



Black Learn, Listen & Lift Toolkit

This Summer Pledge to Learn, Listen and Lift **#TOGETHERWeWillRise**

As a society, we have a long way to go to make sure Black women and Black America are heard, receive equal treatment, and receive true respect for all that has been endured.

The deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Dominique Clayton, and countless others have propelled our nation, and we are ready to address this work with even more urgency.

Our Ask

To better understand just how deep racism runs in our country, and to effectively harness this moment and advocate for change at an institutional level we ask:

Our non-Black community:

We urge you to take the pledge this summer just as you hunker down for health, that you hunker down to Learn, Listen and Lift up, by reading, watching, listening and talking about race, bias and racism. We ask that you challenge yourself to really put yourself in a Black mama's shoes and attempt to experience what it feels like to be Black in America.

Below you will find Facts and Resources (books, films, podcasts, nonprofits and more).

**Pledge to read through this Toolkit and read, watch or listen
to at least three resources.**

If you don't agree this is necessary, Mom Congress is not a fit for you. Just email us at Info@Mom-Congress.com and we will excuse you from the community and refund your membership dues.

Our Black community:

Please be patient with our non-Black community, who is committed to Learn, Listen, and Lift but likely will misstep along the way. We know you have not been provided with patience by society. Our Non-Black mamas promise to do their best.

[The Facts](#)

The Black Maternal Experience:

Black women:

- die in pregnancy at three times the rate of their white counterparts (even when controlling for education and income)
- are 50% more likely to deliver premature babies
- have babies who are twice as likely to die after birth

Every attempt to explain away the disparities noted above has been made by researchers. When researchers cite "race" as a risk factor for these gut-wrenching health outcomes, what they are measuring is the effects of racism.

Institutionalized Racism Defined

The term "institutional racism" was first coined and first used in 1967 by Stokely Carmichael (later known as Kwame Ture) and Charles V. Hamilton in *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. Carmichael and Hamilton wrote that while individual racism is often identifiable because of its overt nature, institutional racism is less perceptible because of its "less overt, far more subtle" nature. Institutional racism "originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than [individual racism]".

Black Men and Women Face Greatest Risk Of Police Misconduct & Murder

Research supports the idea that racism, which is a major driver of lethal and nonlethal police brutality, should be treated as a public health issue. A 2019 study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* quantified Americans' risk of being killed by police use of force and found that "risk is highest for Black men, who (at current levels of risk) face about a 1 in 1,000 chance of being killed by police over the life course."

In comparison, white men have approximately a 1 in 2,500 chance of being killed by police over the life course, and Latino men a 1 in 1,900 chance. Women are far less likely than men to be killed by police. Their lifetime risk is about 1 in 33,000, compared to 1 in 2,000 for men, but when women are stratified by race, Black women face the highest risk over the life course.

In an interview with Vox's P. R. Lockhart, Frank Edwards, PhD, the study's lead author and assistant professor at the Rutgers School of Criminal Justice, said the negative effects of a police killing extend far beyond the lives taken. "There's been great research finding that when an unarmed African American man is killed in a state, there is an increase in symptoms of depression among African Americans in that state following the shooting," Edwards said. "When a white unarmed man is killed in a state, there's no similar increase in depressive symptoms among white residents."

Furthermore, research shows that having negative encounters with the police is associated with higher levels of medical mistrust — a particularly devastating consequence in the middle of a pandemic that necessitates prompt medical care and testing. "We found that when people have a negative encounter with the police, such as the police cursing at them or shoving them, that they are less likely to think medical institutions have their best interests," said Sirry Alang, Ph.D., the study's lead author and assistant professor at Lehigh University, in a press release from the university.

Read more [here](#).

[Resources](#)

(Movies, Books, Podcasts and Nonprofits)

[Webinars](#)

Mom Congress Town Hall Spotlight on the History of U.S. Black Maternal Health



Sayida Peprah, PsyD

Our community was honored to learn of the history of Black Maternal Health in the U.S. from Dr. Sayida Peprah during our Town Hall Saturday, June 13, 2020. Listen to Dr. Peprah's deeply moving presentation [here](#).



Return to Zero HOPE offers these webinars at no cost [here](#).

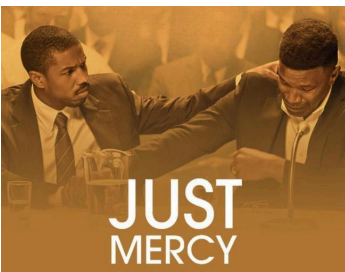
Challenging the Superwoman Mentality in the Black Community After Pregnancy & Infant Loss

Why Black Mothers are Grieving Differently

- Includes the historical aspect of cumulative birth loss.

[Movies](#)

Just Mercy



World-renowned civil rights defense attorney Bryan Stevenson works to free a wrongly condemned death row prisoner.

Selma



Ava DuVernay's powerful drama *Selma* tells the incredible story of how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led the epic march from Selma to Montgomery to secure equal voting rights in an event that forever altered history.

Blindspotting



Starring Daveed Diggs (of *Hamilton* fame) and Rafael Casal, *Blindspotting* follows two best friends from Oakland — one black, one white — over the course of a few days. It's a story about police brutality, gentrification, race, and the limits of white allies, all told through the lens of these two friends.

12 Years a Slave



Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* is just as horrific and haunting as a historical epic about slavery needs to be. The film is a gorgeous portrayal of horrific cruelty, suffering, and, ultimately, bittersweet resilience.

Remember The Titans



Disney's gut wrenching and ultimately heartwarming story introduces the concept of racism to young audiences. The story centers around a newly integrated high school football team, and a millennial classic loved by both young and old.

The Butler



This film tells the story of Cecil Gaines, a White House butler who served eight American presidents over three decades. The film is a tear-jerker and traces the dramatic changes that swept American society from the civil rights movement to Vietnam and beyond, and how those changes affected this man's life and family.

The Adventures of Huck Finn



The Adventures of Huck Finn is a 1993 Disney adventure based on the first half of Mark Twain's novel Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The story follows a boy named Huckleberry Finn and an escaped slave named Jim, who travel the Mississippi River together overcoming obstacles together along the way.

Black-ish' (Series)



Kenya Barris' "Black-ish" is a more straightforward, explanatory series about race that follows an upper-middle-class Black family living in a predominantly white neighborhood navigating microaggressions from fellow neighbors, colleagues and friends. If you watch just one episode, watch the "Hope" episode,

which is about the shooting of an unarmed Black teen. (Note one episode also dives into the topic of postpartum depression).

The Wire' (Series)



A critically acclaimed police series stars Idris Elba, Dominic West and John Doman and tackles themes like drug wars and the education system. It lays out structural racism, giving a comprehensive picture of the overwhelming conditions in the Black community.

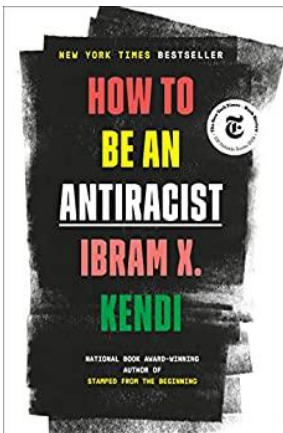
Reads

THE HATE U GIVE



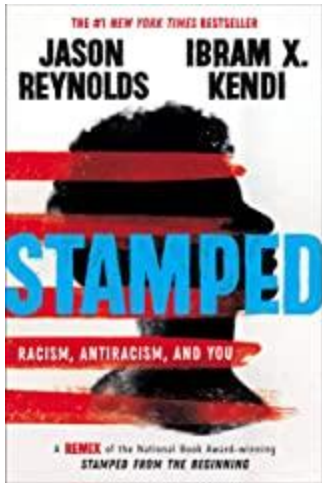
Based on the best-selling novel, THE HATE U GIVE tells the story of Starr Carter, who lives in two worlds: the poor, black neighborhood where she resides and the mostly white prep school she attends. This uneasy balance is shattered when she witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood friend by a policeman. Facing pressures from all sides, Starr must find her voice and stand up for what's right.

How to be AntiRacist, by Ibram X Kendi



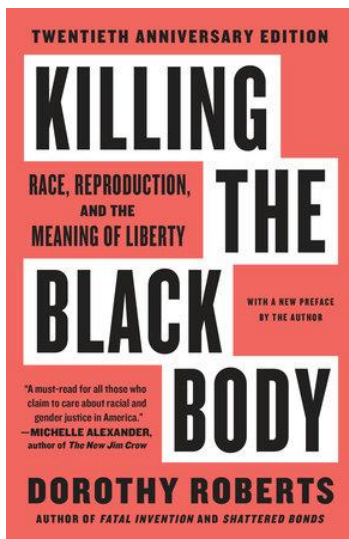
A “groundbreaking” (*Time*) approach to understanding and uprooting racism and inequality in our society—and in ourselves.

Stamped, by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X Kendi



This reimaging of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning *Stamped from the Beginning* reveals the history of racist ideas in America, and inspires hope for an antiracist future.

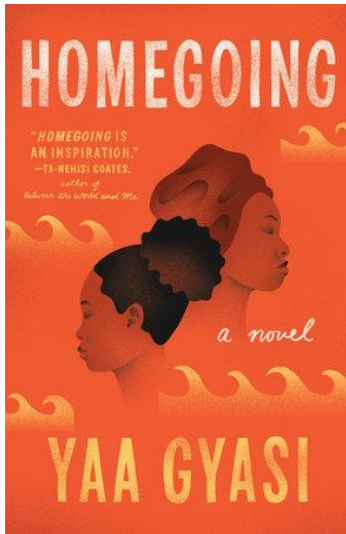
Killing The Black Body



In 1997, this groundbreaking book made a powerful entrance into the national conversation on race. In a media landscape dominated by racially biased images of welfare queens and crack babies, *Killing the Black Body* exposed America's systemic abuse of Black women's bodies. From slave masters' economic stake in bonded women's fertility to government programs that coerced thousands of poor Black women into being sterilized as late as the 1970s, these abuses pointed to the degradation of Black motherhood—and the exclusion of Black women's reproductive needs in mainstream feminist and civil rights agendas.

Now, some two decades later, *Killing the Black Body* has not only exerted profound influence, but also remains as crucial as ever—a rallying cry for education, awareness, and action on extending reproductive justice to all women.

Fiction: Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi



This multigenerational epic follows the descendants of two half-sisters born in 18th-century Ghana across three centuries and two continents. With ambitious scope, unexpected twists, and astonishing language, Gyasi traces the legacies of slavery and colonization to reveal their longstanding impact on racism in America today.

Added 11/3/2020

Added 5 Tips to Raise Racially Conscious Kids From: [Black Mental Wellness](#)

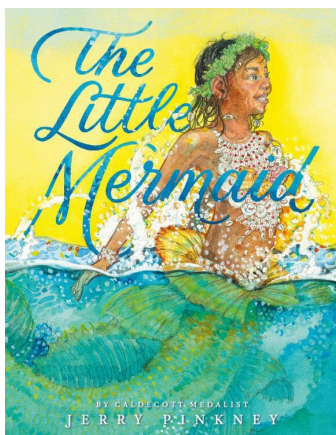
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Added 12/6/2020

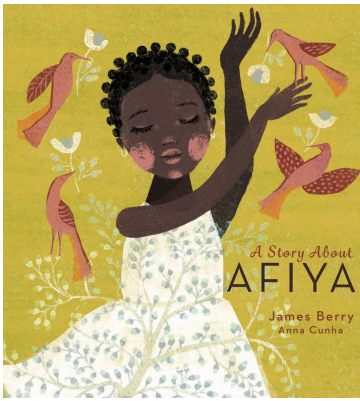
Children's Books

Listed on nytimes.com Best Children's Books of 2020

Picture Books

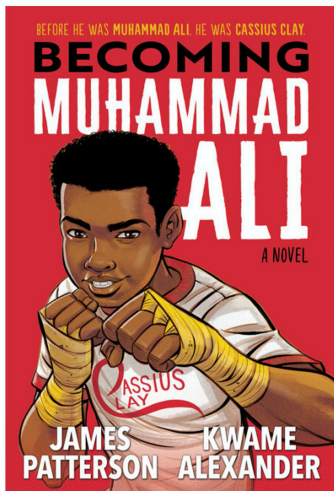


THE LITTLE MERMAID, by Jerry Pinkney. (Little, Brown, \$18.99.) In Pinkney's vivid reimagining of Hans Christian Andersen's classic fairy tale, the mermaid befriends a human girl instead of pining over a handsome prince, and all the characters, human and mermaid, are Black.

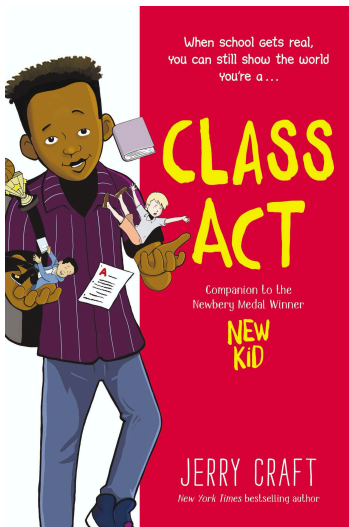


A STORY ABOUT AFIYA, by James Berry, illustrated by Anna Cunha. (Lantana, \$17.99.) This joyous celebration of childhood, culture and place by the Jamaican poet (who died in 2017) follows a young girl named Afiya — “health” in Swahili — whose summer frock “collects” what she sees as she dances across an island in motion. Each airy spread is a fresh canvas for its Brazilian illustrator, just as Afiya’s dress is newly washed each morning.

Middle Grade



BECOMING MUHAMMAD ALI, by James Patterson and Kwame Alexander, illustrated by Dawud Anyabwile. (Jimmy Patterson, \$16.99.) Cassius Clay’s kinetic boyhood — depicted through prose, poetry and illustration — is the prism through which this uplifting novel casts the myth of the legendary boxer.



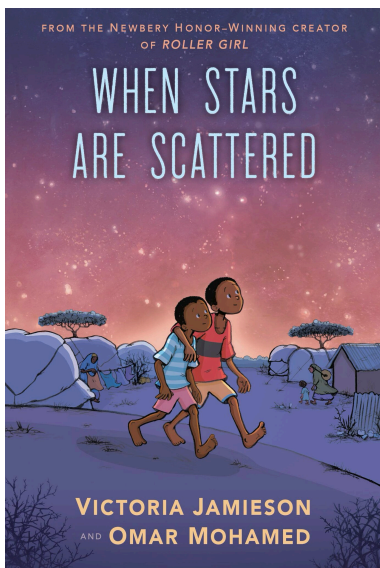
CLASS ACT, by Jerry Craft. (Quill Tree, \$22.99.) A Black student from the Co-op City section of the Bronx attends a private middle school in wealthier Riverdale in this moving and often funny graphic novel about the convergence of an awkward age (13 to 14) with another awkward age (America's racial reckoning).



LORETTA LITTLE LOOKS BACK: Three Voices Go Tell It, by Andrea David Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney. (Little, Brown, \$17.99.) Sparkling with Southern diction and rhythms, and peppered with poems and songs, this novel composed of read-aloud monologues follows three generations of children in one fictional Mississippi family as they survive hardships from sharecropping to voter suppression.

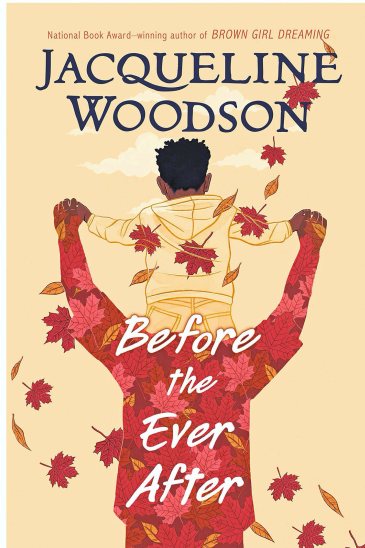


WAYS TO MAKE SUNSHINE, by Renée Watson. (Bloomsbury, \$16.99.) Like Beverly Cleary’s Ramona Quimby, who inspired this heart-wrenching yet delightful new series, the Black fourth grader Ryan Hart is a bright, imaginative girl who specializes in “making a way out of no way.”

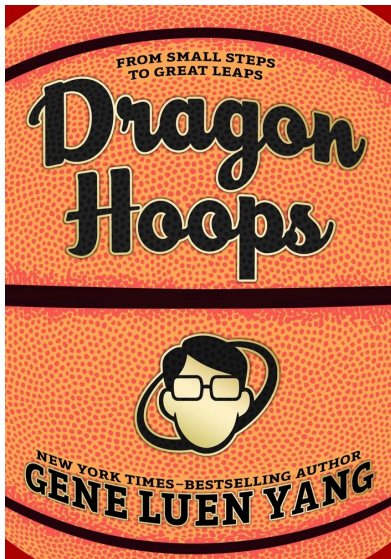


WHEN STARS ARE SCATTERED, by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed. (Dial Books for Young Readers, \$20.99.) This riveting graphic novel chronicles the young Omar’s real-life experiences during the 15 years he and his little brother spent as Somali refugees in the U.N.-run Dadaab camp in Kenya.

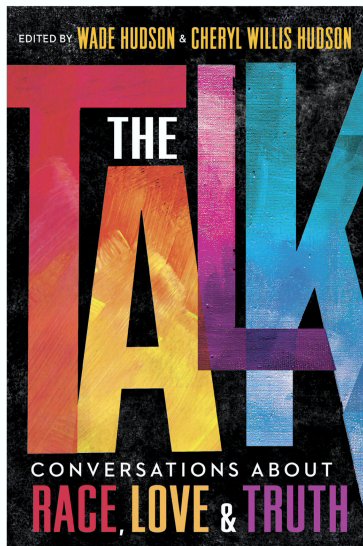
Young Adult



BEFORE THE EVER AFTER, by Jacqueline Woodson. (Nancy Paulsen, \$17.99.) A boy struggles to move forward with his life as his pro football star father's memory fades in this elegiac meditation on loss and longing, told mostly in verse.



DRAGON HOOPS, by Gene Luen Yang. (First Second, \$24.99.) Full of insight about race and ethnicity, this graphic novel intercuts the thrilling wins and crushing defeats of one high school team with basketball's own turbulent history.



THE TALK: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth, edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson. (Crown, \$16.99.) These essays, stories, poems, letters and illustrations work to prepare children for a world that can be bewildering and hostile, while also making plain that the hard conversations we all need to have about race are part of a broader national reckoning.

[Going Deeper: Websites](#)

U.S. Slavery: Timeline, Figures and Abolition

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>

Epigenetics

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theatlantic.com/amp/article/430749/>

Mother.ly's guide to Talking to Kids About Race

<https://www.mother.ly/child/talking-to-kids-about-racism-age-by-age/why-its-never-too-early-to-start-talking-about-race-and-racism-with-kids>

Juneteenth

<https://www.juneteenth.com/history.htm>

The Abolitionist Pledge

<http://www.theabolitionistpledge.com/>

[Nonprofit Organizations Leading Black Maternal Health Change](#)

We urge you to donate to one or more of these organizations whose missions move you

[The Shades of Blue Project](#)

The Shades of Blue Project is dedicated to breaking cultural barriers in maternal mental health by raising awareness and ensuring action is taken to break the stigma surrounding seeking treatment in the minority community when experiencing complications after childbirth. SBP does this by helping women before, during and after child-birth with maternal mental health advocacy, treatment and support. Kay Matthews is the Founder and is the leader of the Mom Congress online community Black Maternal Health Caucus.

[Black Mamas Matter Alliance](#)

BMMA envisions a world where Black mamas have the rights, respect, and resources to thrive before, during, and after pregnancy. BMMA lifts up black-led maternal health organizations and leads the community behind the annual Black Maternal Health Awareness week.

[National Birth Equity Collaborative](#)

Dr. Joia Crear-Perry is the Founder and President of the National Birth Equity Collaborative. NBEC creates solutions that optimize Black maternal and infant health through training, policy advocacy, research, and community-centered collaboration.

[Ancient Song Doula Services](#)

ASDS works to provide not only direct birth support in NYC, particularly for Black birthing people, but also to reclaim the ancient principles of birth. Channel Portia

[Diversity Uplifts](#)

Founded by Dr. Syeda Peprah, Mom Congress 2020 speaker. DU's mission is to improve the well-being of individuals and communities by supporting diversity and increasing cultural competence and humility among healthcare providers who serve diverse communities. DU also supports the provision of no-cost doula services in Los Angeles.

[Common Sense Childbirth](#)

CSB was founded in 1998 by Jennie Joseph, who has dedicated her life to helping women and families have better birth experiences. Over the years, Jennie's work has grown beyond the birth room. She speaks nationally and internationally, sharing her positive outcomes on low birth weight, prematurity, infant mortality, and maternal mortality rates that remain particularly high in minority and disenfranchised populations in the United States.

[Black Women Birthing Justice](#)

Promoting the well-being of birthing families and the community is our priority. BWBJ has been closely following the impact that coronavirus (COVID-19) has had on maternal healthcare systems and expectant families, and the lack of access to essential supports such as doula services and family during childbirth and in the postpartum period. The Black Women Birthing Justice Collective stands in solitude with all birthing people and the birth workers who serve them. The goal to #LiberateBlackBirth and the truth that #BlackMamasMatter stands true now more than ever.

Podcasts

Added 6/27/2020

Natal Podcast

A podcast docuseries about having a baby while Black.

NPR

Microaggressions

(21 minutes)

Conversations about race are essential to affect change, but they're hard and uncomfortable, and you're bound to run into what's known as "microaggressions." These are the thinly veiled, everyday instances of racism, homophobia, sexism (and more) that you see in the world. Kevin Nadal, a professor of psychology, has spent years researching and writing books on the effects of microaggressions.

Code Switch

A Decade of Watching Black People Die

(22 min)

Hosts Shereen Marisol Meraji and Gene Demby discuss how these stories of police brutality directed towards black people keep repeating themselves. They wonder aloud when things will change and what will make them change.

The Breakdown

From Tulsa to Minneapolis - Why History Repeats Itself

(17 min)

Host Shaun King tells the stories of injustice racism and corruption but also gives his audience actionable steps to fight back. In this episode, he looks back nearly 100 years ago to when the black community of

Tulsa, OK was destroyed by terrorists and tries to unpack why we are still dealing with some of the same issues today.

The Forum on Workplace Inclusion

Race: Inclusion & Colorism. How Understanding the History Can Help Us Transform.

(32 min)

Host Milagros Philips, author of *11 Reasons to Become Race Literate*, delves into the idea of colorism. She looks at it from two perspectives: First, the history of colorism and second, how that history affects organizations today. Finally, she explains how simply being aware of colorism can change the way you do business.

About Race

The Big Question

(40 min)

Host Reni Eddo-Lodge, author of the book *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race* addresses her feelings about a question she frequently gets: "As a white person, what I can do to help race relations." She also interviews two guests to get to the heart of what they're doing.

We Live Here

Desegregation Through the Ages

This podcast focuses on the issues of race, class, and power in St Louis. This episode tells the story of the longest-running school desegregation program in the country and how it's affecting the students. Even with the best intentions, the community still struggles with providing a welcoming environment for all students.

1619 (series)

This *New York Times*-produced series marks the 400th anniversary of the first slaves being brought to Virginia. Through interviews and archival audio and writings, the five episodes examine the legacy of slavery in the United States.

Added 2/15/2021

The following podcasts were summarized by *Vanity Fair* in their article [Eight Podcasts to Deepen Your Knowledge of Black History](#)

[Humanity Archive](#)

(series)

Humanity Archive, founded by Jermaine Fowler, seeks to foster “empathy and understanding between cultures”.

Pledge to ‘Learn, Listen, and Lift’

Join us in the online Mom Congress Member Community to discuss these books, films, and more together.

Members, find the community here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/momcongressmembercommunity>

Become a member here:

<https://www.mom-congress.com/get-involved-individuals>

[#MomCongress](#) [#TOGETHERWeWillRise](#)

We must sit with the discomfort and use it to catalyze change.

Do you have additions for the toolkit, comments, or questions? Email Us:

info@Mom-Congress.com
