Cobb County was 4.5% African American. Now it's more than 27% Black and 13% Hispanic. Its politics caught up with its demographics: In 2016 Hillary Clinton was the first Democratic presidential candidate to eke out a win in Cobb County since Jimmy Carter, a Georgian, in 1976.

## Divisions

President Donald Trump's presidency, which has fueled racial divisions and appealed to white grievance, unleashed for some here an overwhelming urgency. Black women added their names to down-ticket ballots; they are canvassing, knocking on doors.

These advocates emphasize that Trump's administration has failed to contain the coronavirus that has killed more than 154,000 Americans, a disproportionate share of them African Americans. He has responded to mass demonstrations over police violence by calling protesters thugs and encouraging law enforcement to beat them back with force.

When Stacey Abrams, a Black progressive Democrat, ran for governor in 2018, she focused her campaign on women of color. In that election, more than 51,000 Black women in Cobb County cast ballots — 20,000 more than voted in midterm elections four years earlier.

Although Abrams lost narrowly statewide, she won Cobb County handily.

"Given how directly Black women have been impacted by the incompetence and the malfeasance of the Trump administration, Black women are going to be at the forefront, not only giving rise to voter turnout, but also shaping the conversations that we will be having in this election season," said Abrams, whose name has also been widely circulated as a possible Biden running mate. "It has been a sea change in how vital our voices have been."

In Cobb County, Charisse Davis looked at the school board members, saw no Black women, so she ran and won. Meanwhile, for the first time a Black woman became the chair of the county's young Republicans. Two joined the Superior Court bench. A teenager ran for class president, and she won, too.

Black women can meet this moment in a way no one else can, they say: The world watched the video of George Floyd begging for his mother as he was dying under a police officer's knee.

Charisse Davis' sons, 10 and 14 years old, asked her: Why won't the officer just let him get up?

When she looks at her own sons, she sees her babies. But the older boy is now taller than she is. He likes hoodies. She worries a stranger might see him as a menace, not a boy whose mother still has to remind him to floss his teeth.

"That is the reality of being a Black mother in this country," she said.

But despite progress, Black women remain underrepresented.

Although they make up about 7.5% of the electorate, less than 2% of statewide elected executive offices were held by Black women as of November 2019. They account for less than 5% of officeholders elected to statewide executive offices, Congress, and state legislatures, according to the Higher Heights survey.

And in Cobb County, Charisse Davis gets messages after school board meetings: "People like you are the problem," one said. "She's a racist," a man wrote. Another described her as "defiant," and said he had his son watch school board meetings "to see how he shouldn't behave."

She hears: You don't belong here.

"You are dismantling the machine, rocking the boat, and all of those things are the way that they are by design," she said, and added that one of the high schools in the district she represents is named after a Confederate officer.

"That is what the county is built on, that is racism, that is systemic racism, that is white supremacy. It's all these things we don't talk about. But if not now, when?"



Democratic presidential candidate former Vice-President Joe Biden speaks at a campaign event at the William 'Hicks' Anderson Community Center in Wilmington, Del on July 28, 2020. (AP)

## Politics

## Trump's slide worries GOP

## House Democrats seek to hold suburbs

WASHINGTON, Aug 3, (AP): In a suburban Houston congressional district that backed President Donald Trump in 2016, a twice-elected Republican sheriff is battling a Democrat who's the son of an immigrant from India. To Democrats, that smells like an opportunity.

Things are flipped in central New York, where freshman Democratic Rep. Anthony Brindisi faces the Republican he ousted two years ago from a district near Syracuse that includes smaller cities like Binghamton and Utica. Trump won there easily, and Republicans say his place atop the ticket will help propel Claudia Tenney back to Congress.

The tale of two districts 1,600 miles apart spotlights that many pivotal House races hinge on suburban voters. While some like Brindisi's have a more rural, blue collar feel than the diverse, better educated one outside Houston, an overriding factor will be how Trump is viewed in the district.

And that's a problem for the GOP.

Two years after a 40-seat surge fueled by wins in the suburbs hoisted Democrats to House control, Republican hopes of recapturing the majority have buckled along with Trump's approval ratings. Some worry that the party will lose seats, an agonizing letdown from their one-time dream of retaking control by gaining 17 seats.

"My fear for Republicans is there are simply not enough rural voters to offset the losses they've suffered in the suburbs these last few years," said former Rep. Charlie Dent, R-Pa., a Trump critic. "It's certainly possible the Democrats could pick up more than a few seats."

Democrats boast an ever-expanding target list that includes a half-dozen Republican seats in Texas plus others outside Atlanta, Cincinnati, Los Angeles and Phoenix. They hope to win in traditionally red strongholds like Alaska, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska and rural Virginia,

while toppling New Jersey Rep. Jeff Van Drew, who defected to the GOP last year.

"We're still on offense," said Rep. Cheri Bustos, D-Ill., who leads House Democrats' campaign organization. She didn't predict how many seats her party would win.

Republicans have opportunities too, including in small town areas in central California, Iowa, Minnesota, New Mexico and Virginia. They're spending money on suburban seats they've previously lost in Georgia, Minnesota and Texas, plus others in Salt Lake City, Oklahoma City, New York City's Staten Island and Charleston, South Carolina.

Spokesman Bob Salera of the National Republican Congressional Committee, the House GOP's political arm, said Republicans will gain seats because progressives' proposals on policing and health care will be "totally toxic among suburban voters."

But Democrats are fortifying their chances with a money-raising bonanza. Since January 2019, all 29 Democrats in House districts Trump carried in 2016 have banked more money than their GOP challengers, usually by multiples. The same is true for all but two of the 24 other Democrats in seats Republicans said they'd pursue aggressively this year.

"That's testament to the environment," said GOP pollster Jon McHenry, citing the presidential race's impact on down-ballot contests. "And it's a wake-up call."

Further bolstering Democrats is repulsion among educated voters over Trump's racially inflammatory tirades, his mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic and crippled economy, and the fact that many suburbs are growing more diverse.

All that could prove telling in the Houston-area district where Democrat Sri Preston Kulkarni is battling GOP

Sheriff Troy Nehls.

The suburban district has been trending away from Republicans as it becomes wealthier and more diverse, with Trump's 8-point victory there well below 2012 GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney's 25-point win. The district has so many minorities that Kulkarni's campaign literature is in 21 languages.

Houston has also seen a major virus resurgence. "It's the greatest failure of leadership in American history," Kulkarni said of Trump's pandemic response.

The American-born Kulkarni left college temporarily when his father was dying of cancer to help provide care and to aid the family's struggle with medical bills. He wields the story as a cautionary tale as Democrats make health care their top issue during a pandemic in which Republicans want the Supreme Court to overturn former President Barack Obama's health care law.

A former foreign service officer, Kulkarni lost a 2018 bid for the seat to GOP Rep. Pete Olson, who chose to retire after that close call. Outspent last time, Kulkarni has raised five times what Nehls has collected.

Nehls served two decades in the Army Reserve and is sheriff of Fort Bend County, which dominates the congressional district. He's emphasized his "proven independent brand" as a sheriff used to "building bridges" with "diverse communities," said campaign spokesman Nick Maddux.

Yet Nehls hasn't hid his support for Trump, attending when the president visited Texas recently. He's shared Trump's disdain for protective masks, writing that a local mandatory mask order "looks more like a communist dictatorship than a free Republic." In a digital ad early this year, the announcer boasted that as sheriff, Nehls "locked up over 2,500 criminal illegal immigrants."

Services empower remote working and increase efficiency during current situation

## Zain offers wide range of digital and cloud solutions to corporate customers



Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the offering of a wide range of digital and cloud solutions to corporate customers, allowing them to increase operational efficiency and empower remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic over Zain's superfast and nationwide network.

Zain offers these solutions as part of its national commitment towards the nation during this crisis, through which the company reflects its role as a leading Kuwaiti private sector organization by making its tech capabilities available. The company is keen on offering the most advanced services and solutions as per the highest international standards to facilitate the continuous operation of government entities and companies of all sizes, while serving their unique needs during the current situation, all while empowering them into digital transformation.

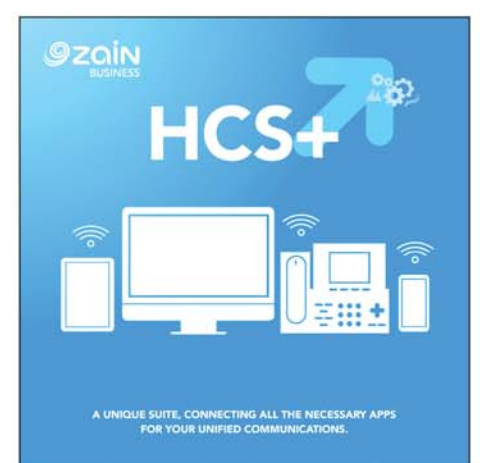
The services and solutions Zain offers include @Lasilki, a world-class Push-to-talk (PTT) service that enables corporate customers, SMEs, and public sector entities to reliably and securely communicate



with their employees, volunteers, or others, whether individuals or large groups. The service is compatible with Zain's nationwide LTE 4G network for solid and fast communication over long distances. @Lasilki features a wide range of advanced devices that allows each organization to choose the device that best suits their needs. The service also comes with the dispatcher management application in the control room and more features to guarantee the highest operational efficiency.

Zain also offers Vehicle Tracking System (VTS) and Fleet Management services, which allow corporate customers who own fleets of vehicles for e-commerce or other purposes to track their vehicles over an M2M (Machine-to-Machine) platform. By installing smart devices on their vehicles, business owners are able to smartly manage their fleets and gain actionable data and detailed insights, enabling them to reduce fleet-related costs, as well as optimize delivery and maintenance procedures.

Additionally, Zain offers Hosted Collaboration



Solutions (HCS and HCS+) that feature a wide range of contact center and customer service solutions, allowing corporate customers to build and operate their own integrated contact centers capable of operating remotely and from home. This contributes to increasing customer satisfaction levels and ensuring fast and reliable customer service during the crisis. Zain HCS and HCS+ solutions include Interactive Voice Response (IVR), call recordings, advanced call queues, and much more. The solutions support eight different languages to facilitate communication with all customers.

Zain strongly believes in the crucial role played by private sector organizations in supporting social and economic sustainability projects, especially during crises. Springing from its growing commitment towards practicing its social responsibility, the company is committed to printing a positive print through all its activities. This has led Zain to embrace the most crucial issues in the community, including the support of the country's entities by making its tech capabilities available.