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# THE SACRAMENTO BEE

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Holly Porter, a quadriplegic who was living in a hospital bed at Camp Resolution homeless encampment, is wheeled around her new apartment by Hope Cooperative's Tracey Knickerbocker on Thursday. Knickerbocker had bought Holly a plant, balloons and assorted deli meats in celebration.

## Baltimore block party shooting leaves 2 dead, 28 injured

BY JULIO CORTEZ AND HOLLY RAMER  
*Associated Press*

### BALTIMORE

Gunfire erupted at a block party in Baltimore on Sunday, killing two people, wounding 28 and leaving an extensive crime scene that marred the U.S. holiday weekend, police said. Three of the wounded were in critical condition and more than a dozen were under the age of 18.

The shooting took place just after 12:30 a.m. when at least two people opened fire at a block party in the Brooklyn Homes area in the southern part of the city, said Richard Worley, Baltimore's acting police commissioner. No arrests had been made by late afternoon. Worley said it wasn't clear whether the shooting was targeted or random.

The shooting comes amid gatherings around the country leading up to the July Fourth holiday. Elsewhere, a shooting in Kansas left seven people with gunshot wounds and two more victims hospitalized after being trampled as people rushed out of a nightclub early Sunday morning, police there said.

The violence in Baltimore occurred as federal prosecutors there this week touted their efforts to reduce violent crime in the city. Police have reported nearly 130 homicides and close to 300 shootings so far this year, though that's down from the same time last year. Authorities have vowed to crack down aggressively on repeat violent offenders.

Nine of Sunday's victims were transported by ambulance and 20 walked into area hospitals with injuries from the shooting, Worley said. Nine remained hospitalized Sunday afternoon.

SEE HOUSING, 6A

SEE SHOOTING, 7A

## Quadriplegic homeless woman finally moves into housing

BY ARIANE LANGE  
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Holly Porter, the quadriplegic homeless woman who inspired and co-founded the first sanctioned, self-governed encampment in Sacramento County, moved into a Meadowview apartment Thursday following months of vociferous lobbying for local authorities to secure a permanent home for her.

For 10 months, Porter and her neighbors at Camp Resolution had repeatedly called on

Sacramento leaders to house her; Porter and her family had actively sought housing for a year and a half.

"I'm very excited," Porter said, sitting in her wheelchair in the sunny ground-floor unit Thursday afternoon, "but I just don't think it's actually sunk in yet."

After months of delays, she had only just allowed herself to feel happy at the prospect of life indoors.

Porter had been living at Camp Resolution, an encampment on Colfax Street and

Arden Way in Old North Sacramento. She and around 60 other residents won a formal lease from the city this spring, guaranteeing they wouldn't be evicted from the site. Though the city has provided trailers, the camp has neither running water nor a connection to the electric grid.

This lack of basic necessities made life there difficult for Porter, who has limited mobility and is particularly vulnerable to bad weather.

Her neighbors at the camp as well as outside activists rallied

around her. Their demands escalated after City Attorney Susana Alcalá Wood and California Homeless Union attorney Anthony Prince signed a letter of understanding March 24 agreeing that the city would "work diligently and use all efforts" to house Porter within 45 days. Ultimately, 97 days elapsed before Porter received her new keys, and her supporters attended multiple City Council meetings to draw attention to her situation.

## Moms for Liberty's focus sets up clash with teachers unions

BY ALI SWENSON  
*Associated Press*

### PHILADELPHIA

Moms for Liberty, a "parental rights" group that has sought to take over school boards in multiple states, is looking to expand those efforts across the country and to other education posts in

2024 and beyond. The effort is setting up a clash with teachers unions and others who view the group as a toxic presence in public schools.

The group's co-founder, Tiffany Justice, said during its annual summit over the weekend in Philadelphia that Moms for Liberty will use its political action committee next year to engage in

school board races nationwide. It also will "start endorsing at the state board level and elected superintendents."

Her comments confirm that Moms for Liberty, which has spent its first two years inflaming school board meetings with aggressive complaints about instruction on systemic racism and gender identity in the classroom,

is developing a larger strategy to overhaul education infrastructure across the country.

As the group has amassed widespread conservative support and donor funding, its focus on education ensures that even as voters turn their attention to the 2024 presidential race, school board elections will remain some of the most contentious political fights next year.

Moms for Liberty started with three Florida moms fighting COVID-19 restrictions in 2021. It has quickly ascended as a national player in Republican politics, helped along the way by

the board's political training and close relationships with high-profile GOP groups and lawmakers. The group's support for school choice and the "fundamental rights of parents" to direct their children's education has drawn allies such as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a leading GOP presidential contender, and the conservative Heritage Foundation.

The group has been labeled an "extremist" organization by the Southern Poverty Law Center for allegedly harassing com-

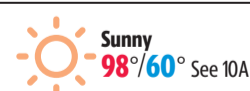
SEE MOMS, 6A



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Crystal Sanchez, president of the Sacramento Homeless Union, speaks during public comment at the end of Tuesday's Sacramento City Council meeting questioning why Holly Porter is not housed, as advocates from Camp Resolution hold up a sign on Holly's behalf.



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Advocates for Holly Porter shut down the beginning of Sacramento City Council on Tuesday and Mayor Darrell Steinberg came from behind closed doors to calm them. For 10 months, Porter and her neighbors at the homeless camp repeatedly called on Sacramento leaders to house her.



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Holly Porter, who says she rarely smokes, takes a drag from Monica Gonzales' cigarette inside a makeshift tent at Camp Resolution on June 21. She said she was stressed about still not getting housing. Earlier that morning, the quadriplegic said, Mayor Darrell Steinberg had visited and told her to call him directly if she didn't get housed.

FROM PAGE 1A

## HOUSING

At Tuesday's council meeting, Crystal Sanchez, the president of the Sacramento Homeless Union, stepped up to the podium to urge leaders to move Porter into a permanent home.

"If we can't house Holly, who has a disability, who has an income, who has a mother who's a caregiver," she asked, "how can we house anybody who's homeless?"

At the Meadowview complex Thursday, the mood was jubilant. Porter's mother and full-time caregiver, Deborah Casillas, couldn't stop smiling. Tracey Knickerbocker, Porter's longtime case manager through the local nonprofit Hope Cooperative, toted three balloons, a shiny red potted anthurium in bloom and a salami-and-cheese platter with a big bow into the apart-

ment.

Standing next to the balloons, Knickerbocker and Casillas hugged. "We did it," Casillas said into Knickerbocker's shoulder. "Yes," the case manager said. "You did."

### NEXT STEPS AFTER PERMANENT HOUSING: OTHER BASIC NEEDS

Now that she has a roof over her head, Porter said she's looking forward to doing everything she couldn't do because being unhoused presented an insurmountable roadblock. In particular, she

was excited to get adequate health services.

"I didn't get nothing when I was homeless," she said. "That's my biggest goal now, is to get all my medical back in place."

Porter couldn't get a physical therapist to treat her in her tent, even though she has a substantial disability. She couldn't get a power wheelchair, or an electric lift to get her out of her hospital bed. Because they didn't have permanent housing, Casillas could not get paid as Porter's in-home supportive services



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Deborah Casillas pushes her daughter, Holly Porter, in her chair, alongside Tracey Knickerbocker with Hope Cooperatives. Porter, a quadriplegic who was living in a hospital bed at Camp Resolution, got the keys to her new apartment Thursday, after seeking housing for a year and a half.

worker, even though Porter needs full-time care.

Additionally, the search for housing and all the attendant bureaucratic hurdles had taken up a significant amount of Porter's time and energy.

Once she gets a power wheelchair, she said, she'll be able to move around the world much more easily.

"I don't plan on staying in here just because I'm indoors," she said.

Even on her move-in day, she had another bureaucratic problem to handle. Porter and Knickerbocker said the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency had agreed to cover her portion of her first month's rent, but because she moved in on June 29, she had learned they would only cover the prorated rent for June — and not the \$228 she'll owe for the month of July.

Porter was hoping to put that money toward setting up her new apartment. The hospital bed in which she spends much of her time could use a new mattress; Casillas needs a bed; and they'll need typical household items such as furniture, linens, towels and cleaning supplies. On Thursday, Knickerbocker and Porter were trying to get Medi-Cal's housing assistance program to cover the cost of July's rent so she'd have a little extra money as she moved in.

And for Porter, the bigger fight wasn't over: She said there are too many disabled people living on the streets, and too many barriers to getting them indoors. She plans to continue advocating for systemic change.

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KEN RUINARD USA Today Network

Former President Donald Trump waves to a Moms for Liberty group during his visit Saturday in downtown Pickens, S.C.

FROM PAGE 1A

## MOMS

munity members, advancing anti-LGBTQ+ misinformation and fighting to scrub diverse and inclusive material from lesson plans.

Justice said in an interview that she and her co-founder, Tina Descovich, were two moms who "had faith in American parents to take back the public education system in America" and that they "fully intend on reclaiming and reforming" that system.

So far, the group has had mixed success at getting its preferred candidates elected. In 2022, slightly more than half of the 500 school board candidates it endorsed across the country won. In the spring of 2023,

fewer than one-third of the nearly 30 candidates it endorsed in Wisconsin were elected.

Focusing on state-level candidates could give Moms for Liberty an opportunity to assert its influence on some of the positions that have more control in determining curriculum, said Jon Valant, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who has studied education policy.

A close partnership with the conservative training organization the Leadership Institute and added money from a growing donor base also could help Moms for Liberty run more electable candidates and help them win in 2024.

Monty Floyd, vice chair

of the Moms for Liberty chapter in Hernando County, Florida, knows what it's like to have the group's support in a political campaign. He ran for school board in 2022 and received the group's endorsement, as well as \$250 from its Florida-based PAC.

Floyd lost that race but plans to run again in 2026, he said. He looks forward to seeing how the group's political influence grows and said that even more than the money, the national network of Moms for Liberty provides a "great resource" to a candidate.

"The wealth of knowledge they have and the network of support and just the advocacy tips that we're learning from the speakers today," he said. "They have good advice to give. So you kind of learn a lot about what you can improve in your messaging."

Moms for Liberty may face obstacles, however, as its rising national presence has driven a counter-movement of activists who oppose it, Valant said.

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said she thinks groups such as Moms for Liberty have "created more action and more energy" among teachers unions.

"We have 41 new units that we have organized as the AFT this year. We've never had that," she said.

She said the union would "do what we have to do" during elections to show the contrast between its endorsed candidates and Moms for Liberty candidates.

Beyond unions, Moms for Liberty is likely to face opposition from grassroots groups and voters who "just don't agree with their vision of what public education should be," Valant said.

Martha Cooney, a Pennsylvania educator who was one of about 100 protesters outside the summit Saturday afternoon, agreed. She said that as Moms for Liberty tries to assert more political power, she and others will continue to stand in its way.

"They are a very small minority who are trying to act like they represent this whole nation, and they do not," Cooney said.

Moms for Liberty did not answer questions on which races it would focus on in 2024, besides making it clear it would not endorse in legislative races or the presidential election.

But even as the group says it will not get involved in the White House race, Republican candidates have tried to harness Moms for Liberty's influence and broad network of more than 120,000 members in 45 states to woo its voting bloc and benefit their primary campaigns.

Five GOP candidates

gave speeches during the gathering in Philadelphia, which ended Sunday.

They included DeSantis and former President Donald Trump. The rivals tried to outflank each other with claims that "woke ideology" had overtaken education and that pronouns and "critical race theory" needed to be struck from classrooms.

"I think moms are the key political force for this 2024 cycle," DeSantis said in his address to attendees Friday.

Other Republican presidential candidates who appeared at the summit included former U.N.

Ambassador Nikki Haley, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson and biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who brought his wife and two children to the stage Saturday. He pledged to prioritize parents' rights and shutter the U.S. Department of Education if elected.

"The membership of this organization is just a small tip of the iceberg of a broader pro-parent movement, pro-children movement in our country," Ramaswamy told reporters at the summit. "And so how important is that? You better believe it's pretty damn important."

**Closed Tuesday, July 4th  
in observance of  
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