

# OPELIKA-AUBURN NEWS

Documents expose growing white supremacist group

360°



Fruit forward: Two delicious ways to celebrate strawberries

LIVELY

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

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## CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF THE CAUCUS LOSES POWER?



JACK GRUBER, JACK GRUBER-USA TODAY

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus pose for photographs in front of the statues of Mary McLeod Bethune and Rosa Parks after Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. and congressional leaders hosted a statue dedication and unveiling ceremony in honor of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune in Statuary Hall at the Capitol in Washington on Wednesday, July 13, 2022.

**SARAH D. WIRE**  
USA TODAY

Redistricting efforts across the South could mean about a third fewer Black members of Congress, the Congressional Black Caucus has warned, and a correspondingly large drop in Black power in Washington.

Chairwoman Yvette Clarke, a Democrat from New York, has said as many as 19 of

her caucus' members could be affected in a worst-case scenario, though she noted the situation is still fluid.

"Black political representation has come under direct assault," she told USA TODAY. "Republicans' racial gerrymandering could have a devastating impact on the CBC, but this democratic erosion extends far beyond politics. When communities lose meaningful political

representation in government, they also lose equitable access to resources, infrastructure, healthcare, education, environmental protections, economic investment, and public safety."

In April, the Supreme Court limited a key part of the Voting Rights Act, Section 2, ruling states cannot be required to create

Please see **BLACK CAUCUS**, Page A2

## Missing Auburn student found dead in Japan

**BRIONNA MCCALL**  
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Auburn University student James "Weston" Higginbotham, 20, was found dead in Japan on Saturday after going missing on Friday, May 29, according to his family.

Weston Higginbotham's mother, Nancy Higginbotham, shared on Facebook that he was found dead by a volunteer search-and-rescue group in a mountainous area



Higginbotham

outside of Kyoto.

"We are forever grateful for the time we had with our sweet, precious Weston, but cannot begin to understand what life without him will be like," Nancy Higginbotham said.

Nancy Higginbotham said they are grateful for the countless

people across the U.S., Japan and around the world who shared her son's story, offered encouragement and helped with search efforts.

"We now ask for privacy as we begin to navigate this unimaginable loss," she said. "Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, and support. We will need them more than ever. We will always love you, Weston."

Higginbotham, 20, was last confirmed in the Kyoto area on Friday, May 29,

according to his family. His family said they have been on a family trip since May 25.

Higginbotham's family said he arrived at Kyoko station on Friday around 8:15 p.m., and his phone lost network at 8:29 p.m. They said it looks like he was on a local, "subway-type" train on the Biwako Line (also referred to as the Tokaido Main Line or the Kosie Line) and was headed toward Tokyo.

### Weather

Humid with a stray t-storm  
**High:** 83 **Low:** 69  
**Forecast:** A8

### Inside

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