

DEOMI NEWS LINKS, 16 OCTOBER 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

[Chamber of Commerce pushes back on Trump extending ban on racial discrimination training](#)

[Alex Gangitano, *The Hill*, 15 October 2020]

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce urged President Trump to withdraw his executive order that extended his administration's ban on race- and sex-based discrimination training to include federal contractors. The Chamber, joined by more than 150 state and local chambers, trade associations and nonprofits, wrote a letter to Trump on Thursday, saying the order creates significant obstacles for employers. "Many of our members are federal contractors and subcontractors that will be covered by this E.O. As currently written, we believe the E.O. will create confusion and uncertainty, lead to non-meritorious investigations, and hinder the ability of employers to implement critical programs to promote diversity and combat discrimination in the workplace," the groups wrote.

[SEE ALSO] [Business Groups Urge Trump to Withdraw Order on Diversity Training](#)

[First monument honoring all military women to be unveiled at Arlington](#) [Nikki Wentling, *Stars and Stripes*, 9 October 2020]

The Women in Military Service for America Memorial, at the gateway to Arlington National Cemetery, is regularly placed on lists of "hidden gems" within the nation's capital—a perspective on the memorial that its leaders are trying to change. "I don't want it to be hidden," said Phyllis Wilson, president of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation and a retired chief warrant officer. The memorial has been closed for about seven months during the coronavirus pandemic. It reopens Oct. 18 with a new feature that Wilson hopes will draw more people inside: the first monument in the Washington area that honors all military women.

[Time's Up study: Many who report harassment face retaliation](#) [Jocelyn Noveck, *The Associated Press*, 15 October 2020]

*Three years into the #MeToo movement, there may be more awareness around workplace sexual harassment. But a new [report](#) finds that almost three-quarters of people reporting such harassment suffer from retaliation if they complain. More than 7 out of 10 people who reported sexual harassment at the workplace said they faced some form of retaliation, up to and including being fired, said the report. It analyzed 3,317 online requests for legal help from the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, between January 2018 and the end of April 2020. The finding on retaliation was one of the most striking of the broad-ranging report, shared with *The Associated Press* ahead of its release Thursday. It also found that workplace harassment severely impacted workers' economic, physical and mental health, and that often, people were subjected to more than one form of workplace harassment—both sexual and racial, for example.*

[SEE ALSO]

CULTURE

[Disney updates content warning for racism in classic films](#) [BBC News, 16 October 2020]

A content advisory notice for racism in classic Disney films, in place since last year, has been updated with a strengthened message. When played on the Disney+ streaming service, films such as Dumbo, Peter Pan and Jungle Book now flash up with a warning about stereotypes. “This program includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures,” the warning says. “These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now.” The message adds that rather than remove the content, “we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together”.

[Historically Black school renames hall honoring KKK leader](#) [Jay Reeves, *The Associated Press*, 15 October 2020]

A historically Black university in Alabama has renamed a dormitory that honored a one-time governor who also led a Ku Klux Klan chapter nearly a century ago. Workers at Alabama State University removed the name “Bibb Graves” from a residence hall on Wednesday. The building had carried Graves’ name since 1928, when he served as the head of a state government that constitutionally mandated White supremacy. At least two other state schools also have renamed campus buildings that honored Graves, who was known as a pro-education, progressive governor despite leading a KKK chapter in the capital city. Klan membership was so large at the time that politicians used connections in the racist terror group to win votes.

[Merriam-Webster dictionary updates “sexual preference” entry after Amy Coney Barrett hearing](#) [Ryan W. Miller, *USA TODAY*, 15 October 2020]

Merriam-Webster, the noted reference book and dictionary publisher, added the word “offensive” to its entry and usage guidance of “preference” and “sexual preference” when referring to sexual orientation after the issue came up during Supreme Court confirmation hearings for Judge Amy Coney Barrett. During the hearing Tuesday, Barrett was asked whether she agrees with the late Justice Antonin Scalia’s criticism of the same-sex marriage ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges—the landmark case which legalized gay marriage in the United States and which advocates worry Barrett would not support if confirmed to the nation’s highest court. Barrett’s answered, “I have never discriminated on the basis of sexual preference and would never discriminate on the basis of sexual preference.” That response drew considerable blowback LGBTQ advocates who say “sexual preference” wrongly implies that sexuality is a choice.

[A gender neutral Spanish pronoun? For some, “elle” is the word.](#) [Sakshi Venkatraman, *NBC News*, 14 October 2020]

*In recent years, activists and academics in the U.S. and Latin America have opened a dialogue about inclusivity in Spanish, a gender-defined language in which most nouns are assigned either a masculine -o ending or a feminine -a ending. The -e ending has become common [as other gender-inclusive terms](#) like “Latinx” and “Latine” grow in prominence. As pronoun options for trans and nonbinary individuals become more recognized in the United States, linguists say a similar push can be seen in Spanish-speaking countries. Mexican-American lexicographer and Amherst University professor Ilan Stavans told *NBC Latino* that he’s heard the “elle” pronoun used in progressive and academic spaces, but not so much in the mainstream yet. “They resemble the*

efforts done in the United States to give that type of linguistic neutrality,” Stavans said. “They seem to me to be scattered.”

[The secret history of Confederate post names the Army never wanted you to see](#) [Paul Szoldra, *Task & Purpose*, 14 October 2020]

Army officials had argued for years against changing the names of its posts, insisting that officers who had fought against the United States during the Civil War had a “significant,” if painful place in its history. Naming an installation in honor of Braxton Bragg, a general and military advisor to the Confederate president, or for John Brown Gordon, a Confederate major general and reputed leader of the Ku Klux Klan, was done “in the spirit of reconciliation, not division,” an Army spokesman said in 2015. “With the exception of Ft. Meade in the interwar period, the Army has exercised its discretion in naming posts. As such, it has the authority to rename them,” Jon T. Hoffman, the Center’s chief historian, summarized. “Although many major bases in the south are now named for Confederate officers, there is considerable historic precedent for naming bases after non-Confederates.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[This small town’s battle over gay Pride flags is helping fuel a national debate](#) [Julie Compton, *NBC News*, 14 October 2020]

For the past two years, residents in the small Rocky Mountain town of Heber City, Utah, have seen their main street bedecked with rainbow banners in celebration of Pride Month in June. However, after the City Council voted for a controversial ordinance regulating banners, LGBTQ advocates said they fear the colorful displays will be a thing of the past. A day after they appeared along Main Street, residents filled a city council meeting to voice divided opinions over them. While many were thrilled, others saw the rainbow banners as government-sanctioned “political speech,” according to Potter. She said city officials began receiving phone calls and emails from people who wanted to know if they could hypothetically apply to install flags with anti-abortion or anti-pornography messages, or with Ku Klux Klan or Nazi symbols, though no one actually applied to install such banners.

[The Navy is reconsidering its war on beards](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 13 October 2020]

*A Navy task force looking into ending racial disparities and injustice within the service is considering whether sailors should be allowed to have beards, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday said on Tuesday. “We’re going to take another look at it,” Gilday [told](#) Defense One editor Bradley Peniston during an interview on Tuesday. “So, if people are complaining about it, I’m not going to play deaf ears and think that I have all of the answers in my beautiful office in the Pentagon.” Gilday’s comments came in response to a question from *Task & Purpose*.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

DISCRIMINATION

[White Veterans Affairs employees twice as likely to be promoted as Black staff, union says](#) [Abbie Bennett, *ConnectingVets.com*, 15 October 2020]

White employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs were twice as likely to be chosen for promotions to management positions they applied for as Black employees, VA data shows. The American Federation of Government Employees, a union representing 265,000 of VA's nearly 400,000 workers, [released data](#) obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests showing promotion statistics from 2017 through mid-2020. In fiscal year 2019, for example, 6,711 employees were selected for management positions out of 176,352 who applied. About 23% of applicants were Black and 33% were White. But of the 40,578 Black employees who applied, about 2.5% were selected for promotion compared to 4.7% of the 58,803 White workers who applied. About 12% of White VA employees are in leadership positions. Fewer than 4% of Black VA staff are in positions of leadership

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Effort to bar LGBTQ discrimination moves ahead in Michigan](#) [David Eggert, *The Associated Press*, 14 October 2020]

A ballot drive has turned in more than 483,000 signatures for an initiative to prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ people in Michigan by amending the state's civil rights law. If election officials determine roughly 340,000 are valid, the bill would be placed before the Republican-led Legislature, where similar legislation has long stalled. If lawmakers did not adopt the measure within 40 days, it would go to a statewide vote in November 2022. In June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a landmark federal civil rights law protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from discrimination in employment. Backers of the Michigan measure said it would provide broader protections in local employment, housing and public accommodations.

[School Suspension Data Shows Glaring Disparities in Discipline by Race](#) [Lauren Camera, *U.S. News & World Report*, 13 October 2020]

Students missed out on 11 million instructional days due to out-of-school suspensions in a single academic year, according to new research that details major disparities in how those suspensions are given to Black and Hispanic students and paints a portrait of an alarming and systemic problem with school discipline in the U.S. The findings headline a new report from the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the UCLA Civil Rights Project and the Learning Policy Institute, which analyzed federal data from the 2015-16 school year for nearly every school district in the country.

DIVERSITY

[Don't Cancel Federal Diversity Training, Fix It](#) [Susan S. Harmeling and Charles M. Henderson, *GovExec*, 15 October 2020] [OPINION]

Our own research shows that mandatory online trainings or cookie-cutter seminars with slides explaining "implicit bias" and other forms of bias and discrimination are [largely ineffective](#), and often [counterproductive](#). What does work is a narrative approach where employees lead with the stories of their lives. By telling our own stories and understanding those of others, we can arrive at a place of greater mutual understanding and, most importantly, trust. Based on our research, we feel that the only way up from the current low point of race relations in this country is through stories, which inherently lead to a sense of inclusion in the broader American experiment. There are no shortcuts—no 45-minute "diversity and inclusion" training sessions, no slide decks—that

will do the work of creating a truly inclusive, welcoming environment in all our institutions—including the federal government. There is only us, sharing our stories in the hope of a more equitable tomorrow.

[All-female crew makes history at Florida fire department](#) [Caitlin O’Kane, CBS News, 14 October 2020]

A fire crew recently made history in Florida at Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue. A crew comprised entirely of women worked a shift together for the first time in the department’s 57-year history. They all worked together last month, and knew it was a momentous day. “That was captain, driver engineer, firefighter, rescue lieutenant, and paramedic,” Krystyna Tesia Krakowski, a rescue lieutenant, told CBS affiliate WPEC-TV. The next day, the station went back to a nearly all-male crew—but for one day, girls ruled. “I am completely humbled,” Krakowski said. “I think we all are. It’s empowering. We’re all about women empowerment. It’s exciting. It’s sad that that’s not the norm but it’s becoming the norm.”

[Deaf people are being left out of the conversation during COVID-19 pandemic](#) [Rheana Murray, NBC News, 14 October 2020]

Across the country, people who are deaf or hard of hearing have been feeling the effects of the pandemic in myriad ways, with communication perhaps being the most obvious hurdle. Masks are a challenge: It is impossible to lip-read when someone is wearing one. (Clear masks may be one solution, although they’re not perfect.) Signing is affected, too, since the language is not simply about the signs the hands makes; it also relies on facial movements and expressions. Some deaf people have found that hearing people are quick to pull down their masks in their presence, which can be helpful from a communication perspective, but risky when it comes to the virus, as infection rates have begun to rise again.

[Santa Ana Montford Point Marine posthumously awarded Congressional Gold Medal](#) [Erika I. Ritchie, *The Orange County Register* (Anaheim, Cal.), 12 October 2020]

Brenda Matthews heard about Black Marines who served at Camp Lejeune’s Montford Point Camp during and right after World War II being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, and she wanted the same thing for her father, Gunnery Sgt. Charles Shaw, who died Oct. 29, 1979, at 62. On Saturday, Oct. 10, Matthews, of Anaheim Hills, her five siblings, family and friends gathered at Friendship Baptist Church in Yorba Linda. In a long-awaited ceremony, Matthews finally got what she had been waiting so long for when retired Marine Staff Sgt. Mike Johnson, the Montford Point Marine Association’s national vice president, laid a bronze replica of the gold medal in her hands and read the official citation. The medal—about 3 inches in diameter and 1/4 inch thick—is engraved with three Black Marines’ faces. On the back, it reads: “For outstanding perseverance and courage that inspired social change in the Marine Corps.”

[REPRINT]

[Transgender Man’s Dream of Joining U.S. Military Thwarted for Now](#) [Rollo Ross, Reuters, 12 October 2020]

Paulo Batista is lifting weights and hitting the books, striving to fulfill his father’s dying wish for him to join the U.S. military. But he says all he has heard from the armed forces is either silence or

a door slamming shut. Batista is transgender, effectively banned from military service under a policy announced by U.S. President Donald Trump in 2017 and formally adopted in 2019, reversing a policy former President Barack Obama's administration had enacted, after extensive review, to allow transgender military service. Still, Batista continues his quest, hopeful of a waiver or a policy change that might let him in, even as military recruiters rebuff his entreaties.

[Women in combat wear armor designed for men. That's finally changing in 2020.](#) [Tom Vanden Brook, *USA TODAY*, 12 October 2020]

For Air Force Maj. Julie Roloson, new body armor being fielded specifically for women is more than a matter of fit and weight. It could be life or death. Roloson, 34, commands the 88th Security Forces Squadron at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and says the new vest, tailored to fit women and lighter than men's versions, gives her a better chance to fight and shoot. Fighting and shooting. Basic requirements for combat jobs, all of which the Pentagon opened to women five years ago. From helmets to accommodate a hair bun to maternity flight suits, gear designed for women is being developed and issued, changing the way the previously one-male-size-fits-all military outfits troops.

["It was an honor": U.S. Army soldier, one of the first women to earn Ranger tab, on leading Ruth Bader Ginsburg's lying in state ceremony](#) [David Choi, *Business Insider*, 8 October 2020]

One of the first women to complete the U.S. Army's Ranger School had the distinct honor of leading Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's lying in state procession at the U.S. Capitol in late September, a ceremony the soldier described as humbling because of its significance. "I am a huge fan of really strong leaders, and I think that Justice Ginsburg was able to champion a lot of things," U.S. Army Capt. Shaye Haver, a company commander of 1st Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, told Insider. "I think that anybody can be proud of and inspired by that. It was an honor to be part of such a large-scale operation to honor a person like that."

MISCELLANEOUS

[Bernard Cohen, lawyer who took on mixed marriage laws, dies](#) [Matthew Barakat, *The Associated Press*, 14 October 2020]

Bernard S. Cohen, who won a landmark case that led to the U.S. Supreme Court's rejection of laws forbidding interracial marriage and later went on to a successful political career as a state legislator, has died. He was 86. Cohen and legal colleague Phil Hirschkop represented Richard and Mildred Loving, a White man and Black woman who were convicted in Virginia in 1959 of illegally cohabiting as man and wife and ordered to leave the state for 25 years. Cohen and Hirschkop represented the Lovings as they sought to have their conviction overturned. It resulted in the Supreme Court's unanimous 1967 [Loving v. Virginia](#) ruling, which declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional.

[Six months after the disappearance and death of Vanessa Guillén, Army changes how missing soldiers are reported](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 14 October 2020]

After a summer of seemingly-never-ending bad news regarding missing soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, the Army is changing its policies for how missing soldiers are reported. In a new action

plan sent out to Army leaders on Tuesday—which was obtained by Task & Purpose and details the service’s path forward on its new number one priority, people—Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville, and Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston say that new guidance on reporting missing soldiers will be released in “the coming weeks.”

[Army to Shake Up Training, Rotational Deployments to Allow Time for Unit Bonding](#) [Hope Hodge Seck, *Military.com*, 13 October 2020]

The secretary of the Army cited the murder of Spc. Vanessa Guillen earlier this year as he outlined aggressive changes intended to improve unit dynamics and prioritize investment in troops. Speaking at the virtual opening ceremony of the Association of the United States Army’s annual conference Tuesday, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said the service plans to scale back time-intensive training demands and make some deployments less onerous. “We are removing gated training requirements and are reducing the demands of rotational deployments,” McCarthy said. “We will focus our training on the basics of individual, squad, platoon and company-level training and key leader training while reducing the requirement to conduct brigade and battalion live-fire exercises.”

[Air Force Academy: Enlisted faculty experiment shows promise, but more study needed](#) [Stephen Losey, *Air Force Times*, 12 October 2020]

The Air Force Academy says its experiment with having senior noncommissioned officers serve as faculty is showing promise after its first year—but needs much more study to decide if it is worth keeping. The academy, based in Colorado Springs, Colorado, began the process of hiring SNCOs as accredited academic faculty instructors for the first time in 2019. Enlisted airmen previously taught at the academy on occasion, but they were not official faculty members. This summer, it finished and released a report on its Enlisted Academic Faculty Program, the academy said in a Sept. 28 release.

[Facebook bans Holocaust denial, distortion posts](#) [Matt O’Brien, *The Associated Press*, 12 October 2020]

Facebook is banning posts that deny or distort the Holocaust and will start directing people to authoritative sources if they search for information about the Nazi genocide. The decision comes amid a push by Holocaust survivors around the world who [lent their voices](#) to a campaign targeting Zuckerberg beginning this summer, urging him to take action to remove Holocaust denial posts from the social media site. Facebook said Monday that the new policy “is supported by the well-documented rise in anti-Semitism globally and the alarming level of ignorance about the Holocaust, especially among young people.” Surveys have shown some younger Americans believe the Holocaust was a myth or has been exaggerated.

[First survey of West Point cadets’ attitudes about civil-military relations raises concerns](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 12 October 2020]

In the midst of a challenging year for civil-military relations in America, the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York, has allowed an unprecedented and timely research survey of more than 1,400 cadets’ attitudes on civil-military relations. The survey’s authors say their views do not reflect the position of the United States Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or

the Department of Defense. But some of the results offer a striking view of the challenges West Point faces in working to mold an apolitical officer corps. Among other things, the survey found that 28 percent of cadets indicated they wouldn't "resist civilian orders that threaten the country's democratic traditions."

MISCONDUCT

[Chief Bass: Disrespect of fellow airmen must stop—now](#) [Stephen Losey, *Air Force Times*, 8 October 2020]

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne Bass on Thursday delivered a strong message to airmen who think it's funny to harass or disrespect their fellow airmen: "Respect is non-negotiable." In a series of tweets and on her Facebook page, Bass responded to a Sept. 4 op-ed in Air Force Times by Staff Sgt. Heather Fejerang about the harassment she and her sister received after the Air Force wrote a story about them deploying together to Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. In her tweet thread, Bass said that she had her staff put her in touch with Fejerang after she read the op-ed several weeks ago. Bass said she applauded Fejerang for how she and her sister handled "being disrespected by our brothers and sisters in arms," and apologized for how their fellow service members behaved. "RESPECT is foundational to our profession," Bass tweeted. "It's an imperative. We all have a personal responsibility to respect others and respect ourselves."

RACISM

[DEA recruits cite "monkey noises" among claims of racism](#) [Jim Mustian, *The Associated Press*, 16 October 2020]

At the Drug Enforcement Administration's Training Academy in Virginia last year, an instructor on the firing range called out a name that was shared by two trainees, one Black and one White. When both responded, the White instructor clarified, "I meant the monkey." That behavior, as alleged in an internal complaint, didn't stop there. The instructor also was accused of going on the loudspeaker in the tower of the outdoor firing range to taunt Black trainees by making "monkey noises." "We were like, 'It's 2019. That shouldn't even be a thing that we're dealing with,'" said Derek Moise, who did not hear the noises himself but recalled the discomfort they caused his fellow Black trainees who did. "Everybody knows what those sounds and noises stand for." As the DEA continues a decades-long struggle to diversify its ranks, it has received a string of recent complaints describing a culture of racial discrimination at its training academy in which minorities are singled out, derided with insults and consistently held to a higher standard than their White counterparts, according to interviews with former recruits and law enforcement officials and records obtained by The Associated Press.

[Man described as neo-Nazi pleads guilty in synagogue plot](#) [Colleen Slevin, *The Associated Press*, 15 October 2020]

A man described by U.S. prosecutors as a neo-Nazi and White supremacist pleaded guilty on Thursday to a hate crime for plotting to bomb a historic Colorado synagogue last year. Richard Holzer, 28, pleaded guilty to attempting to stop people from exercising their religion with an explosive or fire and attempting to destroy a building used in interstate commerce in a plea deal

with prosecutors. Holzer's guilty plea is a reminder that hate crimes will not be tolerated in the state, Scott Levin, the director of the Anti-Defamation League Mountain States Region said. "Hate crimes damage the social fabric of our society and fragment communities. It is critical that those who seek to harm others because of their religion, race, national origin, sexual orientation or any other defining characteristic, be held accountable for their crimes," he said. According to the league, the number of anti-Semitic incidents reported in Colorado increased 56% from 2018 to 2019.

[Secret tapes show neo-Nazi group The Base recruiting former members of the military](#) [Samantha Springer, *NBC News*, 15 October 2020]

Secret recordings of a militant neo-Nazi organization called The Base reveal that the group is recruiting people with military expertise in the U.S. and Canada to train in military operations and prepare to take advantage of what they believe is impending societal collapse. The audio recordings are from calls between the leader of The Base and more than 100 prospective recruits using the encrypted app Wire. Twenty percent of the prospective recruits who were recorded said they were active-duty military or had served in the military in some capacity, said documentary filmmaker Jamila Paksima, a co-host of the podcast. The Justice Department calls The Base a "violent extremist group." Members of The Base in the U.S. have been arrested on charges of possession of weapons, vandalism and conspiracy to commit murder.

[AP Road Trip: Racial tensions in America's "sundown towns"](#) [Tim Sullivan and Noreen Nasir, *The Associated Press*, 14 October 2020]

Ask around this time-battered Midwestern town, with its empty storefronts, dusty antique shops and businesses that have migrated toward the interstate, and nearly everyone will tell you that Black and White residents get along really well... But in Vienna, as in hundreds of mostly White towns with similar histories across America, much is left unspoken. Around here, almost no one talks openly about the violence that drove out Black residents nearly 70 years ago, or even whispers the name these places were given: "sundown towns."

[White woman charged in racist NYC run-in made a 2nd 911 call](#) [Michael R. Sisak, *The Associated Press*, 14 October 2020]

Amy Cooper, the White woman charged with filing a false police report for calling 911 during a dispute with a Black man in New York's Central Park in May, made a second, previously unreported call in which she falsely claimed the man had "tried to assault her," a prosecutor said Wednesday. Assistant District Attorney Joan Illuzzi-Orbon described the second call as Cooper was being arraigned by video in a case that had garnered worldwide attention but was put on hold for months because of the coronavirus pandemic. Cooper did not enter a plea to the misdemeanor charge. "Using a police in a way that is was both racially offensive and designed to intimidate is something that can't be ignored. Therefore we charged her," said Illuzzi, whose last high-profile prosecution sent Harvey Weinstein to prison in March for rape.

[Why decades of trying to end racial segregation in gifted education haven't worked](#) [Danielle Dreilinger, *The Hechinger Report*, 14 October 2020]

Nearly 60 percent of students in gifted education are White, according to the [most recent federal data](#), compared to 50 percent of public school enrollment overall. Black students, in contrast, made up 9 percent of students in gifted education, although they were 15 percent of the overall student population. Many factors contribute to this disparity. Gifted education has racism in its roots: Lewis Terman, the psychologist who in the 1910s popularized the concept of “IQ” that became the foundation of gifted testing, was a eugenicist. And admissions for gifted programs tend to favor children with wealthy, educated parents, who are more likely to be White. In a three-part series, *The Hechinger Report* and *NBC News* examined the ways that gifted education has maintained segregation in American schools; how some districts are trying to diversify gifted classes or get rid of them altogether; and how scientific progress in gene testing could boost—and complicate—efforts to make gifted programs fairer.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[“An unbelievable chain of oppression”](#): America’s history of racism was a preexisting condition for COVID-19 [Alan Gomez, Wyatte Grantham-Philips, Trevor Hughes, Rick Jervis, Rebecca Plevin, Kameel Stanley, Dennis Wagner, Marco della Cava, Deborah Barfield Berry and Mark Nichols, *USA TODAY*, 13 October 2020]

In a six-part series, USA TODAY investigates how racist policies of the past and present have fueled high COVID-19 deaths in communities of color. America’s education and economic systems are still unequal, disproportionately leaving people of color out of higher-wage jobs. When COVID-19 struck, more people of color were serving as essential workers directly in the path of the virus. Decades of discrimination in housing corralled people of color into tightly packed neighborhoods, fueling the virus’ spread. Those neighborhoods tend to lie in “food deserts,” leading to diabetes, obesity and heart disease that make people more likely to die from the virus. Environmental policies designed by White power brokers at the expense of the poor has poisoned the air they breathe, fueling cancers and leaving communities weakened in the path of the virus. A lack of federal funding left the most vulnerable communities cut off from healthcare at the most critical moment.

[Americans aren’t worried about White nationalism in the military—because they don’t know it’s there](#) [Jennifer Spindel, Matt Motta, and Robert Ralston, *The Conversation*, 8 October 2020][[OPINION](#)]

White nationalist groups, who make up some of the most serious terror threats in the country, find new members and support in the U.S. military. These groups believe that White people are under attack in America. The links between the U.S. military and White nationalists date back to the 1990s, with many believers seeing military service as an opportunity to hone their fighting skills and recruit others. Our [research](#) has found that most Americans don’t know much about the level of White nationalism in the military—though when they find out, they’re worried about it.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Black Force Recon Marine, battlefield commission, Vietnam War hero; snubbed for the Medal of Honor?](#) [Todd South, *Marine Corps Times*, 8 October 2020]

Retired Maj. Jim Capers is one of the most decorated Marines in Force Reconnaissance history. Capers is likely the first Black Marine featured prominently on a Marine Corps recruiting poster.

He is also possibly the first Black Marine to receive a battlefield commission in the Vietnam War. The Marine Corps was slow to integrate Blacks into the ranks, keeping segregated in all-Black units through the end of World War II. Under presidential orders, all services were forced to desegregate. However, with the reduction in forces following the war, the Corps forced Black Marines to leave the service or become stewards. Hispanic and Asian Marines were allowed to integrate during this period and into the Korean War. Many believe that a Silver Star Medal doesn't begin to recognize Capers deeds during the mission to Phú Lộc. David "Bull" Gurfein, CEO of United American Patriots, said his group is leading efforts to get another review of the actions and Capers' citation for a potential upgrade to the Medal of Honor. There have been more than 3,400 Medals of Honor awarded since the decoration was created during the Civil War, according to Army data. Black service members have received only 89 Medals of Honor.

RELIGION

[After outrage, Indian brand pulls ad with interfaith couple](#) [Sheikh Saaliq, *The Associated Press*, 15 October 2020]

The advertisement by the popular Indian jewelry brand featured a Muslim man and his Hindu wife preparing for a Hindu-style baby shower. Its tagline read: "A beautiful confluence of two different religions, traditions and cultures." But just days after the 45-second advertisement aired, the Tanishq brand withdrew it from TV channels and its social media platforms on Tuesday, following a backlash from Hindu nationalists, including members of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. They said the ad promoted "love jihad," a conspiracy theory used by radical Hindu groups who accuse Muslim men of converting Hindu women by marriage.

[Minnesota town residents oppose church listed as hate group](#) [*The Associated Press*, 15 October 2020]

Residents packed a town hall in a tiny western Minnesota community to voice opposition to plans by a controversial Nordic heritage church that has been identified as a White supremacist group. The Asatru Folk Assembly bought an abandoned Lutheran church in the Swift County town of Murdock and wants a permit to turn it into a Midwest regional gathering hall. Nearly 50 people in the town of 275 filled the hall for a special City Council meeting Wednesday night. AFA board member Allen Turnage told the crowd the church would not admit a Black person "because they're not of northern European descent."

SEXISM

[Can a Bill Have a Gender? Feminine Wording Exposes a Rift](#) [Christopher F. Schuetze, *The New York Times*, 15 October 2020]

A dispute over grammar between two federal ministries has reopened a front in Germany's longstanding battle about gender equality, forcing officials to redraft a debt protection bill. While the bill drew little attention at the time, the draft language was written employing "Femininum," a grammatical device that includes the use of the feminine form of plural nouns to describe groups that include both men and women. An equivalent in English would be to refer to a group of both male and female actors collectively as "actresses." On Monday, the Interior Ministry announced

that the draft would be rejected based on its use of the generic feminine form, dealing a blow to those who say the usual masculine marginalizes people who do not identify as men. In a country like Germany, where gender norms remain entrenched, the dispute shows how the traditional norms of language can become an obstacle to equality.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Can the military prosecute decades-old rape cases? The Supreme Court will soon decide.](#) [Todd South, *Military Times*, 13 October 2020]

*The U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments on cases today that could open the door for prosecuting decades-old rape allegations that have been previously prohibited due to a five-year time limit placed on prosecuting rapes that may have occurred between 1986 to 2006. The new court case would not affect current rape cases, but it could impact some older cases that were previously deemed too old for prosecuting, said retired Marine Corps officer and career military attorney Colby Vokey. The specific case pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, the *United States v. Briggs*, is consolidated, or combined with other similar rape cases.*

[SCOTUS military rape case hinges on how “cruel and unusual punishment” applies to troops](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 13 October 2020]

*The Supreme Court heard oral arguments on Tuesday in a case that, on its face, would decide whether the military can prosecute rape cases that occurred between 1986 and 2006. That was a time when military legal precedent called for a five-year statute of limitations on rape charges. But the arguments in the case weren't made about time limits, per se. Instead, attorneys for the government and the defense in *United States v. Briggs* opted to make their cases in relation to the 8th Amendment, and whether legal precedent during those years held that rape in the military was a crime punishable by death, and therefore a crime that had no statute of limitations according to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.*

SUICIDE

[Pentagon releases latest numbers for suicide deaths in 2020](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 15 October 2020]

A total of 306 service members died by suicide in the first half of 2020, according to the Pentagon [report](#) released on Thursday, which covers suicide deaths up to June 30. The report says it is too early to determine whether the number of service members who die by suicide will be higher in 2020 than it was last year. But on Sept. 27, the [Associated Press revealed](#) that military deaths by suicide had increased by roughly 20% so far in 2020, citing more recent data.

[Seeking the Military Suicide Solution Podcast, Episode 39: Mental health historians Jeffrey Allen Smith and Michael Doidge](#) [*Military Times*, 15 October 2020]

Dr. Smith is an Associate Professor of American History and Chair of the History Department at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. He has published historical analyses of military mental health, psychology, and suicide in academic journals and commentaries on his research in the New York

Times, Time, and Washington Post; and has been quoted in U.S. News & World Report, NBC News, Reuters, Stars and Stripes, and other media outlets. Dr. Doidge is a contract historian working for the Department of Defense, where he writes on the history of U.S. military medicine. His work on the history of suicide in the military has been published in the Journal of the American Medical Association and the Washington Post.

[\[LISTEN\]](#)

[Air Force Creates Suicide Prevention Training for Families](#) [Jennifer-Leigh Oprihory, *Air Force Magazine*, 13 October 2020]

The Department of the Air Force has released its first-ever [video-based suicide prevention training for USAF and Space Force families](#). The online course, entitled “Equipping Family Members to Help Airmen in Distress,” educates viewers on different ways they can intervene and how to access resources at their disposal, according to a [release](#). It also emphasizes proactive ways to foster resilience—such as eating right, building strong relationships with friends and relatives, and cultivating spirituality. The department has created two separate training tracks—a self-paced one for solo viewers and a small-group one meant to be led by a facilitator—as well as complementary PDF-based guides with follow-on questions for personal reflection or discussion, supportive resources, and more.

[Army’s top general says uptick in soldier suicides could be connected to coronavirus pandemic](#)

[Steve Beynon, *Stars and Stripes*, 13 October 2020]

The Army’s top general said Tuesday that the coronavirus pandemic is taking a toll on the mental health of soldiers and could be a factor in this year’s increase in suicides in the service. “I’m very concerned about the behavioral health impacts of [the coronavirus pandemic]. It’s affecting the soldiers,” Gen. James C. McConville, the Army’s chief of staff, said during the annual Association of the United States Army event. “Some of the scientists have said they cannot show causation between [the coronavirus] and suicide but I would argue it is having an effect because it disconnects people.” The Department of Defense released a report on Oct. 1 that details suicide numbers from the early stages of the pandemic from January to March and before the bulk of the country went into social isolation and the worst economic impacts were felt.

[The Pentagon won’t link COVID-19 and troop suicides. Army leaders disagree.](#) [Elizabeth Howe, *ConnectingVets.com*, 13 October 2020]

“The scientists have said they’re not able to show causation between COVID and suicide, but I would argue—at least my sense is—it is having an effect. Because it disconnects people,” Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. James McConville said at a briefing Tuesday. The Department of Defense [pushed back](#) recently against data that suggested COVID-19 prevention measures led to an increase in suicides among active-duty troops so far in 2020—but Army leaders have repeatedly connected one to the other. While the Department of Defense has declined to definitively link the two, they have conceded that they “underestimated” [the impact of isolation](#).