

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

May 13, 2025

Proclaiming the 3rd Saturday in May as Black Elders Appreciation Day

For over 60 years, the County of Los Angeles (County) has proclaimed the month of May as Older Adults Month to celebrate the invaluable and numerous ways that older adults enrich the fabric of our neighborhoods, communities, and institutions. The collective wisdom, talents, volunteerism, and servant leadership of older adults is vital to the County’s overall wellbeing and vibrancy. Catastrophically, in January 2025, the Eaton Fire devastated the homes and livelihoods of one of the few remaining enclaves of Black older adults in the County. In honor of the Black Elders of Eaton, this year’s Older Adults Month will recognize the contributions of Black older adults as well as their unique needs and challenges.

As members of the founding group of settlers of the Pueblo of Los Angeles, Black elders have a longstanding legacy of shaping the historical, social, cultural, and political footprint of the County. Notable ancestral pioneers such as Biddy Mason, Charlotta Spears Bass, Dr. Charles R. Drew, Paul R. Williams, Charles Mingus, the Honorable Yvonne Braithwaite Burke, and the Honorable Tom Bradley represent a sampling of the Black trailblazers whose accomplishments and advancements paved the way for current and future generations of Angelenos.

According to 2023 data from the Department of Aging & Disabilities, the County is home to the third largest Black population (909,983) in the United States and Black Elders in the County (334,000) represent one of the largest concentrations of Black older adults in the nation. Nearly 60% of Black Elders (65+) in the County rent their homes compared

-MORE-

MOTION

Solis	_____
Mitchell	_____
Horvath	_____
Hahn	_____
Barger	_____

to 29% for their White Elder counterparts. Relatedly, 40% of unsheltered older adults in the County are Black, even though Blacks/African Americans represent less than 10% of the County's population. 41% of the County's Black Elders (65+) live on annual incomes of less than \$35,000 and 62% of Black Elders living at or below the poverty level are women. The Department of Public Health estimates that the diagnosis of Alzheimer's and other dementias will increase by 153% between 2019 and 2040. And, from 2019 – 2024, Black residents in the County had the lowest life expectancy at birth: 73.2 years compared to 80.1 years for the population as a whole and 85.8 years for Asians (who had the highest life expectancy at birth). Far too often, the dignity and resilience of Black Elders belies the depth and complexity of the social, economic, health, and institutional barriers that prevent older Black adults from aging in place with safety, security, independence, and overall wellbeing.

The County has made a commitment to invest in health systems and to expand care capacity that supports the physical health, mental health, and well-being of individuals across the life course continuum. In order to achieve its mission to improve the quality of life for all people and communities of the County, it is imperative that the County take a proactive approach to maintain and enrich the quality of life for Black Elders.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

- 1) Recognize Sistahs Aging with Grace & Elegance, California Black Women's Health Project, and the Sankofa Elder Ambassadors of Los Angeles County for their vision and leadership in developing and adopting a Black Eldering Bill of Rights and Community Manifesto for the Care and Belonging of Black Elders.
- 2) Inaugurate and proclaim the 3rd Saturday in May as Black Elders Appreciation Day in the County of Los Angeles (County) as an annual day of celebration and platform for residents, families, neighborhood groups, community-based-organizations, public service organizations, faith-based institutions, aging services providers, health care providers, civic organizations, businesses, philanthropists, universities, cities, and County departments to engage in community outreach, education, policy, and advocacy events to promote the dignity, care, well-being and belonging of Black Elders and caregivers in the County.
- 3) Direct the Executive Director of the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI)

Initiative to incorporate Black aging and caregiving as a priority focus for the “2026 State of Black Los Angeles County Report” to develop a Black Aging Policy Agenda.

- 4) Direct the Director of the Aging and Disabilities Department to coordinate with the County Commission for Older Adults, and all appropriate departments, in response to the June 4, 2024 motion titled, “Addressing the Needs of Older Adults in Los Angeles County through Outreach,¹” to develop a bi-annual, user-friendly, and accessible hard copy and digital resource guide of all Countywide benefits, services, and resources available to older adults, including State benefits or services that are funded, run, or operated by a County Department.

#

(ME/LH)

¹ <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/192086.pdf>